What is Cinematic Ethics?
Our School of Cinematic Arts family is truly global. The students in our last graduating class hailed from 30 countries, and you can find SCA alumni in just about every media community on the planet. Many of you are reading this in a country other than the United States—whether you’re on location for a project, or one of the many Trojans who live and work overseas.

Which is why I’m so proud that one of this year’s milestone achievements is a gift from the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) that funds the School’s first scholarships specifically earmarked for international students. Every year, we recruit talented students from outside the U.S. who have to decline enrollment for financial reasons, especially since they are ineligible for the aid packages available to American citizens. Coupled with another gift this year from Melody Hobson and George Lucas to provide financial aid to underrepresented students, the HFPA scholarship is helping the School achieve its goal of a more diverse student body.

You’ll find many other milestones in this issue of In Motion. At 88 years old, SCA is still a young institution, and still achieving exciting firsts. This year the School celebrated its first USC Vladek Professor, Cooper Nelson, who has now launched a career in children’s animation, Media Arts. + Practice Ph.D. candidate Aroussiak Gabrielian, whose work focuses on the intersection of cinema, architecture, and landscapes, has won the prestigious Rome Prize, given by the American Academy in Rome for innovative cross-disciplinary work. We also established three new endowed chairs this year: totaling 30, a record for any cinema school. One of those chairs is in Cinematic Ethics, the subject of our cover story and a discipline that asks students to consider thorny questions before they are blindsided by them in professional settings.

It’s also a bounty year for anniversaries. We celebrate twenty years of our Trojan Vision television station while saying goodbye to the retiring Don Tillman, who created its award-winning programming and mentored the hundreds of USC students who have worked there over the years. The Cinema & Media Studies journal, Spectator, turns thirty-five and has published a book comprising some of its best publications through the years. We also take a look back at the many milestones of the Interactive Media & Games Division over the last fifteen years.

As the holiday season approaches and you begin reflecting on your own milestones of the year, I hope you will take some time to connect with us in Los Angeles to let us know what you’ve been up to. Regardless of how far away you might be, you can instantly connect with us @USCcinema on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, or by email at communications@cinema.usc.edu.

We wish you a happy holiday season and New Year!

Elizabeth M. Daley
Steven J. Ross Time Warner Professor and Dean
DEMO DAY & WINTERACTIVE
Students and guests enjoy game play at USC Games’ Demo Day and Winteractive

YOUNG HOLLYWOOD ALUMNI
Alumni Thembi Banks, Madison Ainley, Michael Leeser, Alcino Tada-Currie, Robin Williams Endowed Chair in Comedy Barnet Killman, Kerry Furrh, Angela Beevers, and Jack Henry Robbins at the young alumni event hosted by Killman and USC Comedy

JOSEPH CAMPBELL CHAIR
Ted Braun with his family, wife Lori Froeling, son Lucas and mother Joan Braun

IMAX CLASS
Astronaut Terry Virts visits IML 475, Art & Practice of Giant Screen Filmmaking at the Michelle & Kevin Douglas IMAX Theatre and Immersive Lab

REITMAN WORKSHOP
Robin Williams Endowed Chair in Comedy Barnet Killman and alum Jason Reitman at the Masterclass in Directing Comedy with Jason Reitman hosted by USC Comedy

HOLLYWOOD SHUFFLE
Professor Robert Townsend at a screening and Q&A of his 1987 hit comedy Hollywood Shuffle

HOLLYWOOD SHUFFLE
Students and faculty watching Hollywood Shuffle

JOHN WELLS DIVISION
Alum John Wells and actor William H. Macy at the dedication of the John Wells Division of Writing for Screen & Television

YEAR IN REVIEW

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YEAR IN REVIEW
President Bill Clinton, Secretary Hillary Clinton, Katherine Price and Chairman of the Board of Councilors of the USC School of Cinematic Arts Frank Price at the 2017 USC School of Cinematic Arts Commencement.

Actress Helen Mirren, Dean Elizabeth M. Daley, and director and alum Taylor Hackford.

Suze Todd and Jennifer Todd, the recipients of the 2017 Mary Pickford Alumni Award.

President of NBC Universal Ron Meyer delivering the 2017 USC School of Cinematic Arts Commencement Address.


Michael Kellman, Nancy Mette, Kate Kellman, and Robin Williams Chair in Comedy Professor Barnet Kellman at the dedication of the Robin Williams Chair in Comedy.

Zak Williams, Zelda Williams and Kellman.

Kellman with alum Peter Segal, actress Lisa Kudrow, and Professor Robert Townsend.

Kellman and SCA Board of Councilors member Jeffrey Katzenberg.

Front-center: Ram Shriram with this year’s Shriram Fellows.

The Division of Media Arts + Practice hosted a two-week program, Media Meets Message II, on transmedia for social change with participants from Jordan, Malaysia and Pakistan.
MARK HAMILL
31 & 32 Actor Mark Hamill visits Dr. Drew Caspers’ The Star Wars Phenomenon class.

T.C. WANG
33 (Left to right) Joseph Gardner, Victor Lippit, Miyu Elle Mizuta Lippit, Joyce Lippit, Horstio Miura, Satoko Gardner, Takuya Lippit, Professor Akira Lippit, Re'an Lippit, Re'an Re'an, Elizabeth M. Daley, James Hindman and Fred Wong at the dedication of the T.C. Wang Endowed Chair in Cinematic Arts.

Actor James Hong at the dedication of the T.C. Wang Family Endowed Chair in Cinematic Arts.

Professor Lippit the inaugural holder of the T.C. Wang Family Endowed Chair in Cinematic Arts.

Fred Wong and Dow Elizabeth M. Daley present Professor and Vice Dean Lippit with his new chair.

JOHN SINGLETON VISIT
38 & 39 SCA graduate student O'Shea Myler, Professor Mike Fink, and Part-Time Lecturer and alum John Singleton at the SCA Diversity event Our Voices: An Evening with John Singleton. Attendees below.

RHYTHMS + VISIONS / EXPANDED + LIVE 3
40-42 Yimin Zhang’s projection mapping project, Carmina Sadell’s weather balloon, live music with visuals by Refik Anadol and piano by Gloria Cheng, and an animated clock projection by Julia Kantor at Rhythms + Visions/Expanded + Live 3 produced by Professors Michael Patterson and Candace Reckinger.

ENTERTAINMENT DIVERSITY
43 Host Devon Franklin ’00 at SCA’s Entertainment Diversity Panel.

Adam Pliska ’95, President/CEO, World Poker Tour.

From left: Moira Griffin, Fox Inclusion, Executive Director; Natalie Moran, CAA Multicultural Business Development, Coordinator; Matt Nocita, Becket Film Fund, LCC, CFO.

USC COMEDY LIVE!
46 Students from SCA and the School of Dramatic Arts filming the fifth season of USC Comedy Live!

Alum Jay Roach visits an episode of USC Comedy Live!

Join the conversation @USCcinema
In MOTION

ALUMNI Spotlight HIKARI

By Naomi Iwamoto

Is there a theme you feel like you keep going back to in your work?

This was one of my first questions to SCA alumna, artist, and director, Hikari Mitsuyo Miyazaki, who is also known as HIKARI.

She paused for a second, then gave a big toothy smile: “I like to focus on family.”

Family has been the center of HIKARI’s work, both on and off the screen. The theme is ever present in the celebrated student film she made as her master’s thesis in Film & Television Production. Titled Tsuyako, it was inspired by her grandmother and took place in Post-War Japan. The title character is a mother who lives a demanding life as a mill factory worker and must choose between her duties to her family and following her heart when an old lover—a woman, makes a surprise visit to her home. Beautifully shot in her hometown of Osaka, Japan, it went on to win awards at multiple festivals. The film is a unique story about two women falling in love in a country where lesbian stories are rarely told. And it is undeniably a love letter to her grandmother who made her own sacrifices to raise her family.

Another of her films, A Better Tomorrow, was made as her student film she wrote, sang, painted, and directed every chance she had in school plays but dreamed of leaving her hometown, although it didn’t seem in the cards. “Growing up as a kid I never felt like I fit in in Japan. I’m from this area where there are a lot of factories in South Osaka. Going abroad or out of that area was considered weird and I didn’t think it was possible.”

Despite the odds, her innate desire to experience something outside of Japan pushed her to study as a high school exchange student in Utah during her senior year. She later continued her undergraduate studies at Southern Utah University and graduated with a degree in Theater.

She moved to Los Angeles and worked as an actress, even unearthing a passion for photography and picking up a side gig doing headshots and photographing artists for a small hip hop magazine. But after almost a decade in acting she felt the need to make a change.

“I had an epiphany after her mother reminded her of her enthusiasm for directing her 7th grade school program. ‘I went home that night and looked up best film school in the country’ and USC was the first search result on Google. And it was 10 minutes away! So I applied.’ At SCA, she focused on cinematography and directing.

Since graduating in 2011, HIKARI has worked as a director on Subaru commercials and has managed to fund a string of short films that demonstrate the depth of her talent. In 2013, she was in the first class of the Lexus Short Films series—a program that supports emerging directors as they direct a short film produced by The Weinstein Company and Lexus. ‘I got to learn how the studio works and how the client works,’ she says of the experience. ‘One day I want to direct studio films, so it was a great experience for me.’

A Better Tomorrow was funded by Lexus Short Films and her third short film, Can & Sake, was funded by the Japanese company AVEX through the Short Shorts Film Festival Asia. Her film Where We Begin tells an end-of-life story through dance and was funded through a private investor, Kickstarter personal savings, and a grant she won from the HollyShorts Film Festival for Tsuyako. It premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival.

The acclaim she has received for her shorts provided the encouragement she needed to develop her first feature script. HIKARI, who is currently a Film Independent Fellow, has spent the last few years trying to make that happen. ‘I love short films, but long format has been my goal.’ After graduation, the one thing I wish I had was a feature script ready to move forward because there was a lot of momentum when Tsuyako was doing well.”

Her script, Cantering, follows a paraplegic female adult comic book artist who is forced to discover a new job and romance in Tokyo. Trying to get the film off the ground has been HIKARI’s full-time job. Last year she participated in the NHK Sundance Screenwriting Lab, an annual workshop that invites Sundance writing instructors to Tokyo to work with filmmakers. Most recently she went through Film Independent’s Screenwriting Lab and Directing Lab. This year she participated in their annual Fast Track program, where she pitched her feature during the LA Film Festival. And now, after three years of development, she’s ready to get back on set to direct again.

“It’s been a long process,” she explained. “I had some achievements, and I was progressively closer to making my film a reality.”

And what role does family play in this intensely busy and stressful effort to succeed at feature filmmaking? “When I finally have a bond with my dad’s side probably made me want to create that familial bond in my movies,” says HIKARI. “I like writing but I enjoy being on set more than anything. My creativity comes when I’m on the set.”

However, her mother and sister provide the daily push she needs to keep working. “They have stepped up as HIKARI’s support system. ‘My mom told me I’d do anything for you,’ whenever there is a moment when I was financially struggling, my mom and sister would help me with my rent for a month. I still worry, but that support has helped me believe that the money will come.”

“I am so grateful to have them as my family. I owe them so much. That’s part of the reason I really want to have success, because I want to take care of them because they took care of me pretty much all of my life.’ HIKARI pauses for a second, pensive, before that big smile crosses her face once again: “So I gotta just keep making shit and keep hustling.”
In MOTION - USC SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS

STUDENT ENDOWMENT

Hollywood Foreign Press Association Funds $2 Million Scholarship

By Hugh Hart

Last summer in Oxfordshire outside of London, 18-year-old Amy Sotnick was hanging out by the river with a few friends enjoying the warm evening air when she got an email on her phone. She recalls, “It was from USC and I’d already been accepted, so I wondered ‘What’s this?’ Then I read that I’d won a scholarship from the Hollywood Foreign Press Association. It was a massive surprise!”

Sotnick began her BA in Cinema & Media Studies at the USC School of Cinematic Arts this fall as one of the first beneficiaries of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association’s Endowed International Student Support Fund. The $2 million gift represents SCAS’s largest endowment earmarked specifically for foreign students. HFPA International Scholars, which this year also include South Korean Minwoong Han, each receive a $20,000 deduction from tuition fees from Sotnick.

“This scholarship means the world to me because I can focus a lot more on doing what I’m interested in rather than having to get a job for example to help pay for college. Now I can get completely invested in my studies.”

HFPA has previously used revenue from its annual Golden Globes telecast to fund SCA scholarships, but the idea for a more robust endowment came about two years ago when the Association’s then-president Lorenzo Soria met with Dean Elizabeth M. Daley to discuss possible partnerships. Soria says, “There had been some debate about giving money to a school that already gets big donations from famous filmmakers. But then Dean Daley told me about a young woman from West Africa who was accepted into the School, but because foreign students can’t get Pell Grants, the School just couldn’t make up the difference in financial aid. This saddened Dean Daley and since we are an association of foreigners ourselves, that story resonated for us.”

Current HFPA President Meher Tatna cites the newly created “International Scholars” program as a key component of her group’s mission. “We’re very interested in supporting talented people who are underrepresented in the film and television industries,” she says. Tatna, a Mumbai native, vividly remembers when she first arrived in the United States to attend Brandeis University equipped with one suitcase and $500. “A lot of us in the Hollywood Foreign Press Association remember what it was like to be international students struggling to come up with tuition,” she says. “The idea for this scholarship really hit home.”

At USC, where nearly 70 percent of students receive some form of financial assistance, HFPA’s scholarship fund aims to support foreign applicants who are ineligible for U.S. government loans and grants. “The film school is making a significant effort to bring in more international students,” says Martlene Lawdine, Senior Associate Dean, Advancement at USC School of Cinematic Arts. “This scholarship support flies in the face of everything going on in the world right now, where people are turning inward and watching as students who enter the class completely focused on film become really enthusiastic about the amazing developments in long-form television over the last decade,” says Seiter. In her upper division course (CTS 403 American Television History) Seiter focuses on how new platforms such as streaming are “changing the industry and changing how we watch TV.” Professor Seiter has also taught undergraduate courses on teen films, anime, and crime; and graduate theory courses on scholars such as Bourdieu, Barthes, Žižek, and Brecht.

Consideration for the Pedagogy Award covered the entirety of Seiter’s career from teaching at the University of California San Diego, Indiana University, and the University of Oregon; to the work she has done in K-12 education regarding new media and media production. “It’s a very competitive honor and I am just enormously moved by this recognition of my work,” she says.

Besides teaching, Professor Seiter is also the author of several books including The Internet Player: Children’s Entertainment, Access and Mis-Education, Remote Control, Television, Audiences, and Cultural Power; and Television and New Media Audiences. Seiter comes from a long line of teachers—many of them women—and feels she is honoring them today by expanding her knowledge in the educational realm. She says one of the most beneficial things about teaching is imparting useful information to maturing young people, but also the open collaboration she develops with her students. “The most vital part of teaching is the process of establishing the relationship as one of mutual learning. Guiding students to the choice of a research topic, watching students discover their own capacity for reflection, as well as their strengths and weaknesses—are adventures I truly enjoy. The best mentoring happens when both of us are honest and open enough to shed unworkable projects, theses, or expectations and freely exchange ideas so that we can work flexibly to produce the best work possible.”

By Sabrina Malezkadah and Simran Bhati

Ellen Seiter is Cinema & Media Studies’ Teacher of the Year

By Sabrina

O ne of the first things students do before registering for classes is look up a professor’s name online to find information about their teaching style. A professor who can communicate information effectively while also being nice to students will generally have a good online rating. Usually these determinations come from other students and can be hit or miss. But Ellen Seiter, who teaches in the Bryan Singer Division of Cinema & Media Studies, has official recognition that, when it comes to communicating information about the field in a way that engages and connects young people to the material, she is one of the best.

Seiter, who has been teaching at SCA since 2003, was recently awarded the 2016-2017 Pedagogy Award from the Society for Cinema and Media Studies.

The award is given to outstanding professors who are exemplary in three categories: instruction, publication and development of educational materials, and service or value in the cinema and media studies pedagogy. Professor Seiter was awarded for her efficient efforts in engaging student interest every day, authoring informational textbooks that are used in media studies classrooms, and leading a curriculum in cinema and media within and beyond the classroom.

Professor Seiter holds the Stephen K. Nenso Endowed Chair in Television Studies at SCA. Her expertise is wide ranging in the field, from the interconnections between younger audiences and their relationship with television, to issues of gender, race, and class biases in television, to the vibrant world of anime. Seiter is also an expert in media copyright law and how it is applied to a variety of topics. Within SCA, she teaches courses on television and new media history, theory, and criticism. Importantly, she teaches CTS 191: Introduction to Television, which dives into an exploration of technological, economic, aesthetic, and ideological characteristics of the medium and is required for all Cinema & Media Studies undergraduates. The course, which discusses the historical evolution of television and video, is usually the first students look at television programs with a more critical eye. “I love teaching 191 and watching as students who enter the class completely focused on film become really enthusiastic about the amazing developments in long-form television over the last decade,” says Seiter.

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John Wells Names the Writing Division

THE PROLIFIC WRITER/PRODUCER WILL SERVE AS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT’S POSSIBLE.

By Keryl Brown Ahmed

John Wells, the USCS SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS WRITER/PRODUCER WHAT’S POSSIBLE. WILL SERVE AS THE PROLIFIC the Writing Division with Mehring, founder of the Division was originally named the Filmic Writing Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1982 by legendary screenwriting professor Margaret Mehring, the business as a whole, and have a broader skill base," he says, and having served as a producer, writer, director, and showrunner at the USC School of Cinematic Arts. It was there he fell in love with screenwriting. He says he didn’t make any money from the craft until age 30, eventually landing a producing job on the critically acclaimed "Chinatown" where he got to show off his multitalent prowess. From then on it has been quite a career. Wells is responsible for television--has influenced the evolution of the Screenwriting program at the School of Cinematic Arts. This spring, one of the architects of television’s rise made a major gift to the program which is now known as the John Wells Division of Writing for Screen & Television.

The TV boom that began more than a decade ago and shows no sign of slowing down—currently referred to as the “Platinum Age” of television—has influenced the evolution of the Screenwriting program at the School of Cinematic Arts. This spring, one of the architects of television’s rise made a major gift to the program which is now known as the John Wells Division of Writing for Screen & Television.

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Above: Kristen Wiley Davis with students in the Andrew Markiew Script Library. Right: Writing grads create non-traditional media in addition to screenplays, like Allison Raskin (below left) and Shauna Witherspoon

In MOTION

• 1716 •

writing Life

SCA Senior Evan Dodson is an example of how the John Wells Division of Writing for Screen & Television helps students find their voices—inside and outside the craft.

As a BFA candidate, Dodson used to only write feature film scripts. He was drawn to the "open-and-shut" narrative style, enjoyed the challenge of evoking emotion in a short span of time. He's good at it, too—in 2016, Dodson became the youngest writer to earn a spot on the coveted Blacklist, an annual publication of the Industry's favorite unproduced screenplays. The Blacklisted script, Two Butterflies, is about two estranged sisters forced to reunite and confront their differences after one of them must be transported to an Alzheimer's facility.

Dodson did not always want to be a writer. During his teen years, he studied the visual arts such as painting and drawing. "Unfortunately, because it was taught to me in a very strict and rigid way, I fell out of love with the craft. I found new solace in writing around 18 years old. I think because I let myself fall into it naturally and not by force, I found my passion in it." This year, Dodson will tackle a thesis in comedic TV, overseen by Professor David Isaacs. He's also found his way to a place that values its students, says Sinnett. "Having a name like John Wells at the head of the program means only great things. It is nice to let the industry know that you have been educated in the right places, and not just at USC."

With his writing Dodson chooses to focus on underrepresented communities, be those racial minorities, sexual minorities, or other groups. "I pull from my own true stories as well as the stories of those around me. I find that if I or someone else can speak to a situation, feeling, or experience from their personal lens, it helps me create a story around it. I often find it more grounded if it comes from a place of experience or truth that I can access easily," says Dodson. "I find that I am inspired by my friends and family the most. You can always find a character in my work based off of them.

Evan Dodson, "I find that I am inspired by my friends and family the most. You can always find a character in my work based off of them."

With a relaxed tone that reveals his modest and down-to-earth nature, Wells asserts, "I would hope that my students will see me as a shining example. They're determined to make students feel heard and valued, and to be honest, I wasn't sure what the turnout would be like because he was such a curmudgeon. But there were 500 people there. When I think of SCA, that's what I remember."
The End of an Era:
LARRY AUERBACH Retires
HEAD OF INDUSTRY RELATIONS CELEBRATED FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AT SCA

Larry Auerbach joined SCA after a legendary forty-seven-year career as an agent at the William Morris Agency. While an agent, Auerbach was known as “The Man with the Golden Rolodex” and was a titan in film, television, and publishing. He dedicated himself to helping talented Trojans transition into careers. He donated the funds to open what was known then as Student Industry Relations.

“There was a little story in the paper that I was leaving William Morris, and Dean Elizabeth Daley called me and asked if I would get lunch,” said Auerbach. “I knew USC had a great reputation, but I had no idea I was stepping into a second career. Dean Daley wanted to get the School and the kids, an agent. That’s what they offered me. That’s what I did. The talent was there. They needed someone to pick up the phone.”

Nearly every Trojan who walked through the halls of SCA has been helped by Auerbach at some point during his or her time as a student. Between managing his office, having impromptu meetings with students, Auerbach was the bridge between young Trojans and the film and television industry. His dedication, knowledge, and no-nonsense mentorship launched countless careers and, along with his staff, it isn’t an overstatement to say he changed the face of film, television, and interactive media.

“For the last 25 years, Larry’s been my partner, my mentor, my coach, my corrections officer, and an incredible friend,” said Daley. “I’m so grateful that Larry came and made a second career at the School of Cinematic Arts. What he’s meant to the School and, most importantly, our students is truly amazing.”

“We did some remarkable things in Industry Relations,” said Auerbach. “We helped every student that came to us who wanted to work and wanted to make something of themselves. Some of them made it big. It was fun. When I first came here, I thought I had bigger plans. It was wrong. It turned out to be paradise. It’s been terrific. I’ve had two jobs in my life and seventy-two consecutive years of work.”

On April 12th, a retirement party was held for Auerbach with students from Auerbach’s time at USC. The journal in 1982: “to provide a vehicle for perspective, on the state of the art and the state of film and television discourse.”

SPECTATORSHIP:
Celebrating SCA’s Commitment to Scholarly Enterprise

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In this sense, Spectatorship is far more than a celebration of the remarkable scholarship—and scholars—to come out of the School of Cinematic Arts through the decades. It is a reflection on the evolving discourse of films studies and the role of scholarship in influencing the filmmaking process itself, both here at the School and around the industry.

“Compiling the anthology revealed these hidden histories that came about and showed how our faculty were challenging mainstream discourses and taking them in new directions,” says Whittington. “The overall arguments really changed the field, specifically related to spectatorship and gender and sexuality.”

Unsurprisingly, many of these contributors are now leading scholars at premier institutions across the country. But especially given the School’s proximity to Hollywood and reputation as the professional pipeline to the industry, this scholarly tradition played an important role in changing the conversation about representation in a very tangible way. As Ben Vanaman wrote in the journal’s third publication, the journal aimed to “interrogate the representation of women in American cinema, while simultaneously offering new possibilities of survival for women in society.” That battle continues today, both in academia and in the field itself. There has been plenty of popular discourse in recent years about representation in film and television, but this journal sought to address issues of inquiry that lead to a much larger field of study.

The collected volume is not simply a sweeping ‘best of’ omnibus from all 70 issues (17 volumes) of the Spectator journal, which Whittington quick realized would have required at least ten volumes when he began the project five years ago. Instead, Whittington and Samer chose to organize the essays around the same mission that largely guided Spectator: to provide a vehicle for perspectives on the state of the art and the state of film and television discourse.

“One of the journal’s greatest strengths is creating an intellectual space for students and contributors to provide new critical perspectives,” says Whittington. “In their inquiry, they often ask a question or present a line of inquiry that leads to a much larger field of study.”

In MOTION • USC SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS

By Ryan Dee Gilmour

By Matt Meier

By Matt Meier

Celebrating SCA’s Commitment to Scholarly Enterprise

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THE DUO
In Charge Of SCA’s HIGH TECH BOOM
MERI WEINGARTEN AND TARA TURNER ARE THE BUSIEST TECHNOLOGY MANAGERS ON CAMPUS

By Desa Philadelphia

Access to cutting edge technology has made things faster and more egalitarian for students who are making and studying media at the USC School of Cinematic Arts (SCA), essentially making it a lot easier for them to achieve their creative vision than in years past.

Behind the scenes, however, things have gotten a lot more complicated. With seven divisions that have different creative goals, SCA now has more than 300 computers that each run about 300 distinct pieces of software, which come from multiple vendors with whom the School must negotiate a variety of licensing deals, all aimed at keeping costs as low as possible. Repeat the vendor licensing dance for cameras, sound and lighting gear, and a variety of other specialty equipment. Then add to that annual and semi-annual decisions about what needs to be added, changed, and upgraded.

Now you have an idea of the massive scope of responsibility of the School’s lead technology managers, Meri Weingarten and Tara Turner.

As Director of Digital Media and Technology, Weingarten oversees the teams of technologists, engineers, and media creators it takes to run departments focused on camera, sound, computers, stages, post, and the School’s television station Trojan Vision. She’s also in charge of budgets for all the equipment those teams buy or use. Turner, the Manager of Creative Technology and Support, is in charge of all the resources in the School’s labs, classrooms, and theaters, including computers, software, networks, servers, and projectors.

“We plan, we talk to faculty, we figure out what we need to do for the years to come, we budget and we propose,” says Weingarten, who is also a master in the art of diplomacy since she has to say “no” more often than she’d like to. “We have to be the voice of reason because we understand what it takes,” she says. “It’s not just about getting the new toy.”

A lot of people are surprised when they find out that Weingarten and Turner started out as creatives before moving to the business tech side of things. “We understand what it takes to make a movie or make a game. We don’t make rules for no reason,” says Weingarten. In fact most of the people who work with them have some creative life outside the computer carrel.

Weingarten started teaching at the School in the nineties after a career as an editor for television shows, including Saturday Night Live, and films like Academy Award winners Horatio County, L.A. and Arthur. She also worked as a producer and director and came to SCA as an adjunct professor to teach CTPR 290, one of the School’s most popular production classes. During that time students shot on Super 8, a fact Weingarten loves to point out. “I like to talk about it because my students had these broken down cameras and they came into class to show their work and they carried a boombox for their audio,” she says. “There was no sync sound for Super 8. The hardest part was for them to get their audio and their video to sync up for their presentation. It’s just so funny given what is expected now. And we still could see who had talent and who had a good idea.” She added the staff full time in 1996 as Manager of Editorial overseeing the various editing systems, which started her move toward tech.

Turner grew up playing guitar and has always played in bands, but she was just as interested in the behind-the-scenes jobs, particularly working on lighting, which tapped into an interest in electronics. In college at Brigham Young she majored in Electrical Engineering with minors in Math and Music. “When I graduated college I knew I was going to do the space program or entertainment,” she says. She tried to go the space route, working some government contract jobs in Washington, D.C. “And then the space program closed up and the options I had involved carrying a briefcase so I got in my car and came to LA.” She landed in visual effects, first working in electronic shops that were making things like motion-control rigs and animation stands before moving to jobs in technology management, including at Disney Animation, and coming to SCA in 2016. “The combination of the creative and the technology is what attracted me,” says Turner. “Building a pipeline is what I’ve been doing the whole time I’ve been in the industry.”

Weingarten and Turner say the Cinematic Arts Complex really inspires their job, and they enjoy exploring new technologies with the faculty. “What we are doing here is creating an incredible place where we can expand on a larger scale and have a vision for the future,” says Weingarten. That vision, which includes plans to further bolster areas like VR/AR and visual effects, is especially striking when compared to the technology that existed at the School only a couple decades ago. “We had Media Composer, DiVision, tape and film,” says Weingarten. “People would fight over them because there was never enough.” Students would have to cram into the small editing rooms, she says, pulling all-nighters to get their films done. “Technology was so expensive then and everything was also hardware-based. If you wanted to edit on a computer you’d have to spend a hundred thousand dollars. That’s just on the editing side. The bottom line is we couldn’t do a fraction of what we do now.”

Despite their enthusiasm for their jobs, both Weingarten and Turner admit that keeping up is hard. “Which is why you have to have a passion for it, otherwise you would never do it,” says Weingarten. “We both spend a lot of their ‘free’ time learning about what’s coming down the pipe, trying to figure out how much of it is crucial to the School’s storytelling mission.”

Turner’s group, which is known around the SCA complex as “Creative Tech,” didn’t even exist ten years ago. Back then, Creative Tech was just Avid Tech since the editing system was the most high-tech piece of equipment the School owned. Now there’s a staff of fourteen who are constantly shuttling around to put out fires and calm the nerves of anxious students and faculty. “The way we sort of define ourselves is anything the students need to do their projects or be in their classes, that is us. So if something is wrong in a theatre, classroom, or lab—that’s us,” says Turner, agreeing with Weingarten that the scale of the enterprise is indeed impressive. “With all the moving parts, everything that a Hollywood studio does, we do here.”

They both spend a lot of their “free” time learning about what’s coming down the pipe, trying to figure out how much of it is crucial to the School’s storytelling mission. “Whether it’s a game or film or writing or whatever, it’s really kind of fun to figure out what can be done with this technology or that technique,” says Turner. Lucky for SCA, she and Weingarten are at the ready to make the next best upgrades.
Zynga, which is known for blockbuster social games like FarmVille and Words With Friends, has partnered with the USC School of Cinematic Arts for a three-year course to explore the development of inclusive social mobile games. The course focuses on game production, research of social mobile games, and expanding diversity in the gamespace by bringing underrepresented voices into the field. In addition to instructors from the School’s Interactive Media & Games Division (IMGD), the course, CTIN 482: Designing Social Games, will feature panelists from Zynga who will talk about their work, giving students insight into how social games are conceived and developed.

The Zynga initiative is geared towards teaching students the interconnections of creating social mobile games while using Zynga’s strategic design principles. The gift also funds a series of panels, lectures, and events to promote inclusivity throughout the industry. Students from across the USC campus are invited and encouraged to attend these speaker events on topics including production, engineering, and creative issues.

Sean Bouchard, an associate researcher at USC’s Game Innovation Lab and one of the class’s instructors, says the collaboration with Zynga will be very beneficial to students wanting to learn more about how to make games. “Zynga is a leader not just in mobile games, but in cutting-edge techniques for using data to drive design. They have pioneered and perfected ways of making games that strike a chord with their audience,” says Bouchard. “As a company, Zynga is something we want our students to learn from and aspire to.”

Looking inside to learn more about IMGD’s achievements and milestones as the Division celebrates its 15th Anniversary this year.
“What Was the Right Thing to Do?”

Ted Braun, the inaugural holder of the Joseph Campbell Chair in Cinematic Ethics

By Oliver Jones

Cinematic Arts 530: Cinematic Ethics was offered for the first time in the fall of 2017. But for Ted Braun, who created and teaches the new class, the seeds of what it would become were first planted over a decade ago on a sun-baked hillside more than eight thousand miles from the USC campus.

Braun was in the middle of production on Darfur Now (2007), his award-winning documentary chronicling the genocide in western Sudan. More specifically, he was about to film the military exercises of Sudanese rebels when his field producer spotted something. A group of nomads, a traditional enemy of the rebels, was about to wander through a valley at the center of where the rebels would conduct their fully-armed military exercise. Suddenly Braun was faced with a question that was at once simple yet utterly complex: should he tell the rebels about the presence of the nomads?

“On the one hand, if we don’t let them know and they go down there with guns blazing and suddenly happen upon their enemies, we will have play out before us an aspect of this conflict whose story we had come to film,” recalls Braun, in the relative comfort of his office on the third floor of the Cinematic Arts building. “On the other hand if we do nothing, people will likely die if we let the rebels know that they are there, we could quite possibly expose bloodshed and perhaps prevent the loss of life.” Braun pauses for a moment. “This was an unequivocal ethical question,” he says. “What was the right thing to do?”

Braun—who recounts similar moments every Monday morning in his office on the third floor of the Cinematic Arts building—chose to let the situation breathe. The rebels ended up spotting the nomads themselves and initiated a negotiation, a scene they did not allow Braun and his small crew to film. While the ethical crisis had been averted, he couldn’t help but play the situation over and over in his head. Months later, when production was wrapped and Braun was on a plane back from Khartoum, the same thought kept running through his mind: they sure as hell don’t teach this shit in film school.

Now Braun is part of an effort to make sure that at least one film school does. When the George Lucas Family Foundation established the Joseph Campbell Endowed Chair in Cinematic Ethics and Braun, an Associate Professor in the John Wells, Division of Writing for Screen & Television, became the first to hold this position, the idea was to delve into the stickiest, thorniest issues that arise when making film and television in all its forms. From functioning in a world where the casting couch is not yet a thing of the past, to navigating an industry often considered to be the suicidal migration of lemmings into the Arctic Ocean for the nature film White Wilderness (1958), Braun had already faced a question that was at once simple yet utterly complex: should he tell the rebels about the presence of the nomads?

“This industry is as ethically challenged as any other industry if not more so. But what is unique about the film industry is that it is incredibly self-aware,” says Gabriello Cowperthwaite, director of the paradigm-shifting documentary Blackfish, who was pursuing a PhD in Political Science at USC when she took a class at the School of Cinematic Arts that changed her life. “There are so many voices of people who make films and want to make them that feel the film industry is constantly being poked and prodded. People in this industry are always trying to wake up the dragon, in part because the whole world is watching films and watching us make them. People want to see themselves represented in them properly. And even more significantly, more of us want to be working on films who haven't had that opportunity in the past.”

For many, the very idea of cinematic ethics sounds like a punchline to a joke, if not an outright oxymoron. The business and practice of cinematic arts has long been fraught with behavior that would be unacceptable in most other arenas but, in this world, is given the blind eye and often involves some of its most revered practitioners. In 2013, Bernardo Bertolucci acknowledged that Maria Schneider never consented to the infamous butter sequence with Marlon Brando in The Last Tango in Paris (1972). Walt Disney oversaw what was claimed to be the suicidal migration of lemmings into the Arctic Ocean for the nature film White Wilderness (1958) but what was actually the staged drowning of the creatures in a river in Alberta, Canada, leaving the rodents with an undue reputation as mindless followers.

The idea behind CNTV 530, which is offered during both the fall and spring semesters, is not just to reexamine and assess this often dark and troubled history but also to use case studies—not unlike any kind of practice—to teach students for the ethical quandaries they might confront as they pursue careers as cinema arts professionals. “When you are asked how do you bring ethical questions into the life of a school and into the lives of filmmakers, I think you have to do it with the recognition that you are asking people to imagine something that they have not experienced,” says Braun. “But the reason that you are asking them to imagine that is so they can rehearse the kind of experience that most certainly will smack them in the face someday. As it is with any kind of practice—be it athletic or artistic—the value of rehearsal is that by having worked through a grab bag of ethical questions, you will be more likely to recognize them when you see them. And having navigated a few, you will know where you are and what options are available to you.”

What the class won’t be is a polemic list of ethical do’s and don’ts. The class, not unlike life, will be a grab bag of ethical questions, you will be more likely to recognize them when you see them. And having navigated a few, you will know where you are and what options are available to you.”

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“From the perspective of our students, most undergraduates come to college craving freedom,” says Braun. “They are finally spreading their wings, and this is even truer if they’re pursuing a field like the arts. Efforts to constrain behavior almost always inspire an action in the opposite direction. Trying to codify ethical behavior for our students is likely to have the opposite effect of what it is intended to do and will be alienating rather than effective. By asking ethical questions, getting into the habit of recognizing them when they stare you in the face and then practicing ways to navigate them, you become both a stronger filmmaker and a stronger human being. As an institution, fostering that sense of freedom of the imagination and encouraging people to be brave and to take chances—be daring—is something very close to the core of our mission.”

In complicating situations to use at the case studies that will be the backbone of his class, Braun has been collecting industry war stories from friends and colleagues, each more harrowing than the next. He has found that the ethical dilemmas tend fall into one of four categories: situations that documentarians confront, which are often similar to those faced by journalist; ethical challenges that come into play when one is in the position of supervising someone else; the ethics of representation, whether it is violence, sex, history, or cultural identity; and questions surrounding screen comedy and what it takes to create it.

When it comes to humor, ethics come into play not just in terms of when a joke goes too far, but also the environment required to effectively create. Indeed, students who want to become writers of television comedies have to prepare for a working environment that would turn most HR directors’ hair grey. For both recent and long-time SCA graduates, the complex conversations about cinema ethics taking place Monday mornings in Ted Braun’s classroom are long overdue. “I think when it comes to ethics in cinema, there has been a lack of it,” says Angelique Molina, who graduated from SCA last year with a Masters Degree in Production. “Why is it that we consider it the norm to have this industry be a boys club and to be predominantly white?” Molina cites the fact that less than one percent of working directors are African-American women and less than four percent of working cinematographers are female.

Ethics are not just something that Molina confronts as she navigates her career. It’s the very subject of the work she makes. For her graduate thesis film, the Los Angeles native made the documentary short There Goes the Neighborhood (2016), an intimate portrait of the real costs of gentrification and shifting demographics in the traditionally middle-class, African-American neighborhood of View Park in South L.A.

The film was inspired in part from conversations with her fellow students. “People were talking about moving there like it was some kind of ghetto and now was the up and coming neighborhood,” says Molina. “I found it infuriating. For African Americans, View Park has always been a point of pride. It’s been this gem of a community that we aspire to live in.”

Molina hopes that by looking at it through the lens of longtime residents, her film reframes the “new hot neighborhood” conversation. Similarly, talking about and confronting the issues of racism, sexism, and other forms of injustice within the industry is the first step in making them a part of the past. “It is time to make some people up!” she says. “If we can’t change things for the present, maybe we can do something about the future.”

“The writers’ room requires your inhibitions to be laid on the table,” says David Brauning, veteran of writing rooms for film school discussions for decades. Braun’s approach is a little different. He prods the students to look further: Are there limits to the extent a filmmaker should allow an audience to sympathize with someone many would consider a terrorist? What about interrogators willing to resort to torture?

By discussing the ways that values and empathy stretch beyond cultural identity, Braun is calling to mind the work of the man for whom his Endowed Chair is named: Joseph Campbell. The American mythologist and lecturer’s work in comparative religion and mythology informs not only the spirit of Braun’s one-of-a-kind class, but its day-to-day substance.

“First and foremost, it’s very timely. Campbell had a deep appreciation of the ways in which the stories of the world allow us to understand one another,” explains Braun. “This has less to do with the idea of the ‘monomyth’ and The Hero With A Thousand Faces and more to do with the general power of myth and the recognition of the diversity of the stories that we tell. His work recognizes how much we share with ancient cultures as well as contemporary cultures that are ostensibly different from our own. If you meet someone a stranger, and you are curious, you start to listen to the stories that are important to them in their life; you are drawn into a closer, more respectful relationship with that person. It deepens your sense of respect and it becomes much easier to work together and much, much harder to be contemptuous. To me, that is very powerful.”

USC Comedy Co-Creator
Professor David Isaacs

See a list of resources Professor Braun provides his students by visiting: cinema.usc.edu/ethicsresources
As Trojan Vision celebrates its 20th anniversary, we asked alums Nick Rizzo ’11, Natalie Moran ’09, and Brian Murphy ’04 to reminisce on their experiences at the station, especially how it prepared them for their current entertainment industry jobs.

Most students begin their Trojan Vision experience by signing up for CTPR 409: Practicum in Television Production. Then many of them get jobs at the station or continue as volunteers. Most students walk into 409, a lab-style class (the station being the lab), with no television experience. However, they leave knowing how to work a camera, generate graphics, direct a show, book guests, run audio, and brief hosts.

These days, Natalie Moran, a Cinema & Media Studies alum, is the Coordinator in Multicultural Business Development at Creative Artists Agency (CAA). She started USC undecided about a major, which made her feel inexperienced compared to her peers. “Trojan Vision is where I got my [entertainment] experience,” Moran says. “As an executive producer on CU@USC, I got paid—this was my first job in entertainment.”

CU@USC, a nightly talk show that was Trojan Vision’s first original program, has been broadcast uninterrupted for the past 20 years. Following graduation, the executive producers of the show have become a parade of accomplished and creative industry professionals. Those we talked to attribute a large part of their post-graduate success to their CU@USC training and the support of their extended Trojan Vision family.

Nick Rizzo, a Film & Television Production alum and a producer on Watch What Happens Live with Andy Cohen, says that producing on CU@USC is where he discovered his love for talk shows. “Trojan Vision really helped me with the framework of where I am today. And it helped me with a foundation and really jump-started my career,” he says. “I love film but I also love theatre. Talk shows are a nice combo between film and theatre. CU@USC was such a huge help to get this experience, and once I graduated and started working at all these other talk show jobs, I had a great foundation and was able to hit the ground running career-wise.”

Brian Murphy, an executive producer for a variety of documentaries for CBS, History Channel, and other outlets, also felt he was well prepared because of Trojan Vision. “In between classes, I was calling staff, booking guests, and getting the show up everyday,” Murphy says.

Trojan Vision, USC’s student-operated television station, was launched by the School of Cinematic Arts in 1997 to teach students how to make live television. The station’s programming is produced exclusively by USC students and broadcasts in HD on cable channel 8.1 to the entire USC campus, and to the greater Los Angeles area on LA36, reaching over 1.8 million homes, as well as streaming 24/7 on trojanvision.com.

By Sabrina Malekzadah
DON TILLMAN Retires!
THE GUIDING HAND BEHIND THE SUCCESS OF SCA’S TROJAN VISION TELEVISION STATION FOR 20 YEARS

Some twenty years ago, School of Cinematic Arts Dean Elizabeth Daley pondered a missing element in the School’s curriculum how to train production students to work in live television. Luckily she knew someone who could help. Enter Don Tillman.

Tillman, who retired this year, founded the School’s Trojan Vision television station, the student-run enterprise that hosts talk shows, game shows, specials and live sports. Starting with student assistants, Tillman grew the station to include more than 200 students with opportunities to produce and work on television shows, and to earn credits that count toward their academic degrees.

Tillman’s approach was to give students the same responsibilities as professional television producers, directors, and anchors. His golden rule: “Once you walk through those doors, you’re a professional.” His greatest achievement, he says, was helping students find confidence in their work. “The greatest story I have from my time at the station is watching these young people mature to take on very professional responsibilities. The joy for me over 20 years is being able to see them develop and move on to great careers. We’ve had people in high positions at Paramount, Lionsgate, and other studios, and at least 10 major TV stations across the country. It’s hard to keep track of who’s who because we’ve now graduated so many, but I get email almost daily from somebody updating where they are and what they are doing. So I’ve made an awful lot of friends.”

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For the BROOKSBANK SIBLINGS, TROJAN VISION is a Family Endeavor

Cassandra (Casie), Bonnie, Amanda (Mandy), and Thomas (Tommy) Brooksbank found a creative way to bring their close family bond to their varied USC experiences. As each Brooksbank sibling started their academic career at the University, they followed each other’s footsteps to Trojan Vision, where each created their own unique training experience.

Casie, a 2011 Film & Television Production alum, was General Manager and Creative Director of Special Projects at Trojan Vision.

Bonnie, a 2013 graduate of the Thornton School of Music, was a Producer and Host on the entertainment news show The Scoop.

Mandi, who majored in Business of Cinematic Arts (BCA) and graduated from the Marshall School of Business in 2014, was the Associate Producer for the nighttime talk show CUBUSC as well as The Scoop. She also created and ran the morning variety show called The Toast.

Tommy, who is currently a senior studying Broadcast Journalism and Political Science, is the Web Design/Social Media Manager, CTPR 409 Student Assistant, and Host of The Morning Brew, for which he also directs and produces.

Elder sibling Cassie, who began the Brooksbank invasion, credits Trojan Vision with helping her discover her passion for filmmaking. “Originally, I was accepted to USC as a history major,” she says. “And it was my involvement in Trojan Vision that got me accepted into the film school.”

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Elder sibling Cassie, who began the Brooksbank invasion, credits Trojan Vision with helping her discover her passion for filmmaking. “Originally, I was accepted to USC as a history major,” she says. “And it was my involvement in Trojan Vision that got me accepted into the film school.”

Casie, a 2011 Film & Television Production alum, was General Manager and Creative Director of Special Projects at Trojan Vision.

Bonnie, a 2013 graduate of the Thornton School of Music, was a Producer and Host on the entertainment news show The Scoop.

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SCA CELEBRATES ITS FIRST VALEDICTORIAN, FIRST ROME PRIZE WINNER, AND A ONE-OF-A-KIND TRACK RECORD

At the School of Cinematic Arts we look forward to celebrating the exciting milestones our students and alumni achieve each year. In addition to the many others listed throughout this issue, these are three of our favorites from 2017.

Cooper Nelson Named First USC Valedictorian from the School of Cinematic Arts

Cooper Nelson possesses the kind of resume you’d expect from the valedictorian of a top-ranked research university: a perfect 4.0 GPA, internships with top companies, a semester abroad as a USC Global Scholar, and a laundry list of clubs and extracurriculars. But Nelson differs from the prototypically perfect candidate in one way: “I just really want to write cartoons,” she said during her commencement speech. “Don’t you guys want the grad that’s going to be curing diseases?”

A dual major in Cinema & Media Studies and Law, History, and Culture, with a minor in Screenwriting, Nelson is the first student from the School of Cinematic Arts to earn the distinction of USC Valedictorian. It may come as a total surprise that the University has traditionally overlooked students from SCA, despite its reputation as the top-ranked cinema program in the world, in favor of those from ostensibly more “disease-curing” and “world-saving” fields. Nelson possesses the kind of resume you’d expect from the top-ranked research university, but Nelson differs from the prototypically perfect candidate in one way: “I just really want to write cartoons,” she said during her commencement speech. “Don’t you guys want the grad that’s going to be curing diseases?”

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**REPURPOSING Reality**

**TWO ALUMNI-HELMED COMPANIES REINVENT FACT-BASED STORYTELLING**

By Napoleon Martinez

**TREY ALSUP**

MFA PRODUCTION

THE SITUATION ROOM EXPERIENCE

The Situation Room Experience at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library is a new type of large-scale interactive game experience that places 20-53 people in unique roles as they act out a fictional “what-if” crisis scenario in which the President of the United States has been shot. Designed by Trey Alsup, a 1994 MFA Production graduate, the “educational simulation” derives its name from the focal point of the experience: the White House Situation Room, a historic space where nine sitting presidents have made some of the most important foreign policy decisions on behalf of the country since its creation in 1961. The goal is to teach its players about the difficulties of communication in crisis scenarios and about how to manage information while making tough decisions in high-pressure circumstances.

The game takes place within a large dedicated space where players are split among the Situation Room, the White House Press Room, and a remote “Hospital Command Center.” During the simulation, each participant takes on a role corresponding to actual roles in a crisis such as the one that occurred in 1981 when President Reagan was shot. It successfully opened to the public in August 2016, with sessions booked daily for school groups as well as corporate and government clients.

The multi-level experience has been designed with a variety of new and advanced technologies, including tablets equipped with a real-time app interface that every participant receives during the game. According to Alsup, the technology was important to the design of the simulation in order to facilitate a user-friendly experience by automatically managing some of the game’s administrative tasks, such as assigning each player their role and providing each one with the information, decisions, and controls best suited for the position. This allows the game to adapt to the number of players and differing personalities so that important information is not missed and is quickly disseminated between players as they communicate. But technology is not the focus of the game, says Alsup.

“There is a lot of tech, but hopefully it is all in service to human face-to-face interaction,” Alsup says. Asp came on to the Situation Room Experience with extensive experience designing live-action role-playing games, also known as LARPs. These games usually play out much like theatrical productions as players act out oft-fictional scenarios in real-world spaces with props and game rules that facilitate imagination and player-to-player interaction. Alsup has written and produced many experiences for LARPs, which he now produces for larger simulations such as the one he is now working on for the Situation Room Experience.

Alsup says he used his filmmaking education to build the scenario and system architecture for the Situation Room Experience, which required a concrete understanding of and experience with production, casting, set design—all beneficial skills he learned at SCA. “All these things in film school come back,” says Alsup.

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**DIANE SUZUKI AND MICHAEL WALSH**

MFA ANIMATION

LUCID CGI

Last October, hikers found the remains of a man in a shallow grave just outside Palmdale. The bones belonged to a 20th Century Fox executive, Gavin Smith, who had been missing for over two years. Almost a year later, John Creech, 44, would be found guilty of voluntary manslaughter for the killing of Smith. One of the important participants in the trial was the prosecution’s expert witness, Michael Walsh, a 2001 MFA graduate of the School of Cinematic Arts John C. Hench Division of Animation & Digital Arts.

Walsh is a Computer Animation Specialist at LucidCGI, alitigations graphics firm located in Pasadena, California, led by another Hench-DADA MFA graduate, Diana Suzuki. Together with the team at LucidCGI, Suzuki and Walsh, who first met at USC, produce visual content to supplement attorney presentations in court cases that are often highly publicized and worth billions of dollars. During the 2017 case of People v. John Creech, for example, the firm provided a digitally replicated model of Smith’s bloody car that Creech had stowed away just after the murder; and Walsh testified as an expert witness, explaining the advanced technological process by which he and the team at LucidCGI recreated the crime scene—an entirely new
type of media-based evidence, and one that would prove critical in Creech’s conviction.

“That might have been the first [model of that kind presented] in the US,” says Walsh.

For LucidCGI, visual storytelling is essential. Prior to joining LucidCGI three years ago, Walsh enjoyed a successful career in motion graphics and film, working on films such as 2012, Bowulf, and The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian. Drawing from their SCA educations, Walsh and Suzuki are transforming the way prosecutors rely on technology and visual storytelling to win high-stakes civil and criminal cases.

“The attorneys are set up to… present a certain set of facts. But they are not looking at things the way that a visual artist would look at it,” says Walsh. “That’s where we come in. We shape that story for them.”

To formulate their visual strategy, the team at LucidCGI meticulously reads all legal documents and pulls a story from it that supports the client’s case through the use of graphics. Of course, unlike fictitious films or even stories based on truth, an accurate depiction of facts remains critical to their work.

“In a film, certain things can be embellished to quite a large degree from fact,” says Walsh. “We can’t make things up,” adds Suzuki. “We’re confined in the content of the story that’s presented in the US,” says Walsh.

but we can change the way it’s presented in a certain, and staying ahead of the curve is critical to sustained success. LucidCGI is currently looking into integrating virtual reality technology into the courtroom to give jurors even more immersion, letting them step into the crime scene and see the evidence for themselves in an entirely different way.

For more information on LucidCGI, visit: LucidCGI.com

IN REMEMBRANCE

HUGH HEFNER

by Professor Emeritus and former Hugh M. Hefner Chair in American Film, Rick Jewell

It will take years before the world can objectively evaluate the cultural contributions of Hugh M. Hefner. The nature of the man is best reflected in several New York Times articles published after his recent death. One laudatory piece by Amber Batura argued that Hefner’s Playboy magazine pioneered a new, more progressive view of sexuality and moved the “grinning pimp of the sexual revolution” to the “modern man.” Another by Ross Douthat labeled him the “grimacing pimp of the sexual revolution” and suggested he was the Mephistophelan patriarch of the pornography that pervades contemporary society.

I held the Hugh Hefner Chair for the Study of American Cinema during the last twenty years of my career and studied his life in detail; consequently, my opinion of Mr. Playboy is much closer to Ms. Bastura’s than Mr. Doughart’s. But I will not attempt a global perspective here—I prefer to discuss the Hugh Hefner I knew, his relationship to our students, and our school.

I first met Hefner in 1993 when he undertook a course on media censorship. Although Drew Capper and I were carrying heavy loads at the time, we shared a fascination with the topic and decided to co-teach the class. Our patron evidenced considerable interest in the first syllabus, then phoned to talk about some of the films and readings we had chosen. So we were quite flattered when asked Hefner to “capstone” the course.

JERRY LEWIS

by director, alum and former student of Jerry Lewis, Randal Kleiser

Lessons I learned many years ago from Professor Jerry Lewis at USC have stuck with me to this day.

In the late 60s, when my classmates and I heard he was going to teach a directing class, many of us signed up out of curiosity. What could we learn from this clown? We expected a standup routine, funny anecdotes… “What could we learn from this clown? We expected a standup routine, funny anecdotes…”

We were surprised at the barrage of practical information he conveyed, regarding both techniques of the craft and working with actors.

On the technical side, Jerry knew how to do a job on a set—loading a 35mm magazine to threading a Nagra to gracefully moving a dolly. A few highlights of his tech advice that I still follow:

1. When looking through the lens, imagine the shot that will be ahead and the one that will follow. 2. Never shoot a woman with the lens below her chin. 3. Never shoot a woman with a lens wider than a 35.

On the acting side, a few years ago I interviewed him for the Director’s Guild Visual History Program and asked him how to handle an actor who is nervous. “You have to get him to shake lose all the crap that he’s doing. If he’s trying too hard, you tell him, if all we did what you are doing now, we’d bump into one another. You have to relax. You’re going to be fine.” The reason that we push or force someone to do something is because we want so much to do well. I’m telling you I’m so glad that class by joining us on the final day to discuss his own battles with censors. He said no. However after capturing by several of our brightest, most intrepid students, he changed his mind. Thus began an educationally unique and delightful relationship that transformed CTCS 409 into one of the most popular classes in the university.

Every year from 1993 to 2013, our “third professor” departed his famous mansion to address a new crop of young people. No lecturing—but he enjoyed interacting with students and addressing their questions so much that he once turned down a prestigious honor because he would require him to travel and miss his visit to USC. He particularly relished the thorny questions. Many of our students were aware that Hefner had become a target of Gloria Steinem and other feminists who attacked him for objectifying women. Having accumulated this kind of political baggage on equal rights, consideration for women, and abortion, he was initially blindingly critical. Now he had an opportunity to present his point of view, and he did it artfully and forcefully. Everyone may not have agreed with his arguments, but they came away respecting his willingness to grapple with the issues.

He told me he looked forward to his one day of “professing” more than any other semester. Given his life, that statement seems quite remarkable. He demonstrated his fondness for the USC School of Cinematic Arts by endowing the Chair in American Film, as well as our Moving Image Archive and the Exhibition Space in the Lucas wing. I am one of many who will miss this iconic editor publisher and generous contributor to the Trojan family.
Brad Grey (1957-2017)
Producer

Brady Grey was born in New York, NY. After earning a degree in business and marketing from the University of Buffalo, Grey co-founded Brillstein-Grey Entertainment Industry.

Grey began his career in entertainment while in college, working with Harvey Weinstein, Frank Sinatra, Bob Saget, and more. After creating Brillstein-Grey Entertainment with talent manager Bernie Brillstein, Grey developed hits such as ‘It’s Garry Shandling’s Show, Red Tyme with DJ Quane, The Sopranos, and The Larry Sanders Show.' Grey then began working with Paramount Pictures and in 2005 became the company's CEO. He served a 12-year tenure at Paramount, making films including Iron Man, Mission: Impossible, Transformers, No Country for Old Men, Inconceivable Truth, True Grit, Arrest, and Heroes. Grey also served on the USC School of Cinematic Arts Board of Councilors.

He is survived by his wife, Cassandra Hvysentruit Grey, and his four children: Emily, Jules, Max, and Sam.

Wendy Appel/Apple (1944-2017)
Documentarian

Wendy Appel, who used the professional name Wendy Apple, was a producer, director, and editor in feature film, documentary, and television for over four decades.

She was born in New York and earned a BFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. She worked on acclaimed films such as Fast Rain with Bob Dylan, The Cutting Edge: The Magic of Movie Editing, Approaching Night with Lily Tomlin, and more. Appel, who taught documentary filmmaking in SCA's Summer Program, was passionate about media, feminism, politics, students, friends, and protecting the environment. She was also a member of the Director's Guild of America.

She is survived by her mother Ruth Craven, brother Steven Appel, and a close-knit family of friends.

Howard E. Rieder (1930-2016)
Executive/Documentarian

Howard E. Rieder, who was born in Los Angeles, earned both his BA and MFA from the School of Cinematic Arts.

He became a well-respected advertising and public relations executive, working for companies such as Thomas Organ, Revell Toys, and Nissan Motor Co. He volunteered for the Police Department and helped write, produce, and direct documentaries for the City of Prescott, Arizona. Rieder also wrote, produced, and directed the documentary Go South (2009) about Ron Barnes, a white professor from the University of Iowa who accepted a position at all-black Tuskegee University in 1960's Alabama.

Rieder is survived by his wife, Kather, three daughters, Dee O'Reilly, Leslie Rasmussen, and Linda Gardner; and seven grandchildren.

Jonathan Bernbaum (1982-2016)
Videoographer

Jonathan Bernbaum was born in Berkeley, CA, and studied at USC's School of Cinematic Arts.

After graduating from USC's School of Cinematic Arts in 2008, Bernbaum became a multi-talented visual artist. He garnered international recognition as a video jockey, combining lights and video projections at electronic music shows. Bernbaum toured around the world with various international electronic music groups. He was tragically killed in Oakland’s ‘Ghost Ship' fire in December 2016, amongst other artists and friends. Bernbaum is remembered by friends and family for his intelligence, creativity, and talent.

He is survived by his parents, Edwin and Diane Bernbaum; his brother, David Bernbaum; and his grandmother, Miriam Lowe.

Fred J. Koenekamp (1922-2017)
Cinematographer

Fred J. Koenekamp was born in Los Angeles, CA. After studying at USC and serving in World War II, Koenekamp became an Academy Award-winning cinematographer.

Fred J. Koenekamp was the son of Hollywood cinematographer Hans Frederik Koenekamp. Growing up, Koenekamp often visited his father on set and developed an interest in film. He enrolled at USC in the commercial aviation program, but enlisted in the Navy when World War II broke. After returning home from war, Koenekamp began working in the film industry as a cameraman. Koenekamp was nominated for an Academy Award for cinematography for Patton (1970) and Simon and the Streams (1977) and won the Oscar for Best Cinematography for The Towering Inferno (1974). Koenekamp received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Society of Cinematographers in 2015. He became connected to SCA through his son-in-law Denny Guitt, who is a graduate of the production program.

Koenekamp is survived by his daughter Kathy Guitt.

Edited by Leslie Rasmussen and Linda Gardner. In MOTION • USC SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS
in MOTION • USC SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS

William H. Aho ‘93 returns as Chair of Belmont University’s Department of Mass Communications. Aho is also the founder of The Aho Group, a PR and communications firm.

Judd Apatow follows up his best-selling book Sick in the Head with a sequel sequel. Apatow will be honored with the SAG-AFTRA Foundation’s Life Achievement Award for his work as a director, writer, and producer.

John August ‘94 wrote the upcoming live-action feature Aftersleep.


Todd Black ‘93 will executive produce a series for Amazon Studios.

Michael Berns ‘92 has been named executive producer for Warner Bros. animation.

Ted Braun ‘88 of the L.A. Philharmonic. 

Julian Breece ‘05 received a pilot order commitment from ABC. Breece received a script commitment from Freeform. Breece also signed a deal with ITV Studios.

Gary Fleder ‘93 will direct a film based on the bestselling book Desert Cross.

Paul Haggis ‘91 will direct a series for SyFy.

Ryan Engle ‘01 will rewrite and direct The Virginian.

Jason Clodfelter ‘00 will rewrite and direct A Clock In Its Walls.

David Sollet ‘95 was nominated for a Los Angeles- based on Ryan Koontz.

Beau Bauman ‘01 directed an episode of ABC’s Station 19.

Daniel Y. Liu ‘17 produced a series of international films for a global market.

Philip Malamuth ‘86 was named the editor on Green Lantern Corps.

Martin Hynes ‘96 will write the screenplay for an 12-minute thriller, set entirely within the computer game Grand Theft Auto.

Hakeem Markham ‘17 will executive produce his new series, City On A Hill, for Crackle.

Paul Haddad ‘91 will executive produce a series of international films for a global market.

David Ellison will produce a series of international films for a global market.

Aaron Schneider ‘88 will direct Warner Bros’ World War II drama series.

Jamie Napoli ‘15, Editor, Producer ‘13, 1st AD Tim Astor ‘14, Director

Jeffrey Nachmanoff ‘95 is set to direct Sony’s action thriller for Netflix.

Jeffrey Hidalgo ‘00 is set to direct and produce the TV adaptation of Aladdin.

Steven Soderbergh ‘88 is set to direct and produce Close Up With the Hollywood Reporter.

Ariel Heller ‘17 will rewrite and direct The Virginian.

Paul Weitz will rewrite his spec script inspired by Paramount Pictures.

Alex Litvak ‘95 was nominated for a Los Angeles- Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers.

Matthew Weiner ‘90 will be named Director of Production at SCA, alumni.

Kris M. Miller ‘01 was named the sound editor/mixer for The Virginian.

Danny Strong ‘96 sold a new TV project titled Monopoly.

Victoria Strouse ‘95 has been tapped by Fox 2000 to adapt Katherine Sharp Landgraf’s nonfiction book about the Women Who Woke the World.

MATT RISLEY, a screenwriter alum, will write a script for NBC’s upcoming TV series based on Shedd Aquarium’s program.

Steven Sussman ‘01 will write the television adaptation of Kyle Wears Two Hats, soon-to-be-launched scientific fiction drama The Hypnotic Machine.

Scott Thompson ‘94 will adapt the Pulitzer Prize winning memoir of Peter Baker, The Black Dog of Fate.

Lis Tiffen ‘95 published her novel All That Glitters, won a 2017 International Latino Book Award for Best Fiction, and the Mariposa Award for Best First Book.

Pam Wease is set to act as show runner for the television show The Secret World, based on the videogame of the same name.

Jeff Wadlow ‘01 had his script, Truth or Dare picked up by Blumhouse.

Well will also direct and executive produce the film.

Matthew Weisner ‘90 created, wrote, and produced The Good Cop.

John Wells ‘82 will direct the Vietnam war drama Last Full Measure.

Max Winkler ‘08 sold his dark comedy The River to The Orchard Production Company along with Winick, SCA, alumni.

Tim Story will adapt the Pulitzer Prize winning memoir of Peter Baker, The Black Dog of Fate.

Robert Zemeckis ‘73 and his company ImageMovers have received a straight-to-series order from History Channel.

Stu Zimmerman ‘93 wrote a live-humor drama Sweetbitter, which is being put into development for Starz Network.

Randy Zisk ‘97 will direct and executive produce The God Box, a dramatic crime procedural for Netflix.

Peter Zhou ‘91, Amanda Taue ‘93, Devan Sweeney ‘17, Li Xi ‘16 and Ariel Heller ‘97 were finalists for the 2017 Student Academy Awards. Heller won Best Film, SCA alumni.

We appreciate that we’re missed anyone. Please contact Justin Wilson at 213.740.2804 or alexin@cinema.usc.edu for more information or updates.
Baltimore Boys - Sheldon Candis '93, Director; Jason Wilson '94, Producer

The Big Sick - Judd Apatow, Producer

The Book of Henry - John Schwartzman, Cinematographer

Boston - Jon Dunham '13, Producer/Director/Cinematographer

Buster’s Mal Heart - Jonako Donley '07, Cinematographer

Dispicable Me 3 - Ron Howard, Producer

The Dark Tower - Producer

Buster's Mal Heart - Jonako Donley '07, Cinematographer

Despicable Me 3 - Ron Howard, Producer

The Dark Tower - Producer

Buster’s Mal Heart - Jonako Donley '07, Cinematographer

Detroit - Megan Ellison, Producer

The Envelope - Michael Berman '06, Producer; Nicholas Nesbitt '84, Producer

Little Evil - Matt Spicer '06, Writer/Director

Ingrid Goes West - Matt Spicer '06, Writer/Director

How to Get Away with Murder - Shonda Rhimes '94, Executive Producer

I Love Dick - Dana Reinstein '03, Writer/Executive Producer

Ice Road Truckers - John Star '91, Lead Editor

Insecure - Prentice Penny '95, Writer/Executive Producer; Darnell Lymon North '95, Writer

L.A. Burning: The Riots 25 Years Later - Twelle M. American '10, Editor/Producer

The Leftovers - Carly Wray '13, Writer/Executive Producer

Legends of Tomorrow - Chris Fedak '98, Writer/Executive Producer

Lost in Oz - Ozark Malwoki '93, Writer/Executive Producer; Darnell Mark '93, Writer/Executive Producer; Jared Mark '98, Writer/Executive Producer

Love - Judd Apatow, Writer/Executive Producer; Mason Fink '12, Writer; Michael Liven '11, Producer/Director

Prison Break: Resurrection - Guy Ferland '98, Director

Quantico - Terilyn Shropshire '94, Editor

Queen Sugar - Tina Malbay '13, Writer/Producer/Director

Rebel - John Singleton '90, Executive Producer/Director; Sheldon Candis '93, Director

Rectify - Kate Powers '87, Writer

SEAL Team - Spencer Huddlin '98, Writer/Supervising Producer

A Season With Navy Football - Scott Stine '79, Executive Producer

Shades of Blue - Zac Harnan '93, Writer/Executive Producer

Shadows & Bones: The Mortal Instruments - Todd Stashek '91, Writer/Executive Producer; Angel Dean Lopez '91, Writer/Supervising Producer

Shameless - John Wells '90, Writer/Executive Producer

Skylanders Academy - Stacey Star '95, Executive Producer

Snowfall - John Singleton '90, Writer/Executive Producer/Director; Trevor Engleko '98, Executive Producer; Miera Maron '11, Director; Michael Lehmann '93, Director; Hina Murai '96, Director

Speechless - Eric O’Malley '96, Consulting Producer; Tim Doyle '97, Consulting Producer; Carrie Rosen '98, Writer

Strange Things - Shawn Levy '94, Executive Producer/Writer/Director; Kevin D. Ross '90, Editor

Supergirl - James D'Arcy '93, Writer; Gabe Laviras '98, Co-Producer; Ann Macky '14, Writer; Galynn Parnick '12, Writer

SWAT - Aaron Thomas '92, Writer/Executive Producer

This Is Us - Kay O’Keen '93, Writer

Ark - Andrew Cobile, Writer/Supervising Producer

The Voice - Keith Carrell '96, Supervising Producer

The Walking Dead - Scott Gimple '93, Writer/Executive Producer; Angela Kang '99, Writer/Executive Producer

Westworld - Bryan Burk '91, Executive Producer; Richard Lewis '97, Co-Executive Producer/Writer; Athena Wickham '92, Co-Executive Producer

Zoo - Carla Krattner '93, Writer/Co-Executive Producer

Jigew - Josh Stobberg '97, Writer

Little Evil - Elyse Craig '94, Writer/Director; Jason Michael Berman '96, Producer; Nicholas Nefsitt '94, Producer; Taz Nilen '91, Editor

The Outdoorsman - Kevin Magee '14, Production Coordinator; Ryan Dee Gilmour '10, Writer; Philip Sennett '17, Editor; Tim Attor '14, 1st AD; David Haskell '13, Director; Chris Abernathy '13, Producer; Christina Johns '16, Line Producer; Jamie Napoli '15, Key PA; Andrew Nashman '12, Editor; Peter Baxi '16, Sound Editor / mixer; Jan Basuoka '14, Sound Editor / mixer

Rebel In The Eye - Danny Strong '96, Director; Jason Shuman '96, Producer

Spider-Man: Homecoming - Kevin Feige '95, Producer

Step - Steven Cantor '95, Producer

Transformers: The Last Knight - Tom Daunno, Producer; Don Murphy '88, Producer

War for the Planet of the Apes - Matt Reeves '88, Writer/Director, Amanda Silver '89, Producer

Animal Kingdom - John Wells '92, Executive Producer/Director

Better Call Saul - Peter Gould '90, Writer/Executive Producer

Blackish - Lindsey Shookley '17, Writer/Supervising Producer

Carnival - Jason Reitman, Executive Producer/Director

Chef's Table - David Gelb '06, Executive Producer/Director

Chicago Med - Damon Goldberg '91 and Shelly Musch '91, Writers/Co-Executive Producers

Code Black - Julian Marques '96, Writer/Co-Producer

Crashing - Judd Apatow, Writer/Executive Producer

Diverge - Aaron Kaplan '90, Executive Producer/Director

Documentary Now! - Alec Buono '95, Director

Dynasty - Josh Schwartz, Writer/Executive Producer

Empire of the Sun - Craig Gerber '92, Writer/Executive Producer

Fear the Walking Dead - David Erickson '98, Writer/Executive Producer

Feud - Cara Wolff '91, Writer/Executive Producer

Finn - Gina Welch, Writer/Co-Producer

Flash Off the Boat - Nushietinha Khan '94, Writer/Executive Producer

Hall and Catch Fire - Chris Cantwell '98, Writer/Executive Producer

Wonder Woman - Charles Roven, Producer; Matthew Jensen '94, Cinematographer

American Gods - Bryan Fuller, Writer/Executive Producer

American Housewife - Aaron Kaplan '90, Executive Producer

House of Cards - Joshua Donen '79, Executive Producer

How to Get Away with Murder - Shonda Rhimes '94, Executive Producer

I Love Dick - Dana Reinstein '03, Writer/Co-Executive Producer

Ice Road Truckers - John Star '91, Lead Editor

Insecure - Prentice Penny '95, Writer/Executive Producer; Darnell Lymon North '95, Writer

L.A. Burning: The Riots 25 Years Later - Twelle M. American '10, Editor/Producer

The Leftovers - Carly Wray '13, Writer/Executive Producer

Legends of Tomorrow - Chris Fedak '98, Writer/Executive Producer

Lost in Oz - Ozark Malwoki '93, Writer/Executive Producer; Darnell Mark '93, Writer/Executive Producer; Jared Mark '98, Writer/Executive Producer

Love - Judd Apatow, Writer/Executive Producer; Mason Fink '12, Writer; Michael Liven '11, Producer/Director
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