

Stony Brook University
Manhattan

MFA IN FILM

IN ASSOCIATION WITH KILLER FILMS

**Fall 2020 Semester Comes to a Close**

The end of the semester is nigh! Even with a long year, this semester has flown by. Students are finishing their final projects and bundling up for the holiday season and winter break. We are grateful for our faculty and staff who have worked tirelessly to make this semester one for the history books, and extend an extra congratulations to our students who have worked so hard in their hybrid classes. Thank you to all of our community members who joined our virtual Open Houses and From the Writer's Room series -- they were a huge success!

Student Accomplishments

Lisa Thomas directed and produced her end of first year project, the music novella, *Candy Store*, which is at the coveted #1 Position (out of 87) on the music site The Tinnist. She shot this during the first opening in August after COVID lockdown, adhering to all the new safety guidelines. Her courage to be one of the first Producer / Directors to take on filming under the new protocols, landed her a producing job on a live action shoot for a new Adult Swim, Live Action comedy special starring Jo Firestone which was filmed in October in Queens, NY with the help of many of her Stony Brook classmates. Lisa's producing two new animated series, one for Netflix / Headspace which will premiere on New Year's Day and the other for Adult Swim, entitled Teenage Euthanasia which stars: Maria Bamford, Jo Firestone, Bebe Neuwirth, and Tim Robinson.

Noelle P. Wilson is a semifinalist in the Spring 2021 WeScreenplay Diverse Voices competition with her script, *By the Book*. Ada Lee Holofsky's pilot *2 Falls* is still in the running as semifinalist for best comedy in the Emerging Screenwriters competition. Thesis student Chris Arnold's screenplay *Cornerstone* was read on zoom for the Austria International Film Festival 2020. Emma Freud was played by classmate Amy Gaipa, Therese by Amanda Fuller and Freud by alum James Sharpe. Former student Matthew Gonzalez was the technical assistant on the Shawn Mendes documentary, *In Wonder*.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Student Accomplishments
- Extended Scholarship Deadline
- SUNY PACC Prize Winners

Welcome to the December edition of *IN THE LOOP!* For this issue we are focusing on even more student accomplishments, an update on the Fall 2021 application process, and an interview with our SUNY PACC Prize Winners.

"A script is a living breathing thing. It's not to be put on a pedestal and worshipped. It's a blueprint."
- Fall 2020 Master Class



Shot of Lisa Thomas directing "Candy Store"

SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE EXTENDED

Because 2020 has brought hardship to many in our community we are extending our full ride full tuition remission nomination deadline for our Fall 2021 Application to January 7, 2021. This will allow selected students to apply for the Turner Fellowship and for the Graduate Council Fellowship.

SUNY PACC Prize Winners

Eleven students in Lenny Crook's annual Dogme Class collaborated to write and produce an episodic narrative. Dogme 95 was a filmmaking movement started in 1995 by a group of Danish filmmakers as an attempt to "take back power as storytellers and artists." These students stuck to the strict rules of Dogme 95, each bringing a fictional character to the group. Each student then developed a story and wrote a screenplay that included a character they wrote as well as two other characters written by their classmates.



"One of the biggest parts of writing would be hearing a classmate say, 'Well I don't know if my character would do that,' and then you'd ask why and they'd tell you, and you'd be like, 'Oh, ok.' They have full authority over the character so they know better than anyone," student Conor Demmett said.

They each cast 11 actors and created a production schedule with a detailed plan for filming the series.

"[The Dogme Class] was an invaluable learning experience of thinking on your feet and shooting in real life. We only had one day for each shoot. That's a lot to shoot—eight pages in one day. The fact that any of us even finished it, it just shows the testament and strength of Lenny's development of the class," Conor said.

Conor Demmett and Zhuoga Renqing presented the project on behalf of the group to the SUNY PACC Prize for Performing Arts, Creation, and Curation—and they won! The SUNY PACC Prize prompts the design of arts and curatorial projects and supports the creation of major art projects by SUNY students with competitively awarded commissions.

"Once we finished the presentation, it felt like we won because we finished it, but I was hoping we would get some type of acknowledgement. [Winning the SUNY PACC Prize] was a reward for all of the effort the group put into it. It was unexpected," Conor said. "The fact we went that far with it a year later and that's how it turned out, that's beyond what my expectations were. I felt proud of my group and felt proud of the work we did, and excited to move forward with the project."

In addition to submitting the completed series to festivals, the next step for the 11 students is to use the prize money to become agents for this kind of filmmaking. They will launch the Dogme 2021 web platform which will offer others around the world the opportunity to learn about the Dogme movement, stream their narrative series, and follow the step-by-step guidelines for creation.

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Thank you for reading the latest edition of our newsletter!

Want to see more of what's happening in our program? Follow us on our social media pages:

Instagram: @sbufilm

Twitter: @sbufilm

Facebook: @sbufilmmaking

To apply to our Film or TV Writing MFA programs or for more information, please visit

<https://stonybrook.edu/film> or <https://stonybrook.edu/tv/>

Happy Holidays and have a safe New Year!

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