

FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES

Hello to all of the students, alumni, and friends of the Film and Media Studies Department at Colorado College!

Welcome to the 4th edition of the FMS Newsletter. The Department has had a busy year, with amazing courses, wonderful visitors, and incredible thesis projects.

We always look forward to hearing from *you*! Please share your news (does not have to be film-related!) by writing askfilm@coloradocollege.edu.



CC FILM & MEDIA STUDIES DEPT.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Anika Kan Grevstad '18 is one of 8 filmmakers selected for the American Film Institute's prestigious Directors Workshop for Women+ as part of their class of 2027. A tuition-free yearlong directing program, the DWW+ chooses "outstanding candidates who demonstrate a passion for visual storytelling, the tenacity to pursue a directorial career, and willingness to learn and grow."



Brooks Fortune '12 is an attorney working at the confluence of medicine and tech. His Lewis Award-winning thesis documentary, "Sex Offender," which explores the story of a child unjustly put on the sex offender registry, influenced his decision to pursue the law. After a number of years practicing in Denver, he moved to Burlington, VT, where he spends time hiking and chasing around his 2 little kids.



Ben Bacher '18 had a brief stint playing professional poker, made a documentary about Venus flytrap poachers for the first Documentary Exploration Grant, and has since worked as a video editor for technology case studies, as an electrician's apprentice, and as project manager for a solar company that focuses on affordable housing. He writes, "The through line of this path is finding work that I feel directly makes a difference." Thanks to this insight, he will be pursuing a Masters in Social Work at Simmons University in Boston this fall.



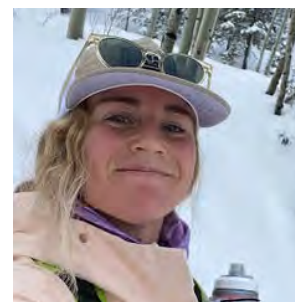
Eliza Edens (Densmore) '19 is a Berkshire-bred, Brooklyn-based singer and songwriter. She writes, "I had the gift of a residency for the entire summer '25 through the Helen Wurlitzer Foundation in Taos, NM. I had my own casita (pictured!) and spent the summer writing songs, practicing my instruments, and coming up with marketing/branding ideas and music video ideas for my upcoming 3rd studio record which I hope will be out in 2026."



Sam Sanson '20 worked as an outdoor educator at Central Park Zoo in NYC; kayaking, hiking, climbing, mountain biking instructor in Boulder; and snowboard instructor in Breckenridge. For the past 3 years she has worked in elementary schools with grades K-5. She writes, "My favorite are 2nd and 3rd graders! I am open to teaching any grade, as they all are fun in different ways." She will be attending grad school in Education next year, hoping to move toward teaching at "an expeditionary learning school if possible ... very CC."



Ansley Queen '20 is a professional triathlete and ultramarathoner. She made her professional Ironman debut at Ironman Chattanooga in 2024 and "it's only up from here." Get it Ansley!



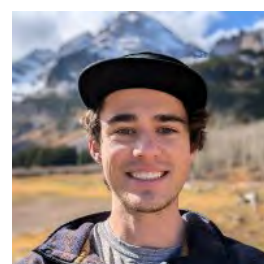
Celia Hardic '21 is a film photographer and artist based in Washington, DC. She teaches darkroom and other photography classes at the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop and recently held her first solo show in New Orleans, focused on "panoramic pinhole photography with a unique homemade 3D printed camera."



Kat Beard '24 writes, "I had an amazing opportunity to write and photograph for POWDER magazine in Japan in late December." She lives in Crested Butte, where she has been doing a variety of freelance work: sales/marketing/content at Steller; news/events at Travel Crested Butte, "keeping people current in terms of trail conditions, wildflower blooms, snowfall;" making educational videos for Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory; and being "really involved with the Crested Butte Film Festival, helping them run their youth film program." She will be attending the Stanford School of Journalism in the fall.



Robert Kerr '14 is based in New York, where he works as a Location Scout on productions such as *Marty Supreme*, *The Bride*, and other union projects both independent and studio backed. He recently completed his MFA in Film and Columbia University and is currently developing a feature, *Gravity and Grace*, in collaboration with his wife. You can see their work at www.rionortefilms.com.



Beck Marshall '25 will be pursuing an MFA in the Loyola Marymount University School of Film and Television next fall, "most likely following the nonfiction directing track, but still deciding!"

SUNDANCE



This past January, our senior thesis class had the opportunity to attend the last-ever Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, before the festival makes the move to Colorado. After a long bus ride, students spent the week watching movies, attending exclusive talks, meditating with Chloe Zhao, and, of course, hot tubbing.

Elizabeth Feingold '26 found herself feeling sentimental when she reflected that the fest would not be returning to Park City. But, at a screening of a remastered *Mysterious Skin*, a 2004 film directed by Greg Araki, she found some hope. "It was when Joseph Gordon Leavitt pulled out Robert Redford's baseball bat that I knew the future of independent cinema was safe."

Students rubbed shoulders with many stars at the fest. On one particular occasion, **Melissa Ramirez '26**, **Sophia Lisco '26**, and Paraprof **Jess Duran '25** found themselves walking up main street and bombarded by photographers.

"Wow, they love my outfit!" remarked Jess.

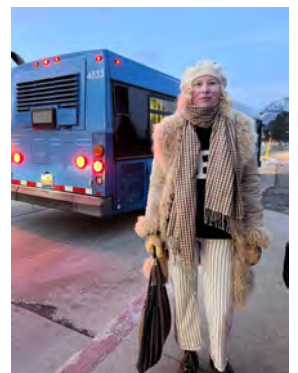
To which Sophia responded, "No, there's a dog wearing Gucci behind you."

But Melissa was the only one who truly had a grasp on the situation. "I think they're taking pictures of Ethan Hawke, who is behind the dog."



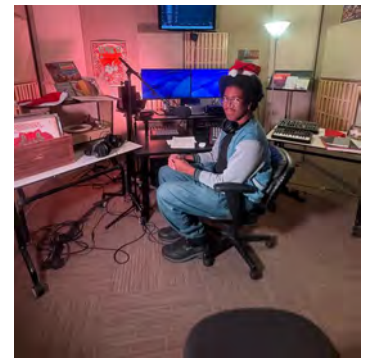
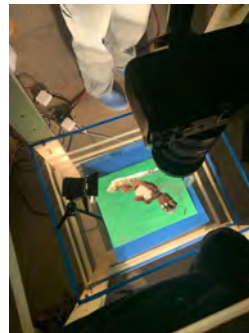
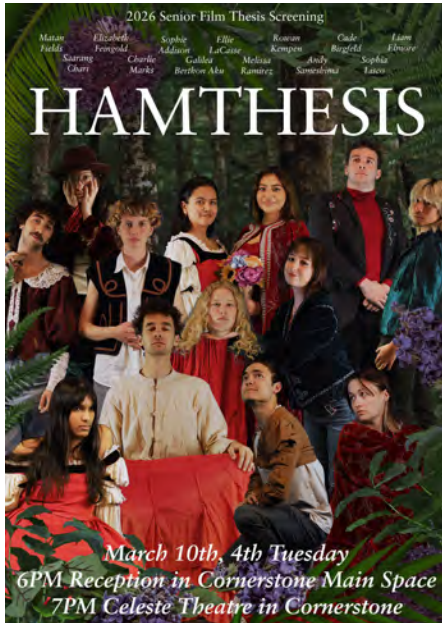
Paraprof Jess Duran may have set a new record for most movies seen at the fest, watching a total of nineteen features, twenty if you count one movie she saw twice. On one day in particular, she spent nearly thirteen hours inside the Library Center Theatre.

See you next year in Boulder!



THESIS

Our senior class successfully completed their thesis process! After months of planning, filming, and editing, students turned out a slate of seven short films, a feat that involved the collaboration of many students across all departments of the college and our own staff and faculty. It takes a village!



"Auld Lang Syne" is a fiction film by Elizabeth Feingold and Liam Elmore, following a lonely young man who finds solace in the words of a radio host on New Year's Eve.

"Let's Bang" was created by Rowan Kempen with the collaboration of Reed Haymons, Ben Laschever, and Katie Lockwood, a group of juniors eager to make Rowan's vision come to life! The short follows Margot, a late-blooming office worker, as she builds the courage to make her fantasies a reality.





"Ojitos Callejeros," created by Melissa Ramirez, is a documentary that follows a stray dog on the streets of Apaseo el Alto, Mexico, on Dia de los Reyes.

"Planet of the Babes" follows a planet of orchid-beings that undergoes a revolution, created by Eleanor LaCasse and Sophia Lisco. This film had the largest cast and crew of the year and did their primary shoot at Baca.



In **"Snagged,"** a stop-motion animation short created by Sophie Addison and Saarang Chari, a monkey and lemur meet in an enchanted forest.

"The Wilderness," a documentary by Cade Birgfeld and Andy Sameshina, explores the community formed by the mountains and those who work to preserve its magic.



And, last but certainly not least, **"Velvet Spaghetti,"** a fiction short by Galilea Berthon Aku, Matan Fields, and Charlie Marks, follows a radical environmentalist who realizes that her boyfriend is less committed to the cause that they both once believed in.

The seniors are all happy to be done with this long haul. They are also stoked to have completed their Givecampus fundraising goal of \$5,000. **Thank you to all every single parent, alumnus, and friend** who chipped in to help! We quite literally could not have done it without you and your support.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Bella Houck '27 was recently awarded a scholarship from the Colorado chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists as part of its annual Top of the Rockies contest. Bella, from Littleton, Colorado, currently serves as an editor of the campus literary magazine *Cipher*. Bella won a \$1,500 scholarship and the Sheldon Peterson Award for broadcast journalism.

Since the senior thesis film screening, where he met some of Rowan Kempen's cast who are involved in the Peak Film Forum, **Tyriek Canty '27** has been working with local filmmakers in the Springs. He PA'd for filmmaker Melissa Peltier on the 72-Hour Kickass Film Festival and will be interning with local producer, Josh Lindquist, this summer, as well as PAing on the feature *Devil in the Trunk*, which will be shot locally.

After several rounds of interviews, **Theo Casper '28** will be interning at the studio Neon this summer.

Reed Haymons '27 and **Katie Lockwood '27** will be interning for filmmakers Lisa Hepner and **Guy Mossman '95** at Vox Pop Films this summer in Los Angeles, "helping out on few projects in different stages," including a forthcoming short film, "Burnt," and a new documentary feature.

Ivan Trejo '27 will be interning at Starz Entertainment in Denver this summer, working in content operations and post-production.

Orion Cenkl '27 will spend his summer in Colorado Springs, working as a radio news intern for KRCC.

Ben Laschever '27 will spend his summer traveling the world and making environmental documentary shorts.

Georgia Emmanuel '27 is interning at Cinetic Media this summer, writing lots of script coverage (which will come in handy for her double major in English).

This summer, **Galy Berthon '26** is working as an instructor and mentor at the Youth Documentary Academy in Colorado Springs. In the fall, she'll join Vida Verde, an wilderness education organization that promotes equity in the outdoors.

Oli Kamenarovska '25 graduated in December. Her thesis film, "Warmis Sobre Ruedas," is making its way through the festival circuit, most recently in competition at the Atlanta Film Festival! Currently, she is back in Macedonia playing semipro basketball.



END OF YEAR HONORS

We are incredibly proud of the students who received the following Film and Media Studies awards at Honors Convocation in May. In addition, congratulations to the FM majors who received *non-film-related* awards! We have so many multi-talented students; their accomplishments confirm that film storytelling is inherently interdisciplinary.

Maya Rosen '28 won the Adelaide Bender Reville Prize for Creative Nonfiction. **Gustavo Caetano '28** won third place in the Adelaide Bender Reville's James Yaffe Prize for Fiction. **Liam Ferguson '27** and **Georgia Emmanuel '27** received Colorado College Grants in Writing from the English Department. In Geology, **Andy Sameshima '26** received the William A. Fischer Special Recognition Award and a Patricia Buster Research Scholarship. **Saarang Chari '26** received the David and Karen Cowperthwaite Award for Excellence in Music *and* she will be next year's FM paraprofessional! **Sophia Lisco '26** and **Melissa Ramirez '26** were Community Engaged Scholars, and **Andy Sameshima '26** and **Saarang Chari '26** were inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa Honors Society. Finally, **Orion Cenkl '27** received the Henri "Skip" Meis 1963 Emerging Student Leader Award.



Richard A. Lewis Memorial Film Award

The Richard A. Lewis Memorial Film Award recognize the best student film of the year. The Lewis Award was endowed by Estelle and Barton Lewis in 2002 to honor the memory of their son Richard, Class of 1975. The award serves to recognize exceptional student work as well as provide encouragement and support for future film projects. Numerous recipients of this award have gone on to become professional filmmakers.

Ellie Diggs LaCasse & Sophia Lisco, "Planet of the Babs" and Melissa Ramirez, "Ojitos Callejeros"

J. H. Edmondson Film Outreach Award

The J.H. Edmondson Film Outreach Award supports the high-quality work of committed student filmmakers by encouraging them to reach out to audiences beyond the college community. The award was established in 2012 through a seed donation by the Joseph Henry Edmondson Foundation, which is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life throughout Colorado's Pikes Peak region and is steeped in the values of service, creativity, inquiry, and respect for community.

Rowan Kempen, "Let's Bang!" and Ivan Trejo, "Migratory Subtitles"

Telly Savalas and T. Christopher Boardman Memorial Award in Film and Media Studies

The Telly Savalas and T. Christopher Boardman Memorial Award in Film and Media Studies honors students who have made an outstanding contribution to building the film community at Colorado College, whether through academic engagement, creative excellence, or co-curricular service. The award was created with the support of Penelope Savalas Boardman, Class of 1983, in honor of the multi-faceted talents and indomitable spirits of her father, Telly Savalas, and her late husband, T. Christopher Boardman, Class of 1983.

Galilea Berthon Aku



DOCUMENTARY EXPLORATION GRANTS

Since 2018, the Colorado College Documentary Exploration Grants Program has funded more than 100 students in making more than 30 documentary films, many of which have won international recognition, screened at film festivals, aired on PBS, or helped students earn major awards. Funded by the Jonathan D + Mark C. Lewis Foundation with the visionary support of **Mark Lewis '01** and **Travis Rummel '01**, the program provides up to \$10,000 for character-driven documentaries and pairs student filmmakers with alumni mentors. Students have filmed in the US and around the world, including in Colombia, Bolivia, Cuba, China, Thailand, Pakistan, Iceland, Germany, Scotland, Ireland, Armenia, Zambia, and South Africa. For students, the program has provided a vital stepping stone toward professional filmmaking careers.

This year, after an inspiring launch presentation by Oscar-winning documentary filmmaker **Daniel Junge '92** followed by a rigorous application and pitch process, the grant committee funded five projects to take place in the next year in locations as far away as Nepal and Brazil and as close to home as Colorado Springs. Congratulations to all the grantees, and huge thanks to the mentoring teams whose documentary experience is both broad and deep and will be crucial in bringing these films to the world.

“Natural Instincts” (Mexico):

Marcos Arnold, Bella Houck, Ben Laschever & Katie Lockwood

Mentors Dakin Henderson '08 & Rebecca Celli '15

"Tripas" (Brazil)

Galilea Berthon Aku & Gustavo Caetano;

Mentors Caroline Andryc '16 & Lindsay Gillette Swift '06

“COST” (Colorado Springs)

Saarang Chari

Mentors Esther Chan '16 & Jabu Ndlovu '18

“Dhal Bhat” (Nepal)

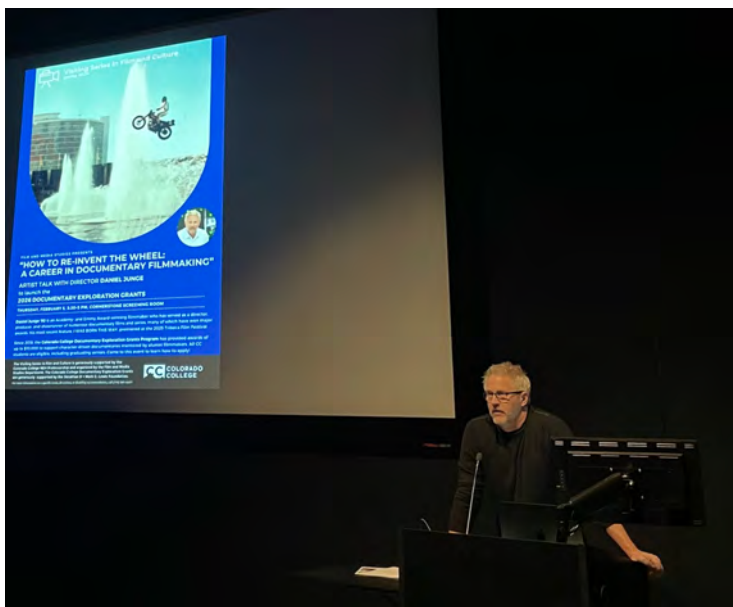
Matan Fields, Reed Haymons & Ben Laschever

Mentors Guy Mossman '95 & Daniel Wright '13

"Paradox" (Southwest Colorado)

Parker Libby & Willow Lott

Mentors Mads Engel '18 & Will Sardinsky '17



VISITING SERIES IN FILM AND CULTURE

Among the incredible filmmakers and scholars who joined us this year for screenings, talks, and craft seminars were **Arya Rani, Anika Kan Grevstad '18, Dan Sturman & Dylan Nelson, Aranya Sahay, Alison O'Daniel, Daniel Junge '92, Skye Mahaffie '15, Cathy Linh Che, Andy Day, Alisha Tejpal & Mireya Martinez, and Emmett Casey.** It was a particular treat to host scholar **Laura U. Marks** (*The Skin of the Film*) with us to discuss "Small Files for a Small World," an urgent environmental film movement, and to have former Artist-in-Residence **Andrew Ahn** back to screen his newest feature, *The Wedding Banquet* -- and then to enjoy a banquet of our own. Special thanks to Professor of Art **Rebecca Tucker** and **the NEH Professorship** for making this series possible.



CLASSES AND HIGHLIGHTS

We have been spoiled this year with many amazing classes and visiting professors.

Back for its second year was **Filmmaking on Film.** Professor **Emmett Casey** came down all the way from Boulder to teach students the ins and outs of the analog tradition in both 8 mm and 16 mm. Students shot, hand-processed, and hand-edited hundreds of feet of film, learning by practice where the term "footage" originates from.



The one and only **Skye Mahaffie '15** returned, coming in from New York to teach students **set and production design** (in "Shooting on Set," a half-block course co-taught with FM Technical Director **Madi Powell**) as well as the full-block courses **"Introduction to Animation,"** and **"Post-Production & VFX."** Among other accomplishments, she figured out how to get the gimbal onto our beloved jib/crane, allowing us to run our first-ever (but certainly not last)"glam-bot" during the thesis reception.



Advanced Filmmaking recently wrapped for the year. Together, students created 3 projects adapted from literature under the guidance of Professor **Arom Choi**. Everyone crewed on each other's project, having the opportunity to learn about multiple roles on set. With a focus on camera movement, the screening that followed was filled with dolly zooms and tracking shots. What more can you ask for!

STAFF & FACULTY UPDATES



We wish the absolute best to our uber-talented paraprofessional **Jess Duran '25** (pictured on set, above) as she moves on to new things after a year of helping students, assisting with classes, running Movie Mondays, and stealing scenes in many, many student films.

Technical Director **Madi Powell** met one of her heroines, Billie Jean King, at Sundance this year and will treasure her signed tennis ball forever. She's spending her summer taking apart and reorganizing every single box, bag, and bundle in the gear cage.

Academic Admin **Mia Naples** hit two years of working at CC. Recently certified as a Legree Method Pilates instructor, she'll have plenty of stamina for English professor **Jared Richman's** "Graphic Narratives" class, which she'll be taking in August.



Professor **Jordan Lord** has had quite the year! They've been hopping all over exhibiting their work. Recently, they delivered the Ian White lecture at the Open City Documentary Film Festival in London, part of a major exhibition at LUX which included their newest film, "Concealed and Denied," an "archival film without archival" about right-wing propagandist Christopher Rufo.

Visiting Assistant Professor **Arya Rani** had an amazing year at CC teaching courses including "Cinematic Landscapes" and "Film History & Theory: Cinematic Gaze." She will be starting a new tenure-track position at Grinnell College in the fall and looks forward to exploring Iowa with her dog Cléo (named after the Agnès Varda film *Cléo 5 to 7*, of course).

Professor **Scott Krzych** is back from sabbatical and better than ever! After leading a block in LA, he was back on campus teaching about his favorite topic, Neoliberalism. Scott ventured over to Amsterdam in October to deliver a talk at the World Picture Conference. He sure works hard for his money. We are happy to have him back, though our coffee budget has gone up significantly.

Professor **Dylan Nelson** has been all over recently with her newest film *The Stamp Thief*. She was just off to Germany for screenings of the film in Berlin. Adding to her Euro cred, her documentary *The Stolen* recently aired on Swiss television. In June, she was promoted to full Professor at the college.

This year we are saying goodbye to the wonderfully talented Professor **Arom Choi**. She is leaving CC to focus on her filmmaking career, currently working on a screenplay. Professor Choi created one of the most beloved classes in the Department, Storytelling Through Sound, and has produced a generation of filmmakers dedicated to clean audio. She is a force to be reckoned with. We wish her great success!

WHAT A YEAR!

It's been a long year over here in the department, and we have enjoyed every bit of it. Over 8 blocks, we ran a whopping 40 classes and one half block. We've watched a lot of media, made a lot of films -- and even temporarily lost some due to hard drive errors. 16mm and digital formats have been worked to the bone. Thankfully, we made it through the year having only broken one tripod. Phew.

Congrats to all of our graduating seniors. We are beyond proud of you and can't wait to see what comes next :)

SEND YOUR NEWS! askfilm@coloradcollege.edu. And have a wonderful summer!

Sincerely
CCFMS

