**Coming Attractions**

Apply now to participate in Career Week in Los Angeles

The Department of Film and Media Studies organizes a week-long career orientation in Los Angeles during spring break for a limited number of qualified students who wish to have a career in the film and media industry in Los Angeles. The week will consist of meeting alumni who work in various facets of the field, visiting work sites, attending workshops, screenings, and receiving valuable mentoring from and contact with “The Hollywood Hawks,” a group of KU alumni in the Los Angeles area who actively work to be a direct link between the entertainment industry and KU.

This will be a competitive application process open to all FMS majors, with priority given to graduating seniors. The Department of Film and Media Studies and the School of the Arts will cover the costs of airfare, lodging, travel to and from the airport, as well as meals and other expenses associated with official programming during the trip. Participants will be expected to pay for meals and expenses outside of FMS planned events. Students and faculty/staff will fly together and stay at the same hotel. Transportation will be arranged by the faculty/staff organizers.

For more information, visit: [https://film.ku.edu/career-week](https://film.ku.edu/career-week)

To see photos and comments from students who participated last year, visit: [http://film.ku.edu/newsletters](http://film.ku.edu/newsletters) and scroll down to the April 2016 expanded version.

KU alum SK Nguyen and Jason Carbone, at Good Clean Fun, a reality television production company.

On the set of *The Big Bang Theory* with Maria Ferrari, writer and executive producer.

With KU alum Jared Stone, a creative director at Warner Bros. Worldwide Television Marketing, outside the Warner Brothers lot.
KU Libraries will host a teach-in regarding the crisis at Standing Rock on December 1, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. in Watson 3 West. This event will bring together faculty scholars from KU (including Joshua Miner), and Haskell Indian Nations University to discuss the social, legal, environmental, media, political, and historical issues surrounding the Dakota Access Pipeline. Students from the First Nations Student Association will also present.
Recognitions and Accomplishments

Kevin Willmott received the “Gordon Parks Choice of Weapons Award” at the 2016 Gordon Parks Celebration

Fort Scott-Filmmaker Kevin Willmott was the recipient of the “Gordon Parks Choice of Weapons Award” at the annual Gordon Parks Celebration on November 3-5 in Fort Scott, Kansas. The Gordon Parks Celebration, a component of the Gordon Parks Museum/Center, was created in 2004 by Fort Scott Community College to honor Fort Scott native Gordon Parks, noted photographer, writer, musician, and filmmaker.

Named after Parks’ autobiography of the same name, the Choice of Weapons Award seeks to honor a recipient who excelled in one of the areas that Gordon Parks did and who exemplifies the spirit and strength of character of Gordon Parks.

“We are so pleased to honor Kevin this year,” said Gordon Parks Museum director Jill Warford. “He is a filmmaker like Gordon and he is building a legacy of creating and directing films that have social impact on our society and give us cause to think about many issues.”

Willmott is a professor in the Media and Film Studies Department at the University of Kansas. He co-wrote and is the Executive Producer of the critically acclaimed film, Chi-Raq, directed by Spike Lee. The film is on numerous best of 2015 lists including best film and best screenplay by The New Yorker Magazine.


Out & About

Stephane Scupham, Kansas City Film Commissioner and a graduate of the former KU Theatre and Film department, visited Germaine Halegoua’s First Year Seminar on November 15. She presented on the role of a film office and discussed her role as KC Film Commissioner. She has fantastic insight into the inner workings of the KC film scene, and introduced students to another side of film, television, and new media production – directing a film office. Ms. Scupham also gave a presentation to the FMS department Colloquium on the same day. Both were open to all FMS students.

FMS student Ty Strange stands with his platter of replacement animation claymation pieces made in Cathy Joritz’s FMS 374 Animation class.

Film premiere: ‘Fast Break: The Legendary John McLendon’

The University of Kansas Department of Health, Sport, and Exercise Sciences hosted the premiere of a documentary film about the life of a prominent KU alumnus and basketball legend.

“Fast Break: The Legendary John McLendon” is presented by the Broken Fence Film Ranch, Rockhaven Films and Level Club productions. It was produced by Scott Unruh and directed by award-winning director Kevin Willmott, KU professor of film & media studies. The premiere also served as the fundraising campaign launch for the John McLendon Leadership Award and Lecture Series.

Inspired by the award-winning biography “Breaking Through: John B. McLendon, Basketball Legend and Civil Rights Pioneer,” by Milton Katz, the film reviews the life of this remarkable African-American Kansas Citian, the first black student at KU to earn his degree in physical education and study under and be mentored by the inventor of basketball, James Naismith.

Read the full story here: http://news.ku.edu/2016/11/16/film-premiere-fast-break-legendary-john-mclendon

New book examines America’s greatest ghost-story writer

In a season of scary-clown mania, Stephen King gets all the credit as America’s greatest writer of horror-fantasy. But the author of a new book on one of King’s collaborators says Peter Straub is actually the better writer, and, in fact, rightful heir to the great American tradition of ghost stories established by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James and H.P. Lovecraft.

In his new book, “The Gothic Worlds of Peter Straub,” University of Kansas Associate Professor of Film Studies John Tibbetts presents the first serious study of Straub, author of “Ghost Story,” “The Talisman” (with King) and “Floating Dragon,” among others. Tibbetts links Straub to a tradition of eerie fiction that goes back beyond Grimm’s Fairy Tales to the Old-World Gothic tradition of the late 18th century, which was then transplanted to the New World and transformed into a uniquely American Gothic. In fact, the Brothers Grimm even show up as characters in Straub’s novel “Shadowland.”

“Straub is a more painstaking writer than King,” Tibbetts said. “He’s a literary horror writer. He’s an intellectual; a man of letters – although he wears that lightly upon his sleeve. He has an academic background, so his stories are shot through with allusions to books, to poetry, to music. He provides the spooks with the best of them, but there is a very intelligent mind that shows through in his work. Many of his protagonists are writers.”

Read the full story: https://news.ku.edu/2016/10/26/new-book-greatest-ghost-story-writer

John Tibbetts has been busy lately with several signings/ readings for his new book, “The Gothic Worlds of Peter Straub.” The book is a critical investigation of the life and work of one of America’s premiere writers of the Gothic story. In a review in the Washington Post, Pulitzer-Prize winning critic Michael Dirda wrote: “[The Gothic Worlds of Peter Straub] deftly tracks the life of this ‘Magaellan of the Interior,’ who for more than 40 years has been exploring the shadowy corners of the human heart... Tibbetts’s study, illustrated with photographs and drawings, is a must-read for any admirer of this restless protean man of letters."

The "tour" began in Lawrence and concluded in Brooklyn, New York. The Raven Book Store was the site for the event on October 25.

Three days later he was a guest of the World Fantasy Convention in Columbus, Ohio, where he gave some readings from the book. In attendance was Peter Straub himself.

Finally, on November 5 Tibbetts went to Brooklyn, New York, where he and Peter Straub appeared jointly for a reading and a book signing at the BookCourt store.

Tibbetts has also appeared on Public Radio to talk about the book. On the morning of November 4 he appeared with Laura Lorson of Kansas Public Radio, and on the morning of November 8 he appeared with Steve Kraske of KCUR, Kansas City, Missouri.
Out & About

FMS Lecturer Laura Kirk recently presented her research at the Citizen Jane Film School during the Citizen Jane Film Festival for the panel When Women Ran Hollywood.

As noted in the program: When Women Ran Hollywood: Meet 5 Female Screenwriters Who Helped Invent Hollywood. Moderator: Dr. Rosanne Welch. Panelist: Toni Anita Hull, Amelia Phillips, Laura Kirk, Sarah Whorton, Julie Berkobien. The Stephens College MFA in Screenwriting is proud to present five of our fabulous MFA students who will in turn introduce the audience to five female screenwriters whose work we know, but whose names have been left out of the textbooks. Help us write them back in and remind us all that Women Ran Hollywood once and are on their way to doing it again!

For more information: http://citizenjanefilmfestival.org/schedule/

Doctoral student Najmeh Moradiyan Rizi has published an article in the peer-reviewed Canadian journal of Synoptique (Concordia University, Montréal). Moradiyan’s article, “The Acoustic Screen: The Dynamics of the Female Look and Voice in Abbas Kiarostami’s Shirin,” is part of Synoptique’s themed issue on “Humorous Disruptions: Humour and Technologies of Disruption in Feminist Media Theory and Practice” (Vol. 5, No. 1).

For more information: http://synoptique.hybrid.concordia.ca/index.php/main/article/view/110

Cine En Construcción (Films In Progress) and the Quest for Post-Production Funding, Prestige, and Overseas Audiences

Professor Tamara Falicov was in London on November 29 to speak about how an Ibero-American finishing fund competition known as ‘Films in Progress’, based at the San Sebastian Film Festival in Spain, helps Latin American films to be completed in order to give these films a chance of entering a prestigious, European film festival the following year.

This process is analyzed to show how a jury comprised of post-production industry professionals selects a film it thinks will be successful, not only in art house film festival venues, but also potentially at the box office.

A major theoretical discussion is how these films might embody what can be called a ‘globalized art house aesthetic’ given that they are made locally but in this case are ultimately destined for a larger global art house market. Finally, the selected film then becomes a co-production, and a collaboration between a Latin American country (in this case, Paraguay) and Spain. These financing arrangements have both strengths and pitfalls, to be analyzed in this research project.
Alumnus Tyler Doehring begins production on short WWII film 'Dust'

When making short films, University alumnus Tyler Doehring [Theatre and Film BA, 2009] tries to keep his themes simple, while answering the hardest question there is.

“I think my narrative voice tends to ask the same question: What is the purpose of life?” Doehring said. “That's obviously a pretty complicated question with no real concrete answer, so I just try to keep looking at it from new angles.”

This question will inhabit the narrative theme and voice of his newest project, “Dust,” a short war film.

When he can find spare time, Doehring enjoys working on his own short films which often feature Alex Salamat, a fellow alumnus and actor, in the lead role.

“Dust is compelling, because he wants what he can't have,” Salamat said. “What he wants most is to die ... It's a fun duality. Playing with this God complex and also deep feelings of inadequacy.”

To fund “Dust,” Doehring recently opened an Indiegogo crowdfunding page in order to raise $6,000. Doehring decided to give five dollars out of every donation of $25 or more, plus every dollar raised after his $6,000 goal, to the United Service Organizations.

“I wanted it to be clear it's a reverent piece,” Doehring said. “It dawned on me that it'd be great to also benefit the troops and to bring positive attention to the short.”

Salamat added, “I think our troops need as much support as possible. They're pretty strong men and women, but they have a damn hard job. I'm glad to help.”

If everything goes as planned, Doehring will start filming on Dec. 10, just three days after the 75th anniversary of Pearl Harbor.


'Descry' screening sparks discussion on race and racism


The 10-minute film focuses on a young black man in a diner in anywhere-America, and delves into both subtle and obvious racism through a series of intentionally cliched interactions with people around him.

Immediately after the screening, Nicole Hodges Persley, an associate professor in the Department of Theatre, said that, as a woman of color, the tropes of “Descry,” though cliches to some, were day-to-day realities for her and her family.

Joining Persley, a panel met after the film to discuss the heavy subject matter in a tense and emotional discussion that lasted for two hours.

The discussion after the screening was an emotional experience. Members of the audience were comfortable enough to voice their varying opinions, sometimes in tears and other times in frustrated, raised voices.

“The point of the film is to make you uncomfortable,” Bleecker said. “When I first started writing this, Ferguson had just happened and I thought, ’This is something that needs to be talked about.’”

While the film is currently running in festival circuits, it cannot be released to the public. Bleecker hopes to distribute “Descry” via iTunes and other online media sometime within the next year.

Read the full story here: http://www.kansan.com/arts_and_culture/descry-screening-sparks-discussion-on-race-and-racism/article_3b6ce322-9ee9-11e6-a234-e39fd5b0d49b.html
Alumni News

'That's So Raven' to return to Disney Channel in spin-off series

On Oct. 27 actress and "The View" panelist Raven-Symoné dropped major news on live television. She was leaving the daytime talk show by the end of the year, and she's coming back to reprise her role as Raven Baxter for a "That's So Raven II" series on Disney Channel.

One of the co-creators and executive producers on the show is 1998 [Theatre and Film] alumnus Scott Thomas [and a member of the FMS Professional Advisory Board]. Knowing the success of the original series, Thomas is beginning the process alongside Symoné and co-creator Jed Elinoff to revamp a story many people loved.

"The best case scenario would be to have familiar faces from the old show and have them pop up, have them involved in some way," Thomas said. "But at the same time introduce some new stars through the kids."

The longtime creative team of Thomas and Elinoff are no strangers to developing young talent. They are also co-creators of "Best Friends Whenever," a Disney Channel show that just wrapped up its second season.

Shortly after they finished, Thomas and Elinoff received a call from a Disney executive about joining the team for a new "That's So Raven" series. Now, they are in the process of developing the pilot script for the show in hopes that they can get the show off the ground as soon as possible.

"We're working with the Disney execs and with Raven to come up with the perfect story to kick this thing off," Thomas said.

Read full story:  http://www.kansan.com/arts_and_culture/that-so-raven-to-return-to-disney-channel-in/article_4442c1c4-a44d-11e6-a49e-c3c16e4257a5.html

KU alumni developing feature-length film

Originally conceived in 2009, "Follow the Leader" was a project that Ben and Jacob Burgharts shelved, knowing there was some potential in the idea. When they came to the University, the brothers began entering short films in the Wild West Film Fest, a local biannual short film contest. They especially enjoyed the horror-themed competition in the fall. This is where they met Josh Doke [FMS BGS, 2012], now a collaborator on "Follow the Leader."

Instead of continuing to compete against the brothers, Doke and his partner began to talk with Ben about collaborating on a future project. This led the brothers to eventually pitch their idea from 2009 as a feature-length film to be produced by Doke's production company, Rockhaven films.

"Follow the Leader" takes place in the 1990s and tells the story of three people who are dropped in an abandoned mall. One has lost their sight, the second has lost their hearing and the third is now mute. When they soon discover that they are not alone in this mall, they must work together to survive and hope that trusting one another can get them through this unimaginable tight spot.

Recently, the Burgharts started a Kickstarter campaign to raise $10,000. With just under two weeks left, and nearly halfway to their goal, they hope to use the funds for almost every aspect of the production process, from the set, to the camera package, to their actors' wages.

Both Doke and Ben expressed their hope that this film resonates throughout Kansas and beyond its borders. Production is set to begin in February.

"We don't just want to make a film that's good for being from Kansas,” Doke said. “We just want to make a good film. Period.”

Read the full story:  http://www.kansan.com/arts_and_culture/ku-alumni-developing-feature-length-film/article_1e431436-9cde-11e6-8229-a3ae5959bfc1.html
The Department of Film & Media Studies  
December 2016

Academic Calendar
Thursday, December 8 — Last day of classes
Friday, December 9 — Stop Day
Monday, December 12 — First day of Finals
Friday, December 16 — Last day of Finals and Graduate Student Application for Graduation deadline

http://www.registrar.ku.edu/calendar/

Equipment Check-in: 10:00 a.m. — 12:00 p.m., Monday, Wednesday, and Friday  
Equipment Check-out: 1:00 p.m. — 3:00 p.m., Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
Sign-up to check-out equipment in the binder on the table near the equipment room.
Sign-up for editing rooms by signing the edit room schedule posted on the editing room doors.
The computer lab is available for use during the following times:
Monday: 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Tuesday: 11:00 – 3:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 8:30 – 12:00 p.m. and 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Thursdays: 8:30 – 12:00 p.m.
Friday: 8:30 – 5:00 p.m.
Check with your instructor or John McCluskey, Assistant Technical Director, for more information.

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http://blog.college.ku.edu/

Are you a Film & Media Studies (or Theatre & Film) alum? We’d love to hear from you. Click https://film.ku.edu/alumni-submissions to update your information with us, so we can add you to the impressive ranks of our alumni.

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