



2025-2026

Year in Review

FTVDM Events Calendar Retrospective

UCLA

School of Theater, Film & Television
**Film, Television
& Digital Media**



The background image shows a dimly lit stage. On the left, a person is partially visible, possibly a performer or audience member. In the center, a large screen displays a colorful, abstract image. The overall atmosphere is dark and artistic.

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A message from Dean Celine Parreñas Shimizu



DEAR FTVDM COMMUNITY,

We measure our work by the conversations it opens. Argentine Third Cinema filmmakers and theorists Solanas and Getino wrote “Towards a Third Cinema” in 1969, calling the film a pretext, the gathering, the event for unleashing the power of cinema to transform society.

The classroom is our first gathering, where the next generations produce knowledge and ask better questions toward imagining and actualizing new worlds. At UCLA, scholarship and creative production are inseparable: each challenges, informs and expands the possibilities of the other.

In and beyond the classroom, FTVDM gathers extraordinary artists, scholars, and industry and community leaders. Our students learn from visionary filmmakers and scholars. They examine media history and theory through CMS programming, celebrate animation at the ANNIE Awards, test emerging technologies at our Future of Cinema AI Conference and build collaborations in conferences, mixers, workshops and conversations.

Our students take these opportunities further than anyone plans for them. They engage fearlessly with ideas. They bring critical inquiry to creative practice and discover new questions through the work of making and writing. They premiere films and projects, pitch original work, write articles and essays, share scripts and celebrate one another at the TFT Film Festival. In every event, I watch emerging voices shape our collective future. *Your Voice, Our Story.*

In the James Bridges Theater, the Darren Star Theater, our classrooms, our sound stages and beyond campus, FTVDM makes spaces that enliven learning and empower the next generations everyday. I am in awe of our enterprise at UCLA TFT. Thank you to our students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors and guests. These pages record what we do at FTVDM, who we are and what we accomplish together as we launch the future of cinema: independent, innovative and impactful.

In beloved community,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Celine Parreñas Shimizu". The script is fluid and cursive.

Celine Parreñas Shimizu, Ph.D.

Dean of the UCLA School of Theater, Film & Television

Distinguished Professor, Department of Film, Television & Digital Media

A message from Fabian Wagmister, Chair

DEAR FRIENDS OF FTVDM,

I am honored to share this glimpse at our creative and intellectual community in the Department of Film, Television, & Digital Media. I have been privileged to be a member of this community for 35 years as faculty, as head of the production program, and now as chair. Every year I am excited to witness moments of deep critical thinking, inspiration of creative discovery, and collective transformative dialogues.



Our mission, while training solid professionals, above all is to enable the intellectual and creative film, media and digital innovators that society needs for an enlightened future. As we start the 26-27 year, we look forward to welcoming our incoming students. We stand ready to help them develop their individual voices, cultivate their art and learn from the experiences of our world-class professors and guests.

Inside this brochure, you will see some of the resonant events we produced in 2025-26 – from master classes, guest speakers, special screenings, industry panels, our Film Festival and more! This past year's Film Festival shined a light on the impressive accomplishments of both our undergraduate and graduate students in all areas of the Department.

Whether our students are developing, creating or collaborating across the programs and departments, we value the importance of the devotion of our esteemed faculty along with our committed staff as they inspire and guide our students' individual projects. This year we are pleased to welcome two new outstanding Associate Professors to our Senate Faculty: **Amy Winfrey** in Animation and **Joseph Erb** in Production.

Thank you for helping us continue to strive to achieve greatness, in keeping with the vast energy and spirit exuding from TFT. It is a wonderful gift to have our alumni and supporters as part of our community.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fabian Wagmister'.

Fabian Wagmister
Professor and Chair, UCLA Department of Film,
Television & Digital Media

Department of Film, Television & Digital Media **Leadership**

Chair



**Professor Fabian
Wagmister**

Vice Chairs



**Professor Kristy
Guevara-Flanagan**
Vice Chair,
Undergraduate Studies



**Associate Professor
Shelleen Greene**
Vice Chair, Cinema &
Media Studies



**Professor Juan Pablo
González**
Vice Chair,
Production

Area Heads



Professor Phyllis Nagy
Area Head,
Screenwriting



Professor Teri Schwartz
Area Head,
Producers Program



Professor Chuck Sheetz
Area Head,
Animation



2025-2026
Event Retrospective

2025-2026 Fall Quarter Events

SATURDAY, SEPT 27: Back To School

Beach Party ANIMATION

A welcome event for all Animation students and faculty.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8: Welcome

Party SCREENWRITING

A welcome event for all Screenwriting MFAs and faculty.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11: Naked Lunch at the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures

Screening followed by a discussion with Chair, Professor Fabian Wagmister and Peter Weller.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16: Screening and Q&A with Justin Lin for his new film Last Days PRODUCTION

MONDAY, OCTOBER 20: UCLA Screenwriting MFA Program Info Session SCREENWRITING

A Zoom event for those interested in applying to the MFA Screenwriting program, held with the help of the Admissions and Recruitment Office.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23: Masterclass with Giovanna Ferrari ANIMATION

A screening and masterclass held by award-winning animator Giovanna Ferrari.



The Simpsons creator Matt Groening with Barbara Boyle, professor emerita and founder of the Groening Fellowship. Photo by Jc Olivera

OCTOBER 24-25: Future of Cinema AI Conference CMS

Collaboration with UCLA Film and Television Archive, Locarno Film Festival, and Swissnex.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28: Masterclass with Screenwriter Josh Singer

SCREENWRITING

An intensive 3-hour masterclass with Oscar-winning screenwriter Josh Singer, offered to all Screenwriting MFAs.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2: Sloan Colloquium SCREENWRITING

A required informational Zoom session for Screenwriting MFAs interested in submitting for the Sloan Award in Screenwriting.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7: Voice Actors Mixer with Animation MFAs ANIMATION

The first of two of the bi-annual mixers brought together Theater students with Animation MFAs for possibilities of collaboration on animated student films.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16: Screening of the Groening Production Fellowship in Animation Films ANIMATION

Fellowship award recipients screen their films for donor Matt Groening, animation faculty and animation students at an invitation-only event.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4: Screening with Q&A of animated feature Boys To Jupiter ANIMATION

Special screening as a collaboration with ASIFA-Hollywood, followed by Q&A with the filmmaker, open to all Animation students and faculty and ASIFA membership.

2025-2026 Fall Quarter In-Class Events

FTV 183B Producing II: Entertainment Economics

Mali Kinberg, PhD-visits for her entire class (first-year Producers Program, Screenwriters, CMS, and Anderson School students) to MRC (Media Rights Capital) and to WME Talent Agency.

FTV 183B: Producing II, Entertainment Economics & 294C: International Financing & Distribution, Mali Kinberg, PhD, Lecturer **PRODUCERS**

*Toby Emmerich - Producer and Former Chairman of Warner Bros. Pictures Group
Stuart Ford - Chairman & CEO, AGC Studios*

Maria Grazia Vario - Chief Content Officer, Groenlandia Films

Josh Small - CFO, Blumhouse

Steve Freedman - EVP, Head of Production for Film, MRC

Jonathan King - President, Closer Media

Rick Rosen - Head of TV, WME

Roya Vakili - SVP Intl Marketing

FTV 282A: TV Development 1, Rose Catherine Pinkney, Lecturer **PRODUCERS**

Aaron Kaplan Non-Writing EP aka "NWEP" -- several shows

Tracy Oliver. EP Creator First Wives Club

Steve Stark - NWEP Wednesday, Fargo

Michael Price: EP Simpson's, creator Lil Kev

Matt Claybrooks EP creator Lil Kev

Adam Gianni NBC Universal. SVP Development

Corey Marsh -NWEP for Wonderland - Average Joe, Dead to Me

Felisha Mary - writer 13 reasons to why not, Bigger creator

Rob Cullen creator Lucky, Average Joe

Devon Shepard EP Being Mary Jane, Weeds

Mike Stein - NWEP for Heartbeat

Kyle Loftus agent president IAG



FTV 184, Overview of Contemporary TV Industry, Paul Nagle, Lecturer

PRODUCERS

Agapay Kapouranis - President, Int'l Distribution Lionsgate Television

Alex Sepiol - Executive Vice-President, Scripted Development NBCUniversal

Rich Greenfield - Partner, Founder, Wall Street Analyst

Jonathan Barzilay - COO, PBS

Robb Rothmann - Founder, Partner UTA and Rothmann, Brecher, Ehrich, Livingston

Howard Braunstein - Executive Producer, Howard Braunstein Films

Glen Mazzara - Showrunner (CRASH; THE WALKING DEAD)

Jason Piccioni - Effects Supervisor

Lisa Kramer - Head of Int'l Television Distribution Viacom

Melissa Harper - Executive VP, Physical Production NBCUniversal

2025-2026 Fall Quarter In-Class Events

FTV 288A: Feature Film Development

1, Alex Franklin, Lecturer **PRODUCERS**

Sarah Flores (Anarchists United aka Lilly Wachowski's company)
Rob Harrington (3 Arts)
Nick Hoffmann (20th Century Studios)
Amanda Jaeger (UTA)
Chris Janney (Anonymous Content)
Jon Kolkey (Netflix)
Keenan Kunst (Blumhouse)
Bobbie Lucas (NBC Universal International)
Stephanie Morales-Macedo (Project X)
Linda Riedmann (Color Force)
Melissa Scicluna (Netflix)

**All Producers Program alumni*

FTV 297A, 297B, Digital Media Producing 1 & 2, Gabe Michael, Lecturer, Digital Media Producing II (AI) **PRODUCERS**

Class sponsors from top AI tool companies: Runway, OpenArt, Elevenlabs. Special trainings and product demos from OpenArt.

Digital Media Producing I **PRODUCERS**

Stacey Crawford - VP, Content Strategy and Executive Producer (former)
Damion Taylor - Founder, Prometheus Digital Studio

402A Section 1 **PRODUCTION**

Jeremy Podeswa
Ngozie Unwarah & Saffron Burrows

403A: Advanced Documentary

Workshop **PRODUCTION**

Filmmakers Rodrigo Reyes and Lorena Gutierrez-Meet in Darren Star Theater
Special Guest: Filmmaker Daniel Junge to screen *I Was Born This Way* in Darren Star Theater.

FTV210: Robocop Screening

followed by a panel moderated by Professor Amy Villarejo with Peter Weller, Ed Neumeier, Barbara Boyle in the James Bridges Theater.

Image (l-r): Peter Weller, Ed Neumeier, Barbara Boyle and Professor Amy Villarejo in a panel discussion on the production of Robocop



2025-2026 Winter Quarter Events

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7: FTV 6A:

American Motion Picture CMS

Assoc. Prof. Ellen Scott

Guest Speaker: Sara Vales

Topic: Introducing Velaslavasay Panorama:

An overview of the panoramic art form (both moving & 360-degree), the general history and projects of the Velaslavasay Panorama (established 2000), including the recent exhibition of the Grand Moving Mirror of California in Seoul, Korea and a live demonstration of a model of the Grand Moving Mirror of California along with information on Los Angeles' oldest purpose built cinema—the Union Theater—home of Velaslavasay Panorama since December 2004.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 8: Screening with Q&A of animated feature *Olivia & las Nubes* ANIMATION

Special screening as a collaboration with ASIFA-Hollywood, followed by Q&A with the filmmaker, open to all Animation students, faculty and ASIFA members.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21: UCLA Animation MFA Program Info Session

ANIMATION

A Zoom event for those interested in applying to the MFA Animation program, held with the help of the Admissions and Recruitment Office.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28: Conversation with Julia Ducournau

PRODUCTION

Moderated by Professor Fabian Wagmister (Darren Star Theater).

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31: Premiere Screening of PBS Kids “Phoebe & Jay”

ANIMATION

A premiere screening of the pilot episode

of PBS Kids series “Phoebe & Jay”, co-created by alum and animation lecturer Thy Than, followed by Q&A with Than and co-creator Genie Deez with special activities for children and families. Held in collaboration with PBS Kids.



Image: Genie Deez and TFT alumna and animation lecturer Thy Than at the TFT premiere of their PBS Kids series, Phoebe & Jay

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6: Voice Actors Mixer with Animation MFAs ANIMATION

The second of two of bi-annual mixers to bring Theater students with Animation MFAs for possibilities of collaboration on animated film projects.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18: FFTV 6A: American Motion Picture CMS

Assoc. Prof. Ellen Scott

Guest Speaker: Nicholas Sisters and Tony Nicholas

Topic: Presentation on the legacy of the Nicholas Brothers and the continued craft of tap dancing with their granddaughters.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21: The Animation Workshop Attends the ANNIE Awards ANIMATION

2nd and 3rd year Animation MFAs attended the opening reception, ANNIE Awards ceremony and post-event party, made possible by ASIFA-Hollywood.

2025-2026 Winter Quarter Events



Image: Internationally renowned writer and director Alireza Khatami (center, back row) with Screenwriting MFAs during the two-day Masterclass on Autofictional Screenwriting

FEBRUARY 21-22: Masterclass in Autofictional Screenwriting with Alireza Khatami SCREENWRITING

A two-day-long intensive masterclass with distinguished international writer/director Alireza Khatami and Screenwriting MFAs, made possible by the Hunter Zakin Fund for Screenwriting.

MONDAY, MARCH 2: FTV 6A: American Motion Picture CMS

Assoc. Prof. Ellen Scott
Guest Speaker: Josslyn Lockett
Topic: Discussion of her latest book.

FRIDAY, MARCH 6: Music Mixer with Animation MFAs ANIMATION

A mixer and info session to bring together students of the film scoring program from the Herb Alpert School of Music with Animation MFAs to explore collaboration on student films.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11: CMS Screening CMS

Prof. Shelleen Greene
Guest: Anna Negri, film director
Topic: Film screening of Anna Negri's documentary Toni, mio padre about her world-renowned philosopher father.

FRIDAY, MARCH 13: UCLA Screenwriting MFA Program Welcome for Admitted Students SCREENWRITING

A Zoom event to welcome admitted students to the Screenwriting MFA Program, including Q&A with a panel of current MFAs, recent program alumni, and the Screenwriting area head Professor Phyllis Nagy.

2025-2026 Winter Quarter In-Class Events

FTV C147/247: Physical Production for Creatives, Kate Beyda, Lecturer

PRODUCERS

Gary Dauberman - Director/Writer/Producer
 Dave Neustadter - Head of Creative at NLC (aka "New Line Cinema")
 Celia Khong - Creative Executive NLC
 Paulina Sussman - Creative Executive NLC
 Chris Bender - Producer and Manager - Good Fear
 Scott White - Director/LP/Producer
 Gretel Twombly - LP
 Michelle Morrissey - LP
 Eric McLeod - LP
 Michael Amundson - AD
 Steven Butensky - Estimator - Warner Bros
 Bill Povletich - Estimator - Warner Bros
 Lisa Knudson-Dietz - VP Finance - Warner Bros
 Joel Tokarsky - Controller
 Jane Lee - SVP Labor Relations Warner Bros
 Ruby Little - VP Labor Relations Warner Bros
 Robert Johnson - Head of Labor at Disney
 Lewis Oberlander - EVP Market Research Warner Bros
 Chelsey Summer - SVP Corporate Communications Warner Bros
 Mark Brown - EVP Visual Effects NLC
 Jen O'Malley - Music exec NLC
 Jessica Alan - SVP Post Production Warner Bros
 Tierney Branda - physical production Exec Amazon/MGM
 Sarah Roberts - physical production Exec NLC
 Lisa Cochran - SVP TV Production Management WBTV
 Justin White - Production Incentives Warner Bros
 Lex Pascal - VP Production Incentives Warner Bros/HBO/TV/NL/DC



FTV 282A: Overview of Network TV Management, Tom Nunan, Lecturer

PRODUCERS

Disney lot tour for the entire second-year Producers Program cohort; special screening of Dead Man's Wire; hosts and oversees Producers Program Physical Production Bootcamp for incoming first years.

FTV: 282B: TV Development 2, Dan McDermott, Lecturer

PRODUCERS

Mark Johnson (NWEF of Breaking Bad; Better Call Saul)
 Karey Burke (President, 20th Century TV)
 Michael Duggan (Writer EP of Miami Vice; Law & Order, etc.)
 Ben Davis (EVP Programming AMC)
 Kevin Reilly (former CEO of FOX, F/X, NBC and WarnerMedia)
 Matt Miller (EP/Showrunner)
 Angela Kang (Showrunner The Walking Dead)
 Laura Feldman (Casting Sony Pictures)
 Carrie Gillogly and Emma Miller (Netflix)

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Winter Quarter In-Class Events

FTV 288B: Feature Film Development 2 & 287B ART & Business of Producing 2, Lianne Halfon, Professor PRODUCERS

*David McKimmie, Sr VP Searchlight Post
Albert Berger, partner Bonafide, producer
Little Miss Sunshine, the Leftovers, Peanut
Butter Falcon*

*Gillian Bohrer, partner Megamix, former
co-president Lionsgate*

*Christopher Blauvelt, cinematographer
Running Out of Angels*

Doug Hall, screenwriter Blackish

*Thayer Juergens, Eastern Standard Head
of Development*

*Danny Gabai, producer and former head
of Vice Media*

*Zoe Worth and Chris Kaye, producers
Thelma*

*Francesco Melzi d'Eril, producer Call Me
By Your Name, The Voice of Hind Rajab*

*Distribution Universal Pictures
Nasim Cabron- Head of Publicity
Lionsgate Films*

*Patricia Gonzalez- EVP, In Theatre
Marketing, Paramount Pictures*

*Joe Wees, EVP, Creative Advertising
Universal Pictures*

*Lauren Martin, EVP Brand Marketing
Universal Pictures*

*Candace Chen, SVP, Media Universal
Pictures*

Lyndsay Dye, SVP Media Universal Pictures

*Nicole Schlegel, VP Global Digital
Marketing Universal Pictures*

FTV 297B Digital Media Producing 1 & 2, Gabe Michael, Lecturer, Digital Media Producing II (AI) PRODUCERS

*Class sponsors from top AI tool
companies: Runway, OpenArt, Elevenlabs.
Special trainings and product demos from
OpenArt.*

FTV 291B: Feature Film Marketing, Chuck Sanders, Lecturer PRODUCERS

*Adam Fogelson- Chairman Lionsgate Films
Dwight Caines- President, Marketing
Universal Pictures*

*Jim Orr- President, Domestic Distribution
Universal Pictures*

Kathleen Gallagher, EVP Domestic

403B: PRODUCTION

*Screening with Noah Arjomand with Eat
Your Catfish in Darren Star Theater
Special Guest: Cinematographer Jenna
Roshier in Darren Star Theater.*

2025-2026

Spring Quarter Events

MONDAY, APRIL 6: FTV 221 CMS

Assoc. Prof. Ellen Scott

Guest Speaker: Lisa Gay Hamilton

Topic: Black Women Media Makers.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8: Screening CMS

Prof. Shelleen Greene

Guest Speaker: Prof. Simone Brioni

*Topic: Film Screening of his documentary,
Maka, about the Afro-Italian writer.*

FRIDAY, APRIL 10: Ripples of the LA Rebellion - Artbound: LA Rebellion and Don't Be Long Little Bird

*Including a panel with featured alumni
filmmakers in the James Bridges Theater.*

SATURDAY, APRIL 11: An Evening with Richard Gadd SCREENWRITING

*Moderated by Prof. Phyllis Nagy and Prof.
Amy Villarejo.*

2025-2026 Spring Quarter Events



Image (l-r): Professor William McDonald, James Deakins and Roger Deakins

APRIL 11 & 12: A Masterclass with Baby Reindeer Creator Richard Gadd

SCREENWRITING

A two-day intensive masterclass with writer/producer Richard Gadd and Screenwriting MFAs, made possible by the Hunter Zakin Fund for Screenwriting.

MONDAY, APRIL 13: FTV 221 CMS

Assoc. Prof. Ellen Scott

Guest Speaker: Philana Payton

Topic: Discussion of recent work on *Black Woman Media Makers*.

MONDAY, MAY 11: FTV 221 CMS

Assoc. Prof. Ellen Scott

Guest Speaker: Jossalynn Smith

Topic: Recent book on LA Rebellion.

THURSDAY, MAY 14: Sir Roger Deakins, ASC, BSC & James Deakins

PRODUCTION

MONDAY, MAY 18: FTV 221 CMS

Assoc. Prof. Ellen Scott

Guest Speaker: Sophia Nahli Allison

Topic: Discussion/presentation on her films, research, and film methodology, in conversation with the theme of *Elegy* and *Black women media-makers*.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20: FTV 113 CMS

Asst. Prof. Veronica Paredes

Guest Speaker: Kristine McKenna

Topic: Recently published, co-authored memoir of David Lynch.

THURSDAY, MAY 28: "What Comes Next" SCREENWRITING

A session with senior Screenwriting faculty and the 2nd-year cohort to discuss "what comes next" in the trajectory of a graduating MFA.

MONDAY, JUNE 1: FTV 221 CMS

Assoc. Prof. Ellen Scott

Guest Speaker: Raven Jackson and Jomo

Fray. Topic: *Black Woman Media Makers*.

JUNE 6-11: TFT Film Festival

THURSDAY, JUNE 11: CMS Faculty Retreat at Luskin Center CMS

Topic: Faculty Retreat to discuss 5-year plan and development ideas; with presentation by Olivier Tournaud from Villa Albertine.

THURSDAY, JUNE 18: *Fade In, Fade Out: The Cinematic Life of Barbara Boyle*

A screening of alumna Nazanin Nematollahi's documentary on the life of producer and Professor Emerita Barbara Boyle. Followed by a Q&A moderated by Professor Kristy Guevara-Flanagan.



Event Highlight 2026 TFT Film Festival

THE 2026 UCLA SCHOOL OF THEATER, FILM AND TELEVISION FILM FESTIVAL

brought together students, alumni, faculty, industry leaders, and film lovers for six unforgettable nights celebrating the next generation of storytellers. Held June 6–11 at UCLA’s James Bridges Theater, the festival showcased exceptional student work spanning animation, narrative, documentary, screenwriting, producing, and directing while honoring distinguished industry professionals whose careers continue to inspire emerging artists.

The festival opened with the annual **Animation Extravaganza**, where audiences experienced an impressive collection of undergraduate and MFA animated films ranging from hand-drawn and 3D animation to stop-motion and experimental works. The evening also celebrated Crystal Anvil Award honoree Valerie Lettera-Spletzer, recognizing her decades-long career as an artist, educator, and animation professional. Student achievement awards honored Yanzhang Song (*Scissors*), Yiru Deng (*The Pit and Tunnel Vision*), Eric Babajian (*The Starlet*), and Marcello Frisina (*Snowblind*) for outstanding accomplishments in storytelling, animation, innovation, and artistic excellence.

The celebration continued with the **Undergraduate Showcase**, highlighting an extraordinary collection of senior projects from UCLA’s graduating filmmakers, screenwriters, animators, cinematographers, producers, editors, and digital media artists. Featuring narrative films, documentaries, animation, pitch presentations, and cinematography reels, the evening reflected the creative diversity and ambitious storytelling that define the undergraduate program. Associate Professor Rory Kelly addressed the audience, celebrating the graduating class as they prepare to launch the next chapter of their creative careers.

At the **Screenwriters Showcase**, the spotlight shifted from the screen to the page as the year’s strongest feature screenplays and television pilots were recognized. Acclaimed writer, performer, and producer Rachel Bloom received the Distinguished Screenwriter Award, inspiring attendees with her groundbreaking career. Honors were presented to Greyson Wyatt (*Son of Duke*), Annie Farrell (*The Lady With*



the Dog), Isabelle McKelvey (*The Landlords*), and Yayabell Debay (*The Retreat*), recognizing exceptional work across feature screenwriting and television writing.

The festival's entrepreneurial spirit took center stage during **Producers Marketplace**, where finalists from UCLA's Producers Program pitched original film and television projects before an accomplished panel of industry executives. The event showcased the creativity and strategic thinking required to bring stories from concept to screen while providing students with invaluable professional feedback. Two coveted honors—the Dan Angel Family Producers Award and the Barbara Boyle Promising Producers Prize—were presented to Amanda Lee during the live event.

The **Production Thesis Showcase** highlighted the culminating work of TFT's MFA production directors, presenting a powerful lineup of thesis films that reflected years of artistic growth and creative exploration. Audiences experienced stories spanning horror, documentary, drama, and experimental cinema, while Distinguished Alumni Honoree Arkesh Ajay returned to celebrate the next generation of filmmakers following his own successful career.

The festival concluded with **Directors Spotlight**, a signature event showcasing outstanding films selected from across TFT's Animation, Documentary, and Narrative concentrations. Emmy- and Directors Guild Award-winning director Leslie Linka Glatter delivered the keynote address, offering invaluable insight drawn from an extraordinary career directing acclaimed series including *Homeland*, *Mad Men*, *The Morning Show*, and *Zero Day*. Additionally, students honored Ben Stiller with the Vanguard Filmmaker Award – the most prestigious recognition of the festival. The evening culminated with the presentation of the festival's highest honor, the Grand Jury Prize, awarded to Shizue Roche Adachi for *Small Claims*.

Together, the festival embodied the Department of Film, Television & Digital Media's commitment to nurturing fearless storytellers and fostering creative innovation across every discipline of filmmaking, and affirmed its role as a launchpad for the artists shaping the future of cinema.

2025-2026

Spring Quarter In-Class Events

FTV 289C: Independent Spirit, Aaron Edwards, Lecturer PRODUCERS

Clara Wardlow, Feature Film Program Manager at Sundance
Jordana Sapiurka, casting associate (TOP GUN: MAVERICK; Percy Jackson & The Olympians)
Dylan Kelley, Media Finance agent at WME
Shaurya Nanavati, VP of finance at Black Bear
Matt Newman, Head of AI Studios at Amazon
Harold Beron, VP of Production at Hartbeat (May 21st)
Justin Polk, co-founder of Invisible Collective (May 28th)
Friends and Family Screening of independently-financed Hartbeat comedy

FTV 295C: Advanced Producing, The TV Showrunner, Ben Haigh, Lecturer

PRODUCERS

Cliff Roberts / Syndicate Entertainment (Untamed)
Erica Robbins / SVP, Physical Production, AMC
John Wirth / showrunner, Dark Winds
Tom Brady (writer) and Max Hurwitz / Co-EPs, Dark Winds
Chelsea Kardos / VP Development & Production, Alloy Entertainment
Drew Worobow (VP) and Corey Schmalzle (Director), AMC Studios

FTV 294A: Contracts & Negotiation, David Boyle & Howard Meyers, Lecturers PRODUCERS

Julie Haffner, Head of Motion Picture Business Affairs, WME
Alison Lima, General Counsel, Netflix Animation Studios
Rona Cosgrove, Executive Vice President and Head of Film Business & Legal Affairs, Legendary Entertainment

Joe Rodriguez, Executive Vice President of Business Affairs and Partnerships, Paramount Pictures
Tom Kennedy, Assistant Chief Counsel, Disney
Darren Trattner, attorney for J.J. Abrams, Scott Cooper, James Grey, and many others; named partner of prestigious boutique talent firm, Jackoway Austen
David Koplan, producer (Smashing Machine, Uncut Gems, Spirited)
Ray Mansfield and Sean McKittrick, producer team (Get Out, BlackKkKlansman, Us)

FTV 294C (International Financing Distribution) PRODUCERS

Mali Kinberg, PhD-visits for her entire class (first-year Producers Program, Screenwriters, CMS, and Anderson School students) to MRC (Media Rights Capital) and to WME Talent Agency

122D: Film Editing PRODUCTION

Cate Haight, editor
Luqi Zhao, Maria Friere Fernando, assistant editors and editors
Bill Macomber, owner Fancy Film Post
Larry Black, sound supervisor, mixer, and archivist

C454B: Advanced Film Editing

PRODUCTION

Kristin Feeley (Director of the Sundance Documentary Film and Artist Programs)
Malgosia Turzanska (Oscar nominated costume designer - Hamnet, Train Dreams)
Eva Victor (Writer, Director, Actor - Sorry, Baby)
Will Znidaric (Editor - The Greatest Night In Pop, Being Eddie)

2025-2026

Spring Quarter In-Class Events



Image: Cinematographer Dean Cundy (third from left) with TFT students

298A Section 3: Developing the Advanced Film **PRODUCTION**

Lorelee Sundra and Carra Greenberg of the UCLA Documentary Film Legal Clinic.

298A Section 2: Feature Screenwriting for Directors **PRODUCTION**

Sierra Falconer, MFA production student, thesis feature "Sunfish and Other Stories of Green Lake" Sundance official selection.

298A Section 4: Business of Doc Class **PRODUCTION**

Guest Speaker, Producer Jessica Hargrave
Guest Speaker, Chief Program Officer Megan Gelstein
Guest Speaker, Grasshopper Film Founder Ryan Krivoshey
Guest Speaker, Attorney Dale Nelson
Guest Speaker, Producer Carra Greenberg
Guest Speaker, Producer Megha Kadakia
We screened Kavary Kaul's film *The Bengali* (Megha is producing the impact campaign) with a panel (Star)
Guest Speaker, Alum Aaron Lemle

404: Emerging Technologies and Techniques Cinematography (Virtual Production) **PRODUCTION**

Matt Ryan, DOP
James Amorosino: Technical Director, Creamsource
Eric Roin: Virtual Production Specialist, Paramount
Geoff George
Tanner Grimshaw: Zeiss Camera Tracker

FTV 122N The History of Animation **ANIMATION**

Mindy Johnson, Lecturer
Renowned Cinematographer and TFT alum Dean Cundey, known for lensing the groundbreaking films *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, and *Jurassic Park* among many others, was an honored guest at animation lecturer Mindy Johnson's class FTV 122N *The History of Animation*. While Mr. Cundey was a student at TFT, he was taught by the Oscar-winning cinematographer James Wong Howe.

2025-2026 Memorable Moments



Image: Rachel Bloom (center) with TFT Screenwriting students. Photo by Jc Olivera

ACTOR-SINGER-WRITER RACHEL BLOOM VISITS TFT

The annual TFT Film Festival is a six-night extravaganza showcasing the outstanding works created by the MFA graduates and undergraduates. It includes the Screenwriters Showcase competition, which features scripts read by industry professionals and finalists chosen in four categories. The winner of each is announced live at the event. A highlight of the most-recent event was the presence of Distinguished Screenwriter Award Honoree Rachel Bloom who shared anecdotes and inspiring words of wisdom.

FTVDM CO-HOSTS SPECIAL ACADEMY MUSEUM EVENT

A collaboration between FTVDM and the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures featured a special screening of David Cronenberg's 1991 hallucinatory noir film *Naked Lunch*, followed by a discussion between Department Chair and Professor Fabian Wagnmister and the star of *Naked Lunch*, Peter Weller.

Dr. Weller teaches masterclasses in directing for FTVDM and just completed work in Quentin Tarantino's *The Further Mis-Adventures of Cliff Booth* – directed by David Fincher and starring Brad Pitt.



Image (l-r): Fabian Wagnmister and Peter Weller. Courtesy of the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures

2025-2026

Memorable Moments



Image: 2025-26 second-year cohort of MFA Production Program students

STUDENTS DEVELOP SKILLS AT ANNUAL THESIS RETREAT

The annual MFA Production Program Thesis Retreat, which began in 2013, is a programmatic activity unique to the UCLA Department of Film, Television & Digital Media that re-envision the process of advancing to candidacy from a singular undertaking between student and advisor to a communal event in which the entire cohort supports and is invested in each member's artistic goals and vision.



Image: Asst. Professor Rory Kelly

During this time, second year cinematographer, narrative fiction and documentary directors, along with faculty of the program, gather at UCLA's Lake Arrowhead Lodge where each student presents a proposal for their thesis film, complete with a synopsis, character descriptions, a director's statement, creative research, a mood board and reel, a production plan, and timeline. These presentations are a culmination of the students' and their advisor's hard work done throughout the quarter. Each presentation is followed by a hearty discussion and exchange of ideas, references, and feedback for the presenting student.

Many striking, imaginative and extraordinary films have emerged from this thesis development process. Students and alum regularly express how much they loved and valued this special experience, and that it is among the top highlights of their time in the program.

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THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A MORE IMPORTANT TIME to support the arts. Your contribution of any size directly supports undergraduate and graduate students and their creative work across film, theater and digital media at UCLA.

Your support helps provide the resources that make hands-on learning possible, from film and production equipment, editing and digital technologies to theater sets, costumes, lighting, sound and other essential production needs. It also expands opportunities for students through guest artists, specialized workshops, master classes and professional mentorship.

Financial support empowers our faculty and staff to build upon the world-class education and experiential training our students already receive, helping them develop their craft, push creative boundaries and thrive as the next generation of storytellers, artists and media professionals.



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