From the Chair

We at the Film Program at Columbia University School of Arts believe the stories we share with each other on screen reflect not only our past and present, but also frame our future. The size and locale of the screens we serve may be changing rapidly, but the rigorous core of our teaching and our resilient spirit remains as powerful as when the program was indelibly shaped by Miloš Forman. As a result our MFA, MA and undergraduate students move on within the professional and scholarly worlds to explore every form of narrative imaginable, including features, documentaries, television, and new media. Like NYC itself, we are diverse and international. In our classrooms, cinematic perspectives from around the globe are shared on a daily basis. We are critical, creative thinkers. We are proud that Columbia filmmakers are changing face of world cinema with an ongoing presence at top international film festivals, multiple awards, and a history of ground-breaking work, and that Columbia scholars are at the vanguard of moving image research, archiving and programming. The real measure of our success however, is something we witness on a daily basis — the emergence of each student’s sense of craft, voice and purpose as we build a community that stretches far beyond our doors. Please consider joining us.

Hilary Brougher, Chair & Associate Professor of Practice, Film Program
Alumna Kathryn Bigelow on the set of her Academy Award-winning film, *The Hurt Locker*
MFA Programs

The MFA programs—in Screenwriting/Directing and in Creative Producing—are among the world’s premiere training grounds for young filmmakers. Unlike other film schools, the two programs share a common first year, combining instruction in producing, directing, and writing with technical training, as well as history and theory. The course of study includes two years of creative workshops and related courses, followed by a year or more of thesis work. All the courses within this unique, integrated curriculum focus on film as a medium for the telling of stories.

Screenwriting/Directing

The mission of the MFA concentration in Screenwriting/Directing is to rigorously train storytellers in film, television, and digital media. TV Writing is also part of the Screenwriting program where students study and write episodic television work. Students are immersed in the principles and working methods of a variety of genres and dramatic forms, and each student is encouraged to explore and establish his or her personal voice.

Course offerings include Directing, Directing Actors, Screenwriting, TV Writing, Elements of Dramatic Narrative, Fundamentals of Editing, Intro to Cinematography, Practical Production, Role of the Producer, TV Directing, Script Revision and Thesis Seminar.

Creative Producing

The MFA concentration in Creative Producing takes advantage of Columbia’s unique geography at the center of the independent film world, with the mission of creating the next generation of producers. The program emphasizes the role of the producer as the creative force behind a project, requiring business and organizational skills, the ability to form creative collaborations and an understanding of an ever-changing marketplace.

Course offerings include Practical Production, Feature Film Development, Feature Film Financing, Writing and Script Analysis for Producers, Pre-Production of a Motion Picture, Business of Film, Business of Television, Directing, Screenwriting, TV Writing, Script Revision, Fundamentals of Editing, Intro to Cinematography, Role of the Producer and Thesis Seminar.
MA in Film and Media Studies

The Master of Arts Program in Film and Media Studies and the undergraduate Film Studies major give students a unique opportunity to study film history and theory in the midst of an active filmmaking community. The Program takes up the evolution of cinema as an art, an institution, an object of philosophical study and an international socio-cultural phenomenon. It is designed to consider current theoretical approaches and to look historiographically at trends such as the transition from film to digital media. The Program is uniquely situated adjacent to the MFA programs in Screenwriting/Directing and Creative Producing, reminding students of the importance of filmmaking practice. The many courses offered in Columbia’s Arts and Sciences departments create opportunities to individualize the course of study. Students are encouraged to take electives in national cinemas, cultural theory, economics, literary studies and philosophy. Our MA alumni enter top international PhD programs, as well as hold jobs as curators, distributors, and critical reviewers.

For more information on applying and Program news and events, visit arts.columbia.edu/ma/film-brochure.
Alumni Accomplishments

Since the MFA program began in 1965, it has been renowned for the global success of its alumni in film and television, including top prizes at Sundance, Cannes, Venice, Berlin, and the Academy Awards.

Since 1991, alumni and faculty have won Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Documentary, Best Animated Feature, Best Screenplay, Best Live-Action Short, and Best Original Song. Our students have won Student Academy awards in 15 of the last 17 annual ceremonies, including the 2016 Gold in the Narrative category for Jimmy Keyrouz’s Nocturne in Black.

Jennifer Lee ’05 is the writer and co-director of Disney’s Frozen, which in 2013 won two Oscars, and became the highest grossing animated film of all time and the highest grossing film ever directed by a woman.

Phil Johnston ’04 co-wrote the screenplay for Zootopia, which was the second highest-grossing film of 2016.

In 2017, Lisa Rubin ’13 wrote and executive produced the original series Gypsy, for Netflix. Gina Atwater, (10’) staff writer Westworld, HBO, penned 10 episodes.

Mark Raso (12’), writer/director brought his feature film Kodachrome to Netflix, as did Olivia Newman (12’) writer/director, First Match. Suzi Yoonessi (’06), writer, director, released her feature, Unloveable. Also in theatres was the critically lauded feature Keep The Change (developed from a short made at CU) by writer/director Rachel Israel (’13), producer Kurt Enger (’07) co-producer Robert Cristiano (’13).

At the 2017 DGA Student Film Awards, 3 alumni took home top prizes. SXSW 2017 showcased work of 18 Columbia alumni and faculty. At Cannes 2018, 5 films premiered from recent alumni, including Yomeddine, (producer, Dina Emam ’16) the first Egyptian film nominated to the main competition. 11 Columbia Filmmakers presented work at the Berlinale. 27 films and one immersive AI experience at Sundance featured the work of Columbia students, faculty and alumni.

Our MA program, has sent students on to doctoral research at Harvard University, New York University, Princeton University, University of California-Berkeley, UCLA, University of Chicago, University of Southern California, Yale, and Kings College, London, among many others.

Kathryn Bigelow’81 became the first woman to win an Academy Award for Best Director, for The Hurt Locker, 2010.

Laura Ricciardi ’07 and Moira Demos ’08 are 4-time Emmy winners for their hit documentary series Making a Murderer, which premiered on Netflix in December 2015.

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Full-Time Faculty

Hilary Brougher, Chair
Bogdan Apetri
Ramin Bahrani
Nico Baumbach
Andy Bienen
Ira Deutchman
Katherine Dieckmann
Trey Ellis
Jane Gaines
Bette Gordon
Annette Insdorf
Jamal Joseph
Tom Kalin
Robert King

David Klass
Jack Lechner
Eric Mendelsohn
Richard Peña
Nicholas Proferes
Frank Pugliese
Maureen A. Ryan
James Schamus
Balir Singer
June Stein

For a list of adjunct faculty and recent guest lecturers visit arts.columbia.edu/film-brochure.

Application & Financial Aid

The School welcomes applications for the fall semester of each year. Visit arts.columbia.edu/apply for all information about applying and application requirements; note specific guidelines for international students, including visa information.

The School of the Arts and Columbia’s Office of University Financial Aid work carefully with current and admitted students to arrange the financing of their degrees. Fellowships, scholarships, federal aid, teaching opportunities and other options are available for eligible students, as well as guidance for finding outside funding.

For more information, visit arts.columbia.edu/tuition/film-brochure.
About the School

Columbia University School of the Arts awards the Master of Fine Arts degree in Film, Theatre, Visual Arts, and Writing and the Master of Arts degree in Film and Media Studies; it also offers an interdisciplinary program in Sound Art. The School is a thriving, diverse community of talented, visionary, and committed artists from around the world and a faculty comprised of acclaimed and internationally renowned artists, film and theatre directors, writers of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction, playwrights, producers, critics, and scholars. In 2015, the School marked the 50th Anniversary of its founding. In 2017, the School opened the Lenfest Center for the Arts, a multi-arts venue designed as a hub for the presentation and creation of art across disciplines on the University’s new Manhattanville campus. The Lenfest hosts exhibitions, performances, screenings, symposia, readings, and lectures that present new, global voices and perspectives, as well as an exciting, publicly accessible home for Columbia’s Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery.

Visit arts.columbia.edu/film-brochure for application requirements and financial aid information.