

VOL. 2 | OCTOBER 2020

# IN THE LOOP

A Message from Stony Brook University's MFA Film and TV Writing Programs



Stony Brook University  
Manhattan

## MFA IN FILM

IN ASSOCIATION WITH KILLER FILMS



### Boo From SBU Film and TV to You! 🎃

As the leaves fall, students in Stony Brook University's MFA in Film and TV program are busy writing scripts, thinking about projects and pitches, and preparing for the last half of the semester. Hybrid classes are the new normal, yet students remain incredibly creative and innovative in this tough year. Students are learning about COVID-19 protocols on film sets and writing short film scripts. Some of our TV Writers have even completed their TV Bible for a Paul Manafort limited series! We have new faculty, a 25th anniversary, and more student accomplishments to share with everyone.

In our Tips from the Writer's Room series, curated by TV Department Director Alan Kingsberg, Lisa Takeuchi Cullen discussed writing and selling a pilot, and her role on the Writer's Guild of America Council, focusing on inclusion and equity. In a quote, she said, "For each of us who feels like we're not seeing something of ourselves represented on screen--that's your story. Don't wait for someone else to tell it. You have to write that story."



Lisa Takeuchi Cullen

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*Welcome to the second edition of IN THE LOOP! We've had a lot of exciting news come out of our program since our September edition. We are especially excited to announce our Film and TV Writing Open Houses! See Page 2 for more details, and remember:*

The next thing  
you create has  
the potential to  
be something  
beautiful

FALL 2020 MASTER CLASS

## Faculty Addition

First, Michael Sardo has joined our TV Writing faculty to lead a Showrunner Workshop. Sardo is known for writing and producing on *The Tracey Ullman Show*, *Grace Under Fire*, *Wings*, *Picket Fences*, *Caroline in the City*, *American Embassy* and *Rizzoli & Isles*. He was the creator, showrunner and executive producer of the series *Fairly Legal* and *Normal*. Sardo will lead a Writers Room of Stony Brook TV writing MFA students to develop his pilot *Run*. We couldn't be more excited to have Michael Sardo joining our program!

## 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF KILLER FILMS

Killer Films has hit their 25th year. They have produced more than 80 films, received 12 Academy Award nominations, and have had numerous festival wins and nominations. Killer Films has been a pioneer in the independent cinema world and was a pillar in the early 1990s for "New Queer Cinema." Founders Christine Vachon and Pamela Koffler have produced films such as, *Boys Don't Cry*, *Carol*, *Still Alice*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *Velvet Goldmine*, and *I Shot Andy Warhol*, along with many others. Killer Films has been partnered with Stony Brook University's MFA Film program for the past five years.



"I get stopped on the street maybe once a month by somebody who says to me, 'You made my favorite movie.' And I never know what title they're going to say," Vachon said. "If you can make a number of movies that have the power to be some-one's favorite, that's a great thing. That's what I want our legacy to be."

## Student Accomplishments

Our very own Noelle Wilson co-wrote a script for a comedy show, alongside Galia Barkol, called *Deep Yearning*. This script was also a Second Round Selection for the Austin Film Festival. Together Noelle and Galia have been awarded the Tangerine Entertainment Fellowship. Tangerine is a production company founded to support women in film and partners with Stowe Story Labs on the Fellowship, awarded annually to an outstanding female screenwriter, filmmaker or creative producer. Congratulations to you both!



A huge congratulations to our recent TV and Film alumni, Jared Szafran, who has won first place for Best Pilot at the Page International Screenwriting Awards. Jared Szafran entered the MFA in Film program in 2015, as part of the OG first film cohort where he studied screenwriting and directing. With the introduction of Alan Kingsberg's TV Writing curriculum, Jared took a deep dive into TV Writing and wrote a spec and three pilots. His latest pilot *RX* won first place in the TV Drama Category at the PAGE International Screenwriting Awards which had over 8000 script submissions from 87 countries. This is a huge win, as this is one of the top contests in the world. Congratulations from all of us at Stony Brook University, Jared!

## Open House

On **November 16 and 17**, our MFA programs in TV Writing and Film are hosting open houses. Our TV Program Open House will be on the 16th, complete with a presentation of the program, a question and answer session, and a special guest speaker: writer and co-executive producer **Davita Scarlett**. Additionally, on the 17th, our Film Open House will feature a presentation and special guest, director **Todd Haynes**. Participation is limited, and an RSVP is required. Feel free to share this information with anyone who may be interested in our MFA programs. Go to [www.stonybrook.edu/film](http://www.stonybrook.edu/film) for more information, or write us at [MFAManhattan@stonybrook.edu](mailto:MFAManhattan@stonybrook.edu).

## Connect With Us! 🎃



Thank you for reading the second 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/>

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