

# VOL. 3 | NOVEMBER 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



### Save the Dates! November Open House

On **November 16 and 17**, we're hosting two Open Classroom/Open Houses for those developing artists and writers interested in pursuing an MFA in Film or TV Writing. Both open houses are in advance of our Turner and Graduate Council Fellowship (GCF) nomination deadline of **December 15, 2020**.

On **November 16th**, our Head of TV Writing **Alan Kingsberg** will give a presentation about the TV Writing program with a question and answer session, paired with a discussion with **Davita Scarlett**, writer and co-executive producer known for her work on *Evil*, *The Good Fight*, and *Queen Sugar*. She is currently developing a new series with Starz and Reese Witherspoon.

On **November 17th**, our Film Open House features a presentation about the MFA in Film program with Director **Magdalene Brandeis**, Artistic Director **Christine Vachon**, and Producer **Simone Pero**, followed by long term collaborator **Vachon** in conversation with indie film legend, **Todd Haynes**. He is the director of the films *The Karen Carpenter Story*, *Poison, Safe*, *Velvet Goldmine*, *Far from Heaven*, *I'm*

*Not There*, *Mildred Pierce*, *Carol*, *Wonderstruck*, and *Dark Waters*.



### IN THIS ISSUE:

- Open House
- About Our Scholarships
- Current Scholarship Recipients
- Student Accomplishments

*Welcome to the latest edition of IN THE LOOP! For this issue, we're focusing on our Open Houses, Scholarship Opportunities, and our students.*

**TV Writing Open House/Open Session:  
November 16, 2020**

**6:45 PM:** Learn about our TV Writing MFA curriculum. Q&A with Head of TV Writing Alan Kingsberg

**8:00 PM:** Davita Scarlett in conversation with Alan Kingsberg.

**Film Open House/Open Session:  
November 17, 2020**

**5:20 PM:** Learn about our Film MFA curriculum. Q&A with Magdalene Brandeis, Christine Vachon, and Simone Pero

**6:30 PM:** Todd Haynes in conversation with Christine Vachon.

All times are in Eastern Standard Time. Participation is limited. RSVP required to: [MFAManhattan@stonybrook.edu](mailto:MFAManhattan@stonybrook.edu)

# About Our Scholarships

“Each year we have the opportunity to put forward our stellar MFA in Film and TV Writing applicants for the big university-wide scholarships, the Turner and the GCF. Our students go toe-to-toe with nominees from all other disciplines, and it’s a great point of pride to see our new four chosen among a field of molecular biologists, among others,” MFA Film Director Magdalene Brandeis said.

This year we have five scholarship recipients: Turner Fellow Scholars Omani McDaniels and Micah Demby, Graduate Council Fellow, Devon Lang, MFA program first-year scholar Elaine Menigo, and second-year scholar, Conor Demmett.



**Elaine Menigo:** “I am a lifelong Wisconsinite who grew up in a town of 2,300 people. I graduated from University of Wisconsin - Madison, and then worked for United States Senator Tammy Baldwin for nearly four years. The part-time Teaching Assistantship I received with my acceptance into the SBU MFA Film program is key to my goal of becoming a director and teacher of film and television. I hope to tell stories that provide reprieve, widen worldviews, and most importantly, entertain.”

**Micah Demby:** “I spent most of my life in Cedar Hill, TX. I then moved to New Orleans and obtained a Filmmaking Degree from Loyola University. I have always loved to read, write, and create, and upon completing my undergraduate education, I felt my journey as a creative was not yet over. I am looking forward to refining my craft and continuing to tell stories that matter to me at SBU. I am so very excited and thankful to have received the Turner Fellowship and to have been accepted into the Film MFA program.”



**Omani McDaniels:** “I lived in Amsterdam for most of my life, working as a club manager turned community manager, with a weekly column on the side. Though writing has always been dear to my heart and my little column was read by tens of thousands, I never dared to see it as a viable career option. The Turner Fellowship has given me the opportunity to get an MFA in TV Writing, and for the first time, I get to choose passion over practicality. It’s my goal to be a vessel for my community through which untold stories can be brought to the screen.”

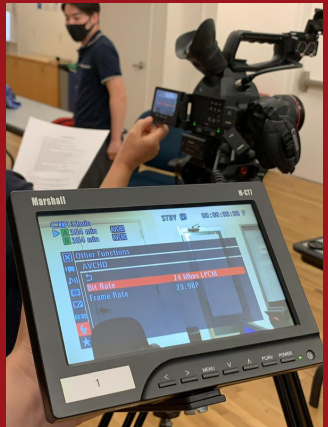
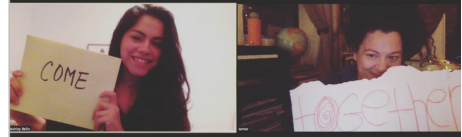
**Devon Lang:** “As a young queer teen fascinated with visual storytelling, I knew early on that it matters profoundly who tells the stories. I studied film production at Santa Fe Community College, American Studies at the University of New Mexico, wrote and performed in circus and burlesque productions, and journaled my way through a variety of occupations, including singing cocktail waitress, exotic dancer, and preschool teacher. The Graduate Council Fellowship is a huge honor, and through Stony Brook’s Television Writing MFA, I am ready to tell some stories.”



**Conor Demmett:** “I’m coming to the program from Hofstra University, where I studied Film and English. Screenwriting is my primary focus, but production courses in the MFA have expanded my interests and influenced how I approach writing. I like to write about characters with intimate relationships, so the opportunity to learn more about directing has been invaluable. Through working with Lenny Crooks and the Dogme class, I am also able to take part in the SUNYPACC Prize finals, broadening my experience/stepping out of my comfort zone.” **BREAKING NEWS:** *Conor, Zhuoga Renqing, and Maja Cule won!* *Read more in our December Newsletter.*

## Student Accomplishments

Film student Ashley Bello and TV Writer/Music composer Tamar Haviv Music have found a way to make us feel a whole lot closer. Humans from every continent joined together to help Tamar’s powerful song, Come Together come to life. Tamar Haviv Music actually partnered with the Etheridge Foundation to launch the music video. Watch the full video: <https://zcu.io/Clx2>. Tamar describes Come Together as “A call to action for coming together with love, kindness, and compassion for one another.” Tamar has been notified that this video has been made an “Official Selection” at the Venice Shorts Film Fest.



## Connect With Us!



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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/>