Established in 1969, the Dance Division at Ohio University remains committed to the integration of the creative, physical, intellectual and cultural practices in dance through studio, classroom and performance experiences.

In addition to rigorous course work, our dance majors will be involved in an average of six or more productions this year, providing them with several opportunities to perform and choreograph. The success of both our current students and alumni is the result of our dedication to experiential learning that is transformative and prepares them to be productive artists who contribute to the cultural enrichment of society. I invite you to connect with us through the Dance Division website, as well as our Facebook page.

I want to thank the incredible faculty and staff in the Dance Division for their unyielding support and hard work in maintaining the vision, mission and core values of our dance program.

We look forward to a productive year and hope to see you at our upcoming performances.

Sincerely,
Travis D. Gatling
Artistic Director/Head

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?
We'd love to include your updates, stories and accomplishments in our next newsletter. Stay in touch with the College of Fine Arts by emailing us: finearts@ohio.edu.

DIDN'T RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL?
If you didn't receive a copy of this newsletter in your email inbox, subscribe to our digital edition of our alumni newsletter by visiting us at www.ohio.edu/finearts/newsletter.

A publication of the College of Fine Arts at Ohio University
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COVER PHOTO: Photos from behind the scenes of Matt Herbert’s MFA thesis film "Deadpoint." Filmed in the Fall of 2015. (Photography by first-year M.F.A. Matt Love.)
The College of Fine Arts celebrates the exceptional faculty and alumni recently recognized by the Ohio Arts Council with Individual Excellence Awards for the state fiscal year 2016. On the list of 75 statewide recipients were three College of Fine Arts faculty members and two alumni, from the fields of choreography, music composition, and playwriting.

Distinguished Professor of Theater/Playwriting Charles Smith was recognized for advancements in the field of playwriting.

Dance Division faculty Zelma Badu-Younge, professor of dance, and Ani Javian, visiting assistant professor of dance, were recognized alongside alumna Megan Pitcher (B.F.A. ’02), the Artistic Director of Meglouise Dance in Cleveland, for achievements in the field of choreography.

The Council also recognized the music composition of Brian Harnetty (Ph.D. ’14), an alumnus of the School of Interdisciplinary Arts now living in Columbus.

Competitive applications focused on the merit of past artistic work, combined with an open panel review conducted by nationally recognized professionals, ensure that only the most exceptional individuals receive funding.

“While the money is nice, the recognition from a panel of national judges is always encouraging. I plan to use this award to finance research on a new play I’ve been considering about the systematic and disproportionate impact of our justice system on the lives of young, and sometimes not so young, African American men,” said Charles Smith.

For Brian Harnetty, this award money supports a live performance of his musical score and audio project, “Shawnee, Ohio,” at the Tecumseh Theater in Shawnee, on October 29, 2016, a performance meant to help the theater and draw attention to the town and the Little Cities of Black Diamonds region where much of his research for the project was based.

“It is nice to apply these funds to a project that reflects on the lives and stories of people who live in southeastern Ohio, and also addresses the long history of mining and gas extraction, booms and busts, and environmental degradation and recovery—issues that are still relevant today,” said Harnetty.

Ani Javian said, “I was honored to hear that I would receive this state-wide award, especially alongside such talented Ohio-based artists! I immediately began dreaming—travel, production, professional development. Hearing news like this allows for so many opportunities.”

These awards support artists’ growth and development and recognize their work in Ohio and beyond, and come with a monetary award.
Recent alumna Bethany Logan relocated to Mumbai, India following the completion of her B.F.A. in dance in 2015. She works with a non-profit anti-human trafficking organization called Oasis, and dances part-time in the Professional Training Program with Navdhara Dance Theatre. We talked over the phone about her experiences this summer.

Q. How’s Mumbai?

The summer season is hot, almost everyday it’s in the 90’s with high humidity. The winter season is December to February, when it’s 75 degrees on a cold day. Mumbai sits right on the Arabian Sea. I live five minutes from a cute little ocean-front referred to as The Bandstand. The pollution here is a very real thing—so folks spend time near and along the waterfront—but we don’t swim.

Q. What was your introduction to India?

I visited in summer 2014 and it stole my heart. I fell in love with the culture and people. I knew I had an opportunity to serve for a year with the non-profit organization, Oasis, so I began looking for dance opportunities in the area. I found Navdhara Dance Company, and was accepted into their professional training program.

I’m working with them three or four days per week, taking classes and dancing with the professional members, essentially as part of the company for one day a week. I’ve had the opportunity to choreograph and dance my own work in company performances as well. In February of this year I performed a solo in the “Platform Dance” performance.

I get to work with two very different populations in Mumbai. With Oasis I work with children in a red light district, in poverty—and with the dance company I work alongside people from a more affluent circumstance.

Q. Describe your experience of working with the Navdhara Dance company.

Time doesn’t have the same importance here... so some classes continue for much longer [than expected]. We take as long as we need to reach our goal in class. I’ve been in one class for up to six
Q. How do you incorporate movement into your work with Oasis? Walk me through an average day.

I am here with a Christian organization partnering with Oasis. I worked with them in 2014. They have projects all over Mumbai, focusing on different populations of need. I was originally placed in service with a children’s daycare supporting a red light district teaching holistic classes in art, dance, English, basics of hygiene, essential life skills and emotional intelligence.

Every day I wake up with the sun and take a local train to work; my commute takes about 20 minutes. Trains in Mumbai are notorious for being a bit insane, a little rickety and over stuffed with commuters. I work in Kamathipura, the largest red light district in all of Asia. We have a morning devotion as a staff before the kids arrive.

On any given day we begin by reviewing the calendar with the kids—to practice English and counting. We sing songs in both Hindi and English, before going into the daily lessons.

I start my dance classes with some warmups, then I’ll discuss a single muscle or muscle group, and how it works. Then the kids and I work on dance and movement while relating to life skills like trust, cooperation or team work.

Q. Does your work with these kids influence your own personal dance/choreography?

My capstone work at OHIO was focused on my experiences visiting India. My recent solo work [that] I choreographed and performed in February with Navdhara was highly influenced by my emotions in interacting with mothers and children in the Kamathipura community. Dancing is a way for me to express interior thoughts.

Q. What’s on the horizon, what’s next for you?

As soon as I can make it happen, I’ll be moving to New York City to pursue my dance career. Mumbai has such a hold on me that I know I’ll be back—just not sure in what capacity, or when.
Visiting Assistant Professor of Dance, Ani Javian, has always been passionate about dance, but she never realized how far it could take her—this summer she brought her love of movement to Bangkok, Thailand.

Like many high school graduates, Javian did not know what she wanted to study in college, but there was one thing that was clear: she wanted to attend a school with a dance program. She ended up at Connecticut College, a small liberal arts school in New England.

“I happened upon a really wonderful dance program...so I was really immersed in [dance] right away,” Javian said. “What I thought would be just taking one class a year turned into a dance major, and that’s where I think I fell in love with it.”

After graduating, Javian worked in New York City for seven years, before attending graduate school at The Ohio State University, in Columbus.

Over the course of her career, she has enjoyed working both as a dancer and a choreographer, focusing on “new styles of movement that draw on modern aesthetics and modernist ideas in dance, with a focus on improvisation as well.”

“When you’re making something, you’re dancing it. You have to experience it,” Javian said. “It’s not just a body doing a thing.”

Lately, Javian has been working on a blog for the dance department. “It’s a way for the department to have a central location for news, and an opportunity to highlight [what] students are doing outside of school [which] we don’t necessarily know about all the time,” said Javian, emphasizing the camaraderie and collaboration within the dance department.

“I think our department fosters [a] close relationship between students and faculty. That’s one of the best things about being in the Dance Division—its community.”

In June, Javian took that sense of community across the globe to Thailand, invited by fellow choreographer and friend, Paige Phillips, where she performed in a show at the Cho Why Gallery in Bangkok.

“It’s not really traditional Thai dancing at all,” Javian said. “It’s about [Paige’s] personal aesthetic.” The three-floor gallery was turned into a “surreal nightclub, [a] mythological place.”

Javian’s time in Thailand was divided between dancing in the show and teaching students at the International School Bangkok.

When she’s not in the studio or teaching, Javian can be found developing her artistic sensibilities outside of dance.

“Dance can be all-consuming, and I’ve always needed other things in my life... I feel like the things I do outside of dance are often art-related, but that’s what I enjoy doing. Having friends from other artistic disciplines has always been important to me,” Javian said. Whether her friends are involved in music, writing or visual art, through these friendships Javian finds inspiration for her own art.

“No matter what I’m doing, it’s always feeding the work that I do in the studio so in that way it’s nice to have all those outside influences,” Javian said.

Her most recent influence is her new home, in Athens, Ohio.

“It’s beautiful here in Athens,” Javian said. “I’ve been living in apartments my whole life, but now I’m renting a house. I have a porch that I sit on—that part feels very new and exciting to me.”

Javian was recently awarded a 2016 Individual Excellence Award in Choreography with the Ohio Arts Council.
Following her undergraduate studies in dance at Ohio University, choreographer Nancy Allison joined the Theater of the Open Eye in 1976, founded that same year by the legendary Jean Erdman and her husband Joseph Campbell.

Nancy Allison’s recent short film project “Hamadryad” (2015), created with co-director Paul Allman, premiered at the 2015 Film Society of Lincoln Center’s Dance on Camera Festival in New York City and has been screened in nearly a dozen festivals around the world since.

The film is a re-staging of the renowned solo choreographic work “Hamadryad” originally created by Jean Erdman in the 70s—newly performed by dancer Miki Orihara, who is best known for her work as a principal dancer in the Martha Graham Dance Company.

“Erdman choreographed her work in a studio setting, but she was often directly and indirectly inspired by the surrounding green landscapes of Woodstock, New York. I thought for this film, I’d like to take her choreography back into the environment that inspired her,” described Allison.

“Dance and film have a long history together. Maya Deren (seminal American experimental filmmaker) and Jean Erdman were friends!” said Allison.

“Gladys Bailin, my teacher and then head of the dance program at Ohio University, recommended I get involved with the Theater of the Open Eye, my junior year in Athens. After graduation, I was invited to join the company,” said Allison.

In the late 70s, Erdman was creating large scale performances, known as “total theater works,” combining dancers, actors and musicians. Allison danced in two revivals of the signature work of the company, “Moon Mysteries: Three Plays for Dancers by William Butler Yeats,” as well as in the three-person multi-media work, “Op Odyssey.” This work featured kinetic sculptures and computer synthesized films by visual artist, Doris Chase. This was Allison’s first experience combining dance and film. “Op Odyssey” won the prize for Best Company Performance at the 15th In-


From 1987-1993 Allison was the executive director, assistant choreographer and featured dancer for the Jean Erdman Video Project which produced the three volume video archive “Dance & Myth: The World of Jean Erdman.”

“The archive captured eleven dances from Erdman’s historic repertory combined with footage of Erdman and her dancers in rehearsal, archival footage and her own voice-over narration describing her aesthetic concerns and artistic process while creating each piece,” said Allison.

One of the pieces Allison danced for this film series was “Hamadryad” (1948), the same choreography she most recently focused on in her own film project.

“I’ve created choreography for other projects on-site, which made it a bit easier. There are many phrases that require dancers to do turns, turning on the balls of their feet outdoors, in the grass—they’re literally digging a hole for themselves.”

Working on non-traditional stages, outdoors and impromptu spaces, according to Allison, is happening in dance more and more—modern dance has a long history of finding influence in the natural world.

Allison quotes Joseph Campbell, “the human anatomy, from which all human needs can be traced, has remained pretty much unchanged since 40,000 BC,” when she counters that “dance—like any art form—is forever changing.”

“In some ways there are more opportunities, more dance education in public schools than ever before. There are many other opportunities now to make a living doing something related to the body. The traditional roles as “company dancer,” may be more difficult, but there are so many other ways that dancers can function as teachers and guides. I’m thinking about body disciplines, movement for healing illness, movement for thinking, for physical fitness, all of which connects to the work of a dancer,” said Allison.

“Once a dancer, always a dancer,’ I like to say, and there’s no escaping the body,” said Allison, “I still begin everyday with about an hour or two of physical practice. Nowadays, that might be yoga and meditation, contact improvisation or time alone preparing for a creative project.”

The varied career paths of today’s university educated modern dancers cross disciplines like anthropology, management consulting, public speaking, conflict resolution, senior care, cancer survivor programs, substance abuse counseling, rape and human traffick-
ing survivor’s programs, as well as general and special education at all levels.

Last summer, Allison began “The Marble Project,” a cinematic collaboration with Italian choreographer, Laura Boato. Another dance film project, this one focused on site-specific dances performed in the ancient marble quarries favored by Michelangelo in Versilia, Tuscany. A co-production of Fondazione Arkad, INDACO and Nancy Allison/NYC, the films are now in post-production.

Nancy Allison teaches workshops and choreographs as a guest artist at universities and studios in the US, Canada and Europe. Additionally, she is editing “Joseph Campbell’s Collected Writing on Dance” for the Joseph Campbell Foundation, scheduled for publication by New World Library in 2017.

See excerpts from the collection “Dance & Myth: The World of Jean Erdman” online here: www.jeanerdmandance.com/repertory

Megan (Pitcher) Young (B.F.A. 2002) was awarded an Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award for Choreography and a Creative Workforce Fellowship with the Community Partnership for Arts & Culture, in Cleveland, OH.


Jesse Keller (B.F.A. 2009), the director of Island Programs & Education at TheYard, the resident dance collective at Martha’s Vineyard, performed alongside Leah Crosby (B.F.A. 2015) and Danielle Doell (B.F.A. 2014) at the prestigious Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival, located in Becket, MA, in July.

Sammy Donahue (B.F.A. 2011) is a member of the Nadine Bommer Dance Company in NYC, with which she performed in Israel, Poland, New York City and Moscow, Russia this year. She also performs with white road Dance Media.


Liz Conway (B.F.A. 2014) is a member of the Dance COLective (Chicago, IL) who shared an interview she conducted last year with another OHIO alumna, Laurel Moore Zahrobsky (B.F.A. 1994), a co-founding member of the company from 1995-2000. The interview is online here.

Leah Crosby (B.F.A. 2015) and Danielle Doell (B.F.A. 2014) work together at The Yard, they team up as the duo LandForms, performing in December at Triskelion Arts, in Brooklyn, New York.

Share your news with us by emailing finearts@ohio.edu
Dear Alumni,

Greetings from Athens! I am happy and proud to report that your film school remains a vibrant scene of learning and accomplishment. Our student filmmakers and film studies students continue to do outstanding work. In the last two years, there has been a blitz of feature filmmaking – Ohio Eminent Scholar Rajko Grlic’s “The Constitution” (recent winner of the top award, the Grand Prize of the Americas, at the Montreal World Film Festival), Professor Tom Hayes’ “Two Blue Lines,” Professor Rafal Sokolowski’s soon-to-be released “22 Chaser,” and thesis filmmakers Kathy Swanson and Vince O’Connell’s “Hap and Ashley.” We also have four current thesis students collaborating in pre-production on an Appalachian feature film.

David Colagiovanni, the new director of the Athens Center for Film and Video, who succeeded the incomparable Ruth Bradley, put on a world class festival in April that featured the return of our distinguished alum, cinematographer Ed Lachman. In recent years, the Film Division has developed a close partnership with the School of Media Arts and Studies which among other things has led to a tremendous increase in teaching opportunities for our graduate students including assignments with the Semester-in-LA program.

Our student web team works tirelessly to highlight the uniqueness of the Ohio University Film Division experience and student, faculty and alumni news. If you haven’t already, please check out the Film Underground website at http://ousof.com/. We’ll highlight some of our web stories in this newsletter, but there are so many more. To keep up with news about our students, faculty, and alumni visit our page Facebook.com/OhioUniversityFilm.

Please consider passing this newsletter and/or link to our website along to anyone you know who might be considering an M.F.A. in Film, an M.A. in Film Studies or a B.F.A. in Film in our outstanding H.T.C. in Film program. Referrals from alumni and friends – especially to former teachers at your high school or undergraduate alma mater – go a long way in pointing prospective students in our direction. Please help us spread the word about Ohio University Film! Please keep in touch. Return visits are always very, very nice. Hope to see you in Athens in the near future.

All the best,

Steven Ross
Artistic Director
Film Division
Through a new agreement, a Film Division student will be invited to help host the program and run the short film production course as part of Ohio University’s School of Media Arts and Studies ‘Ohio in L.A.’ program. The semester-long immersion experience transplants junior and senior undergraduate students to Los Angeles where they take classes, complete industry internships and produce a short film as a team.

Film Underground spoke with M.F.A. student Kyle Kruse about his involvement with the program in LA during the summer of 2016, his experience in the Film Division, and his plans for the future.

Q. Tell us a little about what brought you to Ohio University and the graduate film program.

I always wanted to be a filmmaker. When I was in high school I read a Rolling Stone article where they asked Oliver Stone for one piece of advice and he said “to go out and live a life, then become a filmmaker,” so that’s what I did. I joined the Navy, got stationed in Japan. I travelled the world and wound up in Orlando, FL, to go to film school at Full Sail. That place sucked and was a complete ripoff so I dropped out and started bartending. I did that for a few years, it was fun, but then decided to get after it and so I enrolled in school and never looked back. Here I am now.

Q. How did you get involved in OHIO’s ‘Semester in L.A.’?

The Semester in L.A. program was amazing and something I would definitely recommend to any student who is serious about making the move to L.A. after school. The people I met and experiences I had in that short amount of time have given me a springboard out here, and I could not be happier. A gentleman I met through the program has agreed to be a mentor to me while I am getting started, and that led to numerous discussions, meetings and eventually my first paid gig. This opportunity is with a small horror franchise by the name of Insidious.

Q. Has your involvement in the program shaped your professional life in an appreciable way?

YES! 100%. It also further solidified my desire to one day teach. It was very rewarding guiding a group of young students down the path of making a short film.

Q. How do you think the graduate film program at OHIO prepared you, in terms of industry readiness?

It has provided me with my current skill set and confidence by allowing me the freedom to pursue the projects that I wanted to pursue and by giving me the opportunity to make mistakes and learn through experience.

Q. What do you wish more people knew about the film program?

If you want to go to grad school and actually make films of your own, you need to be at OHIO.

Q. Is there an OHIO network that you’ve been able to take advantage of?

OHIO has a tremendous support system out here in LA. So many people out here love OHIO grads.
ways that profoundly challenge deep-held beliefs and prejudices surrounding material status, sexual orientation, nationality and religion.

Slowly, and even painfully, they begin to open up to each other and recognize the essential humanity each of them possesses.

Three OHIO Film Division students had the opportunity to work on the set in Croatia serving as crew, including as electrician, photographer and third camera assistant.

“They were diligent, they acted professionally and the crew loved them,” said Grlic.

As for what’s on the horizon, Grlic recently finished a documentary feature called “Every Good Story is a Love Story,” produced with support from the Office of the Vice President for Research & Creative Activity.

The School of Dance, Film, and Theater proudly shares the good news that The Montreal World Film Festival’s prestigious Grand Prize of the Americas, the top award of the festival, recognized “The Constitution” (Ustav Republike Hrvatske), a new feature film by Rajko Grlic, Ohio eminent scholar in film.

“It’s always nice to receive such an award. On a personal level it simultaneously feeds your ego and helps the film be better equipped for the world of distribution,” said Grlic.

The Festival, which closed September 5 in Montreal Canada, aims to encourage cultural diversity and understanding between nations through fostering cinema and filmmakers of all continents. The high profile Grand Prize of the Americas is the top prize in the World Competition, reviewed by an international jury of high profile individuals.

“The Constitution,” which Grlic directed and co-wrote with Ante Tomi, and filmed in Croatia, was produced by Zagreb’s Inter Film.

The film presents four very different people living in the same building but avoiding each other because of their differences. Eventually, their lives entangle in

RAJKO GRLIC AWARDED TOP PRIZE IN MONTREAL WORLD FILM FESTIVAL FOR “THE CONSTITUTION.”

Story by Daniel J King

Rajko Grlic holding his recent Grand Prize of the Americas award. Photo courtesy of co-Producer, Mike Downey.
Graduate students studying film at Ohio University have two different paths to tread: the two-year, scholarly M.A. Film Studies path or the three-year, hands-on M.F.A. Film Production path.

While the M.F.A. prepares students for careers in the film and television industry or academia, the M.A. prepares students for further study at the doctoral level and/or careers in film criticism, art administration, or archive and preservation work.

Assistant Professor of Film Studies Dr. Ofer Eliaz provides an overview of the M.A. in Film Studies:

“During their first and second years in the program, the students take a number of classes that help them master the fundamental skills of film scholarship such as film analysis, theoretical methodologies, historical and social work with film texts. In addition, core track courses in film history and film theory give students a broad overview of the field, the way ideas and texts are organized within it, and the major questions, debates and problems taken up by scholars in film studies.”

During their study in the M.A. program, each student completes either a comprehensive exam or a written thesis as their final project. For those students who intend to continue studying at the doctoral level, the written thesis is the recommended path.

Although the number changes with each class, Eliaz estimates that roughly 60 to 70 percent of students in each class pursue a doctoral degree after earning their M.A. in Film Studies at Ohio University. These students tend to gravitate towards Ph.D. programs in film and media studies, often within English or cultural studies departments.

“The thesis trains the students in how to develop research questions, how to locate their ideas within a disciplinary conversation, how to conduct scholarly research and how to organize and write a lengthy, sustained scholarly project,” said Eliaz. “Chapters from the thesis often serve as strong writing samples, and the students’ ability to demonstrate mastery in a particular question makes them attractive to doctoral programs.”

Ohio University Film alumna Megan Brown earned her M.A. in Film Studies in 2012 after completing her thesis work in machinima (films made from video game footage). She is currently a Ph.D. student at Indiana University in the Department of Communication and Culture. Her area of research includes science fiction media and perceived scientific verisimilitude.

“I continued toward the Ph.D. because I felt so invigorated after earning my M.A.,” said Brown. “Being in academia has never been a lifelong goal, to be honest, but I finally felt like I found something I was good at and passionate about.”

While the Ohio University Film division does not offer a Ph.D. program, the university houses doctoral programs in both the School of Media Arts and Studies and the School of Interdisciplinary Arts. The Film Division works closely with both schools to connect faculty

Continued...
sports, I am able to learn a lot from my classmates because our areas of interest are so varied.”

Shook works closely with Dr. Eliaz, which has proven to be another advantage of Film and Media’s collaborative efforts.

“It’s an advantage for us to have this relationship, because if Film sends us a student and says, ‘This is a good student,’ then we have experience to build on,” says McDaniel.

Located just across the hall from the Film Division offices at 31 S. Court St. are the offices of the School of Interdisciplinary Arts.

Markedly different from the Media Arts and Studies program, Interdisciplinary Arts leans towards a more qualitative research approach and spans across a broader spectrum of disciplines that lie outside the world of communication and media.

Gordon Briggs, a graduate of the M.A. in Film Studies program and current doctoral student in Interdisciplinary Arts, for example, focuses his main areas of research in film and aesthetics, and values the goals of the Interdisciplinary Arts approach.

“Taking courses outside your area or comfort zone is crucial. This is something the IARTS department has always emphasized,” says Briggs. “I, for one, took courses in post-colonial theory, art history, literature and film. I believe you should think of your education like it’s geographic territory. Your main area of discipline -- in my case, film -- is like your home base, but you should be able to use your knowledge to build bridges into other areas.”

The Ph.D. in Mass Communication-Media Arts and Studies has widened its scope to include a film studies option. This means now that M.A. in Film Studies students have a nearby option for continuing into a doctoral program.

The doctoral program in Media Arts and Studies encompasses a spectrum of fields pertaining to media. Many of its candidates who apply to the program have backgrounds in communication, international studies, media studies and students by way of curriculum.

“It was about a year and a half ago that Film and Media put their heads together and said, ‘How can we collaborate to our mutual benefit?’” says Dr. Drew McDaniel, Director of the School of Media Arts and Studies.

Beginning in the 2015-2016 academic year, the Film Division and the School of Media Arts and Studies began to work together to develop new ways to partner. Film Division graduate students, for example, are teaching undergraduate classes in the School of Media Arts and Studies. Film professor Dr. Louis-Georges Schwartz is slated to teach a summer course on Miltant Cinema to graduate students in the School of Media Arts and Studies.

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“TWO BLUE LINES,” FILMMAKER’S LABOUR OF LOVE FINDS DISTRIBUTION & FESTIVAL RECOGNITION

Story by Daniel J King

A documentary film, 25 years in the making has steadily gained recognition on the international festival circuit since its premiere in the spring of 2015.

“Two Blue Lines,” directed, edited and co-produced by Tom Hayes, assistant professor of post-production with the Film Division, examines the human and political faultlines found along the divided lives of the Israelis and Palestinians. By primarily featuring the voices and perspectives of Israelis whose positions run counter to their country’s official policy, the documentary provides a portrait of the ongoing conflict from an angle not often depicted in mainstream media.

To track down the voices and perspectives in his film, Hayes made repeated visits to Israel, and the West Bank in particular, over an extended period of time. These visits enabled him to gather footage that both witnesses to change happening over time, in the lives of its human subjects.

Completed in 2014, “Two Blue Lines” premiered at the Wexner Center for the Arts, in Columbus, OH, January 2015. It recently won Best Documentary Feature award at the Canada International Film Festival.

Originally from Vermont, Hayes has been making films since he was a kid. Working as a deck hand—shipping out of New York on cargo ships as a means to pay for film school—Hayes was profoundly impacted by trips into third and fourth world ports.

“I’m making my films for Americans. Many people have said in different ways that democracy depends for its survival on an informed electorate. That’s part of the documentary filmmaker’s role, to create windows and open doors so that we can make informed decisions.”

“If you make the film you thought you were going to make from the start, at least in documentary practice, you may have failed. I try hard to remain open to the footage, to remain open to the work as it develops, so that I learn something about the subject in the process,” said Hayes.

Hayes half-heartedly quips Continued...

CLASS NOTES: FILM

Eva Naripea (M.A. 2005) is the Director of Film Archives at the National Archives of Estonia.


Jeremy Zerechak (M.F.A. 2015) worked as an editor on Alex Gibney’s documentary series, “The Killing Season,” currently airing on A&E and as post-production supervisor of Death Row Stories, premiering in February.

Bilal Sami (M.F.A. 2014) is the writer/producer of the Pakistani feature, “Dobara Phir Se,” premiering this month in the U.S., Canada, and throughout the world.

Chelsea Peters (B.F.A. 2007) continues in her position as Jason Blum’s assistant at Blumhouse Productions.

Edward Lachman (B.F.A. 1971) was nominated for an Oscar for Best Achievement in Cinematography for the film “Carol,” a BAFTA Award for Best Cinematography, and an Outstanding Achievement Award by the American Society of Cinematographers. He won Best Cinematography recognition from the British Society of Cinematographers, and the National Society of Film Critics.

Eva Naripea (M.A. 2005) is the Director of Film Archives at the National Archives of Estonia.
about the “mountain of footage,” that he spent decades wading through at the editing table. “It was by no means a simple process. Knowing when to stop shooting is one of the toughest things in making a documentary; then begins the grueling process of trying to craft form out of the chaos.”

“The easiest thing to do in filmmaking is fail to find adequate distribution. When a film is finally completed, many filmmakers are exhausted in terms of energy, time and money.”

Distribution can be slowed for a variety of reasons, according to Hayes, not least of which can be politically motivated. Pressures from broadcasters, screening venues and even distributors themselves can derail a project’s reception.

“It’s been easier for me to get this film on screens outside the United States, thus far. Partly because, I think, this topic is so iconoclastic.”

Challenging everyday public perception is at the core of why this long-time filmmaker, who began shooting and editing on film in the 1970s, makes his films.

Hayes attributes the power of filmmaking to its utility, its usefulness in addressing issues left outside mainstream media.

“Documentary filmmaking is a way to kick holes in the dark, to open windows to the world, and thus break through some of the noise.”

His personal documentary work has, for the last two decades, focused on issues of identity.

“Today we’re living in a truly revolutionary media environment. Our ability to see and hear each other across borders, gatekeepers and dogma is meaningful. I think we’re in a wonderful moment.”

The biggest challenge today is “finding ways to distinguish one’s work from the overwhelming flood of work being produced. In other words, filmmakers have to find ways of breaking through the noise,” said Hayes.

Because of the amount of money involved in commercial productions, it is hard to break into that industry for someone new. There are not very many “hot set,” productions in Athens, those sets with a real client, in which performance and professionalism is required from the start. In this environment, everyone is part of the production machine, and someone’s paying money to assure things are running smoothly. Students get real world know-how, and a line on their resume which is vital to sending our students out of here prepared for the industry.”

“Our graduate program is high stakes, people rip their lives out by the hair, to come to graduate school. We have a lot of responsibility towards them. Our students are working down the hall editing 24 hours a day, and I often find myself spending the night sleeping in my office so I can be available when they need assistance with the equipment, or when they reach a breaking point. I think this goes across the fine arts, it’s not about the final grade, it’s about whether or not we moved their lives forward,” said Hayes.

The film was nominated for Best Feature Documentary at the 2016 Berlin International Filmmaker Festival of World Cinema. It received nominations for Best Feature Documentary and Best Feature Documentary Director at the 2015 Milan Film Festival, and Best Documentary Feature at the 2016 Canada International Film Festival.

Two Blue Lines was picked up by the Los Angeles distribution company Film Marketing Services, and is also available for streaming rental or purchase through Amazon.com.
The Theater Division launched our new professional theater in partnership with the City of Dublin, Ohio, so that we can offer our students continuous theater experience, extending the tradition started by Elizabeth Evans Baker in 1956. Tantrum Theater (so called because a group of Bobcats is sometimes referred to as a tantrum) produced three productions this summer. The season started with “Little Shop of Horrors,” directed by Daniel Dennis, Tantrum’s Artistic Director, with a creative team of professional OHIO faculty designers. Next up was “Tammy Faye’s Final Audition,” a new play by alumnus and new Assistant Director of the School of Dance, Film, and Theater, Merri Biechler, featuring head of performance Shelley Delaney in the title role, directed by our Directing Program Head, Dennis Delaney. The final production was “Dancing at Lughnasa” directed by Sheila Daniels with a creative team entirely from the Seattle area, featuring Assistant Professor Brian Evans, current students and recent alumni in the cast. Check out Tantrum’s website: www.tantrumtheater.org.

Back on our home turf, the 2016-17 spring semester production schedule begins with “Stupid F***ing Bird,” a wonderful modern take on Chekhov’s “The Seagull,” by Aaron Posner, directed by David Haugen. Next we stage “The Rover,” written in 1677 by Aphra Behn, the first female playwright to earn a living as a playwright. As has been the case for the last 23 years, we end the 2016-17 season with the Seabury Quinn Jr. Playwrights’ Festival.

Last but certainly not least, for the last eight months, we have been in discussions with the Acting Company of New York City to be the anchor school in a new consortium of partner schools in the region. The Acting Company is the only permanent, professional touring repertory company dedicated to the development of classical actors. As soon as the official documents are signed this fall, we will schedule visiting artist events throughout the 2016-17 and 2017-18 academic years, culminating in performances of a tour of two Acting Company productions on our stages. Stay tuned for updates.

Sincerely,

Michael Lincoln
Artistic Director/Head
Theater Division

KEEP IN TOUCH

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?
We’d love to include your updates, stories, and accomplishments in our next newsletter. Stay in Touch with the College of Fine Arts by emailing us: finearts@ohio.edu

DIDN’T RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL?
If you didn’t receive a copy of this newsletter in your email inbox, subscribe to our digital edition of our alumni newsletter by visiting us at www.ohio.edu/finearts/newsletter.
Getting noticed by a New York Times theater critic is exciting—even better when it’s for an exceptional performance.

In April, alumnus Eric Lynch (B.F.A. ’11) was prominently featured in a New York Times review of the premiere of the Goodman Theater’s staging of “2666,” a unique five and a half hour long adaptation—in which Lynch performed live and in pre-recorded video sequences projected large on stage.

The play, based on the book of the same name by Roberto Bolaño, which won the 2008 National Book Critics Circle award for Best Fiction, was adapted and directed by Robert Falls and Seth Bockley in the Owen Theater, Chicago.

Staging of the 900-page monumental work of fiction was organized into five parts following two converging storylines, spanning two continents, across a century of plot maneuvers. An epic undertaking with a cast of 15, Lynch played the role of Oscar Fate.

“The production of ‘2666’ was certainly a different experience. I credit our directors and adapters, Robert Falls and Seth Bockley, in that there was never any panic or rush from the beginning. It was a measured experience, we showed up and worked each day. I never felt the pressure I would have expected from a play of this magnitude, which is amazing,” said Lynch. “You could easily be squashed under the weight of a play that’s five and half hours long.”

Lynch’s character, Oscar Fate, leads the narrative in part three, taking center stage through an integrated series of pre-filmed se-
sequences and live stage acting.

“The Goodman hired a film crew—and we shot on location, all around Chicago, it was really beautiful filmmaking. On-camera acting is an absolute joy, a different set of challenges than stage acting, of course,” said Lynch.

Charles Isherwood, in a review for the New York Times, said “Eric Lynch, who portrays Oscar, makes for such a compelling presence, both on screen and off.”

“As an actor it really doesn’t get any cooler—seeing your face projected on a 35-foot screen—at the Goodman Theater,” said Lynch.

“You take it one line at a time, and one breath at a time, which is a piece of advice I received from a friend at the outset of this project,” said Lynch, who lives in Chicago.

Over the last three years Lynch has appeared in The Goodman Theater productions of “stop. reset.” and “Buzzer,” which received a Black Theater Alliance Award nomination. Other credits include “Native Son” at Court Theatre, “Broken Fences” at 16th Street Theater, “Blacktop Sky” at Theatre Seven, “Holidaze” at Step Up Productions and “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” at Sankofa Theatre Company.

As a young man, inspired by the sportscaster Stewart Scott’s revolutionary voice and persona, Lynch took a drama class Walnut Hills High School in Cincinnati.

“You have to evolve on the fly in this profession, my life five years out from college has evolved many times over. I don’t think anybody would be able to prepare for what this life is like.”
I first caught the acting bug when I was 15 or 16. Because I was shy, I took a drama class, and it hooked me. I was cast in ‘A Raisin in the Sun,’ and found a community there—many of them remain friends—I just knew it was for me.”

Lynch went on to attend Ohio University, selected for the Honors Tutorial College midway through his freshman year, and completing his B.F.A. in acting in 2011.

Thinking back to his time in Athens, studying at Ohio University was a good experience said Lynch, who speaks fondly of working with his teachers and mentors.

“In the classroom, he liked to challenge his professors,” recalled Professor Shelley Delaney, head of performance, Theater Division. “He made me think more specifically about the content I was delivering, and he made me teach to the individual, not just to the curriculum. And he always made me laugh, which is a reward unto itself.”

Delaney recalls working closely with Lynch in an ‘Actor’s Research Tools’ tutorial, as part of his Honors Tutorial College experience at OHIO.

“Eric [Lynch] and I sat in my small office discussing (and integrating) things as wide ranging as the challenges for a gifted young African American athlete growing up in Pittsburgh in the 50’s (Cory in “Fences” by August Wilson), and what it might mean to be the first black student at Ohio University in the 1820’s (John Newton Templeton in “Free Man of Color” by Charles Smith).”

“At its best, acting must be self-revelation. Eric worked more personally and revealed more about himself than I’d ever seen him work. He didn’t hide—at all. That’s when I knew he was an actor, by nature and by intent.”

Five years after completing his degree—and following a move to Chicago in 2013—Lynch has successfully established a career he describes as adventurous, fun and terrifying all at the same time.

“It’s a profession that changes and evolves every day, every month and every year. There’s no job path, structure or stability. We sign theater and television contracts that last three months or less, so there’s always unemployment just around the corner.”

In the face of these inherent challenges, he calls his career both exciting and rewarding beyond description. “You have to evolve on the fly in this profession; my life five years out from college has evolved many times over. I don’t think anybody would be able to prepare for what this life is like.”

“My training and education at OHIO made this possible. OHIO prepared me to do my job well, and it made me competitive in my field right away,” said Lynch, who credits the year-long professional internship following graduation and his first few years as a young actor as the necessary on-the-job training for survival in the professional field.

Lynch has appeared in a number of [producer] Dick Wolf’s Chicago dramas, including “Chicago Med.,” “Chicago Fire” and “Chicago P.D.,” and is scheduled to appear in a new show on [FOX] called “A.P.B.” debuting next year.
Helene Siebrits, associate professor with the Theater Division and head of the costume program, sees teaching as a call to foster collaboration among theater disciplines and build excellent design skills.

Siebrits teaches foundational drawing and design, intermediate and advanced rendering, text analysis for designers and costume history. She is particularly interested in the cross-disciplinary approach to design solutions for set, lighting, projection and costumes.

Her love for costume design was sparked during her mid-twenties after seeing “My Children, My Africa” (Athol Fugard, 1989) at the National Theatre in London. “I instinctively knew that I had to be part of this world of storytelling,” Siebrits said. “My strength is telling stories through character and costumes.”

Siebrits studied at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in South Africa, where she received her Bachelors of Finer Arts degree in Fashion Design and Technology. She earned a second Bachelors degree in Film, Theatre and Television from University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). She continued her education at UCLA and received her MFA in Theatre Design.

Sifting through the details of fabric swatches and color palettes and designing specific period costumes, such as the restoration or baroque periods, brings Siebrits the most enjoyment. She has designed intricately crafted costumes for productions all over the world. Siebrits’ designs and costumes have adorned actors in independent films, theater, opera, dance and multimedia platforms from small intimate theaters in America to large opera houses in Europe.

A career in costume design has fed her love of travel; she has designed costumes in the United States, Canada and Europe, and her costume research has taken her to Southeast Asia.

She also loves traveling to Nicaragua and her home country of South Africa.

Still, there is no place quite like Athens. After falling in love with the small Appalachian town while at a costume symposium, she decided to apply for a position that would allow her to share her passion and knowledge with students at Ohio University.

“I truly enjoy the collaborative spirit among my colleagues, and the atmosphere of respect that everyone shares here,” said Siebrits.

Beginning her second year with the Theater Division, Siebrits continues to strive to strengthen and embrace the world of costuming stitch by stitch, and student by student.
Above: Helene Siebrits designed costumes for the production of Œdipus Rex and the Symphony of Psalms, directed by Peter Sellars and conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen at Festival Lyrique d’Aix-en-Provence, France.

On the left, a rendering for Persephone. The opera is a double bill of Iolanta/Persephone directed by Peter Sellars and conducted by Teodor Currentziz. The photo includes the Amrita Dance Group from Cambodia and the Lyon chorus, Lyon, France. Venue: Festival Lyrique d’Aix-en-Provence, France, 2016.
Tony Sias (M.F.A. ‘92) developed his arts leadership chops over many years as the district wide Director of Arts for Cleveland Metropolitan School District, and the Art Director for the Cleveland School for the Arts, a joint college preparatory academic and pre-professional arts school within the district offering study in visual, performing and literary arts for grades 8–12.

Now this Theater Division alumnus has a new challenge: to serve as President and CEO of Karamu House, the oldest African American community theatre company in the nation.

Karamu House—the first theater in the U.S. to have an integrated cast on stage—began as a settlement house in 1915, designed as an early social service agency for immigrants who were resettling in the Cleveland area community called The Roaring Third, located at the corner of East 38th and Central Avenue.

“The couple who founded it decided to use the arts as a means of engagement, and as an agent for social change. The institution was known as the premier training ground for African American actors in the country by the 1960’s,” said Sias.

“One of my first tasks [with Karamu] was to complete the strategic planning—to set the stage for a holistic new vision at Karamu—aimed at producing the next 100 years.” Sias describes this new vision as “Karamu 2.0,” with a focus on engagement of millennial communities and continuing to open to more diversified audiences into the future.

Key to this redesign is the overhaul of Karamu’s main theater space, the 215-seat Jelliffe Theatre, planned to reopen for the 2017-18 season.

“We’re upgrading to a state of the art theater space—improving seating and upgrading the lighting, and adding new projection to open the space for multiple uses, to function as performing arts production and education spaces, as well as conference and meeting facilities.”

Obtaining his M.F.A. in acting in 1992 at Ohio University, Obten...
Sias fondly remembers working closely with Kathleen Conlin, the head and director of the School of Theatre at the time. Soon after departing Ohio University, Sias acted in “Oak and Ivy,” the story of Ohio poet Paul Lawrence Dunbar, with the Karamu House, thus beginning his long relationship with the historic theater company. In his previous role, as the Director of Arts for Cleveland Metropolitan School District, he was responsible for all visual and performing arts development, professional development for teachers, overseeing after school programs for students and working with a host of community partners in providing additional arts education opportunities.

“One of [my] biggest successes was with All City Arts, an after-school and weekend program in Cleveland. This was designed for the best students in the district as well as the novice. [It served as] one location for all students to produce work with other cultural partners.”

Students in the All City Arts program produce and work with the best local arts professionals, as well as nationally known visiting artists. Averaging 300 students each year from local metropolitan schools, the program celebrates a 90% rate for high school graduation.

These experiences have prepared Sias to confront and re-imagine the future of the arts in Cleveland. “The arts and the public education system is a point of entry for many community stakeholders, representing a very wide network of interested people I had to work with,” said Sias. “Arts are a part of culture,” said Sias, who points to the need for access to culturally responsive perspectives in the community. “It helps people better understand the world they live in, to work together, to problem solve. It promotes a keen sense of self awareness, and allows you experience different perspectives. It’s a vehicle for personal growth.”

Kelsey Brennan (B.F.A. 2007) a company member with Remy Bumppo Theatre in Chicago, as well as with the American Players Theatre in Spring Green, Wisconsin, and will be performing with Milwaukee Repertory Theater in 2017.

Georgia Mallory Guy (M.F.A. 2010) performed in “Tartuffe” at The American Stage, and in the spring of 2017 will perform in “The Great Gatsby” and “Loves Labour’s Lost,” with Orlando Shakespeare Theatre.

Glenna Brucken (B.F.A. 2012) was in the Acting Apprentice Company, Actors Theatre of Louisville, for the 2015-16 season, and played Rose in “Dancing at Lughnasa,” Tantrum Theatre, (Dublin, OH) this summer.

Heather Chrisler (M.F.A. 2012) was Senga in “Dancing Lessons” at Riverside Theater; performed in the world premier of “Good Friday” with Oracle Productions; and played Jane in “Fallen Angels” at Remy Bumppo.

Ryan Czerwonko (B.F.A. 2012) co-starred on “Million Dollar Quartet,” an upcoming CMT original TV series directed by Oscar nominee Roland Joffe, and co-starred on “Patriot,” a new Amazon Prime series.


Ricky Lurie (M.F.A. 2014) is beginning work as the Associate Costume Designer for the new Broadway Musical “Anastasia.”


Mballi Guliwe (M.F.A. 2015) is a member of the Acting Apprentice Company at Actors Theatre of Louisville (2015 – 2016 season), and on the Mainstage at Actors Theatre in “Dracula,” “A Christmas Carol,” and “Peter and the Starcatcher.”

Alycia Kunkel (M.F.A. 2015) and Thomas Daniels (M.F.A. 2015) are both in New Jersey Shakespeare Festival’s production of “A Child’s Christmas in Wales.”

Abraham Adams (M.F.A. 2015) is in “An Octoroon” at Dobama Theatre, and in “Marie Antoinette,” spring of 2016. Teaching resident with CARE (Compassionate Arts Remaking Education), through the Cleveland Play House.


Jacob Sabinsky (B.F.A. 2016), is in the Actors Theatre of Louisville Professional Training Company (2016 - 2017), and played Jonathan Harker in “Dracula,” and multiple roles in “A Christmas Carol.”

Share your news with us by emailing finearts@ohio.edu
Alumnus Qui Nguyen (M.F.A. ’02) was awarded the Harold and Mimi Steinberg/American Theatre Critics Association New Play Award, recognizing his 2015 play “Vietgone.” Earlier this year, the same play was shortlisted for the Edward M. Kennedy Prize for Drama Inspired by American History.

Nguyen was recognized alongside five other playwrights including Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Paula Vogel and Lynn Nottage. Written as a loose interpretation of how Nguyen’s Vietnamese parents met in America, the play is an all-American love story about two very new Americans.

“Vietgone” enjoyed glowing reviews of its off-Broadway debut at the Manhattan Theater Club in New York City this fall, as directed by May Adrales, with a cast featuring Jon Hoche, Jennifer Ikeda, Raymond Lee, Samantha Quan, and Paco Tolson. The play premiered at South Coast Repertory Theater, Costa Mesa, California, October 4, 2015, a production which Los Angeles Times critic Charles McNulty described as careening wildly, “threatening whiplash to heighten our amusement. By the end, however, this riotous theatrical cartoon won me over with its simple honesty.” The Steinberg award is given to playwrights whose scripts premiered professionally outside of New York City, and the winner is awarded $25,000. The award is funded by the Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust.

Qui Nguyen is a playwright, screenwriter, and co-artistic director of the OBIE Award-winning “geek theatre” company, Vampire Cowboys, which produces new works of theater based in action/adventure and dark comedy with a comic book aesthetic, exposing audiences to thought-provoking live entertainment rooted in today’s pop-culture vernacular.

Check out the New York Times article, “How Mom and Dad Met, With Ninjas,” by Diep Tran, published October 5.
Tantrum Theater’s inaugural season opened with “Little Shop of Horrors,” the comedy-horror-rock musical written by Howard Ashman, with music by Alan Menken and directed by Daniel C. Dennis. Second was the new original play, “Tammy Faye’s Final Audition,” written by Merri Biechler and directed by Dennis Lee Delaney. And finally, timed to coincide with the annual Dublin Irish Festival, Tantrum staged Brian Friel’s award-winning Irish masterpiece, “Dancing at Lughnasa,” directed by Sheila Daniels.

Tantrum Theater, the new professional theater created in partnership between Ohio University College of Fine Arts, the City of Dublin, and Dublin Arts Council, celebrated its inaugural season with productions in the Abbey Theater in Dublin, Ohio.

The company is composed of professional actors, designers, directors, production staff and select Ohio University student apprentices. Coinciding with each production, the company offered a variety of educational workshops for high school students and interested community, including “Masks and Physical Theater” workshops, “Stage Combat” workshops, and a Tantrum’s Children’s Theater Ensemble production of a play called “Chewandswallow.”

“The play’s key strength is its ability to home in on the constant oscillation between control and release that keeps the characters’ lives suspended,” said Margaret Quamme, of the Columbus Dispatch.
COMING SUMMER 2017: WHAT’S ON THE HORIZON FOR TANTRUM AUDIENCES—NEXT SEASON

Tantrum Theater proudly announces its 2017 summer season, featuring three exceptional plays, 55 separate performances, and a slate of new play readings, in the Abbey Theater, Dublin, Ohio between May 30 and August 19.

Tantrum’s second season opens with “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” by William Shakespeare, directed by Tantrum’s Artistic Director, Daniel C. Dennis, May 30–June 17. Our production will bring this great play to life in exciting new ways, including a fairy band incorporating as many kids from Dublin and the Columbus area (as possible), alongside a professional cast of actors from Ohio and across the country.

Then follows the critically acclaimed musical “Caroline, or Change,” written by Tony Kushner, with music by Jeanine Tesori, and directed by Robert Barry Fleming, July 5–22. The story looks back at the Civil Rights movement and the changes that swept our country in the early 1960s, changes that in many ways are just coming to a head today.

Finally, timed to coincide with the annual Dublin Irish Festival, “Into the West,” adapted for the stage by Greg Banks from the screenplay by Jim Sheridan, originally commissioned and produced by Travelling Light Theatre Company, UK, and directed by Jen Wineman, runs August 1–19.

Moving at breakneck speed, a small cast animates a long list of characters, the whole thing accompanied, driven really, by a live musician. Though not a musical, music is the life and the breath of this play.

Tantrum’s second season brings “Rising Voices,” a new series of play readings aimed at providing a space for plays in development, plays not often produced, plays being considered for future season programming and plays Tantrum loves and wants our audiences to hear out loud. These events will be pay-what-you-will on the Tuesdays after opening nights.

TICKET INFORMATION:
www.tantrumtheater.org

Promotional artwork by Punch & Judy.
Tantrum Theater’s inaugural season closed with Brian Friel’s award-winning Irish masterpiece, “Dancing at Lughnasa,” directed by Sheila Daniels, and was timed to coincide with the annual Dublin Irish Festival. Photo by Daniel Winters.