

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO ALL THINGS ENTERTAINMENT

THE COLLEGE ISSUE | OCTOBER 2022

THE WRAP

GINA PRINCE-BYTHEWOOD

BEFORE *THE WOMAN KING*
CAME THE
UCLA STUDENT

PLUS:

BEST INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS,
STEVEN SPIELBERG'S
SCHOOLDAYS,
ELEGANCE BRATTON,
STUDENT ACADEMY AWARDS,
TOUGH TRUTHS FOR
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Steve Pond and
Gina Prince-Bythewood

Back to School

This issue, the seventh time TheWrap has ranked the top film schools, marks something of a change in our magazine—or, more accurately, a return. When we first began publishing a college magazine in 2016, we had *Mr. Robot* creator Sam Esmail and *Stranger Things* masterminds the Duffer brothers on the cover to talk about their days at NYU and Chapman, respectively. After that, though, we went with cover illustrations, reasoning that the heart of these issues was the ranked list of schools that makes up most of the magazine.

But we had a change of heart as we were planning this issue, partially inspired by watching Gina Prince-Bythewood's epic *The Woman King* bring down the house at this year's Toronto International Film Festival. Gina had graduated from UCLA's School of Theater, Film and Television in 1991, so we offered her the cover partly because of *The Woman King* but largely because we wanted to hear the story of how a young woman of color came through film school and ended up making not just dramatic indies like *Love & Basketball* and *Beyond the Lights*, but also huge action films like her new one and 2020's *The Old Guard*. We ended up photographing her on the UCLA campus, wandering the corridors of Melnitz Hall, where Gina had shot and screened films in the 1990s and where my son did the same 20 years later. We both noticed that not much had changed: The vending machines are tucked away in the same place, the walls are painted the same color, the smell is the same (I didn't spend enough time there to notice, but she did) and the students still come to tell stories that, in some special cases, can be as inspirational as Gina's. In this issue, we salute those stories, the people who make them and the schools that train them.

Enjoy!



ON THE COVER
Gina Prince-Bythewood was photographed by Matt Sayles at UCLA on Oct. 7, 2022

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MATT SAYLES

THE WRAP

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TheWrap has won multiple awards for its reporting, columns, criticism and feature writing. In 2021 Waxman was honored as the Best Online Journalist at the L.A. Press Club SoCal Journalism Awards, as well as for her blog, Waxword. TheWrap was chosen as the best online news website at the SoCal Journalism Awards in 2018, 2012 and 2009, and best entertainment website at the National Arts & Entertainment Journalism Awards in 2018. In 2019, the site won two National Arts & Entertainment Journalism Awards for the multimedia package "AfterMeToo: 12 Accusers Share What Happened Next, From Firing to More Trauma." In 2021, the L.A. Press Club's SoCal Journalism Awards gave the site top prizes for feature photography as well as for its weekly podcast, "TheWrap-Up."

In 2020, Sharon Waxman was named one of the Top 100 Women Entrepreneurs by Inc. Magazine.

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BURNING QUESTIONS FOR THE FILM STUDENT

A veteran strategist offers some sobering words about film-school education

BY KATHLEEN McINNIS

ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN TAYLOR



The Film School Challenge—no, it isn't a new TikTok dance craze but rather the dilemma facing every student filmmaker: "Did I just go into massive educational debt for nothing?"

Emerging and student filmmakers now face a much different industry than just a few decades ago, but for the most part their education at major film schools across the country is letting them down when it comes to entering the work force fully prepared for the business structure, industry language and professional standards they are about to face.

That's a bold statement, but consider this: While some schools teach electives on entertainment law, none of them teach film-festival strategies for long-term career advancement. A few film schools have started to incorporate finding "voice" into their screenwriting and directing programs, yet none is teaching film students how "voice" translates through marketing materials (the deliverables needed to move your film to audience) as a power tool for future projects. And while every school will teach their students the practical elements of production, they don't (or won't) teach them how to sell their films—and by "sell," I mean not only to the ticket-buying audiences but to the industry, including festival

programmers, financiers, producers, agents, managers, journalists, publicists, talent and colleagues.

Going to film school costs an enormous amount of money: Graduating with debt of \$250,000 is not unheard of. Running a good film school costs an enormous amount of money: Famous alumni are repeatedly tapped for capital campaign contributions. Still, adjunct professors are typically paid dismally low salaries. And while schools look for studios and companies who might want to scout new talent, students are often left on their own to deconstruct what they can about achieving real-life professional growth.

Do film students learn why a set photographer and unit publicist are so vital on-set during production? Do they know how to deliver their film, and how the marketing materials should work on both the film and the filmmakers' behalf? Do they know what journalists actually need from their film in order to write about it?

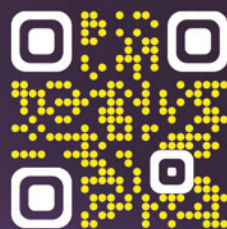
Do film students have any idea how the film festival circuit works, what a festival programmer is looking for or how to strategically use their filmmaker's voice to explore the human condition and be storytellers for a global audience?

Is anyone, other than those of us consultants who have a steady

A woman with dark hair and blue eyes is holding a clapperboard in front of her face. The clapperboard has a black and yellow striped top bar and a photograph of a rugged coastline with cliffs and the ocean. The background of the entire image is a blurred, warm-toned scene, possibly a film set.

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stream of recently graduated yet massively panicked filmmakers knocking at our doors, teaching emerging filmmakers how to merge their creative and business development using their films on the festival circuit?

If my overbooked schedule is any indication, the answers are no.

There are a number of barriers in the way, certainly, that need to be broken down. Academia is not known for the speed by which it changes to accommodate new business practices or methodologies. Introducing new paradigms to old curriculum can be strangely confrontational to some faculty, though it's badly needed: As the film-festival specialist at a major film school in Los Angeles, I had as many faculty as students booking consultations with me about their films.

“

While every school will teach students the practical elements of production, they don't (or won't) teach them how to sell their films.”

Many schools, when considering their curriculum, leave very little room for what most believe is a “fringe” subject, and one that people are sometimes resistant to learn about. I hearken back to a lecture on audience design I gave to a group of filmmakers in Prague years ago: A well-established filmmaker jumped up just minutes into my presentation to yell “heresy!” at me as he stormed out of the hall, chastising me for insisting that filmmakers need to understand the mechanisms of how their films journey to audience.

What, then, should potential film students look for when considering film schools? Learning how to turn on a camera or light a set can be done anywhere, including on set through apprentice-type programs. What film



Kathleen McInnis

schools can and should be offering are industry networking, practicing professionals as faculty and cross-discipline studies such as the art of negotiation and even production accounting (for directors and producers) in addition to the art of visual storytelling.

Ask questions of your prospective schools. Who teaches film festival strategies? Is it a programmer or festival director? Someone who understands the business side of festivals, who has a track record of bringing films to audiences and who is current in their knowledge? Is it a standalone position or tacked onto a faculty's responsibilities?

When the school talks about their internship programs, what exactly can interns expect? Are they paid positions? (They should be.) Are they covered by the school's insurance? What is the job placement rate, and how does that speak directly to your own goals and expectations? Who at the school will personally walk you into industry meetings during your final year? Who signs off on your exit portfolio? What long-term relationships can you expect to start as a student at that school? What alumni are active as mentors?

While it's lovely to have shiny and bright new things at the major film schools, such as LED walls and screening rooms sponsored by major animation

studios, how do those things materially shift your prospects for entering the film industry? Who at the school can elevate your understanding of the business and how you might place yourself in it to your greatest advantage?

I coined the term “The Cinematic Trinity” to elucidate my philosophy on the business of filmmaking: filmmaker as artist + industry as conduit + audience = the successful journey of a film.

Film schools sit squarely in the middle section, as part of the “industry as conduit.” But when their focus is primarily on the prestige and money, it comes at a significant loss to the practical needs of their graduating filmmakers. AFI was once (in)famously known for telling their first-year students, “Look to your left, look to your right. One of you won't be here next year.”

If they aren't careful, it might be time for students to say the same to film schools. **W**

Kathleen McInnis is a producer, strategic publicist and curator who in 1992 founded See-Through Films to assist aspiring filmmakers. She has worked as a programmer and director at the Seattle, Toronto, Palm Springs, Aspen and Hot Docs film festivals and has taught at UCLA, NYU and Loyola Marymount.



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103 YEARS OF FILM SCHOOLS:



A TIMELINE



1919 The Moscow Film School is founded, with Sergei Eisenstein among its instructors.

1932 The University of Southern California creates a Department of Cinema, becoming the first U.S. school to offer a degree in cinema.

1935 The first film school in Western Europe, Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, is established in Rome by Luigi Freddi, the head of cinema for dictator Benito Mussolini. Within 10 years, most of its production equipment will be destroyed in World War II.

1947 UCLA establishes its School of Theater, Film and Television, marking the first time a university combines those disciplines into a single school.

1950 The Performance Art Institution of the Film Bureau of the Ministry of Culture is established in Beijing, China. After three quick name changes, it will become the Beijing Film Academy in 1956.

1961 Walt Disney helps found the California Institute of the Arts, better known as CalArts.

1963 Centro Universitario de Estudios Cinematográficos, a film school inspired by the French New Wave, is established at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. It will be followed 12 years later by Mexico City's other major film school, Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica.

1965 The Tisch School of the Arts is created at New York University.

1966 Francis Ford Coppola makes the feature *You're a Big Boy Now* as his thesis project at UCLA, landing a deal with Warner Bros. and later a Master of Fine Arts degree.

1969 The Center for Advanced Film Studies opens at the Greystone Mansion in Beverly Hills, with Harold Lloyd screening his 1925 silent film *The Freshman* for the first students at what will eventually become known as the AFI Conservatory.

1967 NYU student Martin Scorsese makes his debut feature, *I Call First*, with fellow students that include actor Harvey Keitel and editor Thelma Schoonmaker. The film will later be retitled *Who's That Knocking at My Door* and will be released theatrically after Scorsese adds a sex scene requested by distributor Joseph Brenner.

1969 Brian De Palma's student film from Sarah Lawrence, *The Wedding Party*, is released and marks the first onscreen appearance of Robert De Niro, who is listed in the credits as Robert Denero.

1971 The National Film and Television School is established at Beaconsfield Studios about 25 miles outside London. Its alumni will include Roger Deakins, Julien Temple and Nick Park.

1972 David Lynch begins filming *Eraserhead* in abandoned stables on the grounds of the AFI.

1973 The Australian Film, Television and Radio School graduates its first class, which includes directors Gillian Armstrong (*My Brilliant Career*) and Phillip Noyce (*Patriot Games*).

1983 NYU student Spike Lee submits his master's thesis: an hour-long film called *Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads*. Made with Ang Lee as an assistant director and Ernest R. Dickerson as cinematographer, it becomes the first student film to be included in Lincoln Center's New Directors/New Films Festival.

1985 The French school IDEC (Institut des hautes études cinématographiques) is restructured and becomes La Fémis, with screenwriter Jean-Claude Carrière as its president.

1997 The Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) launches the Savannah Film Festival, which will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2022.

2003 Barry Jenkins attends film school at Florida State University, where he meets aspiring producer Adele Romanski, cinematographer James Laxton and editors Joi McMillon and Nat Sanders. All of them will work on his subsequent projects, including *Moonlight*.


2004 California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger attends a groundbreaking ceremony for the Marion Knott Studios, the centerpiece of a \$52 million expansion of the Dodge College of Film and Media Arts at Chapman University in Southern California. He calls Chapman "like a second home to me."

2022 Ryerson University in Toronto, known for one of the best film schools in Canada, becomes Toronto Metropolitan University after complaints about its founder, the late Egerton Ryerson, and his views toward indigenous people. **W**

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Don't Take No for an Answer

**UCLA'S FILM SCHOOL
TURNED DOWN *THE WOMAN
KING* DIRECTOR GINA
PRINCE-BYTHEWOOD, BUT
SHE DIDN'T LISTEN**

By Steve Pond | Photographed by Matt Sayles



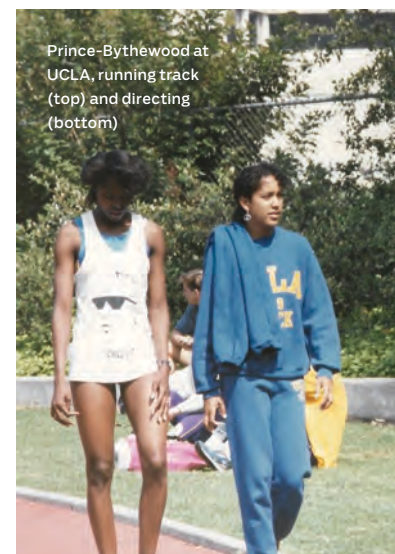
Here and opposite page,
Prince-Bythewood on the set
of *The Woman King*

In a warm October afternoon in Westwood, Gina Prince-Bythewood walked between buildings on the UCLA campus and grinned. “It looks like nothing’s changed,” she said as she took a shortcut from the School of Theater, Film and Television’s Melnitz Hall to the nearby Freud Playhouse. “Even the paint looks the same.” She laughed. “I don’t know if that’s a good thing or not.”

Of course, Prince-Bythewood is an unabashed booster of UCLA’s TFT, from which she graduated in 1991. And paint color notwithstanding, there have definitely been changes since she spent time in these halls: For instance, the James Bridges Theater, where many of her student films screened, had yet to be updated and upgraded when she was here, and the framed posters that lined the lobby definitely didn’t include her own film debut, 2000’s *Love & Basketball*, which now hangs alongside posters from fellow grads like Francis Ford Coppola and Alexander Payne.

Born in Los Angeles but raised in Pacific Grove on the Monterey Peninsula in Northern California, Prince-Bythewood is a writer-director who started in TV but has now made six feature films: *Love & Basketball*, *The Secret Life of Bees*, *Beyond the Lights*, *The Old Guard* and the new epic *The Woman King*, an action-packed period drama starring Viola Davis, Thuso Mbedu and Lashana Lynch as the real-life female Agojie warriors of the 19th century West African kingdom of Dahomey. The film, an exhilarating tribute to the power of Black women, is the boldest statement yet in a career that has always centered the Black female experience.

Prince-Bythewood was also an athlete at UCLA, running track while making her student films. But as she pointed out on the afternoon she went back to Westwood for *TheWrap*, there was never much question which direction her career was headed.



Prince-Bythewood at
UCLA, running track
(top) and directing
(bottom)



TOP: SONY PICTURES; BELOW, COURTESY OF GINA PRINCE-BYTHEWOOD



When did you set your sights on becoming a filmmaker?

It's interesting, because there were definitive stages. When I was little, my parents used to drop us off at the theater every weekend. That's where I saw *Benji*, that's where I saw *E.T.*, and I remember crying in the theater and being shocked that something could make me do that. I became a voracious reader when our TV broke when I was 9 and my parents refused to replace it, which was of course horrifying for me and my siblings. But it forced me to read. I would literally go to the library, check out 20 books a week and just read. And that absolutely influenced my love of storytelling.

And then when I got to high school, I became obsessed with soap operas. I read an article in *Soap Opera Digest*—that's how obsessed I was. It was an interview with a soap opera writer, and that's the first time I realized, "Oh, somebody gets paid to do that." And so that was my goal when I set my sights on UCLA, to write soap operas. Once I got there and started hanging out at the film school, my sights got set a little higher, because you get the opportunity to see great movies on the big screen. Like *12 Angry Men* and *The Apartment* and *The Graduate*. Suddenly you're immersed with these great films, and I started to see myself doing that.

Before that, were there particular films or TV shows that had an impact on you?

Yeah, absolutely. Once we got our TV back when I was a teenager, we as a family would watch *M*A*S*H*, *WKRP in Cincinnati*... And then one day *Diff'rent Strokes* came on, and I remember being blown away by seeing myself on TV. I became obsessed with that show. But I still hadn't seen myself in films until I was 17, when I went to the movies and the trailer for *She's Gotta Have It* came on. It felt like I was being blown back in my seat because there was a Black woman up on screen that seemed to be the star of this film.

That is a feeling that I want to give others. It's absolutely getting better and there are more of us making movies and more diversity of content, which is beautiful. But if you really look at the numbers, it's still dismal.

And so that's always been the fight in terms of putting Black women at the center of my stories and films: to give other people that feeling that I got of seeing yourself reflected on screen.

Why UCLA?

My goal in high school was to play basketball in college, and so USC was actually the place I was focused on because of Cheryl Miller. I'm sure I'm gonna get blasted for this, but I read that at USC (School of Cinematic Arts), not everybody gets to make a film. That it's kind of set up like Hollywood, where you have to pitch and win a spot to make a film—where at UCLA, everybody makes movies. And that's really how it should be. If you're going to film school, you're going to learn how to make movies. So my allegiance shifted to UCLA at that point.

What were the most valuable things that you learned at UCLA?

Well, the absolute most important lesson was to overcome "No." And that is because you can only apply (to the film school) for your junior year at UCLA. So I hung out at the film school those first two years, worked on student films, worked on a soap opera, met all the professors, took as many classes as I could without being a student. I was sure I was going to get in. You're supposed to give yourself a backup major because it's so hard to get in, but I did not give myself a backup. I applied and I got a rejection letter. And that wrecked me, because I knew for a fact this is what I'm supposed to do. It was one of the worst nights of my life, and I had a very long cry.

And then the next day I said, "Let me go to the counselor." So I went to the counselor and told him I wanted to appeal the decision and he said, "You can't do that." So I went home again, had another cry, and then wrote a letter. I poured myself into the letter, essentially saying why they made a mistake. And I sent it to the head of the film school, Ruth Schwartz. Two days later I got a phone call and she said, "We're letting you in." And that absolutely changed the trajectory of my life.

Was the school everything you were looking for?

The beauty of film school is it's a safe place to fail. You're just making movies and learning with everyone. You're finding your voice. I found it incredibly creative. Everybody was supportive. Everyone's giving comments on each other's work, and you're pushing each other and working on each other's things. It's a beautiful environment and I just feel like I found myself and the kind of things I wanted to do and say.

What didn't you learn in school that you wish they had told you?

Working with actors. If I ever become head of UCLA film school, I'm absolutely gonna implement that. There was not enough interaction between us and the theater school, and we're right next to each other. Directing actors is the one thing that you're not taught, and I think it is such a learning curve for directors. You have to know how to talk to actors, work with actors. I got that from Sundance when I got into the Sundance (directing) lab and they made all of us directors take an acting class. Scariest thing I've ever done in my life, but what I learned in that class absolutely influenced my directing from that point forward.

These days, most film schools seem very conscious of the diversity of their student body. But in 1991, I assume there weren't many women of color at the school.

Yeah. I think there were two of us in my class.

You mentioned the fight to put Black women at the center of your films. Was that important in your student films, too?

Yeah. I was putting myself in the writing. For me it was, "Let's just see Black people up on screen living." Which is what I feel and hope that I'm doing now. I want to see us in every genre. And there was a lot of controversy about my thesis film. It didn't get put into the spotlight at the end of the year, where they choose the 10 best films and they invite the industry to come and see. A number of professors were adamant that the film needed to be there, but there were a couple fighting against it and it became a really big thing. And it felt very strange. To have people fighting for you and others to not see you or see the value in your story, that was tough.

Did the controversy have to do with the fact that it was centered in the Black experience?

I can give this as an example. There's a film festival that *The Woman King* didn't get into, and their feedback was that I'm a great action director. Which means they did not see the humanity of these women. That was a gut punch at first. You are an arbiter of taste, of what is considered good cinema, and you are blocking it. And that's what it felt like in film school, where there were some professors who saw the film, loved it and wanted to give it a spotlight, and others who just didn't get it. And that is the thing: They couldn't see themselves in these characters.

Once you graduated, what was the path into the industry for you?

When you go to film school, you're going because there's only one thing you want to do, which is make movies. And graduating, I was like, "OK, I'm gonna graduate and scripts are gonna come flying at me!" Which doesn't happen. Coming out of film school, I had a bunch of meetings based on my thesis film, but I had no scripts. So I'm sitting with the heads of studios. I remember specifically sitting with Stephanie Allain, who at that time was head of Columbia, a Black woman, someone I revered. And everybody asked the same thing, "What do you want to do? What do you have?" And I had nothing. So I came out really unprepared, and I felt like I wasted so many opportunities.

I had the opportunity to have an interview on *A Different World*, which was my favorite show at that time. It was a horrific interview. Again: totally

unprepared, totally blew it. But I got the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences internship and worked at Quincy Jones Entertainment. And at that point I felt like I was kind of in, but I still didn't know what I was gonna do. But the person who got the job at *A Different World* had been messing up and not taking the job seriously, and I got a call from (show creator) Susan Fales-Hill, who said, "Hey, we want to bring on another person." So I went to work as a writer's apprentice on *A Different World*. And that again changed the trajectory of my life. There were Black women running the show and those women took me under their wings and really guided me.

When you were at UCLA, were you dreaming big enough to envision something like *The Woman King*?

That's the thing: I was. And then you get into the industry and you see that the industry is not believing in your dream. For a long time in my head, I would just say, "I wish I could make that." I would see *Gladiator* or I would see *The Last of the Mohicans*. I would love to do that, but women were not allowed through that door. I think it was

"I would pitch these films to the center, and I was getting rejected. I would say, 'Can we cast this?'"

Makeup: Leibi Carlas; Hair: Tiffany Daugherty; Stylist: Joy Bridges

after *Captain America: Winter Soldier* when my older son said to me, “How come I don’t get to see myself in those movies?” And I thought to myself, “This is what I do. I make movies. I need to give him that. Let me give him a chance to see himself heroically, which he’s never gotten to see.”

But you need the industry to give you a chance to do it.

I didn’t feel discriminated against as a director, but it was my choices of what I wanted to make that were discriminated against. I would go in and pitch these films with Black women at the center, and I was getting nothing. No bites. Literally, people would say, “Can we cast this white?” To me, to my face. It’s the strangest thing that people wouldn’t see the offense in that. I’m here pitching my heart out. This is my vision. These characters are a piece of me. And what you’re saying is that you do not see my value and you don’t see the value in these stories. That is soul-crushing.

How different is it now? You came into *The Woman King* when it was already well along, but it still didn’t have a green light yet.

Yeah. It took Viola and (producers) Cathy (Schulman) and Julius (Tennon)

six years to get it going. That’s a long time. It was the success of *Black Panther* that absolutely opened the door for *The Woman King*.

You can look at a film like *Bros*, where everybody is treating it like, “If *Bros* doesn’t succeed, they won’t make gay movies.”

Yes.

You’d think that *The Woman King* should be beyond that, because we’ve had so many examples of movies with predominantly Black casts that have done extraordinarily well. But I suppose there’s still the question, “Can we do a big movie with a largely female Black cast?” hanging over the film.

Yes. That’s in your brain every day. I know Hollywood, and every movie has a target on it. If it does well, then we get to keep making movies and the other filmmakers get to keep making movies. If it doesn’t do well, the pipeline shuts down for a moment and we’ve got to wait for something else to break out. That type of pressure can squash you or it can push you, and it absolutely pushes me. **W**

Films with Black women at the center were getting nothing. Literally, people would say, “Can we cast this white?” to my face.”



TOP

COLLEGE ISSUE

50

FILM
SCHOOLS
OF 2022



Illustration By Max-O-Matic

Before diving into this list—TheWrap’s seventh annual film school rankings—keep one critical caveat in mind: The dream campus for one student can turn out to be an academic nightmare for another. It’s all subjective and to some degree a barrel full of apples and oranges. After all, the best schools for learning how to direct aren’t necessarily the best for learning how to write or produce (or, for that matter, make TikTok videos). Just because a college or university has a high number on these pages doesn’t necessarily mean it’s the right place for you.

That said, there is something of a science to how we put together these rankings. For starters, TheWrap reached out to every school listed and collected data points on everything from class size to student body diversity to scholarships to networking opportunities, along with updates since last year’s rankings on new facilities, new faculty and new programs. Then we reached out to a number of former and current film school deans and other experts for their unvarnished, off-the-record input on which schools they thought were performing above or below expectations. Finally, we sifted through all that information, added a few other criteria—like the alumni each school generates—and crunched the numbers until we ultimately arrived at the following rankings. That “we,” by the way, includes Executive Editor, Awards Steve Pond, Deputy Magazine Editor Steve Root and Contributing Editor Benjamin Svetkey, among others. (Svetkey, as a part-time professor at Chapman University, recused himself from the ranking process.)

So how did it play out? AFI climbed back to No. 1, Ringling College of Art and Design swung into the Top 20 and... well, read on and discover the rest.





American Film Institute / Los Angeles, CA

There's no such thing as a perfect film school, but AFI comes close. Nestled on a picturesque eight-acre campus overlooking L.A., it even looks like a Hollywood-fantasy college (although, technically, AFI is a conservatory, not a college). Its approach to teaching emphasizes hands-on learning and the forging of creative partnerships that last long after graduation. (Take, for instance, the team that put together *Watcher*, which had the biggest opening weekend for any IFC film last year; it was directed by Chloe Okuno, lensed by Benjamin Nielsen and edited by Michael Block—all class of 2014.) Although in recent years the school has been something of a revolving door for deans, it seems to have settled down under Susan Ruskin, the former University of North Carolina chair who came aboard in 2019. It's also made major strides in equity and diversity: 60% of this year's class is female and there are several programs aimed at further cracking Hollywood's glass ceiling, including AFI's Young Women in Film program, a nine-week workshop for female high school students from underrepresented backgrounds. Alumni include Darren Aronofsky, David Lynch, Janusz Kaminski, Terrence Malick, Patty Jenkins and Sian Heder (director of 2022's Oscar-winning *CODA*).



Below, students during the annual AFI Conservatory Bootcamp; above, USC alums George Lucas and Ron Howard on the set of *Willow*



University of Southern California / Los Angeles, CA

All one has to do to grasp the power and history of USC's School of Cinematic Arts is to read the name plates on the buildings: George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, Jeffrey Katzenberg, Sumner Redstone, Robert Zemeckis, Louis B. Mayer. Even Hugh Hefner gets a hall. (No grotto, though.) More importantly, the school has thousands of active alumni fanned out in high places all over Hollywood—from studio c-suites to writers' rooms—who can help grads network their way into an actual job. It also has a faculty, staff and advisory board that's second to none (now including Universal chair Donna Langley on USC's Board of Councilors). Last year, USC received a \$14 million donation from game executive John Riccitiello to expand its games program, and it's also partnering with Sony on developing virtual production facilities and expanding its podcasting curriculum. The downside: Some critics say it's a bit impersonal, more like a factory than a school. Alumni: Ron Howard, Brian Grazer, Jay Roach, Susan Downey, Tim Story and George Lucas, among *many* others.



New York University / New York, NY

One of the biggest selling points of NYU is its campus—also known as New York City. But the school is working hard to maintain its place as the preeminent east coast film program, launching initiatives like the new Martin Scorsese Institute of Global Cinematic Arts, an academic and production center that includes a state-of-the-art virtual production hub. Thanks to a gift from George Lucas and spouse Mellody Hobson, there's a slew of new scholarships. But the press hasn't been all good: The Wall Street Journal recently published a piece knocking the school for leaving some graduate students drowning in debt—at nearly \$50K a year for a three-year program, it's not hard to see how that can happen (though NYU claims that 95 percent of this year's class is receiving financial aid). Alumni include Philip Seymour Hoffman, Spike Lee, Oliver Stone, M. Night Shyamalan, Lady Gaga and, of course, the guy whose name is on that Global Cinematic Arts institute.



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Chapman University / Orange, CA

Chapman has been climbing the rankings in recent years, thanks in part to its emphasis on actually getting students jobs once they graduate. This year, it launched a new Careers Center under the leadership of former CAA agent Joe Rosenberg and producer Susan Landau Finch, created an 8,000-name alumni database and added regular monthly networking events. They've also sponsored workshops on subjects like "How to Build a Franchise, Fast and Furiously" (taught by producer Neal Moritz) and continue to host a top-notch Master Class series. (Recent speakers included Ted Sarandos and Michelle Yeoh.) Its alumni haven't climbed quite as high as the three schools ahead of it on this list, though the Duffer brothers, class of 2007, brought Netflix its biggest hit with *Stranger Things*, and Parker Finn directed the horror hit *Smile*, which crossed \$100 million in two weeks. The place has a reputation for making students happy, and it's also becoming increasingly diverse; Chapman recently hired 25 full and part-time professors, the vast majority being people of color.



Top, two of NYU's finest: Spike Lee and Martin Scorsese; bottom, Chapman grads the Duffer brothers on the set of *Stranger Things* with Winona Ryder



California Institute of the Arts (Cal Arts) / Santa Clarita, CA

Look behind the scenes of pretty much any recent animated feature and you're likely to find a CalArts alum in a major role: Mark Andrews (*Brave*), Brad Bird (*The Incredibles*), Chris Buck (*Frozen*), Pete Docter (*Up*), Genndy Tartakovsky (*Dexter's Laboratory*), Lauren Faust (*My Little Pony*)... The list goes on and on. To keep pace with the industry, the school—founded in 1961, with a little help from Walt Disney—is renovating its animation space and upgrading virtually all of its 25,000 square feet of facilities. Look for the updated space to open next year. The film program is also partnering with CalArts' Patty Disney Center for Life & Work on a mentorship program for under-represented students that includes hands-on opportunities, internships and mentorships.



Columbia University / New York, NY

It's one of the only film schools on this list where you can get an Ivy League diploma. But it comes at a price: A four-year MFA here (the fourth year is optional) will set you back about \$150K in tuition, which is why the Wall Street Journal recently ran a piece about Columbia headlined "Financially Hobbled for Life: The Elite Master's Degrees That Don't Pay Off". The school also took some hits this year from U.S. News & World Report's annual college rankings, which downgraded Columbia from the No. 2 university (after Harvard) to No. 18, following reports that Columbia provided misleading data for the survey. Still, there's no question it remains one of the top film schools in the nation, with a heavy emphasis on the narrative arts, including a brand-new MFA concentration in Writing for Film and Television. (Applications just opened for fall 2023.) Alumni include Jennifer Lee, Simon Kinberg, Olivia Newman and Ashley Lyle.



Emerson College / Boston, MA

Boston has some advantages—it's still a center of intellectual activity in the U.S.—even if it's not exactly a hub of the film or television industry. Still, Emerson manages to punch above its weight, with an alumni list that runs from Norman Lear in the '40s to Henry Winkler and Jay Leno in the '60s and '70s to Warner Film Group CEO Pamela Abdy and *Crazy Rich Asians* writer Adele Lim in the '90s. Its robust film and video programs now also include games and AR/VR instruction as well as new offerings in anti-racist filmmaking and accessible cinema. Plus, there's its Pitchfest competition (where students have 90 seconds to pitch a project to alumni) and the student-run EVVY awards to honor student work. The school went fully bicoastal in 2014, with the opening of its Los Angeles campus, and went global in 2019 with a three-year international BFA (offered jointly with the Paris College of Art) that includes study in Boston, Paris and the college-owned Kasteel Well castle in the Netherlands.



University of California, Los Angeles / Los Angeles, CA

UCLA touts the benefits of a "small and intimate" program (just 581 students) embedded in a large university (32,000 undergraduates) that just happens to be the No. 1 ranked public university in the country by U.S. News. Alumni include Dustin Lance Black, Jack Black, Tim Robbins (who is also a visiting professor) and our cover subject, Gina Prince-Bythewood, whose *The Woman King* has been a hit this fall, grossing \$54M in its first month. But it still doesn't have a permanent dean, struggles with infighting among departments and received a scathing report card two years ago from UCLA's own Academic Senate, which found that student criticism of the program "was wide-ranging and vocal."

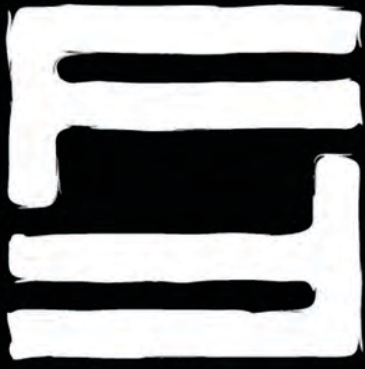


Loyola Marymount University / Los Angeles, CA

After Peggy Rajski's turbulent three-year-term as dean—which ended in 2021 after the faculty revolted against her Hollywood producer-style abrasive behavior towards the staff—LMU seems to have righted itself. Joanne Moore, a former chair at University of



Columbia University



FSU FILM



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Florida State University

North Carolina School of the Arts, is now leading the film department at this smallish Jesuit school, where the student/teacher ratio clocks in at 12:1. Moore, the school's first African American dean, is inheriting a student body that's already pretty diverse; 54.5% of this year's class is non-white.

10 University of North Carolina School of the Arts / Winston-Salem, North Carolina

The state school—one of 17 campuses in the UNC system but the only arts conservatory—costs half of private film schools' tuition (undergrad in-state: \$6,497; out-of-state: \$23,731). But there's nothing cut-rate about the education students receive here. The school boasts impressive soundstages (a full city street and a pool for water scenes) and gives every graduat-



ing class an opportunity to go to L.A. and New York to meet with industry professionals. Still, brain drain has been a problem: It recently lost three of its top educators, with Susan Ruskin going to AFI, Joanne Moore to LMU and Kevin Jones to Chapman.

11 Wesleyan University / Middletown, CT

She retired in 2020, but Professor Jeanine Basinger—who all but invented cinema studies at this small liberal arts campus in the 1960s—is still the heart and soul of the program. Indeed, her influence looms so large at Wesleyan, its film school was recently renamed the Jeanine

Basinger Center for Film Studies. Her approach was more aesthetical and philosophical—"What makes film entertaining, what makes it work?" recalls writer and alum Sam Wasson of the questions explored in her classes—but that doesn't mean students don't also receive a practical education. There's a sound-



stage, a shooting house and three state-of-the-art theaters in which to practice your craft. Other alums include producer-writer Akiva Goldsman (*Star Trek*), Lin-Manuel Miranda (*Hamilton*) and Netflix's director of original series, Danielle Woodrow.

12 University of Texas at Austin / Austin, TX

UT-Austin is one of the few film schools to offer a TV writers' room workshop class, where students create an entire season of a series that they then shop around to all the major networks. Tuition costs are also a big plus: \$11K for in-state students and \$39K for out-of-state (although all MFA students, no matter where they're from, qualify for in-state rates). The student body is relatively diverse—about a third of the current undergraduate class identify as Latino—but Texas has its drawbacks too. Female applicants may want to think twice about living in a state with Gilead-style abortion laws. (There's a \$10K bounty on anyone who aids or abets the termination of a pregnancy.)

13 Stanford University / Palo Alto, CA

This intensive two-year program, which is uniquely housed in the Department of Art and Art History, only admits six to eight students a year but offers everyone a fellowship that covers 100 percent of the cost of tuition. The program, which is considered tops for documentary filmmaking, emphasizes collaboration, and all students are expected to take on shooting, editing and producing roles over the course of the two years. Every student is asked to produce four films during their time in the program—three short films the first year and a 15- to 20-minute-long thesis film in the second year. Thesis films have been seen at film festivals, broadcast on PBS and distributed online.

14 ArtCenter College of Design / Pasadena, CA

The college's promotional materials claim that because all of ArtCenter's instructors are working professionals, "their war stories are hours old, not years old." The school just renovated its Ahmanson Auditorium (funded in part with a donation from alum Zach Snyder). In addition, actor-producer Terry Crews allows students to use the state-of-the-art LED wall at his virtual production facility Amen & Amen, while a partnership with Epic Games has beefed up its virtual production resources. ArtCenter is also gearing up to introduce a writing track to add to its existing tracks in directing, editing and cinematography. At \$48K for undergrads and \$51K for grads, tuition is ever-so-slightly more affordable than most private film schools.



15 Savannah College of Art and Design / Savannah, GA

The school has several campuses—one in Atlanta, another in Lacoste, France, and a third that's entirely virtual—but the bulk of its 16,400 students can be found at the Savannah Film Studios in Savannah, which is currently undergoing a massive upgrade. Along with the newly opened XR stage, an 11-acre expansion, including Hollywood-style backlots, is scheduled to be unveiled in 2023. The Atlanta campus, meanwhile, houses a dedicated screenwriting center while the campus in southern France allows students to film in medieval structures and historic limestone quarries. The French campus also has the advantage of not being in Georgia, where reproductive rights are now nearly as medieval as those quarries.

16 Florida State University / Tallahassee, FL

Finding film school a bit nerve-wracking? Don't sweat it. FSU has a mental health specialist hosting workshops to help "better prepare filmmaking artists to deal with stress [and] collaborative conflicts, and to develop better self-care and work-life balances." On the academic side, the school is starting an MFA track in immersive virtual production. Tuition is bargain-basement—\$6.5K in-state and \$21.6K out-of-state—but there's a catch. Like Texas and Georgia, Florida has recently enacted draconian anti-abortion laws that might have some students thinking twice about spending time there. Prominent alumni include Barry Jenkins (and a lot of the classmates who helped him make *Moonlight* and *The Underground Railroad*), Melissa Carter and Matt Lopez.

17 California State University, Northridge / Northridge, CA

Located about 25 miles from Hollywood, CSUN offers value (in-state tuition is just \$7K for undergrads, \$8.4K for grads) and robust diversity (it's majority Latino) in a competitive program. New

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additions include a Virtual Production track and an upcoming master's degree in Entertainment Media Management. The school's size (34,000 students, second largest in the Cal State system) might put off some prospective students, but it gets bonus points for helping NASA find E.T.: The school was recently tapped by the space agency to make a documentary about the search for extraterrestrial life.

18 Columbia College Chicago / Chicago, IL

If 35,000 square feet of production space isn't enough for you, this school also offers a semester in L.A. program, where you can shoot at Sunset Las Palmas Studios—the very soundstages on which *I Love Lucy* was once taped. Prominent alum includes actress Lena Waithe, Oscar-winner Janusz Kaminski and *Atlanta* cinematographer Christian Springer, who remembers his time in Chicago mostly for the friends he made. “One of the most important and valuable takeaways from the program was discovering how unbelievably important it is to make things with the people you love,” he said. “It can take many years of working in the industry to discover that and it was so valuable to understand that before I even began my professional career.”

19 Ithaca College / Ithaca, NY

In addition to former Disney CEO Bob Iger (magna cum laude '73), the mid-size school (5,600 undergrads) in upstate New York boasts an eclectic alumni mix that includes Liz Tigelaar (*Little Fires Everywhere*), David Boreanaz (*Bones*), Peter Dinklage (who helped create the iconic *Yo' MTV Raps*) and Gavin MacLeod (who played *The Love Boat's* Captain Stubing). This year, the program got a new dean, Amy Falkner, who comes to the school after a distinguished career at Syracuse's S.I. Newhouse School. One potential snag, though: At \$66K per year, tuition is among the highest on this list.

20 Ringling College of Art and Design / Sarasota, FL

Ringling—yes, the founding donor, back in 1931, was one of the brothers behind the famous circus—has been on the leading edge of teaching computer animation since the 1990s. It added a film program in 2008, which admits about 35-45 students a year to study one of two tracks (narrative storytelling or branded entertainment) in its “production intensive” program. The school's five soundstages, 15 editing suites and facilities attract so many working professionals—like Werner Herzog, Kevin Smith and Beau Bridges—that many students are hired and get professional credits well before graduation.

Kevin Smith, who filmed at Ringling College



21 Boston University / Boston, MA

The film school keeps getting bigger and bigger—it now has about 600 undergrad film and TV majors—so they keep hiring more and more teachers. Like, for instance, Margaret Wallace, who was once named one of the 10 most powerful women in video games. Despite the program's size, it keeps most screenwriting classes to fewer than 12 students and production classes to fewer than 16. A new joint venture with the School of Theater will create a sitcom pilot that will be shot in front of a live studio audience.

22 Northwestern University / Evanston, IL

Strictly speaking, this isn't really a film school or even a conservatory. Students who major in Radio, Television, Video and Film get degrees in *communications*. Northwestern sells its program as offering all the practical education of more specialized schools along with all the benefits of getting a



well-rounded liberal arts education. Recent additions to the program include the Pritzker Pucker Studio Lab for the Promotion of Mental Health via the Cinematic Arts (funded with a \$1M donation) which sponsors events, speakers and screenings to promote “honest portrayals of a misunderstood topic.” Undergrad tuition is a hefty \$62K, but the MFA program is fully funded, meaning students get a tuition waiver and stipend.

23 Rhode Island School of Design / Providence, RI

It has been a year of transition for the east coast art school famous as the birthplace of the Talking Heads (though more relevant film alumni include Gus Van Sant, Seth MacFarlane and Jemima Kirke). For starters, it welcomed a new president, Crystal Williams, an award-winning poet who was the associate provost at Boston University, and a new head of the Film, Animation and Video department, animator Amy Kravitz. New classes include Site Gags and Hidden Monsters, which explores the use of humor in animation and its relationship to racism, minstrelsy and problematic issues of representation. The highly selective school—it admits only about 20 percent of applicants—has a student/teacher ratio of just 9:1.

24 Syracuse University / Syracuse, NY

Syracuse offers both BFA and MFA degrees in film through its College of Visual and Performing Arts and BS and MA degrees in television, radio and film through its S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications. But students aren't stuck in upstate New York. The university offers semester-long study programs in L.A., Prague, Bologna and suburban New York, where a partnership with Great Point Media offers internships at Lionsgate Studios in Yonkers.

25 University of Arizona / Tucson, AZ

This year the School for Theatre, Film and Television (TFTV) welcomed several new faculty, including director Peter Lauer (*Emily in Paris*), editor Katy Skjerping (*The Good Fight*) and writer Brian Levant (*Happy Days*), the last of whom will running a TV boot camp class in which students will create an original comedy pilot from scratch. TFTV works closely with Arizona's nationally recognized acting program, giving its film students lots of opportunities to collaborate across program lines. Prominent alums include Netflix exec Scott Stuber, producer Jerry Bruckheimer and *Rutherford Falls* showrunner Sierra Teller Ornelas.



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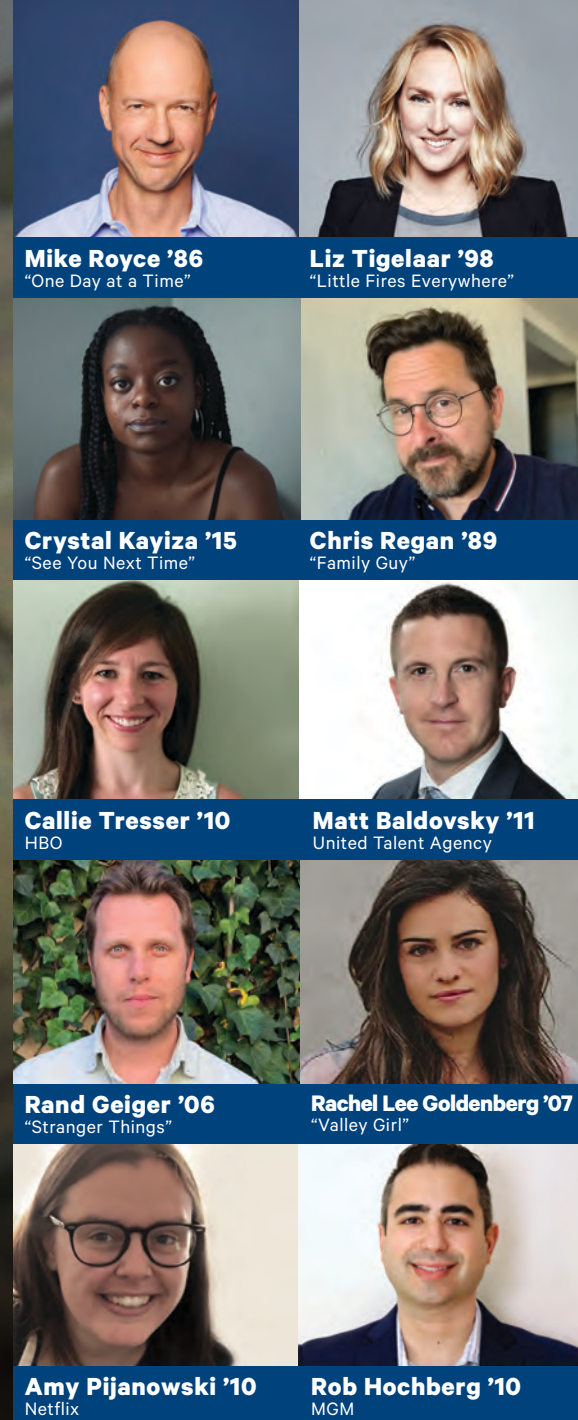
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Mike Royce '86
"One Day at a Time"

Liz Tigelaar '98
"Little Fires Everywhere"

Crystal Kayiza '15
"See You Next Time"

Chris Regan '89
"Family Guy"

Callie Tresser '10
HBO

Matt Baldovsky '11
United Talent Agency

Rand Geiger '06
"Stranger Things"

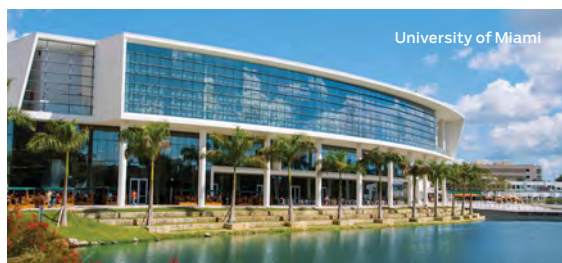
Rachel Lee Goldenberg '07
"Valley Girl"

Amy Pijanowski '10
Netflix

Rob Hochberg '10
MGM



Roy H. Park School of
Communications



University of Miami



University of Miami / Miami, FL

Miami's Cinematic Arts program, which offers undergraduate degrees and an MFA, just launched an interdisciplinary Documentary MFA that combines a journalistic framework with a production education. There's also an outreach program that pairs teams of students with non-profit groups in Central America to create short nonfiction films. Alumni making news lately include producer Barry Waldman (*Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*) and director David Nutter (*The Time Traveler's Wife*).



Los Angeles Film School / Los Angeles, CA

In response to an exponential growth in online learning over the last few years—72% of the school's 4,500 students are enrolled in an online program—LAFS has been increasing its virtual opportunities for students, adding online clubs to parallel the on-campus IRL ones, and is starting a student Discord community. Tuition varies by program, but a full four-year degree runs about \$15K-\$25K per year.



Pratt Institute / Brooklyn, NY

With its 26-acre Brooklyn campus, Pratt is the only art and design school in NYC with a dedicated physical campus that includes three soundstages, editing suites and a 90-seat 4K screening room (plus a sculpture park considered one of the 10 best campus art collections in the U.S.). This past year, Pratt alums with high-profile projects included producers Glenn Ficarra and John Requa (*WeCrashed*) and Liz Hannah (*The Dropout*) while senior Mackie Mallison's short *It Smells Like Springtime* was an official selection of the 2022 New York Film Festival.



San Francisco State University / San Francisco, CA

Though SFSU's roots are in experimental filmmaking influenced by the city's counterculture tradition, most of its current students are more interested in scripted entertainment, so the school has beefed up its offerings in those areas, adding a video game minor. Like other California state schools, SFSU is a bargain (\$7.5K in state, \$18.8K out for undergrads) and very diverse (more than 80% identify as non-white or mixed race).

FROM USMC TO NYU

LONG BEFORE HE WENT TO FILM SCHOOL, WRITER-DIRECTOR ELEGANCE BRATTON GOT HIS START MAKING MOVIES IN THE MILITARY

Most students go to film school after becoming interested in cinema in grade school or high school. Elegance Bratton went there via the United States Marine Corps.

Bratton, writer-director of the acclaimed drama *The Inspection*, was kicked out of his home by his mother at age 16 because he was gay; he joined the Marines in his mid-20s after spending years homeless on the street. (The story of his time in boot camp and his attempts to reconcile with his mother are fictionalized in *The Inspection*, which premiered at this year's Toronto International Film Festival.) While he'd never thought about film as a career because it seemed beyond the realm of possibility for a homeless kid in New Jersey, he did sometimes read books about film after he stole them and before he sold them. "I read Scorsese's books and Spike Lee's books," he said. "And when my recruiter asked me if I ever thought about being a filmmaker, I said, 'Well, I guess.'"

The question came because Bratton had scored well on a Marine Corps placement exam that suggested three potential jobs: military intelligence, journalist and filmmaker. He didn't want to be a spy because "I'm not a snitch" and he considered himself too biased to be a good journalist, but he said yes to filmmaking. "I had this very rudimentary idea of what a filmmaker was," he said. "And in the recruiting book they showed a cool picture of a Marine hanging upside down from a helicopter with a camera."

The Marines taught him filmmaking, but only to a degree. "I did things like actuality films: How do you put this weapon together, how do you take it apart? And I recorded retirement ceremonies. I remember getting a call that the general at our base asked for me, so I went to his office and it was like *Dr. Strangelove*: He had a map of the entire world on his wall. He said, 'Bratton, I wrote this script for my retirement. Do you have any notes?' It was the only time in my life a straight white man had asked my advice about anything."

When he got out of the military, Bratton went to Columbia University and got a degree in African American Studies—but while he was there he also started making a documentary about the young, homeless LGBTQ community, *Pier Kids*. "That was the first time I started thinking about, how does the camera communicate perception and point of view?" he said. "How does the camera make you empathize with someone?" While editing

Pier Kids, he also decided to apply to NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. By that point, he had watched movies incessantly while working at a Blockbuster video store. "I had a pretty sure idea of what I liked in movies," he said. "But Tisch was good for showing that filmmaking's a collaborative art. That was the first time I ever had a cinematographer, a sound person, a gaffer... And it taught me how to exist as myself in this system."

That final lesson, though, didn't always come easily. "I was making movies about trans people, about Black people, about queer people, and at that moment it wasn't popular," he said. "Some people there thought that movies about people like that would never go anywhere." He wrote the first draft of *The Inspection* while at NYU, and also learned by watching the acclaimed filmmakers who taught at the school. "When I was in film school, you couldn't have told me that I wasn't successful," he said. "So I thought, I'm gonna look at every successful director in this place and act like them."

And now, as he reads the rave reviews of *The Inspection* (TheWrap said it "has the trappings of an instant queer classic") and awaits its November release by A24, Bratton feels both embraced and empowered. "I was in a homeless shelter 20 years ago," he said. "To get to this space, I've had to dream big. And now I want to dream bigger." —STEVE POND



The Inspection



Jeremy Pope, left, and Elegance Bratton

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Alienwork: Ishma created by VFS 3D Animation & Visual Effects, Modeling student Yogeve Sharabi

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Vancouver Film School

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VFS

30 Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey / New Brunswick, NJ

Rutgers this year introduced an interdisciplinary program to cultivate collaboration between film, theater, music and dance centered on a new first-year course called Interplay. Meanwhile, Rutgers Documentary Film Lab, which recently won nearly \$1 million in new grants, has sent some two dozen students to shoot films in such far-flung locales as Antarctica and Indonesia.

31 School of Visual Arts / New York, NY

This year SVA redesigned its BFA in film program to give students more choice and to ensure they graduate with marketable skills. The animation program is considered very strong, especially in 2D. A collaboration with the Museum of the Moving Images showcases student films alongside professional works at its First Look Festival. SVA also brags that it has more film equipment per capita than any other east coast school.

32 University of California, Santa Barbara / Santa Barbara, CA

UCSB has long worked to move beyond its party reputation (not easy, since it is literally right on the beach), but in truth it has a distinguished film program celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2023. The school offers courses in film history and theory; media practices around the world; fiction and nonfiction filmmaking; video games, interactive and web-based digital media production; screenwriting; and archival and curatorial practice. The graduate core focuses on history, theory and critical analysis, but there's also a non-production PhD track for film scholars. In-state tuition is a manageable \$38K, but an eye-watering, Ivy League-esque \$69K for out-of-state students.



University of California, Santa Barbara

33 Hofstra University / Hempstead, NY

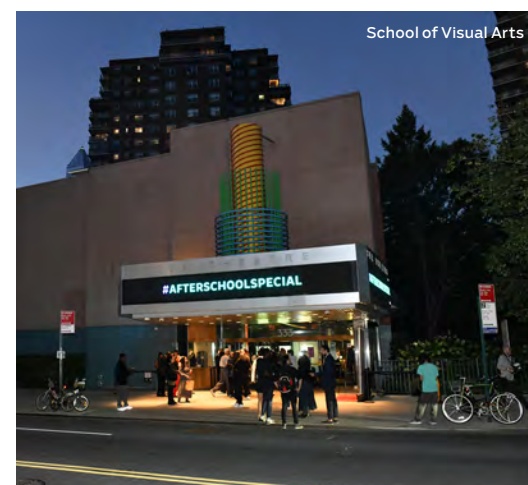
This Long Island school began in 1935 as a satellite campus of NYU before breaking off as an independent university in 1939. With 201 film majors, Hofstra's program is one of the larger undergrad programs in the country. The school has recently introduced a BFA in film that mixes practical instruction in production with cores on film history and theory and a Writing for the Screen BFA that is designed to allow graduates to thrive in all manner of writers rooms. Alumni include Anonymous Content CEO Dawn Olmstead, producer Avi Arad and Francis Ford Coppola (who has funded a screenwriting/playwriting scholarship).

34 University of California, Berkeley / Berkeley, CA

The film department—which focuses on teaching students, per the school, “to think historically, theoretically, and analytically about film and media within the broad context of humanistic studies”—has seen a 120% jump in enrollment over the last few years. The program boasts that fully half its majors transferred into Berkeley from a community college and a high number come from underrepresented minorities.

35 University of Pennsylvania / Philadelphia, PA

With the elevation of Karen Redrobe to Director of Cinema and Media Studies and hiring of Professor Shannon Mattern, a pioneer in media infrastructures studies, Penn is looking to build bridges between cinema and media studies as well as the rapidly expanding world of digital humanities. Penn alumni who have made a name in Hollywood include actors Bruce Dern, Elizabeth Banks and Candice Bergen, producers Dick Wolf, Marc Platt, TV writer Meredith Stiehm and Oscar-winning documentarian Morgan Neville. But it all comes at an Ivy League price tag; a year at Penn costs over \$85,000.



School of Visual Arts

36 Stony Brook University / Stony Brook, NY

Part of New York's public university system, the school, located about 60 miles from Manhattan on Long Island's North Shore, has doubled the number of grad students since last year, and has been beefing up its faculty, adding three new teachers this year, all working professionals with extensive writing, directing and producing credits. It's also bringing back Michael Rauch (*Royal Pains*, *Monarch*) to teach its showrunner class. Tuition remains relatively modest, with the school estimating that a three-year MFA (two years in residence) would cost about \$35K in-state, \$64K out-of-state.

37 DePaul University / Chicago, IL

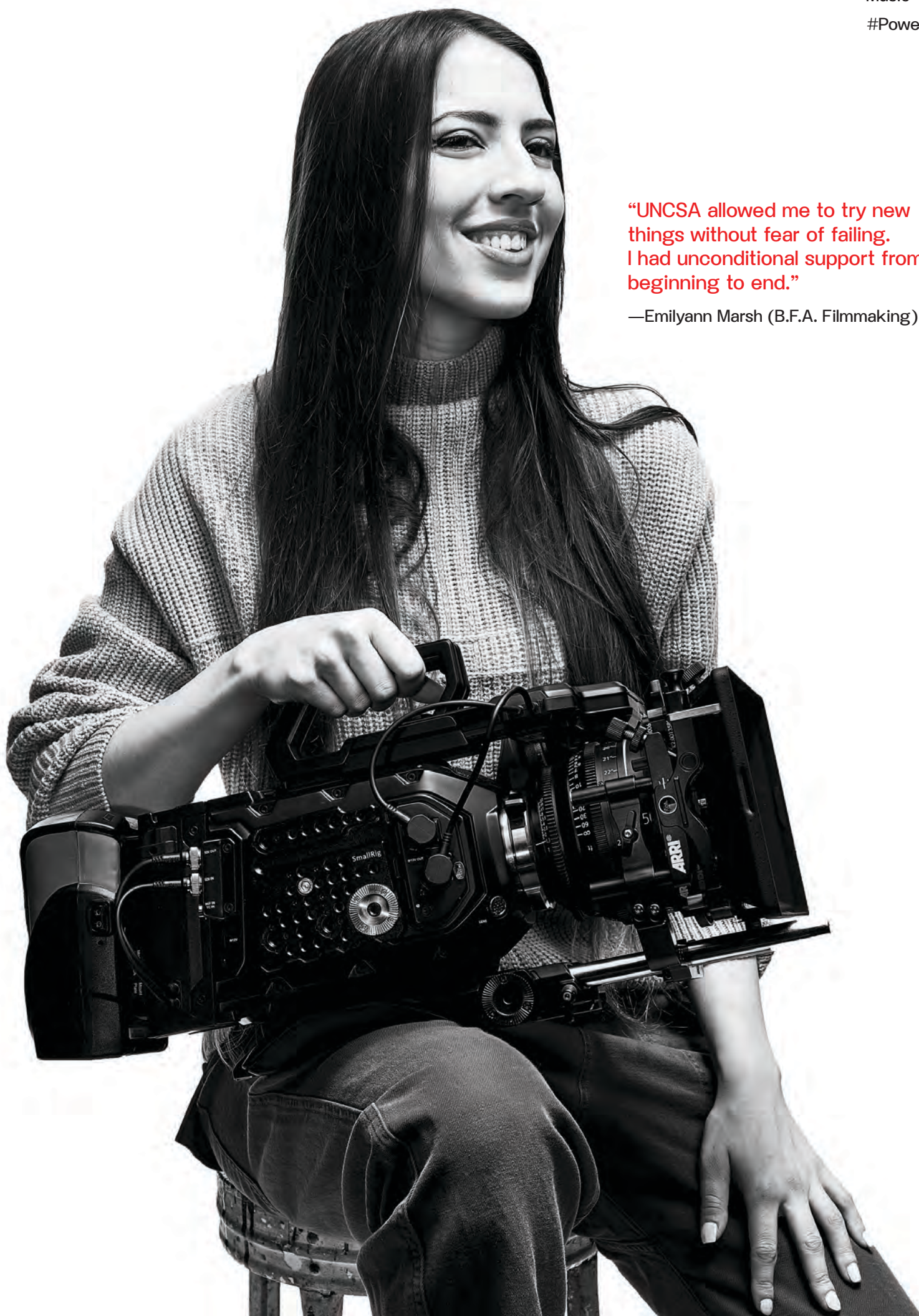
This year, 347 incoming freshman majored in Film & TV, making it the most popular field of study at this Catholic university. Most students focus on production, but other popular specialties include screenwriting, documentary and editing. The school's 32,000-square-foot production space is in the same complex where Dick Wolf's many *Chicago* series and other programs film.

38 Arizona State University / Tempe, AZ

The ASU program has made big strides in recent years. In 2020 it was upgraded to a separate school within the University—The Sidney Poitier New American Film School—and brought in former Academy president Cheryl Boone Isaacs as founding director. This fall it moves to a new top-flight facility about seven miles from the main campus in Tempe. It also operates a satellite campus in L.A. and just added an MA in Narrative and Emerging Media, run jointly with the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism.

“UNCSA allowed me to try new things without fear of failing. I had unconditional support from beginning to end.”

—Emilyann Marsh (B.F.A. Filmmaking)



HOW THE ACADEMY HELPED CREATE THE FIRST U.S. FILM SCHOOL

BY BRUCE DAVIS

*Editor's note: Bruce Davis spent 20 years as the executive director of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. He retired in 2011 and has just published *The Academy and the Award* (Brandeis University Press), from which this story is excerpted.*

Back in Los Angeles, [Academy founding member Milton] Sills and his College Affairs Committee decided on their strategy. Rather than approaching a large number of colleges at the outset about adding film studies to their programs, they elected to look for one school that might be persuaded to try a pilot program. The Academy, working with faculty members from the school, would monitor the advance run, read the response cards, and decide whether further editing or rewriting was called for.

The committee persuaded the Academy Board that the University of Southern California would be the ideal school for the experiment. It was close at hand and was beginning to acquire a respectable academic reputation, and the university's president and the Academy's president were already good friends. Though born in Illinois, USC's Dr. Rufus von KleinSmid, in photographs, displayed an aspect and a bearing that left him only a mensural scar short of being fairly described as Stroheimesque. And he may have regretted the absence of the scar; in any case, he was an avid fencer. He founded the USC fencing team, and for some years prior to that he had wielded a blade regularly at the elegant downtown Los Angeles Athletic Club. There he became acquainted, and frequently crossed swords, with the town's best-known

fencing enthusiast [and Academy president], Douglas Fairbanks. It was not difficult for Fairbanks to talk von KleinSmid into a meeting; in fact the USC head huddled for two hours with Sills' committee in May 1927, almost before the dishes from the [Academy-founding] Organizational Banquet had been cleared.* Von KleinSmid liked new projects, and he liked the prospect of aligning his school with the most successful and glamorous business in his city. He asked the dean of his College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, Karl T. Waugh, to select some faculty who might be useful in designing a film-related course or two, and that small group met with the Academy's committee over the following months.

In the course of the discussions, the two groups realized that it would be useful to have representatives from USC spend time observing a studio, so that there would be someone on the campus whose acquaintance with moviemaking would be more than theoretical. USC selected a young man named Lester Cowan for that role. Cowan was not a faculty member. He had become attached to the university very tenuously in a sort of special projects capacity, but he was happy to take on the assignment and become in effect an intern at United Artists, where M.C. Levee had agreed to show him the cables. As the planning proceeded, Cowan took part in those conversations, and as the only participant in the room who didn't have a film career or a faculty load to distract him from the project, he gradually became the course's de facto leader.

In July 1928 he sent a memo to [screenwriter and Academy founding member] Frank Woods in which he laid out a possible syllabus for the pilot course and, in what cynics might see as an attempt to create a job for himself, recommended that the Academy establish a Bureau of College



Top to bottom: USC's Rufus von KleinSmid, the Academy's Milton Sills, Frank E. Woods, and Lester Cowan

Affairs to manage its future expansion into academe. Both Woods and Sills were very impressed with Cowan's initiative, and though no one embraced the Bureau proposal, Sills did point out that the intern had been putting in a lot of work with only a token salary from USC and none at all from the Academy. He suggested it might be time to change that.

Cowan was piped aboard by Woods in September, at a just-livable salary of a hundred dollars a week, and was formally placed in charge of the pilot course, now titled Introduction to Photoplay and slotted into the spring semester of 1929. Speakers were lined up: Woods on film history to date, [producer Irving] Thalberg on contemporary filmmaking, William Cameron Menzies on art direction, L.A. Times film reviewer Edwin Schallert on Principles of Criticism, Levee on the business of motion pictures, USC's Waugh and two colleagues who spoke on aesthetic and social issues, and William de Mille—just months away from becoming the Academy's second president—wrapping things up on May 29 with a look at the future of motion pictures. Cowan seemed genuinely exhilarated by his new job. The Photoplay course was a thorough success; it continued to be offered and was joined by others. In 1932 the university formed its Department of Cinema, offering the first bachelor's degree in cinema in the United States. **W**

**Von KleinSmid's name and his sculpted bust adorned USC's imposing Center for International and Public Affairs until both were removed by a vote of the school's trustees in 2020. The action followed years of students and faculty objecting to the former president's writings on, and enthusiastic proselytizing for, eugenics.*

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39 School of the Art Institute of Chicago / Chicago, IL

SAIC—one of the artiest film schools on this list—prides itself on encouraging students to engage in “experimentation with radical form and content,” which seems fitting for a school that started in 1886 as a student art cooperative. It pitches itself as “the perfect fit for students eager to navigate the space between cinema, installation, mobile device, performance site and community-based projects.”

40 American University / Washington, DC

This film program squeezes everything it can from its D.C. location, partnering with National Geographic for a class on archival storytelling, working with government agencies and NGOs to produce PSAs and landing a grant from the National Science Foundation to build a holographic production studio. The program’s Center for Environmental Filmmaking even received a grant to make a film celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act.

41 University of Michigan / Ann Arbor, MI

Michigan approaches film studies as a traditional liberal arts subject rather than a vocational pursuit. But its screenwriting sub-major builds on a legacy that includes alumni Arthur Miller, Lawrence Kasdan, New Line founder Robert Shaye and UTA’s Peter Benedek. Plus, it gets great guest speakers like Alexander Payne and Spike Lee.

42 Full Sail University / Winter Park, FL

The object at this for-profit institution is speed, with some of the fastest degrees in the discipline: 12 months for a graduate degree and 20 months on campus (plus 29 months online) for undergraduates. Alumni include

senior vice president of production operations at HBO & HBO Max Stephen Beres, writer/director Darren Lynn Bousman (*Spiral*, *Saw II*) and Gary Rizzo, who won sound mixing Oscars in 2011 and 2018.

43 University of Colorado at Boulder / Boulder, CO

For the outdoorsy types, this school has the Rocky Mountains literally at its front step and world-class ski resorts like Breckenridge and Vail nearby. But you can learn something while you’re there as well; its Department of Cinema Studies & Moving Image Arts offers no fewer than 400 majors. Its most famous—and infamous—alumni are the *South Park* boys, Trey Parker (who won a Student Academy Award while at Boulder) and Matt Stone (who was a math major).

44 New York Film Academy / New York, NY

The name is a bit misleading, since this for-profit is based not just in New York but in Los Angeles and Miami as well, with campuses in Florence and Gold Coast, Australia and satellite locations in Paris, Shanghai, Moscow and Beijing. This year, the school is launching three new degree programs: BFA in Entertainment Media, BFA in Musical Theatre and an online Master of Arts in Entrepreneurial Producing and Innovation.

45 Colorado Film School / Denver, CO

Part of the Colorado Community College system, this film school offers one of the least expensive diplomas on this list: An Associate’s degree costs about \$15K in tuition. CFS is in the process of developing a four-year bachelor’s degree to go along with a major facilities upgrade. But cheap doesn’t mean bad: Recent grads include Robert Brogden, a finalist for a student Academy Award, and Emmy nominee Austin Roth.

46 Biola University / La Mirada, CA

The private, nondenominational, evangelical Christian university about 25 miles from Hollywood has seen enrollment in the School of Cinema & Media Arts climb 26% in the last two years. Its School of Cinema & Media Arts is led by Tom Halleen, who left his job as EVP of Programming Strategy at AMC Networks in 2020 to join the university. Biola now has plans to build a \$76-million studio facility that will span more than 56,000 square feet.

47 Mount St. Mary’s / Los Angeles, CA

This private Catholic university is for women only at the undergraduate level but admits men to its graduate programs. In addition to its main campus in Brentwood, the film department has a new professional studio facility on Hollywood Blvd. overlooking the historic TCL Chinese Theater. Along with a standard bachelor’s degree in film and media, students can also earn a degree in Film, Media and Social Justice that emphasizes advocacy-based content.

48 University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee / Milwaukee, WI

The Peck School’s Department of Film, Video, Animation and New Genres—where Willem Dafoe got his degree—offers some 500 concentrations of film studies, among the largest on this list. A state-of-the-art animation studio has just been added to the midwestern campus, where students can get both undergrad and MFA degrees in cinematic arts.

49 Johns Hopkins University/ MICA / Baltimore, MD

The Baltimore-based program, jointly operated by Johns Hopkins and the Maryland Institute College of Art, prides itself on its small classes (a 10:1 student/faculty ratio) and hands-on practical instruction, combined with a strong emphasis on developing critical thinking and writing skills in students.

50 Pepperdine University / Los Angeles, CA

The location couldn’t be sweeter—on the Malibu bluffs overlooking the ocean—but it’s not technically a film school; it’s a private Christian university that offers a very strong film major. It gets an F in responsiveness, however, since it failed to respond to TheWrap’s request for survey data. **W**





The UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television celebrates our alumna Gina Prince-Bythewood, the success of her film *The Woman King*, and all our students and alums!



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GREAT INTERNATIONAL FILM SCHOOLS: 22 FOR '22

THE 50 SCHOOLS IN OUR RANKINGS OF U.S. SCHOOLS ARE FAR FROM THE ONLY PLACE TO GET A FIRST-RATE EDUCATION IN FILM, TELEVISION AND MEDIA. HERE'S AN UNRANKED LIST OF SOME OF THE BEST OF THE HUNDREDS OF FILM SCHOOLS AROUND THE WORLD. **BY STEVE POND**

AUSTRALIAN FILM, TELEVISION AND RADIO SCHOOL SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

"AFTRS was perfect because it was...practical," says songwriter Christine Kirkwood, who graduated from Australia's national screen and broadcast school after a six-month government program to train women in filmmaking. Her fellow alums include Gillian Armstrong and Phillip Noyce, who were in the school's first graduating class in 1973, as well as Jane Campion, Cate Shortland and cinematographer Andrew Lesnie. Located near the Fox Studios in Sydney, the campus includes studios, post-production facilities and an extensive library.

AFTRS has a robust First Nations and Outreach program for indigenous students, and in early 2023 a new partnership with Industrial Light & Magic will allow the school to begin offering a two-semester Graduate Diploma in Visual Effects program. Other new offerings include a Screen Warriors program that will recruit, train and mentor military veterans who want to break into the film and television industry. 2018 graduate Pariya Taherzadeh, a successful podcaster, has launched a new \$20,000 scholarship for aspiring audio storytellers.



BEIJING FILM ACADEMY BEIJING, CHINA

Given the current political climate, U.S. students might not be keen on heading to China to study film, even if that country is one of the world's biggest markets. And even aspiring filmmakers inside China might balk at being told, as they were last year,

that their chief goal should be to make work that would lead to "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese people." Still, more than 40,000 students typically apply for 400 to 500 spots; international students can also apply for a film production program conducted entirely in English.

The 71-year-old school's graduates have included Zhang Yimou, Chen Kaige, Jia Zhangke and Ai Weiwei. (Even dissident artists go there!) The largest institution for film and television production in Asia, the academy consists of nine different schools and eight departments, including film and television technology, film directing, film theory, screenwriting and cinema studies and sound recording.

CENTRO DE CAPACITACIÓN CINEMATográfica MEXICO CITY

Established by Mexico's National Council for Culture and Arts in 1975, with iconoclastic Spanish-Mexican director Luis Buñuel as its honorary president, the CCC has educated cinematographer Rodrigo Prieto (*Amores Perros*, *Brokeback Mountain* and *The Irishman*) and director Carlos Carrera (*The Crime of Padre Amaro*), among others. The school's programs are Cinematographic Screenwriting and Film and Audiovisual Production, which are both two-year, four-semester programs; General Cinema Studies, a four-and-a-half-year, nine-semester program; and Academic Extension, which offers courses and workshops for anyone interested in film. The Opera Prima project allows students, chosen through an in-school competition, to produce their first feature films with support provided by the school and other students involved in the productions.

CCC is one of the two major Mexican film schools, the other being the Centro Universitario de Estudios Cinematográficos, whose students have included director Alfonso Cuarón and cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki.



CENTRO SPERIMENTALA DI CINEMATOGRAFIA ROME, ITALY

The alumni from the oldest film school in Western Europe is a who's who of Italian cinema: directors Michelangelo Antonioni, Marco Bellocchio and Paolo Virzì, cinematographers Néstor Almendros and Vittorio Storaro and actors Claudia Cardinale, Sophia Loren, Francesca Neri and Domenico Modugno. The school was founded in 1935 by Benito Mussolini's head of cinema, Luigi Freddi, and continues to be financed by the Italian government.

The school, which has numerous facilities throughout Italy, presented three world-premiere restorations at this year's Venice Film Festival, with two short films from CSC students in competition in the International Critics Week section. In September, the school signed an agreement with the Veneto Region and the Veneto Film Commission to build a laboratory for immersive arts training in Venice. The CSC says the lab will be the first training center for VR and the immersive arts in Europe. A pilot program will take place in the summer of 2023 on the island of San Servolo, with small classes potentially beginning next September.

ECAM (ESCUELA DE CINEMATOGRAFÍA Y DEL AUDIOVISUAL DE LA COMUNIDAD DE MADRID)

MADRID, SPAIN

ECAM, which in English is known as the Madrid Film School, says that 72% of its approximately 500 students get a job in the industry after completing their studies; those 500 students are taught by about 400 film, TV and advertising professionals (many on a part-time basis). The school offers three-year programs with undergraduate degrees in cinematography with a variety of majors, and one-year bachelor's degree in cinematography programs in costume design, creative direction in branded content, VFX monitoring, executive pro-

duction and film criticism, among others.

A few years ago, ECAM launched The Screen, a program designed, according to the school, “to promote the production of feature films, support emerging talent and invigorate the audiovisual fabric.” The Screen’s projects include The Incubator, which chooses five student projects per year and connects the students with professionals in the European film industry. Past films from The Incubator have premiered at the Berlin, Locarno and San Sebastian film festivals and on Netflix.



LA FÉMIS (ÉCOLE NATIONALE SUPÉRIEURE DES MÉTIERS DE L'IMAGE ET DU SON) PARIS, FRANCE

Here’s a school that’s so hard to get into that a feature documentary was made about the grueling admissions process: Claire Simon’s 2019 doc *The Competition*, which went behind the scenes of the highly selective interviews and exercises that narrow down hundreds of applicants to the lucky 3% who are accepted into Paris’ temple of cinema education. Of course, the prospective students have good reason to jump through all those hoops, because the roster of former students at La Fémis (and its predecessor, IDHEC) includes Costa-Gavras, Claire Denis, Louis Malle, Jean-Jacques Annaud, François Ozon, Alain Resnais, Céline Sciamma and Julia Ducournau, among many others.

The La Fémis website proudly says that its students produce “more than 100 short films” each year, and with Gallic pride insists, “More than simple exercises, these films are real works.” It backs up that statement by listing every film festival appearance for its student films—and so far this year, class projects have been booked 122 times at festivals in 30 different countries.

FILM AND TELEVISION INSTITUTE OF INDIA PUNE, INDIA

“How do you teach filmmaking, or its component parts?” asks Shekhar Kapur, the director of *Bandit Queen*, *Elizabeth* and *What’s Love Got to Do With It?* and the chairman of FTII, in a message on the school’s website. “The answer is simple. You don’t

teach. You simply provoke the artist in the student.” Instructors who do that provoking on the campus in Kolkata have included David Lean and Satyajit Ray. This year, the school hosted a centenary tribute to Ray, the Indian Center for Cultural Relations’ Gen-Next Democracy Delegation, and became a “knowledge partner” to help Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University and University of Ladakh launch courses in film and television. Current courses include a Basic Course in Smartphone Filmmaking.

FILMAKADEMIE BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG LUDWIGSBURG, GERMANY

Founded in 1991 in southwest Germany, Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg occupies two sites in the city of Ludwigsburg. One contains the Filmakademie and its highly regarded animation and visual-effects programs at the Animation Institute, while the other houses the Academy of Performing Arts Baden-Württemberg and, in conjunction with Paris’ Le Fémis, the Atelier Ludwigsburg-Paris. “Creativity takes place particularly in cross-border exchange and in the spaces in between that arise,” FABW director Thomas Schadt said in a ceremony at the start of the 2022-2023 academic year.

The school does extensive collaborations with international schools, including this year with the



Universidad de Valparaíso in Chile and Al-Quds University in the West Bank. FABW is also one of five German film schools that launched a 2018 initiative to empower women in the film industry, institute a zero-tolerance principle for discrimination and sexualized violence, and create awareness of gender representation in media.

FILMAKADEMIE WIEN VIENNA, AUSTRIA

The Filmakademie Wien, or Vienna Film Academy, is also the Institute for Film and Television of the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, a school widely considered one of the world’s greatest for music. The film program consists of a three-year program that leads to a bachelor of arts degree in one of five disciplines (screenwriting and dramaturgy, camera technology and cinematography,

producing, directing, and editing) and a two-year master of arts program. Students are taught together for the first three semesters before moving into their areas of specialization.

Little Joe director Jessica Hausner is the latest addition to a directing faculty that has also included Michael Haneke. Students produce about 80 short, medium-length and feature-length films each year, with Haneke’s student Patrick Vollrath winning a Student Academy Award and landing an Oscar nomination in 2016 for *Everything Will Be Okay*.

ŁÓDŹ FILM SCHOOL ŁÓDŹ, POLAND

The Polish National film School in Łódź is separated into four departments: Film and Television Directing, Direction of Photography and Television Production, Acting, and Film Art Organization. Most of them are five-year programs, but a part-time curriculum is also available, though geared mostly to local students who plan to go to work in the Polish film and TV industries.

During the post-World War II period in Poland, the Łódź Film School became a cultural center for artists and students who didn’t follow the Communist Party line. Initially split into one school for actors and another for filmmakers, it merged in 1958. The school also produced Oscar winners in directors Roman Polanski, Andrzej Wajda and Zbigniew Rybczynski.

LONDON FILM SCHOOL LONDON, ENGLAND

The UK’s oldest film school is located in a former brewery in Covent Garden and caters to a student body that largely comes from outside the U.K. Alumni include Michael Mann, Mike Leigh, Ann Hui, Danny Huston and Duncan Jones. It offers postgraduate degrees, including an M.A. in all aspects of filmmaking, an M.A. in screenwriting, an M.A. in international film business and a Ph.D in Film by Practice, a partnership with the University of Exeter College of Humanities that allows students to “integrate their technical and practical skills into a more advanced cultural, aesthetic and critical context.”



During the summer of 2021, the school joined forces with The Yard Covent Garden to host outdoor screenings of curated films from LFS students and alumni. And this year, the school also joined the National Saturday Club to let 13- to 16-year-olds watch, discuss and make films at LFS on Saturday mornings from October through March.

NATIONAL FILM AND TELEVISION SCHOOL BEACONSFIELD, ENGLAND

No film school won more Student Academy Awards in the (now-defunct) international categories than the National Film and Television School, and no other school was honored with a BAFTA award for Outstanding Contribution to British Cinema. The 51-year-old school outside London has a roster of former students that includes directors Julien Temple, Terence Davies and Lynne Ramsay, animator Nick Park, cinematographer Roger Deakins, composer Dario Marianelli, documentarian Nick Broomfield and writer Krysty Wilson-Cairns. This year, grad Aneil Karia won the Oscar for his short film *The Long Goodbye* while seven student projects made BAFTA's Student Nominations shortlist and another seven won at the RTS Student Television Awards.

Apart from its main studio complex in Beaconsfield, which was modernized and got two new buildings in 2017, the school has campuses in Cardiff, Glasgow and Leeds. New offerings this year include the Virtual Production Certificate Programme, co-sponsored by WB Discovery Access and Screen Spotlight; a 10-month short-film incubator, Disney Imagine UK; the Prime Video Craft Academy, which offers 25 paid internships; new funding for sports and live-events production; and new scholarships for female location sound recorders and black British women cinematographers, as well as a pair of scholarships supported by UK Cinema Association.

NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL OF DENMARK COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

The National Film School of Denmark sits in Copenhagen harbor on an island of culture: It's next to the Rhythmic Music Conservatory and the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation on the island of Frederiksholm. The school's eight programs—script writing, sound, editing, fiction directing, documentary directing, games directing and animation—are administered by 50 employees and a number of guest instructors for a student body of about 100.

Among the former students who have attended the school's mostly four-year programs are *Another Round* director and co-writer Thomas Vinterberg and co-writer Tobias Lindholm (director of the current *The Good Nurse*); Susanne Bier, whose *In a Better World* and *The Night Manager* won an Oscar

and two Emmys, respectively; *An Education* and *The Kindness of Strangers* director Lone Scherfig; Anthony Dod Mantle, who won the cinematography Oscar for *Slumdog Millionaire*; and two of Denmark's most notable directors, Bille August (*Pelle the Conqueror*) and Lars von Trier (*Antichrist*).

PRAGUE FILM SCHOOL PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

The other major film school in Prague, FAMU, is designed for Czech-speaking students, but the Prague Film School is geared for international students with specialized studies in screenwriting, directing, cinematography and postproduction, as well as programs in film acting and documentary. The basic programs occupy a single year of total immersion in filmmaking, although second-year and semester programs are also available. The school promises to give students "material for a show reel compiled from up to 30 short films, commercials and music videos from one minute to 30 minutes in length."

The Prague Film School student body consists of about 100 students, who the school says typically come from 30 to 35 different countries. All classes are taught in English.

TORONTO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY (FORMERLY RYERSON UNIVERSITY) TORONTO, CANADA

The school now known as Toronto Met or TMU came onto the film-school map as Ryerson University. It used variations on that name from its founding in the 1940s until April 2022, when the name changed after student and faculty protests over namesake Egerton Ryerson's involvement in the Canadian government's former program to take indigenous children away from their parents and put them in boarding schools to "assimilate" them into mainstream Canadian culture. In addition to the name change, the university is now early in a 10-year "Campus Master Plan" of new building, which will

also reconfigure existing spaces to "embrace reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples."

The film and media schools operate within TMU's Creative School, a collection of nine schools that offer undergraduate degrees in acting, film, media production, new media and sports media, and graduate degrees in communication and culture, digital media, documentary media, scriptwriting and story design and many others. The school also has media hubs in the U.K., the U.S.A., Italy and Egypt.

SAE INSTITUTE ZURICH, SWITZERLAND

Beginning with a handful of schools in Australia in 1976, SAE is a private for-profit college that now runs 50 institutes in more than 20 countries around the world, including multiple ones in the United States. Within that worldwide group of schools, the Zurich campus is particularly known for its media programs, making it the one SAE school that receives consistent acclaim.

Programs in Zurich include audio and music production, film and animation, games and programming, marketing and promotion and web and coding. The Film & Animation program is divided into film production, visual FX & 3D animation and game art & 3D animation. In addition to classes, the school offers a wide array of workshops, from sound mixing to photography to the metaverse.

STOCKHOLM FILM SCHOOL STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

This 38-year-old school uses what it calls "The Stockholm Method," by which it means instruction that "combines hybrid classes with high-intensity projects and master-apprentice training." It offers a one-year International Film Program, with film-making fundamentals in the first semester and more in-depth study in the second covering cinematography, directing, editing, film production, script writing and sound. Additional second-year programs are also available for directing and cinematography



students, as are intensive 10-week courses in acting, film production and screenwriting. This year, the school also announced new Stockholm Film School online classes.

Directors Espen Sandberg and Joachim Rønning (*Kon-Tiki*, *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales*) and Oscar-winning cinematographer Linus Sandgren (*La La Land*, *No Time to Die*) are among the former students at the school.

STEVE TISCH SCHOOL OF FILM AND TELEVISION AT TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

There's more than one Tisch in the film-school world. In 2015, 33 years after NYU's school of the arts was named after Laurence A. and Preston Robert Tisch, producer and football executive Steve Tisch (Preston's son) gave a donation that resulted in the film school at Tel Aviv University being renamed the Steve Tisch School of Film and Television. The school, which is part of the largest university in Israel and the largest Jewish university in the world, offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in what it calls the Theoretical Track, the Production Track, the Scriptwriting Track and the Digital Media Track, as well as a recent addition, the MFA in documentary film. In addition to the practical fields, its areas of specialization include cultural studies.

Graduates include Omri Shenhar and Alon Aranya, co-creators of the TV series *Tehran*; Ari Folman, director of *Waltz With Bashir* and *Where Is Anne Frank*; documentary director Dror Moreh (*The Gatekeepers*); and *The Affair* co-creator and *Treatment* director Hagai Levi, among others.

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA VANCOUVER, CANADA

Consistently ranked with Toronto Metropolitan as the two best film and media schools in Canada, the University of British Columbia has been around since 1915, though obviously not teaching film that long. Its four-year program in film production encompasses film studies and history in the first year; directing, writing and production in the second; sound and postproduction in the third; and advanced production, cinematography and documentary in the fourth. The film studies program goes in depth with Canadian, Asian, Hollywood and cult cinema, along with concentrated seminars in the final two years.

The school's Visual Resources Center has recently added a film collection to its enormous number of slides, videos, DVDs and digital images. Class sizes are small, and students can also take courses from UBC's theater and creative writing programs. Related programs are offered at a second campus in the Okanagan region of southern British Columbia.

UNIVERSITY OF TELEVISION AND FILM MUNICH (HOCHSCHULE FÜR FERNSEHEN UND FILM MÜNCHEN)

MUNICH, GERMANY

Established in 1966 by the Bavarian government, this school teaches all aspects of filmmaking to a group of about 350 students in seven different degree programs that fit under the umbrellas of media studies and technology; every student must take courses in both of those categories.



This Bavarian university began in a villa and moved to a former bed-spring factory before its move in 2011 to a complex in Munich's museum district. Graduates include Wim Wenders (*Paris, Texas*), Roland Emmerich (*Independence Day*), Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck (*The Lives of Others*) and Maren Ade (*Toni Erdmann*). This year, the university won two Student Academy Awards, matching NYU for the most of any school.

VANCOUVER FILM SCHOOL VANCOUVER, CANADA

With eight campuses in downtown Vancouver totaling 150,000 square feet, the Vancouver Film School has room for 15 different one-year programs that include film production, art and design, digital design, game design, makeup design and sound design, writing, VR/AR and three programs devoted to animation and two to acting. By the school's count,



375 VFS alumni had credits on projects that were nominated for Emmys in 2022.

Alumni include *District 9* director Neill Blomkamp, *Arrow* star Emily Bett Rickards and Kevin Smith, who recently created the Kevin Smith Scholarships in acting, writing and film production. Additional financial aid opportunities created in 2022 include a \$150,000 "Women in Game Design" scholarship fund created through a partnership with the Coalition, Blackbird Interactive and A Thinking Ape, and a \$200,000 Indigenous Scholarship in Video Games fund.

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

This 124-year-old research university offers degrees in more than 100 undergraduate subjects alone, all of which are open to first-year students. And while it's best known internationally for law, it also has departments for film, game design, media design, media studies and animation & visual effects. (It can't hurt that visual effects students are in the same neighborhood as Peter Jackson's WETA FX.)

Former students include Taika Waititi, Sam Neill, Jane Campion, Fran Walsh and Flight of the Conchords' Jemaine Clement and Bret McKenzie—along with prime ministers of both New Zealand and Samoa, a Nobel Prize-winning chemist, a couple of chief justices and a lot of members of parliament. **W**



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OSCAR GOES (MORE) GLOBAL

The Student Academy Awards made a big change this year to embrace international film schools—and challenge domestic ones.

Since 2016, when the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences launched a drive to make its membership more diverse, the AMPAS membership has also gotten significantly more international, with almost a quarter of the 10,000-plus members now residing outside the United States. And this year, when 50% of the film professionals invited to join were from outside the U.S., the Student Academy Awards took a dramatic step toward becoming more international: As *TheWrap* revealed exclusively in April, the Student Oscars merged their domestic and international categories so that film schools inside and outside the U.S. competed in the same categories, with no distinction between them.

“We’re a global organization and we’re reflecting a global film industry,” AMPAS VP of Talent Development and Inclusion Programs Kendra Carter said. “We wanted to reflect that with the Student Academy Awards so there’s no distinction or divide between international and domestic when it comes to excellent storytelling. Film is global, and our competition reflects film in the future.”

The change came after years of international schools slowly earning more recognition at the Student Oscars. For the first seven years, 1973 and 1975–1980, the awards went only to domestic schools. A single international category was added in 1981, with the first award going to *Maedeli la brèche* from Jaco Van Dormael, a student at Belgium’s Institut National Supérieur; Van Dormael would go on to represent Belgium three times in the international category at the Oscars, making the shortlist with *The Brand New Testament* in 2015.

But for the next 30 years, the Academy would give awards to as many as 11 U.S. schools each year, but only a single award to an international school. That changed in 2011 when what had been called the “Foreign Film Award” was expanded to three winners. It stayed that way until 2016, when new international categories for narrative, animated and documentary films were created to match three of the domestic categories. But while U.S. schools were awarded gold, silver and bronze medals in all of those categories, international schools only got gold in the animation and doc categories; only in narrative did it have the full three winners.



This year, though, the Student Academy Award categories were reduced to four—alternative/experimental, animation, documentary and narrative—in which domestic and international schools would compete head-to-head on equal footing. “I don’t think the change came as a surprise, and it was well-supported by our members,” said Jeanell English, the Academy’s executive vice president of impact and inclusion. “We’re realizing that film schools are more and more globally accessible, and we’re seeing this really

beautiful mix in terms of how accessible film education is around the world.”

And how did the new system play out? Overall, international schools scored 16 finalists while American schools had only eight. Two of the three finalists in the alternative/experimental category were from American schools, USC and Pratt, joined by the Universidad de Antioquia from Colombia; in the documentary category, four of the seven came from U.S. schools (USC, Columbia and two from NYU), with the other finalists coming from the U.K. and Norway. But international schools dominated the narrative and animation categories, landing six of the seven finalists in each, led by a pair of films from the University of Television and Film Munich and two more from another German school, Konrad Wolf Film University of Babelsberg.

The winners, though, were evenly divided, with students from five U.S. schools and five international schools taking awards, and the four gold medals split evenly. The single award in the alternative/experimental category went to USC, and American schools swept the documentary category with two winners from NYU and one from Columbia. The animation category, on the other hand, was a clean sweep for international schools, with honors going to the Griffith Film School in Australia, Konrad Wolf in Germany and the Pôle 3D Digital & Creative School in France. And in the narrative category, gold and silver went to the University of Television and Film Munich and bronze to the American Film Institute.

“The change came at a time when we were having really great international representation amongst our membership,” English said. “And that, of course, evolves the conversations that we’re having as an organization. That’s why we prioritize inclusion and wanting to bring more voices in to make sure we’re building a competition that really reflects the industry and rewards excellent storytelling.” —SP

This year’s Student Academy Award winners

Alternative/Experimental

GOLD MEDAL: Olivia Peace, *Against Reality*, University of Southern California

Animation

GOLD MEDAL: Lachlan Pendragon, *An Ostrich Told Me the World Is Fake and I Think I Believe It*, Griffith Film School, Australia



SILVER MEDAL: Jan Gadermann and Sebastian Gadow, *Laika & Nemo*, Konrad Wolf Film University of Babelsberg, Germany

BRONZE MEDAL: Yanis Belaid, Elliott Benard and Nicolas Mayeur, *The Seine’s Tears*, Pôle 3D Digital & Creative School, France

Documentary

GOLD MEDAL: Shuhao Tse, *Found*, New York University

SILVER MEDAL: Jared Peraglia, *Here to Stay*, New York University

BRONZE MEDAL: Gabriella Canal and Michael Fearon, *Seasons*, Columbia University

Narrative

GOLD MEDAL: Nils Keller, *Almost Home*, University of Television and Film Munich, Germany

SILVER MEDAL: Welf Reinhart, *Rooms*, University of Television and Film Munich, Germany

BRONZE MEDAL: Freddy Macdonald, *Shedding Angels*, American Film Institute

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AWARD-WINNING STUDENTS AND ALUMS

Columbia students and alums are
recognized for their excellence in
the visual arts. Last award season,
we celebrated Akanksha Cruczynski,
MFA student, and her film "Close
Ties to Home Country," winner of
a Student Academy Award.

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THE GRILL

TheWrap's leading business conference took place virtually and in person in October 2022, offering two days of conversations about everything from the metaverse to the overturning of Roe v. Wade, from merger mania to the future of live events. **Here are some highlights.**



PANELS MODERATED BY SHARON WAXMAN, IVY KAGAN BIERMAN, ADAM CHITWOOD, PETER CSATHY, GREG FOSTER, SERA GAMBLE & SUSAN SPRUNG, ROSS GERBER, JETHRO NEDEDOG, ANDI ORTIZ, STEVE POND, CARLA RENATA & JACQUELINE COLEY, BRIAN WELK AND RICHARD WOLPERT.



Spotlight Conversation With Strauss Zelnick

Take-Two Interactive head Strauss Zelnick spoke to Sharon Waxman for a Spotlight Conversation and explained why he doesn't see other gaming companies as a threat. "The entertainment business is the antithesis of a fungible commoditized business," he said. "Every title stands alone. In other words, we compete with everything and we compete with nothing. You can't replace one of our titles with another title."



State of the Industry With Kevin Mayer

When asked which social media brands he sees thriving and surviving 10 years from now, Candle Media Co-CEO Kevin Mayer predicted that TikTok could stand alongside YouTube (to which "it pales in comparison") as a survivor. "In many ways, TikTok is a marketing tool for creators," he said. "That's where they get big, and then they move people over to Instagram or YouTube, and that is probably something TikTok is going to want to revisit."



The Future of Film: Streaming & Theatrical Can Coexist

Theatrical exhibition and streaming can still coexist, Paramount marketing president Marc Weinstock told former IMAX Entertainment CEO Greg Foster in a virtual one-on-one discussion. "I think 45 days is the perfect length for the (theatrical-to-streaming) window," Weinstock said. "I think *Lost City*...is the most watched film on (Paramount+). So you take a good box office result and a great streaming result, and all boats have been lifted."

THE GRILL



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Hollywood's Guide to the Metaverse

"We don't exactly know what's going to happen here, but we want to make sure we have a place in the metaverse...it's just better to be in the conversation than to be outside looking in," Paramount Global futurist Ted Schilowitz said during TheGrill's metaverse panel. "If you don't play the game, you're almost guaranteed to lose the game."

Navigating Hollywood in a Post-Roe v. Wade World

In the wake of the Supreme Court's June decision to overturn the 1973 landmark Roe v. Wade, sectors of Hollywood have mobilized. "Women on set need a place and someone that they can call, a representative, much like we do with sexual harassment hotlines or other work-problem hotlines," actress Jodie Sweetin said during a panel with writer-producer Nicole Jefferson Asher and Women in Film CEO Kirsten Schaffer. "We need a place where women can call and say, 'I'm in Georgia. I'm in Kentucky, and I am working, and I need an abortion or I'm having a miscarriage. What are the steps I take?'"



Podcasts: A Hollywood Goldmine

"My biggest challenge was getting over the mockery that was made of me when I was leaving Glee," said actress Becca Tobin on a podcasting panel. "All of my cast members were like, 'You're gonna what? You're gonna podcast?' And now all of them are doing them."

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Roundtable

During the DEI roundtable, Warner Bros. Discovery head DEI officer Asif Sadiq put the industry's push for inclusion in context. "I think the most important thing is everyone understanding why we're doing it," he said. "This isn't nice to have, it's not something we do because we have to—it's critical for our business. If the culture is one of inclusion, then everyone has to adapt to that culture."





Merger Mania: Behind the Mega Deals in Media & Entertainment

Hollywood is in a period of transition and a period of anxiety, but that doesn't mean that the recent boom in mergers and acquisitions has stopped, according to Carlos Jimenez of Moelis & Company investment bankers. On the Merger Mania panel, he suggested that his company's job is not to sit on the sidelines waiting for economic change but "really to find where the opportunities are, where there is disruption creating an opportunity. It's finding those talented managers (that don't just) sit back and watch what their peers are doing."



The Role of Hollywood in an Election Year

Dr. Stacy Smith, founder of the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative at the University of Southern California, told Sharon Waxman that election-cycle issues like reproductive rights, gun violence and gerrymandering are "not normalized" in movies and TV. "It's not part of typical storytelling largely because women and people of color aren't behind the camera," she said. "If we had fixed this 20 years ago, we would be in a different situation today... It's imperative, and the reason why is what group doesn't go to the polls? Young people."



The Future of Live Events & Experiences

Live entertainment business leaders say they must do more than persuade cautious audiences that it's safe to go out in a crowd: With or without a mask, they say the long pandemic—and its trailing economic woes—has fueled a trend among younger audiences to crave experiences. On a panel moderated by Ross Gerber, president and CEO of Gerber Kawasaki, Jaime Weston, EVP and chief marketing officer for On Location, said live entertainment purveyors are observing that the next generation of consumers "will live in their parents' basement so they can use their money for experiences."



Producers Roundtable

The producers on The Grill's roundtable delved into the nuances of shooting in today's fraught climate—including, for *Reservation Dogs* executive producer Tazbah Chavez, the unexpected connection between being inclusive and making sure people have access to reproductive healthcare. To give visibility to indigenous tribes in Oklahoma, the FX series needs to film there—but when one indigenous actress had an ectopic pregnancy, the production had to deal with the state's draconian restrictions. "It puts us in a strange place," Chavez said. "It shook us and the women on set into thinking, are we in a space where we'd be taken care of?"



Spotlight Conversation: Steven Levitan

In a conversation with Sharon Waxman about his new show *Reboot*, which premiered on Hulu this fall, *Modern Family* creator Steven Levitan said he wanted to turn the lens inward toward his own industry, pulling back the curtain on how cultural conversations are impacting the writers room. "I can pretend that doesn't happen, or I can point out that it does happen," he said. "I've been in discussions where a room full of smart, forward-thinking people has been sharply divided on whether or not something is OK to do. So I'm in a unique position with this show to show those conversations."



The Subscription Cyclers – The New Streaming Norm

The streaming revolution has run into "subscription cyclers," customers who subscribe to a service and then cancel it immediately after watching a single series. At the Subscription Cyclers panel, Samba TV senior vice president Dallas Lawrence said that 40% of millennial and Gen Z viewers have done so, and 75% are likely to do it in the next six months. "Once you dip your toes in, you tend to want to keep doing it," Lawrence said. "Gen Z does it two or three times, not just once, so they are dining and dashing on a regular basis."

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THE 2022 INNOVATORS LIST

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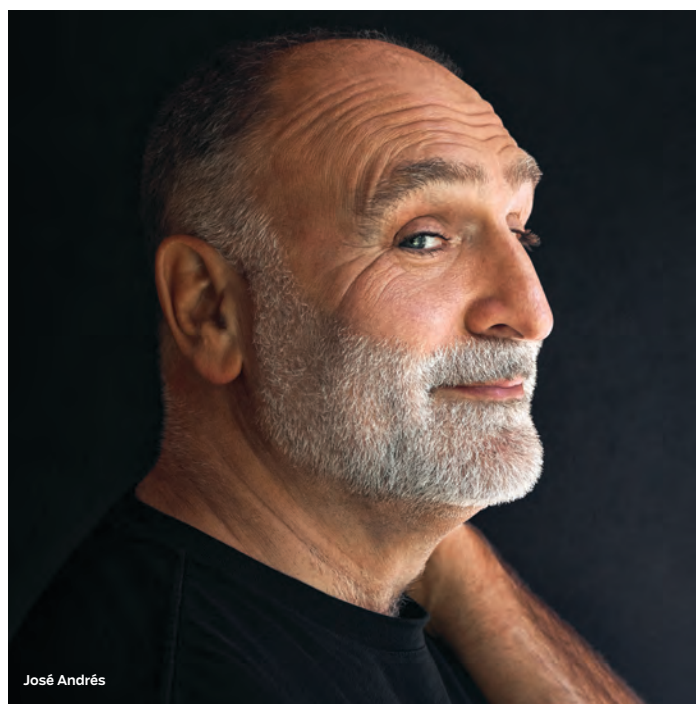
The entertainment landscape has been rocked by streaming and COVID and the world shaken by natural disasters and political divisions. That creates enormous challenges for those working in media, but also offers opportunities to those with vision. TheWrap's 2022 Innovators List salutes nine individuals, two duos and one big group who led us forward in the last year.

José Andrés, chef and humanitarian

José Andrés, the Santa-like 53-year-old superstar chef from Spain, has spent months at a time in areas devastated by natural disasters or war with his World Central Kitchen. But while Andrés remains connected to humanitarian work, especially in Ukraine, he's also busy sharing his message by expanding his media footprint. Andrés has started his own production company, José Andrés Media. (Ever wary of self-aggrandizing, Andrés doesn't love that the company is named after him, much preferring the cook-friendly acronym JAM.)

Like a restaurant menu where the courses keep coming, JAM's output includes the chef's own weekly podcast, *Longer Tables*; another podcast, *Pressure Cooker*, hosted by journalist Jane Black and journalist-professor Elizabeth Dunn; a Substack newsletter; and an upcoming Discovery+ television series (premiering later this year) in which he travels through Spain with his college-age daughters. Outside of JAM, Andrés also voices Chef Al on the new Disney animated series *Firebuds*, which premiered last month.

What connects all his projects is, of course, food. "Everybody has a relationship with food, from the moment we are being fed by our mothers," Andrés told Steve Pond at TheGrill. "Forever, we remember that food equals love. That's powerful. That's why these stories, I think, are important and open up a lot of other possibilities to understand more about people." —JOE MCGOVERN



José Andrés

Bad Bunny, musician and actor

It's hard to imagine any season *sin* Bad Bunny. The Puerto Rican singer, rapper and actor, born Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio, is the hottest musician in the world right now. And as a genre-bending artist whose sounds span reggaeton, EDM and trap, he's changing the definition of a global music superstar and proudly keeping his Latin identity front and center.

Bad Bunny's latest album, *Un Verano Sin Ti* (A Summer Without You) debuted at the top of the Billboard charts, where it stayed for 10 weeks. By mid-July, he broke his own all-time record for most Spotify streams in a year with 10.3 billion, at one point holding nine of the top 10 songs on the app's Daily Top Songs Global chart. He smashed Drake's previously held record of most album streams in 24 hours by a cool six million. In his spare time, he made his big-screen debut opposite Brad Pitt in the action flick

Bullet Train. Next up, he'll enter Sony's universe of Marvel characters as the first-ever live-action Latino hero in *El Muerto*, due in January 2024.

He is also proud of how his heritage shapes his artistry. He's bucked longstanding industry expectations for Spanish-speaking artists to "cross over" into the English-speaking mainstream, shining a light on the *puertorriqueño* musicians who have come before him instead of seeking out collaborations with pop stars. And he told GQ, "I never made a song thinking, 'Man, this is for the world. This is to capture the gringo audience.' On the contrary, I make songs as if only Puerto Ricans were going to listen to them. I forget the entire world listens to me." —NATALIE OGANESYAN

Alexis Barreyat and Kévin Perreau, BeReal founders

In 2020, French entrepreneurs Alexis Barreyat and Kévin Perreau launched the photo-sharing app BeReal with the goal that people would use it the way social media apps were originally intended: to connect with friends and family without worrying about followers, likes and filters. The idea was simple: Snap a photo. Be your true self. Be real.

What started as a tool for Gen Z to keep in touch "authentically" has since skyrocketed into one of the fastest-growing social media platforms of 2022, second only to TikTok. BeReal has shot from 10,000 daily active users in March 2021 to more than 15 million today—helping to snag the company a \$600 million valuation, according to the



Bad Bunny



Financial Times.

The app's reported 315% increase in usage in 2022 and a 1,000% uptick in downloads haven't gone unnoticed by TikTok and Instagram: Both recently launched features similar to BeReal's two-sided look and overall "authenticity" vibe. As for whether or not BeReal can become as valued a marketing tool in Hollywood as its social media competitors, most studios are taking a wait-and-see approach. Spontaneity is, after all, anathema to carefully planned publicity campaigns. For now, only Paramount has jumped into the fray, using BeReal to promote next year's *Scream 6* by teasing cast members, locations and plot lines. In a case of extreme meta-irony, the BeReal *Scream* teasers were reposted on TikTok. —LOREE SEITZ

Sewell Chan, editor

Sewell Chan was only seven months into his job as editor-in-chief at The Texas Tribune last May when 19 children and two adults were killed in the shooting at Robb Elementary School in Texas' Uvalde County. Immediately, Chan and his staff had to figure out how they would cover the tragedy, given that the Tribune is a nonprofit, nonpartisan politics and policy website focused primarily on government goings-on in Austin. "We really had to scramble," Chan said. "We had journalists in Uvalde who had never even covered local murders before. And now suddenly, they're covering a horrific massacre and tragedy."

Under Chan's leadership, The Texas Tribune ended up producing some of the most extraordinary coverage to come out of the tragedy. Reporters on the ground gave a voice to the devastated community and held the police accountable for their unconscionable mistakes, making the Tribune a model for nonprofit news organizations in an era of fractured media playing to a deeply polarized country.

"We are doing our work because we ultimately believe that high-quality news information that is told fairly and with professional rigor and ethics ultimately leads to a more engaged citizenry, which leads to a healthier democracy," Chan said. And if that means he'll be criticized for doing things like inviting Senator Ted Cruz to speak at the Texas Film Festival, he can accept that. "To me, the question is, do we want a space where people can still come together, even if they vehemently disagree?" he said. "And as angry as things are right now, I



still believe that having people come together and at least try to engage in good faith and a spirit of civility, that is more important than ever."

—MISSY SCHWARTZ & LOREE SEITZ

Ryan Condal, producer

House of the Dragon had an incredibly high bar to clear. Not only was it following in the footsteps of the juggernaut that was *Game of Thrones*, but in contrast to other TV sequels or spinoffs, this prequel had zero character crossover beyond the Targaryen name of its characters. And yet the series is a massive success, with the largest single-day debut for a series in HBO Max history. And that success is due to the innovative creative decisions made by showrunner and co-creator Ryan Condal and his team—including the idea of centering the show on two women whose childhood bond breaks under the weight of politics and tradition: Princess Rhaenyra Targaryen, played by Milly Alcock in the

first five episodes and Emma D'Arcy in the latter half of the season, and Queen Alicent Hightower, played by Emily Carey and later, Olivia Cooke.

"We decided to go back deeper into their history and tell the story of these two women as young girls and make them peers that had grown up together and were quite fond of each other and had a close friendship, only to have it broken apart by the male pressures around them," said Condal, who exec-produced Season 1 with *Game of Thrones* veteran producer and director Miguel Sapochnik.

As for why his show has struck such a nerve with audiences, Condal said, "I think the success of *House of the Dragon* is offering up the same thing but in a different way than *Game of Thrones*. People come expecting high political intrigue, interesting characters who do unexpected things and surprising storytelling. I think that comes from centering on well-drawn characters that you spend a lot of time with and get to know and then get horrified when they start making questionable decisions."

—ADAM CHITWOOD

Billy Eichner, actor and writer

Let's just get it out of the way immediately: *Bros* did not do as well at the box office as expected. Instead of the projected \$10 million opening weekend, it made just \$4.8 million, despite near universally positive reviews and a solid A on CinemaScore. But a disappointing debut can't take away what Billy Eichner accomplished with his funny, raunchy and sincere studio-backed movie packed with queer folks that tells a story about gay men in love.

For Eichner, the first openly gay man to co-write and star in his own studio movie, it made sense to cast the film with actors from the LGBTQ+ community. "Historically, when you look at who's gotten the opportunities to play the most high-profile, the most widely distributed movies that centered LGBTQ characters, they've almost always been played by straight actors and actresses, who use it as opportunities to show us how serious and





Billy Eichner

brave they are," Eichner told TheWrap's Brandon Katz. "And they win awards and their career gets to grow as a result of playing those roles. It has so rarely happened in the reverse—with LGBTQ actors who were bold enough to say, 'I'm LGBTQ and I still should have access to a great Hollywood career.'"

And even if, as Eichner posited on Twitter, mainstream America just wasn't ready for *Bros*, the movie will always be there for people to discover it. And he's proud of that. "In the last few years, we've seen a real wave of queer content that, for the first time, is made by and starring actual LGBTQ folks. *Bros* is part of that wave, and I'm very grateful for that. And it's great to not be alone."

—NATALIE OGANESYAN

James Goldston, congressional advisor

Last summer, nearly 20 million viewers tuned into the first primetime hearing of the House Select Committee's investigation into the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol. What they saw was unlike any televised congressional hearing before: a tightly organized, rigorously structured presentation that wove recorded testimony, previously unseen footage of the attack and other news clips into the live proceedings. It was a far cry from the unwieldy, meandering (and usually quite stale) style of most congressional hearings. And it's all thanks to former ABC News head James Goldston. The House committee brought him on as an adviser to help wrestle a towering amount of material into a clear, digestible format that would cut through the daily media cacophony.

"We live in an era where, no matter how important the subject, it's competing for attention," Goldston said. "People are distracted, people have got a lot going on. And so the hope was, by bringing these new techniques to this format, that we could engage people in a way that perhaps they wouldn't otherwise have been."

The second primetime hearing attracted 17.7 million



James Goldston

viewers (on par with the average audience for *Sunday Night Football*) and the six daytime broadcasts nabbed 11.2 million (which is about the average viewership for last TV season's top-rated network series, *NCIS*). "The number of people watching live and the number of people engaging with the material on social media and online was quite extraordinary," Goldston said. "I'm a great believer in the power of narrative and the power of storytelling... Storytelling itself can be an incredible tool in mass engagement around the world."

—MISSY SCHWARTZ

Hollywood's abortion-rights coalition

Following last June's Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*, a group of more than 400 female, trans and nonbinary showrunners leaped into action. They wrote letters to nine major studios and streaming platforms, demanding protection for pregnant employees of productions in abortion-hostile states. Within days, the coalition more than tripled its numbers as additional showrunners, creators and directors joined the effort to implement widespread safety protocols and advocate for access to reproductive health care in Hollywood. Shonda Rhimes, Ryan Murphy, Donald Glover, Ava DuVernay, Natasha Lyonne, Issa Rae, J.J. Abrams, Mindy Kaling, Amy Schumacher and Damon Lindelof are among the A-listers who spoke out.

"In a sense, it was a way to channel all the anger and despair that is a natural result of having a profoundly important human right taken away," one of the showrunners involved told TheWrap. (The showrunner chose to remain anonymous to avoid drawing attention to any individual members of the coalition.) "In this job, you have a profound responsibility for people, for their health, for their welfare, for their professional lives, for



Chelsea Handler, Amy Schumer, Shonda Rhimes, Ava DuVernay, Issa Rae and Lena Dunham

their emotional states, for their creative impulse. Recognizing that responsibility and being willing to protect the people who rely on you is a really important part of this job. I think those who have been in that position just felt like we had no choice but to engage in the coalition."

The group is now more than 1,500 people strong and has raised \$3 million for the National Network

of Abortion Funds. To date, several studios have pledged to work with the coalition to set up a 24-hour reproductive health safety hotline and to develop employee protections in states like Georgia, Texas and Alabama, where abortion access has been restricted. Coalition members said they will remain focused on holding studios accountable for the commitments they've made, despite the rough road ahead. "It's incredibly complicated," the showrunner said. "And that's one of the reasons that we have never said, 'We can come up with an answer.' The answer may well be that there is no way to keep cast, crew, staff and other individuals safe in an abortion-hostile state." —KATIE CAMPIONE

Nova Wav, music producers

Several years ago, a music industry exec told Nova Wav—the Grammy-winning songwriting and producing duo made up of Brittany "Chi" Coney and Denisia "Blu June" Andrews—to return to their home base of Atlanta to "get better" before attempting to chart a path in the L.A. scene. The pair ignored the advice, and less than a week later met Beyoncé and established a relationship that would lead them to co-write and co-produce half of the superstar's infectious track list on the critically acclaimed *Act I: Renaissance*.

"You can hear the freedom in the album, you

can hear empowerment, which is our biggest mission and message that we want to give people through music," Coney said of the work that is widely regarded as the album of the summer, if not the entire year. *Renaissance* is a gargantuan effort spanning a plethora

of collaborations and sounds emblematic of Black dance music. But before Nova Wav worked with the "genius herself," the Florida natives spent nearly a decade masterminding their rise through the ranks.

With Grammys under their belt for work on Beyoncé's "Black Parade" and Jazmine Sullivan's "Pick Up Your Feelings," Andrews and Coney want to start fostering fresh talent, particularly artists from underrepresented backgrounds. (Less than 1% of music producers are Black women.) Nova Wav recently held its first writers' camp in Atlanta, specifically targeting those without publishing deals and major earnings from their creations. "There's so much untapped creativity," Andrews said. "We just want to ... help bring those types of people to the forefront because there are just so many gatekeepers in the industry, and I just feel like we had to work so hard, and it didn't have to be as difficult as it was." —NATALIE OGANESYAN



Remington Scott, Hyperreal founder

The true innovation of Remington Scott's company, Hyperreal, is not just that he's created strikingly lifelike digital versions of stars who are living or dead (or completely fictional). It's that he's putting those creations into the hands of the talent themselves, empowering them to drive the innovation.



Hyperreal has in two years created a near-perfect double of pop star Madison Beer for a performance that won a Webby for Tech Achievement; made Paul McCartney resemble a Beatles-era version of himself; designed a virtual model of the late rapper the Notorious B.I.G.; and, with entertainment mogul Simon Fuller and Verizon, invented an AI-driven alien pop princess named Alta B who appeared with the boy band Now United in their "Jump" video. Signaling confidence in Hyperreal's continued growth, the Korean giant CJ ENM took a minority stake in Hyperreal in April.

The fact that the digital versions of real, flesh-and-blood humans are owned by their real, flesh-and-blood human selves (or their estate) means that they can one day bring those models into other virtual spaces in the metaverse. "There are playbooks, and a lot of people write about how to do business or write about how to make things," Scott said. "It's great to listen to those things. But none of them replace what makes you unique and

how you are driving forward your vision."

Scott, a veteran of computer-graphic design in the video game world, said the company has expanded to working with corporate clients to develop branded characters and mascots. Hyperreal is also looking to open its services to regular folks. "In 2022, we've seen art and technology and business colliding and offering new opportunities for value and new opportunities for expression," he said. "Sometimes they work well and sometimes they don't. Sometimes you might see something that gets a lot of excitement, but then it kind of burns out. But they're all going to be helping to build a foundation for how we're moving forward in the technology space." —BRIAN WELK

Domee Shi, animator

If there was a defining lesson that Domee Shi learned early in her animation career, it was to "just trust my weird gut," she said. "If an idea is really, really weird and kind of shocking, instead of self-editing and getting rid of it in the story, I'll just let it play out and see the reaction."

Shi, who was born in China and emigrated to Canada as a child, first joined Pixar in 2011 as a storyboard intern. She followed the "trust my weird gut" principle when pitching her beautifully strange and affecting short film *Bao*, for which she won an Oscar in 2019. And she stuck to her



instincts again when developing her feature debut, *Turning Red*. The most popular Disney+ original to date, it cemented Shi's status as an artist with a distinct point of view, toggling effortlessly between extreme goofiness and earnest thoughtfulness, even broaching the once-taboo topic of menstruation as well as a frank reckoning with inter-generational trauma.

Making the movie, her team asked questions like "What haven't we seen before in animation?" Watching it connect with audiences, especially kids who look like her and may harbor dreams of making movies, was an "awesome" experience for Shi. "Not that long ago, I was just a sweaty, nerdy Asian animation student with big hopes and

dreams, drawing in my dorm room in cold Toronto, Canada," she said. "We could show these kids that there's a path for them in this industry and a space for them and their voice." —DREW TAYLOR

Michelle Yeoh, actress

In a scene midway through *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, Michelle Yeoh frantically runs away from a woman who is swinging her leashed lap dog in the air like a bola. She grabs a two-liter bottle of



orange soda, chugs it in one go and taps an earpiece to gain the powers of an alternate version of her character...one endowed with the powers of a Teppanyaki chef.

Amazingly, that isn't even in the top 10 weirdest things that happen in *Everything Everywhere All at*

Once, the frantic, bizarre and deeply heartfelt sci-fi film directed by Dan Kwan and Daniel Scheinert that became the first art-house hit of the post-pandemic era—and proved that at 60, Michelle Yeoh is still one of the world's most formidable performers. The film is a showcase for Yeoh: She goes from a run-down Everywoman trying to keep the peace with her daughter (Stephanie Hsu), save her marriage (Ke Huy Quan plays her husband) and salvage her business to a universe-hopping superhero in sensible sneakers who quite literally saves the world.

"She's the woman that you pass by when you go to Chinatown or in the supermarket. It could be any immigrant woman," Yeoh said in an interview with NPR last spring. "I felt that it was so important for someone like that to be given a voice and then to be shown that she is actually a superheroine. When (people) think 'superhero,' it's always the guy [who's] first in line for it. So that's why when I received the script, it was such an overwhelming sense of relief. It was like, yes, *finally*."

A starring role in one of the year's most talked-about movies would be achievement enough for most actors, but *Everything Everywhere All at Once* is just one of Yeoh's many 2022 projects. She also lent her voice to *Minions: Rise of Gru*, *Paws of Fury: The Legend of Hank* and HBO Max's upcoming *ARK: The Animated Series*. In addition, she stars in Netflix's *The Witcher: Blood Origin* series, co-stars in Paul Feig's *The School for Good and Evil* and will round out the year in nothing less than James Cameron's long-promised *Avatar: The Way of Water*. And given that Yeoh is still driven by the same prodigious work ethic that catapulted her to stardom four decades ago, you can bet the future will be just as prolific. As she recently told Rolling Stone, "There's always the idea of, 'I'll leave it to fate.' Bullshit. You need to work hard and the harder you work, the luckier you get." —JEREMY FUSTER

SCHOOLING SPIELBERG

One of the most successful directors in history was rejected by his top choices—but that didn't stop him from getting a degree that was 37 years in the making

BY STEVE POND

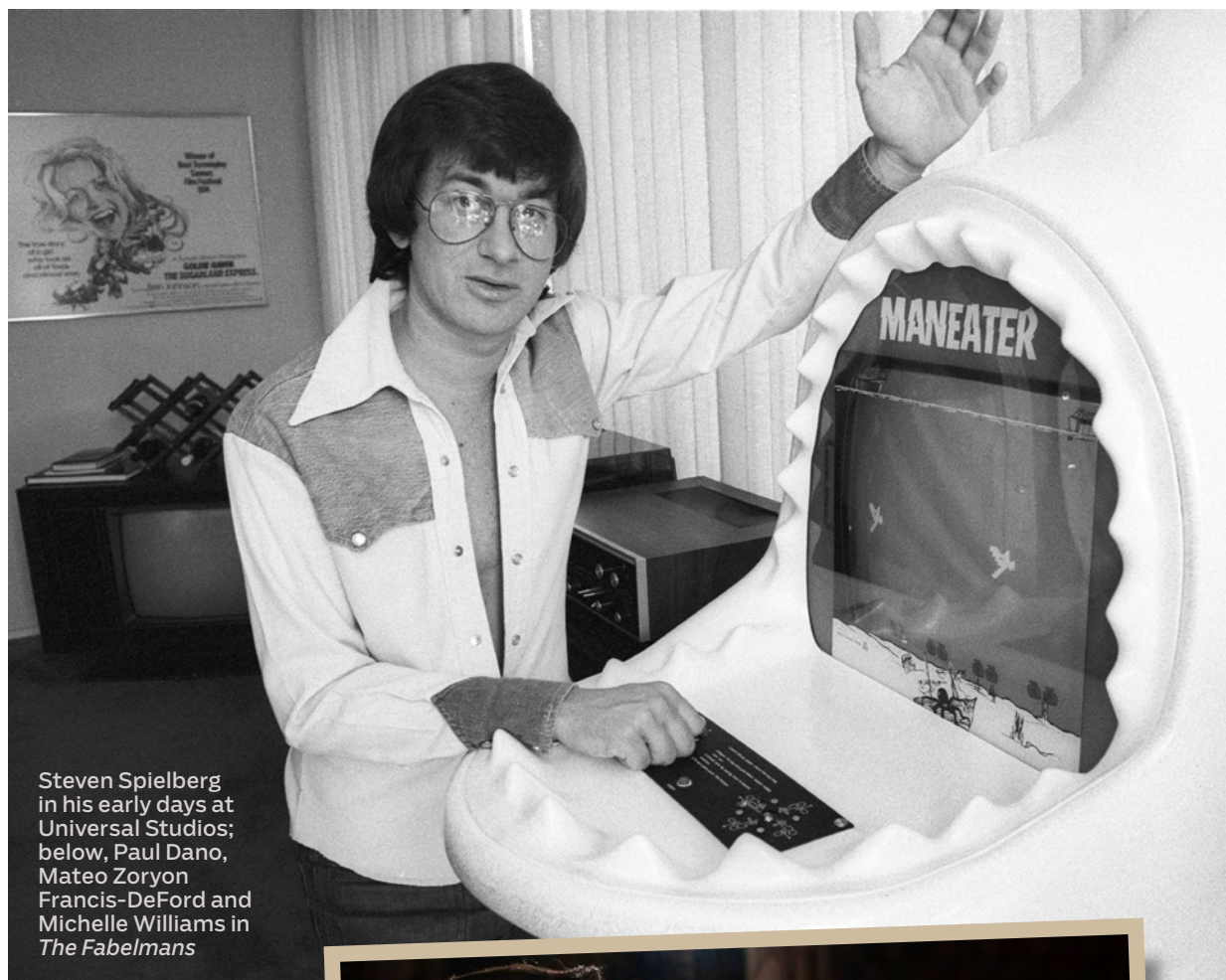
The upcoming Steven Spielberg movie *The Fabelmans* is a coming-of-age story where the guy who's coming of age is a fictionalized version of Spielberg himself—a smart kid from a Jewish family who became obsessed with movies and with making his own films from an early age. It ends with young Sammy Fabelman getting a job at a Hollywood studio, and there meeting an irascible, profane John Ford. But it doesn't include any scenes in which Sammy learns his craft at film school—not because Spielberg didn't go to film school, but because it was only a small footnote to his development as a filmmaker and his success in Hollywood.

Mind you, Spielberg tried to get a top-flight education in cinema: In the mid 1960s, he applied to USC's School of Cinematic Arts and to UCLA, both of which turned him down, reportedly because his high school grades were mediocre. So instead, he enrolled in California State University, Long Beach, a state school 45 minutes south of Los Angeles that was not particularly noted for its film department.

But he also had an ace in the hole, because before he even started film school he'd secured an unpaid internship at Universal Pictures. While hanging out there, he made a short film called *Amblin'*, which was impressive enough (at least in the eyes of Universal VP Sidney Sheinberg) for the studio to offer him a deal to direct for the studio, beginning with an episode of the TV series *Night Gallery* starring an initially skeptical Joan Crawford.

That deal made film school a distraction from his professional career, so Spielberg dropped out of CSULB in his sophomore year. He would eventually go back and earn his degree in 2001, after 18 movies, \$6 billion in grosses, three Oscars and five honorary doctorates. CSULB waived the requirement that he make a 12-minute film as his senior project and let him submit *Schindler's List* instead, while Spielberg once claimed (or joked?) to a Harvard graduating class that the California school gave him three credits in paleontology for making *Jurassic Park*. He finished off his degree by writing a term paper for a natural science class.

So you can go on the Cal State website these days and see Spielberg listed as a graduate with the notation "Film and Video Production (2001)." Just don't expect to see that college experience in *The Fabelmans*, which skips the classroom and heads straight to the studio. **W**



Steven Spielberg in his early days at Universal Studios; below, Paul Dano, Mateo Zoryon Francis-DeFord and Michelle Williams in *The Fabelmans*



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