

## DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING PITCH POINT

Documentaries have never been more popular – whether you are looking to develop your filmmaking craft or are out to change the world. As NPR recently put it, “The Documentary Is In -And Enjoying- An Undeniable Golden Age.” (Their article actually focuses on documentary sensations Free Solo - edited by NYFA Docs prof Bob Eisenhardt & RBG - shot by NYFA Docs prof Claudia Raschke.)

Since 2008, we’ve held a berth on the **The Independent magazine’s** list of the “10 Best Academic Programs for Documentary Filmmakers” and for very good reasons.

We attract students from all over the world, some of whom have begun making the festival circuit, getting their films distributed, winning awards, and making an impact even before they graduate.

### **ONE YEAR CONSERVATORY IN DOCUMENTARY: (two semesters in NYC; three semesters in LA)**

You will be challenged to make **six films of increasing complexity, several digital media pieces, and a TV series pitch deck**. Films include an 8 – 10 minute Social Issue film and a Thesis Film of up to 20 minutes on a subject you choose.

#### **CLASSES INCLUDE:**

Documentary Craft  
Camera Lighting and Sound  
Documentary Production Workshop  
Documentary Producing  
Writing for the Documentary  
Editing  
Documentary Cinema Studies

### **MFA IN DOCUMENTARY: (six semesters) \*\*NY conservatory students can complete the first year of the MFA in NY and then transfer to the second year of the MFA in LA.\*\***

The first year of the MFA program mirrors the One Year program detailed above.

During the first semester of Year Two, working together as a team, students produce a **promotional film for a local nonprofit organization**. This will give you the experience of producing nonfiction media that serves a purpose or brand and working with and for a Client.

The final two semesters are devoted exclusively to the research, development, preproduction, production and postproduction of your **30minute thesis documentary short**. You will craft a **business and marketing plan**, including the creation of an internet presence and strategy for your film. Your film will be held to the same industry standards as any professional project and should be ready for sale and/or distribution when completed. You will learn and apply professional techniques such as **graphics, titles, animation, sound design and sweetening, and color**

**correction** to your thesis project. Music, either an original score or licensed songs will be incorporated as well. All students are expected to have a role in multiple thesis productions, besides their own.

The final thesis documentary is intended to reflect the student's strengths as a documentary filmmaker and should be of professional quality. The thesis film can serve as a demonstration of skills to a potential employer, be submitted to film festivals, marketed and distributed, used as a presentation reel to seek funding to extend the film from a short to a feature-length documentary.

**CLASSES INCLUDE:**

Community Film Production  
Advanced Editing  
Advanced Camera & Lighting  
Writing & Directing the Thesis Documentary  
Producing the Thesis Documentary  
Sound Design  
Graphics, Visual Effects, Color Correction  
Mixing  
Marketing the Non Fiction Film

**SPECIAL EVENTS AND INDUSTRY OUTREACH - NYC:**

NYFA's New York Documentary Department offers students opportunities to attend outside screenings in New York City... home to the independent documentary community and home to a number of large film festivals and events such as Tribeca Film Festival...

New York is also home of DOC NYC, one of the world's largest documentary film festivals. All student films are automatically considered for selection for the Department showcase, which we have consistently been invited to screen each year at DOC NYC.

NYFA also brings in master class guests including some of the top documentary filmmakers.

Recent speakers/screenings have included:

Geof Bartz - Five-time Oscar-winning Supervising Editor of HBO's Documentary Department

Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi - Oscar-winning director/producer, *Free Solo*

Sam Pollard - Oscar-nominated editor, *4 Little Girls*

Kahane Cooperman - Oscar-nominated director/producer *Joe's Violin* (The New Yorker)

**SPECIAL EVENTS AND INDUSTRY OUTREACH - LA:**

Los Angeles is not just the movie capital of the world – it is also home to a large and thriving documentary community and nearly all of the television and cable channels in the U.S. are based in LA or have production offices here. LA is also the home of the **International Documentary Association**, the premiere membership organization for nonfiction filmmakers. Students have the opportunity to **pitch their ideas** in front of industry professionals from organizations including **Sundance Documentary, Independent Film Project and the IDA**. (Tuition includes IDA membership and attendance at IDA events.)

NYFA's Los Angeles Documentary Department takes full advantage of this access with frequent trips to outside screenings and campus visits from some of the top documentarians in the world.

Recent speakers/screenings have included:

Davis Guggenheim – *An Inconvenient Truth, Waiting for Superman, He Called Me Malala*

Rory Kennedy – *Last Days in Vietnam*

Chris Paine – *Who Killed The Electric Car I and II*

Ashley York – *Tig*

Christine O'Malley – *Wordplay, IOUSA*

### **CAMERAS:**

One Year Documentary students are first introduced to the **Arri S, a 16mm film camera** to learn the absolute basics of camera technique. They move on to the **Canon 5d** for most of the semester and the **Canon C100** for the One Year project.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:**

Prior to graduation, Barbara Weintraub, Chair of Industry Outreach, will meet with students to discuss the alumni network,

NY Documentary students also have a unit dedicated to Creative Professional Development, where an instructor will guide them through developing a post-graduation plan including creating a professional resume, cover letter, reel, and bio as well as job searching and networking strategies.

**NYFA LA'S Chair of Industry Outreach, Barbara Weintraub**, works with each student before they graduate to create a **professional resume** and a **postschool career game plan**

### **FACULTY BIOS**

Headed by Emmy Award-winning documentary filmmaker Barbara MulterWellin, the documentary faculty includes top directors, producers, editors, cinematographers and sound designers with an extraordinary collective depth of experience in the field.

#### **Barbara MulterWellin** | *Chair of Documentary*

Barbara MulterWellin has written and produced hundreds of hours of nonfiction television programming and web content. Her work has been seen on **HBO, Showtime, PBS, Lifetime, KCET, The Discovery Channel, UPN, Lifetime, FitTV, TBS, HGTV, and TLC**. She won a **2013 L.A. Area Emmy** for her work on the series television and web series "Your Turn To Care" which was also the winner of a **2013 Gracie Award**. Ms. MulterWellin has produced two films for the acclaimed PBS documentary series Independent Lens. "Taking The Heat: The First Women Firefighters of New York City," a documentary narrated by Susan Sarandon. The second film, "Paul Conrad: Drawing Fire" was also selected for the first digital release of Independent Lens films.

Wendy Apple graduated with a BFA from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. Her experience as producer, director and editor in film and television included "**Hard Rain**" with Bob Dylan, "**Appearing Nightly**" with Lily Tomlin, "**Don't Drop the Ball**" with Kenny Loggins, "**The Cutting Edge: The Magic of Movie Editing**", and many more. Wendy is also a member of the Director's Guild.

#### **Mary Beth Fielder**

Mary Beth Fielder is a filmmaker and teacher **with over twenty five years of experience** in film and television. Fielder has written screenplays for **Universal Pictures, 20th Century Fox** and **Warner Bros.** and directed the television drama, "**thirtysomething.**" She wrote and produced awardwinning feature films "**Wild About Harry**",

named Best of Fest at the Palm Springs International Film Festival in 2009 and **"Togetherness Supreme"**, winner of Best International Feature Film at the 2011 Santa Barbara International Film Festival and multiple African Movie Academy Awards.

### **Denise Hamilton**

Denise Hamilton is a writerproducer for television whose work has been produced for **NBC** and **CBS** affiliates in New York and Boston, the **Discovery Channel**, the **Fox Family Channel**, **E! Entertainment**, **de Passe Entertainment**, and **Quincy JonesDavid Saltzman Entertainment**. Ms. Hamilton wrote and produced the documentary **"Ngone's Story: A Tale of Africa's Orphans"** for the NBC/IBC series "Horizons of the Spirit". Ms. Hamilton was coordinating producer for both the ABCTV documentary "Motown 40: The Music is Forever", and WNBCTV's "For Peace Sake: Youth Speaks Out" which **won three local Emmys**.

### **Charles Rose**

Charles Rose is an **AIC Cinematographer** with **over 30 years of experience** on an international level having worked on motion picture narrative films, documentaries, commercials, music videos, and as a 3D cinematic consultant. He has over 14 years of experience teaching **all aspects of cinematic creation** using 16/35 mm film cameras (Panavision, Arri, Movicam, Aaton) to all current digital cameras from Red cameras, Alexas, Sony F65 to DSLR cameras. He has extensive experience teaching the concepts and techniques related to **set illumination** for both film and digital imagery creation.

### **John Sisti**

John began his career as a **recording engineer at A&M Records** working with such artists as Captain and Tennille ("Love Will Keep Us Together", Grammy awardwinning Record of the Year), Carole King, George Harrison, Barbara Streisand, Hoyt Axton, and others. John joined **Sony Pictures'**, then new, **digital sound department** as a sound editor and, the following year, became a **sound supervisor** for shows such as "Mad About You" (which won two Emmys for best sound, and features including "Cable Guy", "Bottle Rockets", and Frances Ford Coppola's "Bram Stoker's Dracula" which won an Oscar for best sound).

## **SUCCESSFUL ALUMNI & ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

New York Film Academy Documentary MFA graduate **Kai Lu's** short film, **"The Cost of Love"**, won the **2015 Indie Fest Award of Merit** and was an official selection of the 23rd San Francisco Global Movie Festival. Lu's film was also featured at the 68th Cannes Film Festival Short Film Corner.

2015 MFA graduate **Tiffany Toulze** has worked as an **Assistant Editor at Indigo Films** and is preparing her thesis documentary, **Surviving Woodlands**, about the horrific abuse suffered by children at a nowshuttered Canadian asylum, for a **screening before Parliament in British Columbia**.

2015 1 Year Certificate student **Rachael Pelzer's** documentary short **Zulu Maniacs**, about a troupe of hip hop dancers bringing movement, fun, and positivity to children, has been accepted into the **San Luis Obispo Film Festival**.