



Stony Brook University  
Manhattan

# MFA IN FILM & TV

IN ASSOCIATION WITH KILLER FILMS



## Introduction

Isn't this semester just flying by?! The sun is shining, the days are longer, and the leaves are budding. In this issue of In the Loop, we explore how spring productions are achieving success in our year long pandemic, looking at the exciting projects Killer Films has announced, and letting you all know about our amazing fellowship sweep. See below for our April updates!

## SBU Students Sweep TV Academy Fellowships

Two students from Stony Brook's MFA in Television Writing program have won coveted Television Academy Writing Fellowships. **Mallory Baysek**, a first-year student, won in the Drama category with her *Good Fight* spec, *A Clusterf\*ck of Karens*, which explores themes of racism, privilege, and cancel culture.

**Galen Foote**, currently in his second year, won for Comedy with his *Big Mouth* spec, *Big Boys*, an adventure into the ramifications of becoming a big boy, both figuratively and literally.

"Winning one highly competitive fellowship is a big achievement for any program, but for our new MFA in Television Writing to bring home two in one year speaks to the enormous talent of our students and the effectiveness of our curriculum and faculty," said Alan Kingsberg, director

of Stony Brook's MFA in Television Writing. Christine Vachon, artistic director for Film and TV, added that "our TV Writing curriculum is now one of the most extensive in the world."

The TV Academy fellowships include one-on-one mentoring by industry professionals, high-level training seminars, and networking opportunities with Hollywood writers, agents, and producers. Academy host companies include ABC/Disney, CBS/Nickelodeon, Hulu, NBC/Universal, and HBO. Congratulations to Mallory and Galen!

## Spring Productions

Spring student film shoots are underway! With COVID-19 protocols adding new challenges, first-year filmmakers are rising to the occasion. Last weekend, the first-year film cohort wrapped their first shoot in a public location. Currently titled *A Sign of Luck*, this short was written and directed by producing student **Audrey Wick**. With a cast and crew of twelve including a Covid Safety Supervisor and an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter, the team filmed at the Greenpoint Ferry Station and Smith-9th Street Subway Stop in New York City. For Audrey, the shoot was a learning experience and a success.

Audrey's script follows two people traveling through the city on the way to meet for their first date. She wanted a story that took place outdoors with minimal contact. "We submitted a Covid safety plan that had to be approved by faculty," she explained. Everyone on set tested negative at the Manhattan Center testing location, and wore masks, except for the actors during takes.

The script also featured deaf characters, and for Audrey, who is hearing, it was crucial to cast deaf or hard-of-hearing actors. "Representation matters," she said. Her Assistant Director, **Elaine Menigo**, agreed. "When you're directing, you want to find those moments that feel real. Lived experience can add something that impacts the viewer." As Audrey's film enters the post-production phase, she and Elaine will continue to work as crew for their classmates' films. Audrey said her advice to her classmates on set in the coming weeks is to set priorities. "Decide what's important to you and know that going into your shoot," she said. Audrey's priority is using storytelling to make an impact, and using her platform to educate people. "And remember to have fun. Take a breath and be in it." "And if you burn, wear sunscreen," Elaine added. "You don't want to get a mask tan."

## Killer Films Announcements

Killer Films has so many exciting projects being released this spring and summer. Firstly, Killer Films has produced the much anticipated film *Zola*, and we've finally gotten a taste of the film through its new [trailer](#) and poster. *Zola* will be released on June 30.

Additionally, FX's *PRIDE* Docuseries, which chronicles the fight for LGBTQ+ rights in America will premiere its first three episodes back-to-back on May 14 at 8 p.m. ET, followed by the final three episodes on May 21 at 8 p.m. ET on FX. All of the episodes will be available the day after premiering on FX on Hulu. Each episode will focus on one decade, starting with 1950, and running through the 2000s. Stony Brook's own Christine Vachon is an executive

producer on the show. Keep an eye out for more announcements from Killer Films!

## P.S. SUNYWide Film Festival Entry

One of our stellar MFA Film students, **John Kim**, is in the running for awards at the SUNYWide Film Festival for his film, *Cupcake Dad*. This piece is a narrative film. John also has a screenplay in contention for the festival awards. For more on John's selection, visit <https://www.sunywidefilmfestival.com/official-selections-swff9>

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## April 15th Decision Date

On April 15, all Fall 2021 applicants must submit their replies to all the programs and disciplines across the country. We wish all those pursuing a higher education the best of clarity as they make their decisions.



Fellowship Winners Mallory Basek and Galen Foote



Audrey's Shoot was Accomplished in Only One Day



Refining Lighting Techniques in the Cinematography Class

## Connect With Us! ✨

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