

Bay Area Documentary Filmmakers  
Wednesdays 1:00-3:00pm, May 1-22, 2024

Instructor: Michael Fox  
foxonfilm@yahoo.com

Bay Area documentary makers are distinguished by their commitment to exposing injustices at home and abroad, unearthing forgotten or buried history, and spotlighting iconoclastic artists of color. This class provides the opportunity to hear how four local filmmakers perceive and do their jobs. Each session features a new or recent film followed by a Q&A with the director(s). We'll focus on the practical, ethical, narrative and aesthetic challenges of making documentaries, from conception through production and postproduction to distribution.

**May 1 Andrew Abrahams** Special Sneak Preview (2024, 70 min)

A new, not-yet-released film that has been abridged from 90 minutes for this class.

Andrew Abrahams is a two-time Academy Award shortlisted producer/director of creative non-fiction films, cinematographer and photographer. Andrew studied at NU's Medill School of Journalism and USC's School of Cinema, receiving a master's degree in Visual Anthropology. His most recent film, *American Justice on Trial: People v. Newton* (2022), was Oscar shortlisted, won nine awards (including Best Short Doc at the Pan African FF) and screened in last year's BADF class. *Alfredo's Fire (Il Fuoco di Alfredo)*, 2013) premiered at the Santa Barbara IFF and received a CINE Best Independent Doc jury award. *The Grove* (2011, funded by ITVS) was awarded Best Documentary at the Seattle Lesbian & Gay FF and aired nationally on PBS. *Under Our Skin* (2008) received seven best doc awards at international festivals, was an Academy Award semifinalist for Best Doc Feature and received a theatrical release. *Under Our Skin 2: Emergence* (2014) received top honors from the National Health Information Assoc. Andrew is a recipient of a Pew Charitable Trust Fellowship in Dance/Media and two-time Grand Prize-winner at the Dance on Camera FF. He was budget director of the distribution coop New Day Films, board director of the Jewish Film Institute, and Academy of Television Arts & Sciences member. He has been recognized by the Northern California Marin Arts Council as Outstanding Artist, and by the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences for Outstanding Documentary Achievement. Andrew also teaches workshops, notably Intimacy & Exposure: The Alchemy of Photography at the Esalen Institute. In addition to the film he is presenting in class, Andrew is in postproduction on *Complicated: Children Suffering at the Margins of Medicine*.  
<https://openeyepictures.com/>

**May 8 Mike Jacobs** *Who Is Michael Jang?* (2024, 42 min)

After decades in obscurity, Michael Jang uses graffiti tactics to share his hidden archive of fine art photography with the world. A chronicle of an elusive artist at a flashpoint in his career. *Who Is Michael Jang?* plays SF DocFest (May 30-June 9). <https://itvs.org/films/who-is-michael-jang/>

Boulder native Mike Jacobs directed *Marvel's Behind the Mask* (2021, Disney+), spotlighting the writers and artists of the comic-book characters. He was showrunner on *Level Playing Field* (2021, HBO), which examined inequality in sports and society, and directed the 12-episode series *Blackballed* (2020, Roku) about the Donald Sterling-L.A. Clippers race scandal. Mike has helmed numerous ESPN films, including one of the most-watched pieces in the "30 for 30" shorts library, *The High Five* (2014 SxSW premiere, SFIFF jury award). He made his feature debut with the S.F.-set doc *Audience of One* (2007, SxSW jury award) and his shorts have been lauded on Nowness, Pitchfork and PopUp Magazine and played Tribeca, True/False, New Directors/New Films and AFIDocs. Michael's commercial work for Microsoft, Meta, Zendesk, Toyota, Infiniti, Square, etc. has won Clios and been featured in *Adweek*, *Shoot* and *NY Times*.  
<https://strikeanywherefilms.com/>

**May 15 Madeleine Lim** *Jewelle: A Just Vision* (2022, 64 min)

From Black Power in late-'60s Boston to AIDS activism in mid-'80s New York to marriage equality in early-'10s San Francisco, *Jewelle: A Just Vision* follows novelist (*The Gilda Stories*, 1991), playwright (*Waiting for Giovanni*, 2011), essayist, poet and journalist Jewelle Gomez.

<https://qwocmap.org/jewelle/>

Madeleine Lim is a producer, director, cinematographer and editor. She received her BA in Cinema from San Francisco State University, and has been an Adjunct Professor in the Film/Media Studies Department at the University of San Francisco since 2004. Her films have screened at festivals around the world, including Vancouver IFF, Mill Valley FF and Amsterdam Amnesty IFF. Lim's short doc *The Worlds of Bernice Bing* (2013) won the Audience Award at the Queer Women of Color Film Festival. Her other honors include a National Educational Media Network Bronze Apple Award and a Joey Award of Excellence from the San Jose Film & Video Commission.

**May 22 Ariana Garfinkel and Michaelle McGaraghan** *My Own Normal* (2024, 55 min)

When disabled filmmaker Alexander Freeman tells his parents his girlfriend is pregnant, their reaction is not what he expected. Confronting that pain, he sets out to create his version of a "normal life" as a parent and partner. *My Own Normal* plays SF DocFest (May 30-June 9).

<https://myownnormalmovie.com/#home>

Producer Ariana Garfinkel's credits include *On These Grounds* (2021, SxSW, Starz), *Never Too Late: The Doc Severinsen Story* (2020, PBS' American Masters), *You Don't Nomi* (2019, Tribeca, AMC+), *I Am Maris: Portrait of a Young Yogi* (2018, Netflix), *Boys of Summer* (2010, ESPN, PBS) and *Trumbo* (2007).

Emmy-nominated editor and writer Michaelle McGaraghan's credits include *Embrace the Panda: Making Turning Red* (2022, Disney+), *Inside Pixar* (2020, Disney+), *Always in Season* (2019, Sundance), *Jean-Michel Basquiat: The Radiant Child* (2010, Sundance) and *Jimmy Scott: If You Only Knew* (2002, SxSW). She is writing and editing Marc Smolowitz's forthcoming *The Lonely Child*. McGaraghan is a Sundance Art of Editing fellow, Karen Schmeer Film Editing Fellow and Sundance Doc Lab Contributing Editor.