

Bay Area Documentary Filmmakers
Wednesdays, January 24-March 7, 2018 2:00-4:00pm

Instructor: Michael Fox
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There are only three places in the country—New York, Los Angeles and the Bay Area—where a different lineup of independent documentary filmmakers could be assembled for a class every year. What distinguishes Bay Area doc makers is their dedication to exposing social injustices at home and abroad, reviving ignored or forgotten history and spotlighting iconoclastic artists. Each session of the class features a new or recent film followed by a discussion with the director. We'll focus on the practical and ethical challenges of making documentaries, from conception through production and postproduction to distribution.

Note: The lineup is subject to change because last-minute shooting or editing obligations may compel a filmmaker to cancel. Another filmmaker and film will be scheduled.

Jan. 24 Rick Tejada-Flores *My Bolivia: Remembering What I Never Knew* (2017, 57 min)

Rick Tejada-Flores grew up in Southern California to become a filmmaker, artist and political activist. By the time he was interested in his Bolivian heritage, it was too late to ask his parents. Wanting to make peace with his family's history of privilege and wealth in Latin America, he set off on a journey to unravel the past. *My Bolivia* premiered last spring at the inaugural Doc Lands in Marin County, and aired on the World Channel in October. Rick presented an early cut of *My Bolivia* in this class in the fall of 2009.

<http://worldchannel.org/programs/episode/dw-s2-201-my-bolivia/>

www.mybolivia.net

ww2.kqed.org/arts/2017/10/02/nw-playing-rick-tejada-flores-roots-around-his-bolivian-family-tree/

www.sf360.org/?pageid=12214

Rick Tejada-Flores began working in television in 1969 in a minority training program at KQED's Newsroom. He was news-film editor at KGO before going on to co-produce and co-direct *Si Se Puede!* for the United Farmworkers Union in 1973. He returned to public television, where he produced and directed the artists' profiles *Orozco: Man of Fire* (1985), *Rivera in America* (1988) and *Jasper Johns: Ideas in Paint* (1989). His other major films include *The Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farmworkers' Struggle* (1997), *The Good War and Those Who Refused to Fight It* (2000) and *Race is the Place* (2005). www.paradigmproductions.org

Jan. 31 Mike Seely *Exiled* (2017, 30 min) + *The Most Distant Places* (2010, 35 min)

Exiled profiles two deported veterans, green card immigrants willing to die for their country. Stuck in Tijuana, Army combat vet Mauricio Hernandez struggles to find adequate treatment for his PTSD, while paratrooper Hector Barajas fights to reunite with his daughter in Compton. An intimate look at the human consequences of current U.S. immigration policy. www.facebook.com/exiledthefilm/

Dr. Edgar Rodas is dedicated to improving health conditions for underprivileged communities in his native Ecuador. Cinterandes is his visionary mobile hospital and rural health care project. *The Most Distant Places* follows Dr. Rodas and his team to the far reaches of Ecuador, weaving portrayals of the doctors with stories of their patients. Traveling from indigenous hamlets in the Andes to fishing villages on the coast to Amazonian river communities, the film illustrates the challenges of providing health care for impoverished people far from adequate medical facilities.

www.themostdistantplaces.com www.cinterandes.org/index.php/en/

Mike Seely did his undergraduate work at Oberlin College and earned his MFA from Stanford's prestigious graduate program in documentary production. He spent almost all of 2010 in Poland on a Fulbright grant producing, shooting and directing two short docs "as a way to experiment with style and explore the Polish documentary tradition." Seely has produced, directed, and photographed dozens of cross-cultural and international doc projects. His work has been broadcast in the U.S. and screened at festivals worldwide including Slamdance, Tribeca, Toronto, and San Francisco. A freelance cinematographer and producer, he works with independent directors, nonprofit, broadcast and commercial clients such as National Geographic, MTV2, Frontline World, SFMOMA, Facebook and Williams-Sonoma. www.open-signal.com www.sf360.org/Home/?pageid=13450

Feb. 7 NO CLASS

Feb. 14 Ken Schneider and Abby Ginzberg *And Then They Came For Us* (2017) 45 min

75 years ago, Executive Order 9066 paved the way for the violation of constitutional rights that resulted in the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans. Featuring George Takei and others who were incarcerated, along with newly rediscovered photographs by Dorothea Lange, *And Then They Came for Us* brings history into the present by following Japanese American activists as they speak out against the Muslim registry and travel ban. www.thentheycamedoc.com

Ken Schneider has edited over 35 feature docs focusing on war and peace, human rights, artists' lives, untold American histories and contemporary social issues. His films have screened on PBS' *American Masters*, *POV*, *Independent Lens*, *Frontline*, HBO, Showtime, in festivals and on television worldwide. They've won Emmys, two Peabodys, a Columbia-Dupont, IDA awards, an Indie Spirit, top awards at Sundance and other major festivals, and have been nominated for an Oscar (*Regret To Inform*) and additional Emmys.

His credits include *Have You Heard From Johannesburg* (Emmy-winning series); *The Good War and Those Who Refused To Fight It*; *El Poeta*; *Orozco: Man of Fire*; *Ralph Ellison: An American Journey*; *Store Wars*; *School Colors*; *Bolinao 52*; *Ancestors in the Americas* and *Speaking in Tongues*. kenschneidereditor.net

Schneider and his wife, Marcia Jarmel, have made several films together including the long-form docs *Havana Curveball* (2014, screened in six countries, Best Documentary awards at the Boston and Seattle Children's Film Festivals, *Speaking in Tongues* (Audience Award at 2009 SFIFF, national PBS broadcast) and *Born in the U.S.A.* (2000, broadcast on PBS' Independent Lens). www.patchworkfilms.net

Abby Ginzberg visited last year's class with *Agents of Change*. She has been making docs about race and social justice for 30 years. *Soft Vengeance: Albie Sachs and the New South Africa* (2014) won a Peabody Award and four festival audience awards. *Cruz Reynoso: Sowing the Seeds of Justice* (2010) and *Soul of Justice: Thelton Henderson's American Journey* (2005), about a Latino and African American judge, respectively, aired on PBS and won numerous awards. Ginzberg is President of the Berkeley Film Foundation, which awards grants to doc filmmakers. www.abbyginzberg.com

Feb. 21 Annelise Wunderlich and Richard O'Connell *The Corridor* (2017) 72 min
What's it like to go to school while incarcerated? The tools in your bike repair class are locked to the table, and classrooms come equipped with panic buttons. Room assignments take gang affiliation into account. Exposing one's ignorance is seen as a weakness in a world of predators. These are some of the challenges facing participants in the S.F. Sheriff Department's pioneering program for inmates to earn their GEDs. Tracing their progress from orientation to graduation, observational footage of school and jail routine is supported by a soundtrack of reflections from guards, teachers and inmates. Intertitles of statistics underline the students' odds, and achievements. *The Corridor* premiered at the 2017 Mill Valley Film Festival, where it was named Best Bay Area Documentary by a S.F. Film Critics Circle jury. www.thecorridor documentary.com

Annelise Wunderlich is Executive Producer for KQED's Education department, and has produced educational content for Independent Lens and other PBS programs and nonprofits.

Richard O'Connell is Senior Producer of National Productions for Independent Television Service (ITVS), and has supervised the production of more than 300 docs that were broadcast nationally on PBS. He has worked as a journalist, and as a filmmaker in both narrative fiction (*Black Eyed Dog*, 1999) and documentary production (*Pride of Ireland*, 2000). Those directorial projects were broadcast on PBS, exhibited theatrically and premiered at festivals in the U.S. and abroad He holds Masters in Economics and Sociology, and Film Studies. He is the director of shorts programs for the S.F. Irish Film Festival.

Feb. 28 Sara Maamouri *We Are Not Princesses* (WORK IN PROGRESS, 2018, 69 min)
The Greek heroine Antigone ignites the spirits of four Syrian women living in Beirut's refugee camps. Feminine wisdom, passed through the ages, connects the inner lives of the women and gives them a sense of belonging and rootedness. Through animation and intimate vérité footage, the doc illustrates that which is invisible to the eye: the thoughts,

memories, and dreams of these mothers, sisters, and wives as they grapple daily with past traumas and future uncertainty. www.openartfoundation.org

We Are Not Princesses explores the Antigone of Syria theatre workshop which began in 2014 with 35 Syrian women living in Beirut's refugee camps. Although the workshop and rehearsals provide the structural foundation, the film is not an observational documentary about putting on a play. It explores how tools of expression taught in the workshops play out in the women's lives outside of the rehearsal space. The actresses' experiences and stories, as well as their reaction to the play, are woven into the structure of the workshop. Through four participants—Fedwa, Heba, Mona and Isra'a—we explore the theater space, domestic space and public space of Beirut through vérité footage, as well as the streets of Syria through animation sequences guided by the women's voices.

Editor and co-producer Sara Maamouri's work over 15 years has examined social, educational and political issues from former enemies bound together through loss and discovery (*In This Waiting*, 2011) to rebuilding a life in a former war zone (*Amal's Garden*, 2012) and reinventing a country as the world watches (*A Revolution in Four Seasons*, Hot Docs 2016). She edited and co-produced *The Judge* (directed by Erika Cohn) which premiered at TIFF 2017. A multi-lingual Tunisian educated in New York and California, Maamouri brings international sensitivity to her editing, production and story development while building transmedia narratives to engage a constantly evolving audience base. <http://saramaamouri.com>

Mar. 7 Secret Sneak Preview