

Bay Area Documentary Filmmakers
Wednesdays 2-4pm, Apr. 3-May 8, 2019

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.

Apr. 3 **Connie Field** *The Whistleblower of My Lai* (2018, 65 min)

A unique fusion of opera and documentary that blends the emotional crystallization of a dramatized human story with the concreteness of real life. *The Whistleblower of My Lai* captures the best and worst of humanity through U.S. Army helicopter pilot Hugh Thompson and his witnessing and exposure of the massacre in Son My commune, Quang Ngai province in 1968. <https://vietnam.vnanet.vn/english/connie-field-a-documentary-filmmaker-of-hidden-stories/374206.html>

Connie Field worked as an organizer in social and human rights organizations before getting involved in film. Many of her documentaries focus on hidden histories which should be part of our collective memories. Her films include the feminist classic *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* (1980), *Freedom On My Mind* (1994), an Academy Award--nominated history of the civil rights movement in Mississippi, and *¡Salud!* (2006) about Cuba's efforts toward global health equity. Her epic seven-part series *Have You Heard from Johannesburg*, recounting the global movement that ended apartheid in South Africa, aired on PBS and BBC in 2012. More recently, she made *Al Helm: Martin Luther King in Palestine* and *Oliver Tambo*. Field has won the Sundance Grand Jury Prize and a primetime Emmy Award, was nominated for a British Academy Award and received Best Series and Best Feature Documentary prizes from numerous festivals. Her work has aired in more than 30 countries. She is a recipient of the John Grierson Award as most outstanding social documentarian and a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, and is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Connie's website: www.clarityfilms.org/index.html

Apr. 10 **John Antonelli** *The New Environmentalists* (2018) and *The Land is Tired* (work in progress, 2020)

Robert Redford narrates the Emmy Award-winning series of inspiring portraits of passionate, dedicated activists who have placed themselves in harm's way to battle powerful adversaries while building grassroots support. These heroes share a goal: Safeguarding the Earth's natural resources from exploitation and pollution while fighting for environmental justice in their communities. John Antonelli expands and deepens the stories of two Haitian New Environmentalists in *The Land is Tired*.

Marin County producer, director and writer John Antonelli's documentaries include *Kerouac, the Movie* (1985) and the American Masters portrait, *Sam Cooke: Crossing Over* (2010). His

nonfiction shorts, *Sea Change* and *Unfair Game: The Politics of Poaching*, aired on PBS in 2018.

John and Will Parrinello's website: www.mvfg.com

Apr. 17 **Todd Darling** *Occupy the Farm* (excerpt, 2014) and *Two Rivers* (work in progress, 2020)

Occupy the Farm documents the strategic 2012 protests of urban farmers against UC's plans to build a shopping center on the Gill Tract near Oakland. website: www.occupythefarmfilm.com

Two Rivers focuses on the Water Protectors at Standing Rock, North Dakota, and on the Klamath River in California. These indigenous-led environmental actions, 1,500 miles apart, expose a fundamental dilemma as well as a potential path forward. website: www.gofundme.com/FilmCrewAtStandingRock

Based in LA for many years and now Berkeley, Todd Darling is a producer, editor and director whose films include the feature *A Snowmobile for George* (2008) and *Black Rock Horse* (2012), a short filmed at Burning Man. Todd won the Eric Sevareid Award from the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for his first nationally broadcast documentary, *Año Nuevo*. He produced the reality TV series "Laguna Beach: The Real Orange County" (2004) and "Lost Tapes" (2008-09). He has over a hundred editing credits, ranging from "Sesame Street" videos to "Project Runway" episodes to Comedy Central's "The Man Show." Todd has worked on the broadcast of five Olympic Games, and shot programs for the BBC, USA, Discovery Channel, and TLC. He began his career as a freelance journalist covering stories in Europe, the U.S. and Mexico. Todd's website: <http://todddarling.com>

Apr. 24 **Dan Goldes** *5 Blocks* (rough cut, 2019, 50 min)

5 Blocks traces the current development and dramatic change of San Francisco's mid-Market neighborhood. Website: www.5blocksproject.com

Dan Goldes has produced, directed and edited three short docs: *ub2* (2013, exploring language relating to HIV), *Equal Justice Under Law* (2015, inspired by the U.S. Supreme Court's marriage equality decision) and *Arrested (Again)* (2017, a profile of nonviolent activist Karen Topakian), each of which played more than two dozen festivals. He graduated from the San Francisco School of Digital Filmmaking, and he and *5 Blocks* are part of the incubator residency program of the San Francisco Ninth Street Independent Film Center. He has sat on screening committees of the San Francisco Green Film Festival and Sebastopol Documentary Film Festival. *5 Blocks* marks his feature debut.

May 1 **Christopher Beaver** pre-release sneak preview (2019, 54 min)

Director Chris Beaver and producer Diana Fuller graciously screen their latest, nearly complete documentary ahead of its premiere later this year.

Christopher Beaver is a writer, producer and director whose films include the Emmy-winning *Dark Circle* (1982, with Judy Irving), which received a Certificate of Special Merit from the

Academy Awards documentary committee. His environmental docs include *Treasures of the Greenbelt*, *Secrets of the Bay*, *Tales of the San Joaquin—A River Journey* (nominated for the International Documentary Association's Pare Lorentz Award) and *Tulare, The Phantom Lake*. Chris presented *Racing to Zero*, a solutions-oriented film tracing San Francisco's efforts to divert all waste from landfills, in the Winter 2015 Bay Area Documentary Filmmakers class. Chris's website: www.cbfilms.net

May 8 **Molly Stuart** *Objector* (work in progress, 2019, 75 min)

Like all Israeli teenagers, Atalya Ben-Abba is obligated by law to become a soldier. Unlike most, she questions the ethics of her country's military. Before making the decision that will set her on a new life course, Atalya visits the West Bank. As her enlistment date approaches, and at the risk of becoming a target for vitriol and exclusion, she grapples with refusing her military duty. *Objector* offers a window into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict via the perspective of a Jewish woman taking an uncommon stand.

Molly Stuart made an award-winning short film (with the same title) about Atalya Ben-Abba in 2017. With the goal of telling a feature-length story, she crowd-funded to hire a director of photography and co-editor and received grants from the Berkeley Film Foundation and other sources.

Director, producer and editor Molly Stuart earned her MFA in Cinema at S.F. State University, where she won the Bill Nichols Excellence in Cinema Award, Canon Best in Show Award and Spotlight on Women in Film Award. Her festival prizes include Best Documentary Short and Best Young Women Storyteller Award. Stuart was a 2018 Women Peace and Security Fellow and is a current resident of SFFILM FilmHouse. She received her BS in sociology and film studies from Middlebury College. *Objector* is her documentary feature debut. webpage: www.eldoradofilms.net/filmmakers/molly-stuart/