



MPS | FILM DIRECTING



Graduate Programs

The MPS Film Directing program

at SVA offers emerging filmmakers the opportunity to immerse themselves in the art and craft of directing film. Great directors are great storytellers. Our one-year master's program in Film Directing is designed to provide an extensive education in visual storytelling. The program challenges you to articulate your artistic vision utilizing the multifaceted medium of film.

You will develop the intellectual and practical skills for directing film. You will learn the art of visual storytelling, working under the tutelage of industry professionals to grasp how to evolve stories from script to screen, direct actors, and employ an arsenal of cinematic tools to tell a compelling

visual narrative. With the guidance of our award-winning faculty, you will cultivate original ideas for successful, inventive films that communicate a narrative in an aesthetically interesting and innovative manner. The course of study also addresses the historical and critical context of film as an art form, its political and sociocultural dimensions, and comparative examination of theories for understanding film and video.

The MPS Film Directing program celebrates the truly independent art of filmmaking. Our students are outfitted with the creative, technical and critical means needed to impart their artistic visions. With hands-on instruction from our experienced faculty and New York City as your classroom, you will do things you can't do anywhere else and will graduate ready to jump into a career that could change your life and, quite possibly, the world.

—Bob Giraldi, chair

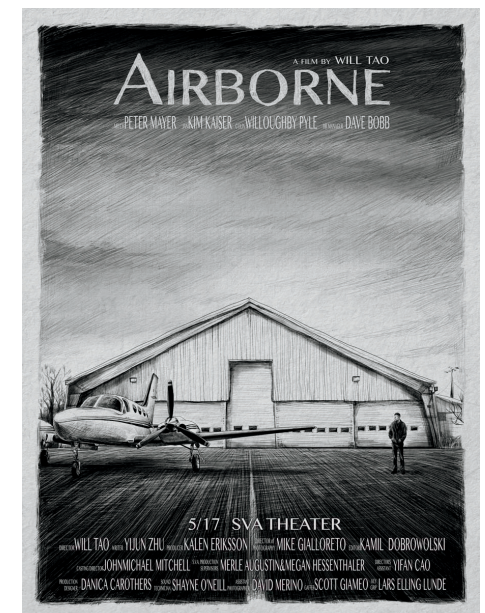
About the Program

In less than one year, each student in the MPS Film Directing program directs a professionally produced short film and attains a master's degree. Over the course of nine months, we empower our students to direct their own short films by providing them with the latest technology, instruction from award-winning filmmakers and an experienced film crew. High-level production values combined with strong storytelling equals success in the film industry. For this reason, the student films created in this program have gone on to be purchased for distribution by HBO and screen as official selections at such prestigious institutions as Cannes Film Festival, Slamdance, SXSW and Film Festival Internazionale di Milano, to name a few.

Scheduled for the working professional, classes are held Monday through Thursday, 6:00 to 9:00pm, with Fridays reserved for studio time, guest lectures, critiques, demonstrations and/or field trips.

Degree candidates must successfully complete 30 credits, including all required courses. Thesis films will be screened in a juried film festival at the SVA Theatre. Each thesis film must be reviewed and approved by the thesis committee and the department chair in order for the student to be eligible for degree conferral.

This studio-based program is chaired by Bob Giraldi, the director who played a major role in the music video revolution and who continues to be a prolific creative force. As one of America's legendary commercial and music video directors, Bob uses his considerable expertise and experience to introduce each of our students to the film industry. Bob has directed some of the world's biggest icons, including Michael Jackson, Paul McCartney, Pat Benatar, Lionel Richie and Will Smith.



Film posters from the class of 2019.



CASE STUDY

Katy-May Hudson/Sakshi Gurnani/India McKinney

An Opportunity to Get on the Big Screen

Three is a magic number, it is often said, and that is certainly true in the case of Katy-May Hudson, Sakshi Gurnani and India McKinney, recent graduates of the MPS Film Directing program at SVA. The trio is currently at work on *Just a Step Away*, a short film sponsored by Coca-Cola and Regal Cinemas aimed to screen in theaters across the country. The team came together after Katy-May's script was chosen as a finalist for the 2020 Coca-Cola Refreshing Films program, a national competition in which more than 800 scripts from nearly 40 film programs are submitted for consideration. Finalists receive a budget and a team of mentors to help them bring their visions to the screen. ►

OPPOSITE, FROM LEFT: Katy-May Hudson, Sakshi Gurnani and India McKinney.



“This is so exciting—it’s huge for me,” says Katy-May, writer and director on the project. “I get goose bumps thinking about it.”

It was Katy-May’s theater arts background that led her to filmmaking. She was working as the artistic director of the New York Neo-Futurists Ensemble, an experimental theater company, when she began making short experimental films. Wanting to get better at the craft, she found her way to the Film Directing program, where she met Sakshi, who had left a job as a creative producer for Yash Raj Films, one of Bollywood’s leading production companies, to attend SVA. Like Katy-May, Sakshi felt she needed a program that would allow her to hone her skills as a writer and director, something

her work in production wasn’t providing.

“I wanted to direct in life,” Sakshi says, “and I realized there’s a lot more I need to learn, more than I could learn on set.”

The filmmakers met over a drink one night after submitting their scripts to Coca-Cola Regal and made a pact to work together if either of their scripts won the contest. When Katy-May’s script for *Just a Step Away*, a musical fantasia about a woman who is transported into another world every time she steps into a movie theater, was selected, Sakshi came onto the project as her producer. During preproduction, when Sakshi needed to return home for a few weeks, she and Katy-May asked India, another friend from the program, to join their team. India filled in during Sakshi’s absence and stayed



OPPOSITE: Behind the scene of *Just a Step Away*.
ABOVE: Scenes from Katy-May Hudson’s film *Pete’s Valve*.



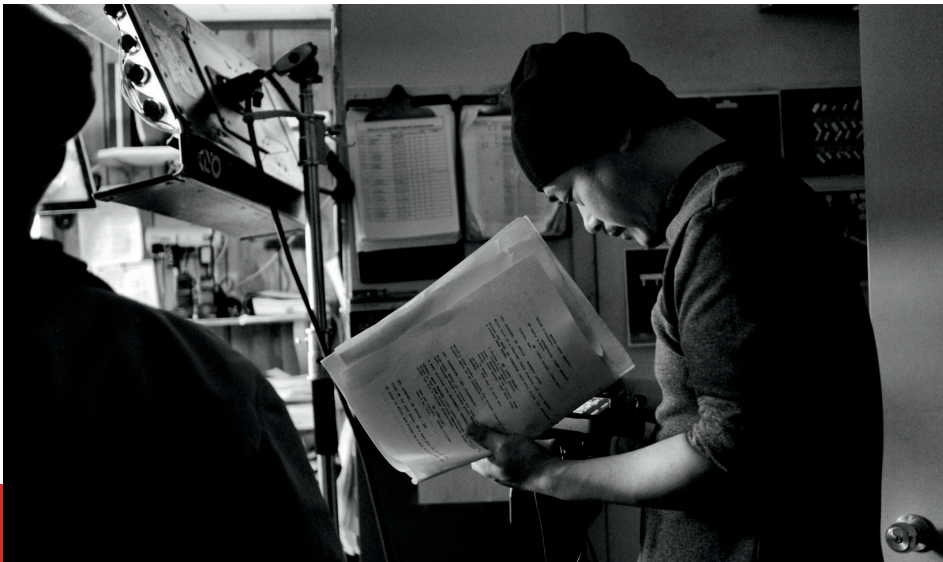
on as consulting producer once she returned.

The triumvirate is now in full production, as excited to be working together as they are to make a film that will be seen by such a wide audience. It's an intense time, with long days and plenty to worry about, but they rely on one another's support and enthusiasm.

"We love each other, we communicate well, we have good chemistry," Katy-May says. "So we got lucky there."

The film may be seen online at us.coca-cola.com/refreshingfilms.

The short film stars Robin Virginie (left).



Curriculum/ Sample Program

Learn filmmaking in this unique nine-month program chaired by legendary short-film commercial director Bob Giraldi.

FALL

	CREDITS
Directing I	4
Film Language, Analysis and Criticism I	3
Lecture Series I: Directing Actors/Casting for Directors	2
Producing for Film Artists	3
Screenwriting	3

SPRING

Directing II	6
Director's Toolbox	3
Editing as Storytelling	3
Film Language, Analysis and Criticism II	3
Lecture Series II	0

OPPOSITE, TOP TO BOTTOM: Detail of scene from Katy-May Hudson's film *Pete's Valve*; Will Tao (MPS 2019) reviews a script.

“ Thanks to the program, I gained my confidence back as an artist and learned a lot too. I also appreciate the no-BS, hands-on approach. Very cool way to teach.”

—Mika Orr (MPS 2017)

Course Offerings

A sample of our course descriptions follows.
All course information can be found online at:
sva.edu/mpsfilmdirecting/curriculum.

DIRECTING I & II

Students are offered firsthand experience in the creation and execution of a short film in the ever-changing world of media production. We will discuss and analyze Academy Award-winning films with the objective of studying various techniques. Students will learn how to employ the tools of cinema to tell their story. Students will be required to examine the challenges of directing a short film—conceptual screenwriting, directing, cinematography, and working with a production team to achieve their vision. The second semester begins preproduction, moving forward with location scouting, shot lists and production of thesis films.

EDITING AS STORYTELLING

This course will focus on the role of editing in film storytelling. Students will be introduced to the interfaces for popular editing platforms like Adobe Premiere and Final Cut Pro X and learn advanced techniques for leveraging these applications. The course will cover postproduction workflow, working with an editor, technical and creative challenges of postproduction and providing deliverables on a deadline. The course will also review the practical utilization of theories, conventional methods and unconventional approaches to furthering the story through examples screened in class.

DIRECTOR'S TOOLBOX

This course explores a variety of methods for utilizing the many tools at the director's disposal before production, during production and after. Students will have the opportunity to workshop scenes, exploring techniques to articulate the story through lens choice, lighting, camera position, blocking and composition, as well as optimize the collaborative process to tell a compelling visual narrative. In the second half of the semester, this course shifts to deconstructing the various platforms for engaging in social media and uniquely marketing the students' films directly to their intended audiences.

FILM LANGUAGE, ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM I & II

Narrative filmmaking has been at the forefront of cinema for motion pictures' over-120-year history. Stories have played a critical part in the development and culture of film, from the earliest projected images made by the Lumière brothers in France in the 1890s, to works being made today by amateurs on smartphones and transmitted globally on the Internet. This course will analyze the language of narrative filmmaking with examples of significant short films that have expanded the boundaries of cinematic expression around the world. The lectures, screenings and class discussions will cover the various strategies of telling a story in film and will suggest a critical framework for thinking about the modes of narrative expressiveness in cinema. A broad range of narrative cinema will be featured, including films that mix fiction with documentary reality and even those works that question the idea of the narrative itself. The concentration in the first part of this course will be on American and European cinema within a context

LECTURE SERIES I & II

The technical aspects of filmmaking will be examined in this course through lecture and workshop formats. Lectures include a range of specialized, relevant topics designed to coincide with each phase of production that students undertake. Workshops offer students additional hands-on experience in the filmmaking process.

SCREENWRITING

Serving as an intensive exploration of the basic principles of dramatic writing, this course will explore the practice and theory of storytelling through a wide range of contexts—from the ancient Greeks to contemporary Hollywood. With a focus on the elements common to all narratives, each student will develop a short screenplay (8 to 12 minutes). Students have the choice of writing their own screenplay, collaborating with a professional writer or optioning an original script from a professional writer. Each of these processes will lead to developing a shooting script under the guidance of the instructor. Students will submit numerous revisions until the screenplay is approved for the next phase of production.

of social responsibility. The second semester features short works, primarily from the East, and will focus on student-made films as well as digital works conceived in nontraditional modes.

PRODUCING FOR FILM ARTISTS

The practical and creative information needed by film artists to realize their artistic vision and find the appropriate media outlets for their completed works will be the focus of this course. While it is important to push the aesthetic boundaries in our field of the moving image, it is also invaluable to have an understanding of production and distribution options and general business information that is key to the independent media-maker.



Notable Alumni

Amanda Alvich

MPS 2017; producer, Paramount; formerly producer and editor, BuzzFeed; director of a 2018 Coca-Cola Regal Films program contest finalist

Nadia Bedzhanova

MPS 2012; director; photographer; clients include *Vogue Russia*, *Dazed* and *Metal*

Ed Cabán

MPS 2011; filmmaker; faculty, St. John's University; media arts teacher, All Hallows High School, New York

Alon Gelnik

MPS 2014; video editor, Vice Media

Rebecca Halfon

MPS 2018; director of the short film *Bodega*, which screened at SXSW, online on Short of the Week, was licensed by Air Canada and is a Vimeo Staff Pick

Dawn Han

MPS 2015; director/producer; director of the award-winning film *Cork Man*

Ji Hyun Kim

MPS 2016; producer and director, Curieyes

David Munz-Maire

MPS 2014; producer; director; head of AireBedd Productions; writer/director of the award-winning short *Chateau Sauvignon: Terroir*

Pam Nasr

MPS 2018; director of content strategy, Brooklyn Women's Film Festival; model, *Vogue*; director; sought-after fashion and set stylist

Miguel J. Soliman

MPS 2017; features programmer, New York Latino Film Festival; writer/director of award-winning film *Desde el Principio*, distributed by HBO

Katie Staab

MPS 2012; freelance writer/creative development; formerly head of video production, Talent Inc. Worldwide; video producer, Facebook Live; writer/producer, *People Now* magazine

Alcee H. Walker

MPS 2015; writer/director of the award-winning film *Inferno*, which won a jury award from the Directors Guild of America Student Film Awards

“This program has been the best thing I’ve chosen to do in my life. I’m glad to have met the chair and the wonderful faculty here. I learned a lot.”

—Miguel J. Soliman (MPS 2017)

PREVIOUS SPREAD: On the set of *Siren*, directed by chair Bob Giraldi and the MPS Film Directing students.

Faculty

To learn more about the faculty members and to read their biographies visit: sva.edu/mpsfilmdirecting/faculty.

Bob Giraldi
chair, MPS Film Directing;
president, film director,
Giraldi Media

Merle Augustin
director, producer

Christina Kallas
filmmaker, screenwriter

Laurence Kardish
film curator

Sean Mannion
editor, producer

Cailin McFadden
filmmaker, producer

Alistair McMeekin
filmmaker, editor

Natasha Soto-Albors
actor, screenwriter, producer

Lecturers

Danny Aiello
actor

Lily Baldwin
writer, director

Alexander Dinelaris
writer, producer, director

Stuart Dryburgh
cinematographer

Below is just a sample of guest lecturers who have spoken with our students.

Nicolás Giacobone
writer

Denis Hamill
writer

Russell Hollander
national executive director,
Directors Guild of America

Alex Lasarenko
composer

Doug LeClaire
director, Asbury Shorts
festival

Barry Markowitz
director of photography

Beth Melsky
casting director

Eva Minemar
producer

Fred Murphy
director of photography

Chris Newman
sound engineer

Calliope Nicholas
director, FilmColumbia
festival

Richard Pepperman
editor

John Rivoli
designer

Gillian Robespierre
writer, director

Sofia Sondervan
producer

Bruce Van Dusen
director

Tim Van Patten
director, actor

Christopher Walters
director of photography

Application Process

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

For a full list of application requirements and detailed instructions, visit:

sva.edu/grad/howtoapply

- Online Application and \$80 Application Fee: sva.edu/apply

DEADLINES

For information on application deadlines, visit: sva.edu/grad/timeline

IMPORTANT LINKS

- FAQ: sva.edu/grad/faq
- International students: sva.edu/grad/intl
- Tuition and fees: sva.edu/tuition
- Visit SVA: sva.edu/grad/visit

Contact Us

We encourage applicants to visit our department. Contact us directly to schedule a department tour or sign up to attend an Information Session. For more information and to register, go to: sva.edu/grad/visit.

If you have any questions about the application process, contact Graduate Admissions at 212.592.2107 or email: gradadmissions@sva.edu.

Bob Giraldi, chair

Cailin McFadden, director of operations

Tel: 212.592.2705

Email: directing@sva.edu

Site: sva.edu/mpsfilmdirecting

 [instagram.com/svafilmdirecting](https://www.instagram.com/svafilmdirecting)

 vimeo.com/svafilmdirecting

“Personally,
I’m very happy
that I enrolled in
this program. I never would
have made a film on my own

without the structure, resources and guidance
I was given by everyone at SVA. I’ll be leaving
here feeling confident that I can write, direct
and produce more films on my own. I got
exactly what I wanted out of this program.”

—Rebecca Halfon (MPS 2018)

ACCREDITATION

The School of Visual Arts has been authorized by the New York State Board of Regents (www.highered.nysed.gov) to confer the degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts on graduates of programs in Advertising; Animation; Comics; Computer Art, Computer Animation and Visual Effects; Design; Film; Fine Arts; Illustration; Interior Design; Photography and Video; Visual and Critical Studies; and to confer the degree of Master of Arts on graduates of programs in Art Education; Curatorial Practice; Design Research, Writing and Criticism; and to confer the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching on graduates of the program in Art Education; and to confer the degree of Master of Fine Arts on graduates of programs in Art Practice; Computer Arts; Design; Design for Social Innovation; Fine Arts; Illustration as Visual Essay; Interaction Design; Photography, Video and Related Media; Products of Design; Social Documentary Film; Visual Narrative; and to confer the degree of Master of Professional Studies on graduates of programs in Art Therapy; Branding; Digital Photography; Directing; Fashion Photography.

The School of Visual Arts is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (msche.org), 1007 North Orange Street, 4th Floor, MB #166, Wilmington, DE 19801, 267-284-5011. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council on Higher Education Accreditation.

The Interior Design program leading to the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Design is accredited by the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (accredit-id.org), 206 Grandville Avenue, Suite 305, Grand Rapids, MI, 49503-4014.

The School of Visual Arts’ Department of Art Education is a member in good standing of the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP), a national accrediting organization recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

The School of Visual Arts’ Department of Art Education is currently pursuing accreditation of its educator preparation programs under the AAQEP standards with an anticipated quality assurance review in fall 2023. Pursuant to Section 52.21 of the

Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, the educator preparation programs offered by the School of Visual Arts are therefore considered to be continuously accredited for purposes of meeting the New York State requirement that all such programs maintain continuous accreditation.

The School of Visual Arts’ Master of Arts in Teaching in Art Education program was previously accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

The MPS Art Therapy program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (www.caahep.org) upon the recommendation of the Accreditation Council for Art Therapy Education. Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs, 25400 US Hwy 19N, Suite 158, Clearwater, FL 33763, 727-210-2350. The program meets all educational requirements for licensure in New York State as a Creative Arts Therapist (LCAT) and Registered Art Therapist (ATR) with the Art Therapy Credentials Board (ATCB).

CREDITS

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COVER: On the set of Katy-May Hudson’s short film *Pete’s Valve*.

School of Visual Arts

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sva.edu/grad