

Ya'Ke Smith  
Dept. of Radio-TV-Film  
The University of Texas at Austin  
Moody College of Communication  
Department of Radio-Television-Film  
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## **EDUCATION**

### **M.F.A., The University of Texas at Austin, Film Production/Direction, 2006**

Thesis Project: *The Second Coming*

Thesis Advisor: Cauleen Smith

Jesse Jones Fellow

McNair Scholar

Wilhelmina and Exalton Delco Graduate Fellowship

### **B.A., The University of the Incarnate Word, Comm. Arts/Video Production, 2003**

McNair Scholar

## **ACADEMIC/ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS**

### **Associate Professor of Film, Tenured**

The University of Texas at Austin, Department of Radio-Television-Film, 2017 – Present

### **Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

The University of Texas at Austin, Department of Radio-Television-Film, 2019 – 2022

### **The Morgan Woodward Distinguished Professor of Film, Associate Professor, Tenured**

The University of Texas at Arlington, Dept. of Art/Art History, 2016 – 2017

### **The Morgan Woodward Distinguished Professor of Film, Assistant Professor, Tenure Track**

The University of Texas at Arlington, Dept. of Art/Art History, 2010 – 2016

### **Visiting Assistant Professor**

The University of Texas at Arlington, Dept. of Art/Art History, 2009 – 2010

### **Lecturer**

The University of Texas at Austin, Dept. of Radio-TV-Film, 2007 – 2009

## **HONORS AND AWARDS**

- Austin Black Chamber of Commerce Creative Geniis Award Nominee, 2022
- The Robert C. Jeffrey Award, The Moody College of Communication, 2022
- Creative Achievement Award, The Moody College of Communication, 2022
- Black Public Alliance Award Winner, 2021

- Ya'Ke Smith Day, The City of Cincinnati, 2019
- The Taft Museum of Art's Duncanson Artist-in-Residence, 2019
- Moviemaker Magazine and Austin Film Festival's Screenwriters to Watch List, 2016
- Faculty Development Leave, 2016-17
- Alumni of Distinction, Communication Arts Department, The University of the Incarnate Word, 2016
- FD Magazine's "One to Watch in 2016" list
- Austin Revolution's Filmmaker of the Year, 2015
- COLA Outstanding Research Award, The University of Texas at Arlington, 2014
- Outstanding Research/Creative Accomplishment Award, The University of Texas at Arlington, 2013
- Ya'Ke Smith Day, The City of Buffalo, 2013
- REP Grant, The University of Texas at Arlington, 2012
- Outspoken Swan Award, Outspoken Magazine, 2012
- Morgan Woodward Distinguished Professor of Film, The University of Texas at Arlington, 2011-2017
- Alumni of Distinction, The University of the Incarnate Word, 2011
- Wilhelmina and Exalton Delco Graduate Fellowship, The University of Texas at Austin, 2006-2007
- Jesse Jones Graduate Fellowship, The University of Texas at Austin, 2005-2006
- Warren Skaaren Fellowship, The University of Texas at Austin, 2005-2006
- McNair Scholars Fellowship, The University of Texas at Austin, 2003-2005
- Helena Monahan Media Studies Award, The University of the Incarnate Word, 2001-2003

## **GUEST LECTURES, KEYNOTE, MASTERCLASSES, AND RESIDENCIES**

### **Artist-in-Residence/Guest Instructor**

The University of Karachi, Pakistan, 2022 and 2023

### **Keynote: Film as Social Emancipation**

Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, Pakistan, 2022

### **Guest Lecture, Eastside Youth Content Creators Program**

Alamo City Studios, 2022

### **Guest Lecture, The Intersection of Art and Activism in the Film Work of Ya'Ke Smith**

Rice University, 2021

### **Guest Lecture, Current Perspective Lecture Series: Making Freedom Real, Film as a Tool for Liberation**

Kansas City Art Institute, 2021

### **Facilitator, Sundance Film Festival's Black Media Story Summit**

The Austin Film Society/Sundance Film Festival, 2021

**Artist-in-Residence**

TADOHE (Texas Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education), 2020

**Keynote Address**

The UT-Austin McNair Scholars Graduation Celebration, 2021

**Moderator**

The State of Black UT, 2021

**Master Class: Creating Social Cinema**

Cine Resistencia Book Store, 2020

**Masterclass: Directing the Actor**

The Sidewalk Film Festival, 2020

**Masterclass: Directing the Actor**

The Houston Film Commission, 2020

**Guest Instructor**

The National College of Arts Lahore, Pakistan, 2019

**Artist-in-Residence**

Taft Museum of Art/The Duncanson Society, 2019

**Guest Instructor**

The Nate Parker Film Institute, 2016

**Keynote Address**

MavsMeet Convocation, The University of Texas at Arlington, 2016

**Keynote Address**

MavsMeet Convocation, The University of Texas at Arlington, 2012

**Guest Lecturer**

Southwest Alternate Media Project, 2009

**Guest Lecturer**

Gemini Ink Literary Arts Center, 2009

**Guest Instructor**

The Austin Film Festival Summer Media Camps for Young Adults, 2007 –09

**Guest Instructor**

The University of Texas Summer Media Camps for Young Adults, 2005-2009

**Guest Instructor**

The Austin Film Festival's Afterschool Media Camps for Young Adults, 2009

**Guest Instructor**

The Austin Film Society's Afterschool Media Camps for Young Adults, 2008

**Mentor**

Southwest Alternate Media Project's Emerging Filmmaker Program, 2008-2009

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

The Directors Guild of America

Board Member of The Austin Film Society

Campus to Coalition Texas

San Antonio Convention and Visitor's Bureau

San Antonio Office of Cultural Affairs

The Texas Motion Picture Alliance

Film Independent

The San Antonio Film Society

The Arlington Film Society

The Dallas Film Society

Black Reel Awards

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (*Hired Work*)****EPISODIC TELEVISION (While in Rank)****Sacrifice: (2023) Director (2 Episodes)**

**Forthcoming:** BET Networks

Director of two episodes of the new Paula Patton (*Mission Impossible*) series for BET networks. The episodes were directed in the Summer and Fall of 2022 and they are set for a Fall 2023 release.

**Text Me When You Get Home: Madison Nygard (2023) Director/Producer**

Lifetime Television

**Behind the Headlines: Black Girl Missing: (2023) Director/Producer**

Lifetime Television

**Text Me When You Get Home, Queena Phu (2022) Director**

Lifetime Television

**TALES: Fight The Power (2022) Director**

BET Networks

**The San Antonio Martin Luther King Jr. Virtual Celebration (2021)**

Writer/Director

**Feature Documentary**, The City of San Antonio/The San Antonio MLK Commission

**The Price of Fame: The Muhammad Ali Story (2019) Writer/Director**  
AMS Pictures/REELZ Network

**Murder Made Me Famous: The Aileen Wournos Story (2018) Writer/Director**  
AMS Pictures/REELZ Network

**Murder Made Me Famous: The BTK Killer (2018) Writer**  
AMS Pictures/REELZ Network

**The Price of Fame: The Prince Story (2017) Writer**  
AMS Pictures/REELZ Network

**Murder Made Me Famous: The David Koresh Story (2017) Writer/Director**  
AMS Pictures/REELZ Network

**Scandal Made Me Famous: The Mary Kay Letourneau Story (2017) Director**  
AMS Pictures/REELZ Network

**Scandal Made Me Famous: The Heidi Fleiss Story (2017) Director**  
AMS Pictures/REELZ Network

#### **TELEVISION COMMERCIALS (While in Rank)**

**The Texas Food Bank SNAP Program Ad (2023) Writer**  
The Texas Food Bank

**The American Heart Association Centennial Video (2023) Writer**  
The American Heart Association

#### **FEATURE LENGTH FILM (While in Rank)**

**Making of a Menace: (2023-) Writer**  
**In Progress:** Making of a Menace, LLC  
Following the childhood of Antong Lucky, founder of the Dallas Bloods street gang, the film chronicles him starting the gang and his enlightenment when he decided to denounce the bloods and go on a path of redemption. I have been hired to write the screenplay, which is slated to go into production in 2025.

#### **FILMOGRAPHY (Independent Work)**

## **WORKS COMPLETED IN RANK**

### **Juneteenth: Faith & Freedom (2022) Director/Producer – Sony HD – Feature Documentary**

Director Ya'Ke Smith and pastor Rasool Berry journey through Texas to examine our country's history, faith's power to overcome suffering, and the connections between Christianity and American slavery in this soulful and conversational exploration of Juneteenth.

“An illuminating tool for deep understanding and thoughtful perspectives about the complex history of race, slavery, and faith in America.”

–The Tennessee Tribune

#### **Screenings/Awards**

Winner, Cinema Dulce (Best of Fest) Award, The Hill Country Film Festival  
Winner, Film Slam Audience Choice Award, The Cleveland International Film Festival

Winner, The Wilbur Award for Full Length Production

Nominee, Best Documentary, The Hill Country Film Festival

Nominee, Best Documentary, The Dead Center Film Festival

Nominee, Best Documentary, The Heartland Film Festival

Nominee, Best Documentary, The Austin Revolution Film Festival

Nominee, Best Director, The Austin Revolution Film Festival

Nominee, Best Cinematography, The Austin Revolution Film Festival

Nominee, Best Editing, The Austin Revolution Film Festival

Nominee, Best Texas Film, The Dallas International Film Festival

Special Screening, San Antonio Juneteenth Society

Special Screening, San Marcos Public Library

Special Screening, The Center for Race and Democracy

Special Screening, Christian Community Development Conference

Special Screening, Mosaix Conference

Special Screening, The Juneteenth Celebration at the Bob Bullock Museum

**NOTE: Film screened nationally on PBS in the summer of 2023**

### ***The Pandemic Chronicles (2020) Writer/Director – Mixed Media – Anthology Series***

An anthology series about love and grief during quarantine. Filmed entirely during the Coronavirus Lockdown using Social Distance and Virtual Directing.

“The shorts will serve as documents of a time when the world was askew.”

–The Dallas Morning News

#### **Screenings/Awards**

Distribution, Full Spectrum Features

Winner, Best Web Series, The Denton Black Film Festival

Winner, Best Short Series, The South Texas Underground Film Festival

Winner, Audience Choice Award, The Capital City Black Film Festival

Winner, Audience Choice Award, The Centre Film Festival

Nominee, Best Short Film, The Austin Film Festival  
 Nominee, Best Narrative Short, The Black Reel Awards  
 Official Selection, The Milwaukee Black Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The San Antonio Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The San Antonio Black Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The United Filmmaker's Festival  
 Official Selection, KERA's Frame of Mind Series

***Dear Bruh (2020) Writer/Director – Mixed Media/Found Footage –Short Film***

George Floyd. Breonna Taylor. Ahmaud Arbury. This is an elegy for them and others lost to state-sanctioned racial violence.

“Urgent and arresting.”

–Criterion

**Screenings/Awards**

Winner, Curator's Award, Walla Walla Film Crush  
 Official Selection, Frame of Mind  
 Official Selection, Indie Memphis Film Festival  
 Official Selection, Lake County Film Festival  
 Official Selection, Lost River Film Festival

***Edwin (2020) Writer/Director – Sony F5 –Short Documentary***

Edwin Debrow Jr. murdered a cab driver when he was 12. He was sentenced to 40 years. Today he's walking out.

“Ya'Ke's films reflect the struggles he's witnessed and experienced.”

–The Austin Chronicle

**Screenings/Awards**

Official Selection, The Thin Line Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The Dallas International Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The Literally Shorts Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The Sidewalk Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The PBS Short Film Festival  
 Official Selection, PBS Pop Up Series  
 Official Selection, Walla Walla Film Crush Screening

***Brother (2020) Writer/Director/Producer – Sony F5 –Short Film***

Jason and Caleb have been friends for the better part of a decade, but then Casey comes home.

“Ya'Ke is pure in his intentions and motives for filmmaking.”

–Austin Culturemap

**Screenings/Awards**

Winner, Moody College Creative Achievement Award

Winner, Best Short Film, Videofest's Alternative Fictions Film Festival  
 Winner, Best Texas Short Film, The Deep in the Heart Film Festival  
 Winner, Best Drama Short, The Barebones Film Festival  
 Winner, Curator's Award, Walla Walla Film Crush  
 Winner, Best Director, The Victoria Texas Independent Film Festival  
 Honorable Mention, Best Short Film, The Denton Black Film Festival  
 Honorable Mention, Best Texas Short Film, The Denton Black Film Festival  
 Nominee, Best Drama, The Las Vegas Black Film Festival  
 Nominee, Best Actor (Justin Arnold) The Las Vegas Black Film Festival  
 Nominee, Best Narrative Short, The Black Reel Awards  
 Official Selection, The Barebones Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The Dallas International Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The Twister Alley Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The Martha's Vineyard African-American,  
 Official Selection, The Victoria Independent Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The Dead Center Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The Walla Walla Film Crush  
 Official Selection, Deep in the Heart Film Festival  
 Official Selection, San Francisco Black Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The Las Vegas Black Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The Sidewalk Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The Bronzelens Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The Austin Revolution Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The University Film and Video Association Conference  
 Official Selection, The Cucalorus Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The Hollyshorts film festival  
 Official Selection, The Centre Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The Capital City Black Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The South Texas International Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The Annapolis Film Festival

***Heavenly (2019) Writer/Director – Alexa –Short Film***

Crystal, a former ballet dancer, returns home after being sex-trafficked and struggles to shake the physical and psychological trauma she endured while “in the life.”

“Follows the mental dissipation of a teenage ballet dancer sold into sex trafficking.”

–Shadow & Act

**Screenings/Awards**

Distribution, Discover Film  
 Best Short Film, Frame 4 Frame Film Festival  
 Audience Choice Award, The Fort Worth Indie Film Showcase  
 Best Short Film Award Nominee, DC Black Film Festival  
 Best Short Film Award Nominee, Bronze Lens Film Festival  
 Best Short Film Award Nominee, Literally Short Film Festival



Best Short Film Award Nominee, San Antonio Film Festival  
 Best Short Film Award Nominee, The Sidewalk Film Festival  
 Best Short Film Award Nominee, The Golden Door Film Festival  
 Best Short Film Award Nominee, The San Antonio Black Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The American Black Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The Austin Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The Cucalorus Film Festival  
 Official Selection, The Oaxaca Film Festival

### **WORKS COMPLETED IN PREVIOUS RANK**

#### ***The Beginning and Ending of Everything* (2017) Writer/Director – Alexa –Original Web Series**

Angelita returns home from prison in hopes of reuniting with the young child she left behind as well as starting a new life. When she discovers the child is nowhere to be found, she goes on a quest to find the baby, her hope, and her reason for living.

“Ya’Ke’s film aims, not to rectify the increasingly business-centric nature of news reporting, but to offer another point of view — to add dimension, nuance and humanity to something not much more than a thirty second news package to the rest of the country.”

–The Moving Arts Film Journal

#### **Screenings/Awards**

International Distribution, One Digital  
 Best Web Series Director, The Austin Revolution Film Festival  
 Best Web Series Actress (*Monica Pena*) The Austin Revolution Film Festival  
 Best Ensemble Performance, The Dallas Videofest  
 Best Web Series Nominee, The American Black Film Festival  
 Best Web Series Nominee, The Sidewalk Film Festival  
 Best Web Series Nominee, The Austin Revolution Film Festival  
 Best LGBTQ Themed Film Nominee, The Austin Revolution Film Festival  
 Best Web Series Nominee, The Austin Film Festival

#### ***San Antonio* (2016) Writer – Original Screenplay**

After surviving the destruction of Hurricane Katrina, Cheryl is displaced in San Antonio. Fleeing from the Mexican Cartels and the threat of death, Hector illegally crosses the border into San Antonio in order to hide out. When Cheryl and Hector meet by chance, they become exactly what the other one needs to heal and overcome.

#### **Awards/Grants**

Best Screenplay, The Austin Revolution Film Festival  
 Live Staged Reading, The Austin Film Festival

#### ***HEAVEN* (2015) Writer – Original Screenplay**

A young ballet prodigy is sexually and psychologically manipulated into the brutal world of sex trafficking and creates a fantasy world where she escapes.

“As script readings at the Austin Film Festival go, Vince Gilligan's 2 Face might've gotten all the glory, but Wednesday's “Heaven” has all the guts.”  
–The Austin Chronicle

**Readings/Workshops**

Selection, Sundance Institute's Writer's Intensive Lab  
Live Staged Reading, The Austin Film Festival

***one hitta quitta* (2015) Writer/Director/Editor/Producer – iPhone – Short Film**

A young boy addicted to watching Internet violence, becomes the violence that he consumes.

“Smith's handling is seamless, and makes what might otherwise be a run-of-the-mill story into something new and on point.”

–The Memphis Flyer

**Screenings/Awards**

Winner, Special Jury Prize Short Filmmaking, Dallas International Film Festival  
Best Short Film Award Nominee, Marfa Film Festival  
Best Short Film Award Nominee, Los Angeles Shorts Fest  
Best Short Film Award Nominee, Indie Memphis Film Festival  
Best Short Film Award Nominee, Columbus International Film/Video Festival  
Best Short Film Award Nominee, Denver International Film Festival  
Best Short Film Award Nominee, Woodshole Film Festival  
Official Selection, Sidewalk Film Festival  
Official Selection, Roxbury International Film Festival  
Official Selection, San Francisco Black Film Festival  
Official Selection, Little Rock Film Festival

***dawn.* (2014-15) Co-writer/Director/Producer – Alexa – Short Film**

A woman who is recently released from prison, struggles to readapt to society.

“A peek into an overlooked American Plight.”

–D Magazine

**Screenings/Awards**

National Broadcast, HBO  
On-Line Broadcast, Issa Rae Short Film Sunday's Youtube Showcase  
Best of The Texas Show Award, Dallas Videofest  
Best Short Film Award Nominee, Lone Star Film Festival  
Best Short Film Award Nominee, Martha's Vineyard African-American Film Festival  
Best Short Film Award Nominee, Indie Memphis Film Festival  
Official Selection, American Black Film Festival  
Official Selection, Raindance Film Festival

Official Selection, Austin Film Festival  
 Official Selection, Cucalorus Film Festival  
 Official Selection, Sidewalk Film Festival

***WOLF* – (2012) Writer/Director/Editor/Producer – RED MX – Feature Film**

A family is shaken to the core when they discover their son has been molested. As they struggle to deal with the betrayal, their son heads towards a total mental collapse because of his love for his abuser, while his abuser attempts to exorcise his own past demons.

“Ya’Ke Smith’s feature film directorial debut *WOLF* is an audacious, potent drama that will likely elicit extreme reactions from viewers. This is the film that Spike Lee’s *Red Hook Summer* should have been; and if Tyler Perry had the goods and the guts, his Christian-themed morality tales that seem to only exist on a really simplistic, even shallow level, will instead look and sound like *WOLF*.”

–Indiewire

“An impressive piece by a young director.”

–NPR

“*WOLF* is a well thought out, at times touching and, even more so, disturbing look at abuse in the church system.”

–Film Threat Magazine

“(Ya’Ke’s) film is sure to prompt deep philosophical discussions about power, corruption, religion and society. Is that not the purpose of art? To challenge us. To make us think. To make us react.”

–Smells Like Screen Spirit

**Screenings/Awards**

International Distribution: iTunes, Amazon Prime, Cable VOD  
 Best Texas Feature Film Award, Dallas International Film Festival  
 Arkansas-Times Audience Choice Award, Little Rock Film Festival  
 Audience Choice Award Best Feature, Sidewalk Film Festival  
 Saatchi Producer’s Award, Martha’s Vineyard African-American Film Festival  
 Honorable Mention Best Narrative Feature, Urbanworld Film Festival  
 Best Director – First Film, Pan African Film and Arts Festival  
 Louis Black Award Nominee, SXSW Film Festival  
 Recipient, Texas Filmmakers Production Fund Grant  
 Recipient, REP Grant, The University of Texas at Arlington  
 Official Selection, WNY Black Film Festival  
 Official Selection, Montreal International Black Film Festival

Official Selection, New Orleans Film Festival  
 Official Selection, Oakland Underground Film Festival  
 Official Selection, Black Harvest Film Festival (Opening Night Film)  
 Official Selection, Cucalorus Film Festival  
 Official Selection, Rhode Island International Film Festival  
 Official Selection, Rendezvous with Madness Film Festival  
 Official Selection, Our Image Film Festival (Spotlight film)  
 Official Selection, Reel Independent Film Festival (Spotlight film)  
 Official Selection, New York Latino Film Festival

***Art is Luminaria* – (2012) Director/Editor/Producer – Canon 5D – Video Installation**

Commissioned by the City of San Antonio's Office of Cultural Affairs, *Art is Luminaria* is a six-screen project conceived by Ya'Ke Smith. Driven by the spoken word of Mikala Gibson, the piece encompasses the disciplines of music, dance, spoken word, film, fiction writing and painting. In this film, the illuminating power of creativity springs these various artistic disciplines to life.

“(Art is Luminaria) might have resulted in a series of caricatures, but Smith’s reputation as “an actor’s director,” promises brilliance instead.”  
 –The San Antonio Current

**Screenings/Awards**

Featured Installation: Luminaria San Antonio  
 Featured Installation: American's for the Arts Convention

***Katrina's Son* – (2010) Writer/Director/Editor – Canon 7D – Short Drama**

Six months after Hurricane Katrina, a young boy travels to San Antonio in search of the mother who abandoned him years earlier in New Orleans.

“Raw and confrontational...the sense of abandonment and betrayal is palpable.

–The Houston Press

**Screenings/Awards**

Best Cinematography, DC Shorts Film Festival  
 Audience Choice Award, DC Shorts Film Festival  
 Best Narrative Short, Austin Film Festival (Official Academy Award Qualifying Film Festival)  
 Best Texas Short, Dallas Video Festival  
 Best Narrative Short, Urbanworld Film Festival  
 Preston E. Smith Award, Flatland International Film Festival  
 Black Reel Award, Best Short Film  
 Audience Choice Award, Texas Black Film Festival  
 Best Texas Film, Texas Black Film Festival  
 Best Short Film (Honorable Mention), Kansas City Film Festival  
 Best San Antonio Filmmaker, San Antonio Film Festival  
 Finalist (Best Short Film), USA Film Festival

Best Short Film (Honorable Film Festival), Urban Mediamakers Film Festival  
 Comcast Television On-Demand Broadcast  
 Recipient, Texas Filmmakers Production Fund Grant  
 Recipient, Texas Filmmaker's Grant  
 Official Selection, Texas Filmmaker's Showcase  
 Official Selection, HBO/New York Latino Film Festival  
 Official Selection, Martha's Vineyard African-American Film Festival  
 Official Selection, Acadiana Film Festival  
 Official Selection, WNY African-American Film Festival  
 Official Selection, Oaxaca International Independent Film Festival

***Change* – (2009) Writer/Director/Editor – Red One – Drama**

A community unites and comes to the aid of an elderly woman as she faces foreclosure.

**Screenings/Awards**

Official Selection/Finalist, American Black Film Festival  
 Official Selection, Dallas Video Festival  
 National Broadcast, African-American Short Film's Showcase  
 Finalist, SAL Film Festival  
 Official Selection, Seguin Film and Arts Festival

***The Second Coming* – (2007) Writer/Director/Editor – Super 16MM – 9:30min – Drama**

An estranged father returns home to make amends with his son and make a decision that changes both of their lives forever.

“Compelling.”  
 -xfinity.com

**Screenings/Awards**

National Broadcast, HBO  
 National Broadcast, Comcast Xfinity  
 Regional Broadcast, PBS Houston  
 Best Short Film, The American Black Film Festival  
 Best San Antonio Filmmaker, The San Antonio Film Festival  
 Best Actor, 24FPS Film Festival  
 Silver Award, 24 FPS Film Festival  
 Audience Choice Award, 24FPS Film Festival  
 Finalist, Student Academy Awards  
 Official Selection, Reel Black Men Film Showcase, Raleigh Studios Los Angeles  
 Official Selection, Texas Filmmaker's Showcase  
 Official Selection, Urbanworld Film Festival  
 Official Selection, Ozark Foothills Film Festival  
 Official Selection, Cinefestival Film Festival

***Hope's War* – (2006) Writer/Director/Editor – Super 16MM – Drama**

After returning home from Iraq, A U.S. Soldier struggles to adapt back to everyday life as brutal visions of war threaten to destroy him.

“A raw, dismal portrayal of war’s psychological aftermath.”

-The San Antonio Current

“A sobering 10-minute look inside the mind of a recently returned Iraq War.”

-The Texas Observer

**Screenings/Awards**

Director’s Guild of America Student Film Award

National Broadcast, Showtime

Kodak Emerging Filmmaker’s Showcase, Cannes Film Festival (1 of 5 films selected)

Best Texas Filmmaker, The San Antonio Film Festival

Best Actress, 24FPS Film Festival

Gold Award, 24 FPS Film Festival

Best Director, 24FP Film Festival

Honorable Mention, The Pan African Film and Arts Festival

Finalist, BET J Short Film Competition

Official Selection, Texas Filmmaker’s Showcase

**TELEVISION SHADOWING EXPERIENCE**

**Empire: (2018) Director Sanaa Hamri and Felicia Henderson**  
HBO

**The Deuce: (2016) Director Ernest Dickerson**  
HBO

**PUBLISHED ARTICLES/OP-EDS**

*Juneteenth, Jack Yates, and the Power of Fatherhood.*

The Dallas Morning News, 2023

*DEI Denial is the Modern Day Lynching*

The Boston Globe, 2023

The Emancipator, 2023

The Wall Street Journal, 2023

*Art is inherently political. Here are some artists who are using their voice for good.*

The Dallas Morning News, 2023

*What I learned from COVID Writer’s Block: Busyness is the Enemy of an Authentic Voice*

The Dallas Morning News, 2023

*What ‘Dahmer’ is Teaching us about Race*

The Dallas Morning News, 2023

*'She Said' Offers a Powerful Exposé of Abusive Hollywood Systems*  
The Dallas Morning News, 2022

*I Made it Out of The Inner-City. My Cousin Didn't. Mourning Him is Complicated*  
The Dallas Morning News, 2022

*On Juneteenth, Celebrate and Remember*  
The San Antonio Express News, 2022

*Juneteenth is a Day of Remembrance and Liberation*  
The Dallas Morning News, 2022

*The Herculean Feats of Motherhood*  
The Dallas Morning News, 2022

*With 'Lovecraft Country' and 'Watchmen' a Black Texas Filmmaker Feels seen in a New Way*  
The Dallas Morning News 2020

*Beyonce's Visual Album 'Black Is King' is Pure Magic*  
The Dallas Morning News, 2020

*How Do You Learn To Be a Father If You Didn't Have One*  
The Dallas Morning News, 2018

## **REVIEWS/ON-AIR APPEARANCES**

Vogue Magazine

Variety Magazine

CNN

HLN

PBS

NPR

Indiewire

Huffington Post Live

National Public Radio

Texas Public Radio

The Texas Monthly

KERA Radio

Sirius Satellite Radio

CBS Dallas

Great Day San Antonio

WFAA DFW

Ebony Magazine

The Houston Press  
The Boston Globe  
The Houston Chronicle  
The Chicago Sun-Times  
The Fort Worth Star-Telegram  
The Fort Worth Weekly  
The San Antonio Express News  
The Dallas Morning News  
Film Slate Magazine  
Film Threat Magazine  
Moviemaker Magazine  
FMW Magazine  
The Short Film Journal  
Movie Maker Magazine  
The Austin-American Statesman  
The Austin Chronicle  
The San Antonio Current  
The San Antonio Living Show  
Arlington: My American Dream City Artist Campaign  
San Antonio Convention and Visitor's Bureau Art's Marketing Campaign  
FD Luxe Magazine

## **COURSES TAUGHT**

### **The University of Texas at Austin, Department of Radio-Television-Film**

RTF 343: Producing the TV Pilot, Fall 2023. 15 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment. **Created Course**

RTF 881KB: Graduate Seminar in Principles of Film and TV Production, Spring 2023. 10 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

RTF 366D: Directing Workshop, Spring 2020. 18 students enrolled. 2 major film assignments.

RTF 343: Advanced Production, Fall 2019. 18 students enrolled. 3 major film assignments.

RTF 366D: Directing Workshop, Spring 2019. 18 students enrolled. 2 major film assignments.

RTF 881KB: Graduate Seminar in Principles of Film and TV Production, Spring 2019. 12 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

RTF 366D: Directing Workshop, Fall 2018. 18 students enrolled. 2 major film assignments.



RTF 343: Advanced Production, Fall 2018. 18 students enrolled. 3 major film assignments.

RTF 366D: Directing Workshop, Spring 2018. 18 students enrolled. 2 major film assignments.

RTF 881KB: Graduate Seminar in Principles of Film and TV Production, Spring 2018. 12 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

RTF 366D: Directing Workshop, Fall 2017. 18 students enrolled. 2 major film assignments.

RTF 488M: Graduate Pre-Thesis Production, Fall 2017. 12 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

**The University of Texas at Arlington, Department of Art/Art History**

Art 5683: Graduate Research in Film/Video/Screenwriting, Spring 2017. 4 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 3386: Directing Workshop, Fall 2016. 17 students enrolled. 2 major film assignments. **Modified Course**

Art 5683: Graduate Research in Film/Video/Screenwriting, Spring 2016. 4 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 5683: Graduate Research in Film/Video/Screenwriting, Fall 2015. 5 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 3386: Directing Workshop, Fall 2015. 18 students enrolled. 2 major film assignments. **Modified Course**

Art 5683: Graduate Research in Film/Video/Screenwriting, Fall 2015. 5 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 2358: Intro to Film/Video Production, Fall 2015. 35 Students enrolled. 5 major film assignments.

Art 4311: Script to Screen, Summer 2015. 11 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 4362: Advanced Film/Video, Spring 2015. 10 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 5683: Graduate Research in Film/Video/Screenwriting, Spring 2015. 5 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 4362: Advanced Film/Video, Spring 2015. 14 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 2358: Intro to Film/Video Production, Fall 2014. 24 Students enrolled. 5 major film assignments.

Art 4362: Advanced Film/Video, Fall 2014. 14 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 5683: Graduate Research in Film/Video/Screenwriting, Fall 2014. 5 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 4311: Script to Screen, Summer 2014. 8 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

### **Created Course**

Art 4362: Advanced Film/Video, Spring 2015. 14 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 4352: Narrative Film/Video, Spring 2014. 12 students enrolled. 1 major collaborative film assignment.

Art 3386: Directing Workshop, Spring 2014. 10 students enrolled. 2 major film assignments.

Art 5683: Graduate Research in Film/Video/Screenwriting, Spring 2014. 5 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 3386: Directing Workshop, Summer 2013. 15 students enrolled. 1 major film assignments.

Art 4362: Advanced Film/Video, Spring 2013. 17 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 5683: Graduate Research in Film/Video/Screenwriting, Spring 2013. 5 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 3386: Directing Workshop, Fall 2012. 17 students enrolled. 2 major film assignments.

Art 4362: Advanced Film/Video, Fall 2012. 16 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 5683: Graduate Research in Film/Video/Screenwriting, Fall 2012. 5 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 4311: Script to Screen, Summer 2012. 18 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 5383: Graduate Research in Film/Video/Screenwriting, Summer 2012. 1 student enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 3386: Directing Workshop, Fall 2012. 17 students enrolled. 2 major film assignments.

Art 4352: Narrative Film/Video, Spring 2012. 18 students enrolled. 1 major collaborative film assignment.

Art 3386: Directing Workshop, Spring 2012. 17 students enrolled. 2 major film assignments.

Art 5683: Graduate Research in Film/Video/Screenwriting, Spring 2012. 5 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 4362: Advanced Film/Video, Fall 2011. 18 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 5683: Graduate Research in Film/Video/Screenwriting, Fall 2011. 4 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 3386: Directing Workshop, Summer 2011. 15 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment.

Art 5683: Graduate Research in Film/Video/Screenwriting, Spring 2011. 4 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment. **Modified Course**

Art 3386: Directing Workshop, Spring 2011. 17 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment. **Modified Course**

Art 3350: Intro to Narrative Screenwriting, Fall 2010. 13 Students enrolled. 6 major screenwriting assignments. **Modified Course**

Art 4362: Advanced Film/Video, Fall 2010. 17 students enrolled. 1 major film assignment. **Modified Course**

## **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

### **RTF 881KB: Graduate Seminar in Principles of Film and TV Production**

This course is an intensive workshop in narrative directing and film production. Its goal is to develop the ability and self-confidence to translate, from the page to the screen, the narrative and the corresponding visual/aural structures of a scene or short film. The course explores the role of

the director in narrative filmmaking and the director's storytelling and aesthetic responsibilities. Investigation of the director/actor relationship will be a priority, and casting, rehearsal technique, acting theory and process, and staging issues will be explored in depth. For the final project, each student will direct and edit an original short film, **five-eight minutes in length**. In addition, each student will fill a number of crew positions on other students' projects. Readings, exercises, screenings and other assignments throughout the semester are designed to sharpen the directors' narrative and visual awareness.

### **RTF 488M: Graduate Pre-Thesis Production**

This course is an intensive workshop in visual storytelling and is designed for students to complete a Video/Film Project. The goal is for the student to develop the skills and self-confidence to take an idea and effectively translate it for the screen. This will be the most-challenging class you've taken, but the most fulfilling as this is where you will be able to experiment, make mistakes, work through some creative issues and ultimately produce a film that you'll be proud of. Don't think of this film as your magnum opus, but think of it as a stop on a journey, a journey that will continue long after you leave this university. Don't put pressure on yourself to achieve perfection—because frankly you never will—no one ever has—and if they tell you they have, they are lying to you. I expect this and nothing more: hard work, tireless dedication and the creation of a project that is from your heart, not your head.

### **ART 5683: Graduate Research in Film/Video/Screenwriting**

The goal of this workshop is to develop the ability and self-confidence to articulate and translate from the page to the screen the narrative and the corresponding visual/aural structures of a scene or short film. Broadly speaking, we will be concerned with the role of the director in narrative filmmaking and the director's storytelling and aesthetic responsibilities. Students will direct an original film for their final project.

### **ART 4352: Narrative Film/Video**

The goal of this course is to learn the workflow of professional narrative filmmaking. Guest lectures, in-class exercises and presentations will strengthen students' knowledge in their crew position. Students will then use the skills learned to produce a 10-15 minute narrative film that will be shot over Spring Break. All students are required to perform their crew position to the best of their ability as well as lend a hand wherever there is lack. Students will act as director of photography, camera operator, producer, production designer, location manager, grip, gaffer, art director and production assistant. Students will also be required to conduct in-class presentations on their crew positions, informing the rest of the class on their respective duties and how the rest of the class can help them to fulfill said duties. Students are required to be on set during the entire film shoot.

### **RTF 367D: Directing Workshop**

Great visuals - Compelling story - Interesting Visual effects: Although each of these are important in the creation of a great film, the one thing that stands above them all... is the actor in the frame. This workshop will examine the director/actor relationship and explore the ways in which film directors can illicit compelling performances out of their actors. By discussing in depth script analysis, rehearsal strategies, beat-by-beat

breakdowns, staging and effective acting exercises, each director will walk away with a deeper knowledge of what it means to connect with an actor and unlock their creative intuition. Over the course of the semester, students will cast, rehearse, shoot and edit two three-to-four-minute scenes.

### **ART 2358: Introduction to Film/Video Production**

This course is an intensive workshop in visual storytelling. Students will develop their aesthetic and critical approach to video. Readings, exercises, screenings and other assignments are designed to develop technical skills and to sharpen the filmmaker's visual awareness and appreciation for the expressive potential of sound and image. By the completion of class students will be expected to have mastered all of the aesthetic and critical skills needed to produce cutting edge work. The course will have six production based assignments.

### **ART 4311: Script to Screen**

The class is a two-week course in which students worked in groups to produce a short film. Each group consisted of 4-5 students and those students worked in various crew positions on each shoot. Each student pitched a screenplay and then as a class we chose the best ones and spent time in class developing those stories. The films were then shot and edited over the course of the mini-mester.

### **ART 3350: Introduction to Narrative Screenwriting**

The course will introduce students to the principles of narrative screenwriting, with special emphasis on structure, conflict, and character development. Through writing exercises, script analysis and class discussion, students will leave this course a better writer than when they entered. Students are required to several screenplays and write coherent coverage about the material and discuss the coverage in class. Once this is mastered, students will understand how screenplays work and be able to use those principles in writing your own original material. The course will have five writing exercise assignments, culminating in the writing of a short screenplay.

## **UNIVERSITY SERVICE**

### **The University of Texas at Austin**

Committee Member, Longhorn Showcase, Dept. of Radio-TV-Film, 2020/2022

Committee Member, Scholarship Committee, Dept. of Radio-TV-Film, 2018/2023

Hiring Committee, Communication Studies Department, 2023

Hiring Committee, The School of Journalism and Media, 2023

Hiring Committee, The School of Advertising and PR, 2022

Committee Member, COVID Service Awards, 2021

Committee Member, MFA Curriculum, 2021- present

Creator and Chair, The Diversity in Media Symposium, 2021 - 2022

Created the College's Strategic Action Plan for Diversity, 2020

Created the College's Diversity Statement Parameters for the annual Faculty Annual Review  
Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Moody College of Communication,  
2019-2022

Committee Member, RTF Undergraduate Holistic Review Process, 2019 - 2020

Chair Search Committee, Dept. of Radio-TV-Film, 2018/2023  
Chair, The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, 2019-2022  
MFA Admissions Committee, Dept. of Radio-TV-Film, 2018  
RTF Production Faculty Hiring Committee, 2020  
Jordan Peele's *US*, screening and talk back, 2018  
Toni Morrison *The Pieces I Am*, screening and talk back, 2018  
University-wide COVID-19 Student Success Task Force, 2020  
College-wide COVID-19 Student Success Task Force, Chair, 2020  
Supervised the Creation of the Moody College Communication's DEI Website, 2019  
Graduate Thesis Committee Supervision and Membership, 2017 - present

### **The University of Texas at Arlington**

Provost Search Committee, 2017  
Assistant Professor of Film Search Committee, 2017  
Film/Video Area Visiting Assistant Professor Search, 2016  
Recruitment Committee, 2015-2017  
MFA Committee, 2010 - 2017  
Visiting Artist Committee, 2016  
Student Advising, 2009 - 2017  
Center for African-American Studies Conference Committee, 2014  
Keynote Speaker, MavsMeet Convocation 2011/2016  
Keynote Speaker, Terry Scholars Banquet, 2014  
Presenter for the UT-System's Chancellor's Council Executive Meeting (Chancellor McRaven Highlighted the session I was a part of, "The Essence of Genius" in his blog)  
TedX UTA Presenter (Creating Art From The Soul), 2014  
Center for African-American Studies Power Hour Lecture (Contemporary Representations of African-Americans in film), 2013  
Center for African-American Studies Conference Speaker, 2013  
WOLF Film Screening, Center for Multicultural Affairs, 2012  
President Spaniolo's special screening of WOLF, 2012  
Katrina's Son Film Screening, Alternative Spring Break, 2012  
Visiting Artist Host (PJ Raval, **Cauleen Smith**, Kip Fulbeck), 2011  
Juror, Ideas in Art Awards Jury, 2011  
Panelist, One Book Film Panel, 2010

### **PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Board Member, The Dallas Videofest, 2020- 2023  
Panelist, SXSW Film Festival, 2022  
Board Member, The Austin Film Society, 2021 – ongoing  
Guest Teacher, KEEN Photography Guest Lecturer, AFF Teacher Training Series, 2021  
Guest Speaker/Screening, Northern Kentucky University, 2020  
*Just Mercy* talkback and screening, St. Stephen's Episcopal School, 2020  
Guest Lecture, Dallas Screenwriter's Association, 2020  
Guest Speaker/Screening, Ohio Northern University, 2019  
San Antonio Dream Week Screening of *Katrina's Son*, 2019  
San Antonio Dream Week, *Film as a Weapon: A Conversation with Ya'Ke*, 2019

Voting Committee, Black Reel Awards, 2019 – present  
 Guest Speaker, The University of the Incarnate Word's Annual Communications Gala, 2018  
 Juror, Dallas International Film Festival, 2018  
 Panelist/Juror, Austin Film Festival, 2018/ 2020  
 Advisory Board Member, Arlington Film Society, 2017 – 2020  
 Juror, The Oak Cliff Film Festival, 2017  
 Board Member, Texas Motion Picture Alliance, 2016 – 2021  
 Ambassador's Council, Cucalorus Film Festival, 2015-2019  
 Juror, The Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival, 2015  
 Juror, Texas Black Film Festival 2016 – 2017  
 Juror, Dallas Video Festival, 2016 /2017/2019/2020  
 Panelist/Juror, Sidewalk Film Festival, 2014/2017/2019  
 Guest Speaker, The Friends of Sam Houston Breakfast Fundraiser, 2015  
 Guest Artist, SWAMP Directing Actors for The Screen Workshop, 2014  
 Guest Speaker, Booker T. Washington Senior Showcase, 2014  
 Guest Adjudicator, ISAS High School Arts Festival, 2014  
 Mentor, SWAMP Emerging Filmmakers Fellowship Program, 2013

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Op-Ed Project Public Voices Fellowship Program  
 Sundance Intensive Writer's Institute  
 HBO Director's Shadowing Program (Shadowed director Ernest Dickerson on HBO and David Simon's TV Show The Deuce)  
 The Austin Film Festival's Writer's Ranch

### **GRADUATE COMMITTEES**

#### **The University of Texas at Austin**

Hang Nguyen, Committee Member, MFA Film/Video, Expected Completion Summer 2023  
 Alessandro Lunghi, Committee Member, MFA Film/Video, Expected Completion Fall 2023  
 Fatima Wardy, Committee Chair, MFA Film/Video, Expected Completion Spring 2025  
 Jarius Sowell, Committee Chair, MFA Film/Video, Expected Completion Fall 2024  
 Anya Swanson, Committee Member, MFA Film/Video, Expected Completion Fall 2023  
 Edem Dotse, Committee Member, MFA Film/Video, Completed Spring 2023

*Current Position: PhD Student, UC Boulder Emergent Technologies and Media Art Practices*

Jana Henson, Committee Member, MFA Screenwriting, Completed Fall 2022

Cristin Stephens, Committee Chair, MFA Film/Video, Completed Fall 2022

*Current Position: Lecturer, UT-Austin's Radio-Television-Film Department*

Kenya Gillespie, Committee Chair, MFA Film/Video, Completed Spring 2022

*Current Position: Film Lecturer, Texas State University Theater Department*

Matt Lennon, Committee Chair, MFA Film/Video, Completed Summer 2021

*Current Position: Lecturer, UT-Austin's Radio-Television-Film Department; Producer, Bevo Video Productions, Texas Student Media*

Tori McCarthy, Committee Member, MFA Film/Video, Completed Fall 2021

*Current Position: Independent Cinematographer*

Sara Pinar Onder, Committee Member, MFA Film/Video, Completed Summer 2021

*Current Position: Independent Filmmaker*

Prakshi Malik, Committee Member, MFA Film/Video, Completed Spring 2021

*Current Position: Independent Film Editor*

Ahsjah Exume, Committee Chair, MFA Film/Video, Completed Fall 2020

*Current Position: Digital Content Producer, Reforge*

Heather Halstead, Committee Chair, MFA Film/Video Completed Fall 2020

*Current Position: Designer/Head Writer, Warlock Media, LLC*

Taniel Kilajian, Committee Chair, MFA Film/Video, Completed Fall 2019

*Current Position: Film Lecturer, Texas State University Theater Department*

Christopher Magliozzi, Committee Member, MFA Film/Video, Completed Fall 2020

*Current Position: Filmmaker/Designer, MASS Design Group*

### **The University of Texas at Arlington**

Cydney Cox, Committee Chair, MFA Film/Video, Completed Spring 2018

*Current Position: Film Lecturer, The University of Texas at Dallas*

Joshua Gallas, Committee Chair, MFA Film/Video, Completed Spring 2018

*Current Position: Filmmaker/Owner, Prelude Films*

Terry Raper, Committee Chair, MFA Film/Video, Completed Spring 2018

*Current Position: Unknown*

Spencer Evans, Committee Member, MFA Painting, Completed Fall 2017

*Current Position: Associate Professor, Rhode Island School of Design*

Fatimah Jawad, Committee Member, MFA Film/Video, Completed Spring 2017

*Current Position: Film Lecturer, Texas A&M University; Festival Director, Shutter Speed Film Festival*

Jean Patrick Mahoney, Committee Member, MFA Film/Video, Completed Spring 2016

*Current Position: Film Instructor, The Art Institute of Dallas*

Brendan Feltrup-Exum, Committee Chair, MFA Film/Video, Completed Spring 2015

*Current Position, Film Location Assistant, Various Film Productions*

Gabriel Duran, Committee Chair, MFA Film/Video, Completed Fall 2015

*Current Position: Assitant Professor, Texas A&M Corpus Christi*

Ryan Britton, Committee Chair, MFA Film/Video, Completed Spring 2014

*Current Position: Film Production Designer, Various Film/TV Productions*

Kight Haberer, Committee Chair, MFA Film/Video, Completed Spring 2013

*Current Position: Unknown*

Elisha Burley, Committee Chair, MFA Film/Video, Completed Spring 2013

*Current Position: Video Editor, Inspired Effects Photo + Video*

Jorge Garza, Committee Chair, MFA Film/Video, Completed Spring 2012

*Current Position: Adjunct Assistant Professor, The University of Texas At Arlington*

Jennifer Chamberlain, Committee Member, MA English, Completed Fall 2012

*Current Position: Unknown*