

MDOCS

JOHN B. MOORE DOCUMENTARY STUDIES COLLABORATIVE



Contact Us

[Send us an email](#)
[Visit the website](#)

Office: Filene 228
Lab: LI 113
(518) 580-5271



News of Note

[Director's Note: April-May, 2016](#)

Spring flew by with stimulating on and off campus events and work by MDOCS students. Learn more about what we've been up to and exciting events planned for June 2016's Storytellers' Institute.

[Read More...](#)



[Storytellers' Institute: 2016 Schedule of Events](#)

Check out MDOCS' Storytellers' Institute screenings, listening sessions, virtual reality experience, discussions, and an exhibit and other events throughout June. This year's events focus on the Institute theme of walking the line between fact and fiction in documentary storytelling.

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[Doc off Campus: Trip to Tribeca Film Festival](#)

Follow MDOCS student Sam Grant through the April 23 trip to New York City to see Prof. Cecilia Aldarondo's feature documentary, "Memories of a Penitent Heart," premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival.

[Read More...](#)



[Doc on Campus: Crowd-Funding Campaign for Student Documentary Festival](#)

We reached our funding goal to help create a student-run, student-curated documentary festival of student work!

[Read More...](#)



[Faculty Spotlight: Erika Schielke's new science podcast](#)

2016 Storytellers' Institute Faculty Scholar Erika Schielke describes developing a podcast to make science accessible to everyone.

[Read More...](#)



[Doc on Campus: MDOCS Academic Festival](#)

The MDOCS Academic Festival session highlighted student collaborative documentary work with a spotlight on seniors' documentary video projects.

[Read More...](#)



[SSMP Highlight: States of Incarceration](#)

For the past year, Skidmore students in collaboration with the Skidmore Saratoga Memory Project and Professor Eric Morser took part in a nationwide project called, "States of Incarceration." Find out how their audio interviews and photos were incorporated into a larger touring exhibit highlighting the work of 20 other participating schools.

[Read More...](#)



[Doc on Campus: The Artist Interview](#)

Students from The Artist Interview, an Art History/ MDOCS spring course, describe learning how to conduct an interview and see how oral histories connect with a museum exhibition and archive.

[Read More...](#)



[SSMP Highlight: 60 Years Young](#)

Over the past year, SSMP students worked with the Saratoga Adult and Senior Center to research and tell the Center's story for its 60th Anniversary. They drew on photos and archival clippings and combined them with interviews to connect the local story to the history of senior centers across the country, and to create a video and exhibit displayed during the gala celebration.

[Read More...](#)



Upcoming

Storytellers' Institute

- **June 2, 5-6 p.m., Davis Auditorium:** [Fact or Fiction? Adapting Reality for Stage & Screen](#)
- **June 2, 7-9 p.m., Davis Auditorium:** [Screening: Tolkien and Lewis: Myth, Imagination, and the Quest for Meaning](#)
- **June 9-12, Tang Museum:** [Festorium Weekend with screenings, exhibits, talks and VR](#)
- **June 16, 6-8:30 p.m., Spring Street Gallery:** [Fellows' Exhibit Opening](#)
- **June 21, 7-9 p.m., Spring Street Gallery:** [Screening "Inheritance"](#)
- **June 23, 7-9:30 p.m., Spring Street Gallery:** [Screening "Spectres of Shortwave"](#)

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Director's Note: April-May, 2016

May 10, 2016

The MDOCS academic year wrapped up with a field trip to New York City on April 23 to celebrate the Tribeca screening of assistant professor in English Cecilia Aldarondo's first film, *Memories of a Penitent Heart*, and student showcases of audio, video exhibition and multi-media documentary storytelling at the Tang, on WSPN, at Academic Festival and independent screenings.



Speakers Bullock, Ghammashi, Aldarondo
& Kennebeck



Conversation after the panel

For the field trip, the operative word really was "collaborative." MDOCS, English, Media and Film Studies, and Project Vis faculty, staff and students worked in concert to get the bus on the road, the amazing panelists to a wonderful screening room at the School of the Visual Arts (thanks, Masters in Social Documentary program!), and the tickets to Tribeca. The process was smooth and effective thanks in large part to the indefatigable Jesse Wakeman, MDOCS' program coordinator who in less than six months has become indispensable, and student assistant Sam Grant, who documented the trip. The energy and enthusiasm that supported us as we pulled together an engaging one-of-a-kind experience as soon as Cecilia heard the good news is a sign of the ways in which we are building meaningful opportunities and networks to serve a range of constituents. From having alumni in NYC as well as our friends Yvonne Welbon and YouthFX join us, to learning about the many "nos" a documentarian might hear on the way to "yesses" in funding and distribution to the alternate career paths in teaching and community outreach, to the nuts and bolts of festival-going behavior -- what more could we have asked for?



Skidmore faculty with students in NYC

It turns out the answer is: support for MDOCS students to try their hand at festival organizing. We asked, and with the help of a crowdfunding initiative organized by Skidmore's Office of Advancement, we received generous support from alumni, students and a few anonymous donors, we quickly reached our goal. With funds in hand, we are recruiting a festival programmer to teach a new fall class to introduce the theory and practice of getting started, and support students as they get their own festival off the ground in spring 2017.

But it's not fall yet.

In the past two weeks, MDOCS Student Showcases highlighted students presenting individual and collaborative projects to a range of audiences, from film screenings to "Tangwaves" site-specific audio presentations to Skidmore's Academic Festival, where students working on the Skidmore-Saratoga Memory Project Sixty Years Young capped off a year and a half of work. Incarceration Project students (History) presented separately, discussing how conducting oral histories with people connected to the former Mount McGregor prison reshaped their understanding of crime and punishment.

Screenings | Exhibits | Talks | Virtual Reality

WALKING THE LINE

FACT AND FICTION
in documentary storytelling


Festposium Weekend

Thursday, June 9 - Sunday, June 12
Tang Teaching Museum

Program Curators: Jeff Daniel Silva and Ann Heppermann
Speakers: Martin Johnson, Kaitlin Priest, Stephanie Spray, Maxim Podorovkin, Nicolas Pereda, Marc Beaudet, Loïc Suty

Point of Departure:
Adapting Reality for Stage and Screen
Thursday, June 2, 5-9 PM
Davis Auditorium
Speakers: Chip Duncan, Dan Markley and Jonathan Burkhart

Institute@ Spring St Gallery
Thursday, June 8 - Wednesday, June 29
Spring St Gallery, Saratoga Springs
Featuring:
INSTITUTE FELLOWS
Aggie Baez Amanda Dawn Christie
Jake Nussbaum Courtney Reid-Eaton



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All events are FREE and open to the public. For details visit www.skidmore.edu/MDOCS

As exam week wraps up, seniors get ready to fling caps in the air and the rest of the community prepares for a dynamic Saratoga Springs summer or scatters to internships and jobs from here to Bhutan. MDOCS storytelling students and faculty are refining research, setting up interviews, and experimenting with visual tools and technologies. We all anticipate an amazing Storytellers' Institute in June-- an overview of scheduled events is included here, along with our amazing banner poster designed by the amazing Michael Zhou, '17.

Look for a Storytellers' newsletter in your inbox shortly with details on our upcoming events this June. First up: June 2, Fact or Fiction?: Adapting Reality for Stage and Screen a conversation with filmmaker Chip Duncan, Broadway producer Dan Markley, and "real life" basis for a musical character and festival founder Jonathan Burkhart

followed by a screening of Duncan's 2015 film *Tolkien & Lewis: Myth, Imagination & The Quest for Meaning*.

Many thanks to the faculty, staff, students, community partners and donors who are continuing to help MDOCS thrive and develop on a campus increasingly rife with evidence-based, research-driven, creative, energetic, and innovative storytelling.

- Jordana Dym, Director

Storytellers' Institute: 2016 Schedule of Events

May 9, 2016

Screenings | Exhibits | Talks | Virtual Reality

WALKING THE LINE

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All events are FREE and open to the public - for details visit www.skidmore.edu/MDOCS

The John B. Moore Documentary Studies Collaborative's (MDOCS) annual Storytellers' Institute brings together documentary professionals, students and faculty for thought-provoking conversation, production and inspiration. This 5-week residency program offers documentary creators space and time to focus on their work while also participating in public events that welcome the community into the conversation.

Point of Departure: Adapting Reality for Stage and Screen

Thursday, June 2: 5-6pm Panel, 7pm Screening and Q&A - Davis Auditorium

Join Chip Duncan (Filmmaker/Photographer), Dan Markley (Producer), and Jonathan Burkhart (President, Nantucket Film Festival) for a moderated discussion about the challenges of representing “real” stories on the stage and screen. The panel is directly followed by a reception and exclusive screening of Duncan’s new film, *Tolkien & Lewis: Myth, Imagination and The Quest for Meaning* about C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien.

Festosium Weekend

Thursday, June 9 – Sunday, June 12 - Tang Teaching Museum

This weekend-long gathering presents a series of screenings, exhibits, talks and events with filmmakers, audio documentarians, visual artists, multimedia designers, and virtual reality storytellers considering how recent documentary work challenges our understanding of what separates (or unites) fact and fiction, truth and imagination.

Guests include: Jeff Daniel Silva (*Ivan & Ivana*), Ann Heppermann (*Serendipity* podcast), Martin Johnson (*Serendipity* podcast), Kaitlin Prest (*The Heart* podcast), Stephanie Spray (*Manakamana*), Maxim Pozdorovkin (*Pussy Riot: A Punk Prayer*), Nicolás Pereda (*Summer of Goliath*), Marc Beaudet & Loïc Suty (Turbulent.ca, virtual reality)

Institute @ Spring St. Gallery

Thursday, June 16 - Wednesday, June 29 - Spring St. Gallery (110 Spring St, Saratoga Springs)

Spring St. Gallery is hosting a collective exhibit of work by this year’s Institute Fellows and former Skidmore Student Scholars with accompanying artist talks and screenings.

Thursday, June 16, 6-8:30pm – Artists’ talks and opening reception: Featuring Institute Fellows Courtney Reid-Eaton and Jake Nussbaum

Tuesday, June 21, 7-9pm – Screening: *Inheritance*, followed by a discussion with director and Institute Fellow Aggie Ebrahimi Bazaz

Thursday, June 23, 7-9:30pm – Special Preview Screening: *Spectres of Shortwave*, followed by Q&A with director and Institute Fellow Amanda Dawn Christie

Institute screenings, performances and presentations are free and open to the public. For further information visit www.skidmore.edu/mdocs/storytellers-institute.

Doc off Campus: Trip to Tribeca Film Festival

May 2, 2016

Guest student blogger: Sam Grant, '18

I'm convinced that there always has been and always will be a shroud of mystery surrounding what exactly it is that faculty do outside of the classroom. A juvenile fascination, maybe, but I'm certainly not alone in this curiosity. Since easing further into my college years, though, I've been pleasantly surprised with the openness of several of my teachers. Skidmore professors, particularly some of those within MDOCS, are excited to share the projects they're working on outside of the classroom with their students. They recognize that the student interest in hearing about real-world skill application is there, and in return, they grant their students access to their second lives--their lives as working documentarians.



I got the chance to be a part of Professor Cecilia Aldarondo's first course here at Skidmore last fall (EN 217: Film), which is where I first learned about the ins and outs of her filmmaking career. Prof. Aldarondo's reputation as a talented documentary filmmaker (and one who was getting noticed by festivals, no less!) began to spread from class to class. Part of what was so great about having a practicing documentarian leading your class is that when she would speak about the film industry, she would speak from first-hand knowledge. She infused the textbook material with her own experiences, and elevated the course material to a level of deeper connection. Flash-forward a semester, and her completed documentary, *Memories of a Penitent Heart*, is premiering at the Tribeca Film Festival. And as if that wasn't news enough, Prof. Aldarondo (along with English, MDOCS, Project VIS, and MFS) went right on ahead and arranged a field trip, giving us (her humble mega-fans) the chance to visit the festival for ourselves.



Traveling through New York City with a huge pack of people is hilarious. Traveling with a huge pack of people that includes your professors is even more hilarious (again, connecting back to the odd sensation of seeing your instructors in public). What was wonderful about this crew of people, though, is that I had never met half of them. The students and faculty members in attendance were from a range of disciplines, departments, and class years, and yet they had all taken a special interest in Prof. Aldarondo's film. April 23rd, the day of the trip, was a Saturday that blew by way too quickly. That being said, we packed in as much pre-festival activity as one dysfunctional group of liberal arts

students could manage. A few pics from the day are included below. Ruminare with me, won't you?

The School of Visual Arts is an institution that's known for opening its doors to those interested in the creative realm. Its program in Social Documentary offered the Skidmore group a perfect spot to host a panel of social documentarian filmmakers and producers. Four women - Prof Aldarondo, Sharese Bullock-Bailey, Barbara Ghammashi, and Sonia Kennebeck (*National Bird*, 2016), led us in a discussion about the challenges and implications of the documentary field, and incorporated some prime examples of student work along the way. Much of the presentation was spent talking about documentary-empowering initiatives, and other organizations (like [Tribeca Teaches](#), [Women Make Movies](#), [The Paley Center](#)) that should be on the radar of anyone hoping to point themselves in this direction.



Sonia Kennebeck, creator of "National Bird" (2016)

If anyone has any future plans to hit up a film festival, here are the three to-dos we were told:

- 1. have a business card***
- 2. see a lot of movies***
- 3. have an opinion***



I'm pretty sure that the group became dead quiet when we walked onto the festival grounds. There was lots of looking around, and lots of people watching. I did my fair share of staring at people/places/things, and the whole time, I kept thinking "who let these children into a *real* film festival."

We yucked it up on the red carpet, and then filed inside. We sat down, the film started, there was a brief Q&A afterwards, the whole thing happened like clockwork. The response to Prof. Aldarondo's film was tremendous.



To have seen bits and clips of it months prior had been fantastic, but it didn't compare to seeing it in a full-blown cinema setting. The audience was made up of a combination of students, friends, other documentarians, and strangers, and it was still a competition to see who could cheer the loudest. Watching the film sparked several conversations (about film ethics, about cinematography, about narration), which carried onto the bus, and all the way home.

We got to go to the Tribeca Film Festival, and better yet, we got to go cheer on one of our Professors at the Tribeca Film Festival. That's too cool.

I'm only in my sophomore year, but I've already gotten to go on a trip like this. It's days like these, days that go by way too quickly but are jam-packed with storytelling opportunities, which reinforce the capabilities of the MDOCS program.

For more information about Prof. Aldarondo's film, visit www.penitentheart.com.



- Sam Grant, '18

Doc on Campus: Crowd-Funding Campaign for Student Documentary Festival

April 22, 2016

Article Update (May 9, 2016): We reached our goal! Thank you to all of the generous donors who helped this initiative come to fruition. Stay tuned for more news coming this Fall.



<https://www.givecampus.com/schools/SkidmoreCollege/mdocs-student-run-documentary-festival>

From Skidmore student documentary storytellers... to a student run festival.

"I am really excited about sharing my documentary work with other students and the whole Skidmore community. The MDOCS Student-Run Documentary Festival will provide a stage for me—and many other students—to tell our story." - Samantha Grant '18

In its first 18 months, MDOCS has hosted award-winning local, national and international artists telling evidence-based stories that matter in sound, film, and exhibition, and offered courses in podcasting, video production, screenwriting, and archival storytelling skills.

We also started the Storytellers' Institute, a 5-week summer creative-academic experience in which advanced Skidmore students and faculty work alongside documentarians in residence. This June our first Festosium, a three-day look at the line between fact and fiction in documentary storytelling, will showcase documentary work for the broader community.

For summer 2017, our goal is clear: **a student-run festival to accompany the 2017 Festosium showcasing undergraduate work in documentary storytelling.**

To reach that goal, MDOCS is participating in a Skidmore crowdsourced fundraising campaign to rally alumni, parents and MDOCS supporters to make this goal a reality, complete with a short video drawing on the talents of Skidmore students.

The campaign runs until May 4, 11:59pm EST.

Contributions will help MDOCS raise the \$5,000 needed to take students and faculty into the classroom and on the road to experience regional documentary festivals in the wild during the fall semester.

Each gift will enable us to

- connect with and learn from professionals about the art and science of producing and running successful film and audio festivals and organizing experience-rich exhibitions
- bring festival founders, organizers and directors to campus
- support fieldtrips to regional festivals
- collaborate with community and academic partners

Contributors are invited to connect to MDOCS -- students offer formal "thank yous" and opportunities to meet with students, faculty and Storytellers' participants and even to tell their own stories.

They and the MDOCS staff and faculty welcome this campaign as a way to build connections to Skidmoreans past, present and future as MDOCS enhances student understanding of the workings and place of documentary festivals in their academic and subsequent careers.

Click [here](#) to see the video and join the campaign.

<https://www.givecampus.com/schools/SkidmoreCollege/mdocs-student-run-documentary-festival>

Faculty Spotlight: Erika Schielke's new science podcast

May 6, 2016

Eager to share the secrets of the scientific realm through her own podcast series, Biology instructor Erika Schielke sits down to discuss her plans for this summer's Storytellers' Institute, regional coyote species, and walking the line between fact and fiction.



Professor Schielke's background has a stronger creative influence than expected of scientists. Growing up with a strong interest in the worlds of both the language arts and the hard sciences, balancing the two ways of knowing the world certainly influenced her emphasis on communication in academia, moving into teaching biology and ecology from having been a bit of a "dabbler" in her undergrad years.

"I initially viewed those areas as distinct and not really having a lot of overlap or interaction. But I took one or two nonfiction writing classes, and began to realize that there was this really nice interface between creative writing and science. Plus, I could take this love of language that I had and write about science in a way that was accessible for people. So, I dabbled in that a bit, stayed focused mainly on science in my graduate work, but also began to think again about the role that communication could play. So, during my graduate work, I sort of started exploring how I could get involved in science communication. When I finished my PhD, I did a fellowship as a mass media fellow (through the American Association for the Advancement of Science). They take a lot of recent PhD graduates and actually place them as science reporters in different areas of news media. So, I worked as a science reporter at an NPR affiliate studio in Colorado.

I had a really great experience producing radio stories. I love the aspect of sound. I like the idea that you can listen to a podcast anywhere. You don't need to look at a screen, you could be running, you could be walking, driving, cooking, and you can actually be hearing a story and be immersed during the smaller moments of our lives."

Taking this knowledge of audio documentary along with her, Professor Schielke joins MDOCS for the 2016 Summer Storytellers' Institute. The Institute brings together documentarians from a variety of backgrounds to collaborate in an open academic setting. Professor Schielke is bringing her very own podcast series to the table. To put her personal and professional spin on it, each episode will focus on a freestanding ecological topic.



"They'll all be sort of loosely related in the sense that they'll all be related to regional environmental issues. So, for example, how might climate change be affecting lake ecosystems? Or maybe, what's happening with rattlesnake populations in the southern Adirondacks? They'd be 4-minute segments, similar to something you'd hear if you listened to a news feature on NPR.

Part of the timing of this is great, because I'm teaching a course called 'Ecology of the Adirondacks.' So, to give you a particular case study (and something that may be featured in one of these podcasts), we just had a class focusing on what's been termed the 'coywolf.' This is a northeastern coyote which researchers are finding actually has a significant amount of wolf DNA. There's actually a proposal to list them as a new species. There's a lot of debate about this. So, that's one topic that I have thought about exploring further. I also am hoping to do a story looking at rattlesnake populations in the Southern Adirondacks. We've also had a particularly crazy winter and spring, so I'm looking to tie in some issues that will discuss climate change on a more local level."

Thinking about questions from a scientific standpoint comes with its own set of challenges, which ties right into this year's institute theme of "Fact and Fiction."

"In my specific podcasts, I'm going to stick to the factual element. These podcasts are very data driven and evidence driven. I'm interested in broadly the question of where is that line between fact and fiction. So, I guess for me in this institute, the fictional element will be something I experience through the other events and speakers and collaborations. I think this theme, the line between fact and fiction, is very unique for me, because I'm used to looking for the facts. That said, I'm really looking forward to learning from the other participants. I hope my particular background brings a bit of a useful perspective, but I would say that I'm certainly looking forward to learning as much from the other participants as I expect to give them."

The Storytellers' Institute offers a collaborative and supportive "laboratory" experience for its Institute Fellows and Skidmore Scholars to explore and develop their work. Outside of the program, there comes the question of who the work will reach on a broader scale.

"I am hoping to reach non-scientists. When you're in academia, you spend a lot of time talking to scientists, and that's exciting and engaging and really interesting, but I think that I do see a real need for communicating science to the public in general. So, I would hope that my grandmother, and my sister-in-law, and the high school student who lives next door to me would see this as the sort of thing they want to listen to. I'm hoping to capture something that will communicate the interest, but be accessible to the general public. So you could be driving in the car and think 'wow, that's interesting, and now I know a little more about this certain scientific topic, and it didn't feel like work.' I think for me, a lot of it comes down to recognizing that gap between great science and public understanding of science."

- Written by Sam Grant, '18

Doc on Campus: MDOCS Academic Festival

May 10, 2016



Each year, Skidmore College's Honors Forum highlights student accomplishments in a daylong campus-wide academic festival held on the day after classes end. For MDOCS', a few hours was not enough -- faculty organized Student Showcases stretching across two weeks, including the Tangwaves pop-up FM radio station.

The MDOCS 2016 Academic Festival session showcased evidence-based work spanning across all documentary media. Stories ranged from historic archival projects like those highlighted in *60 Years Young*, to an interactive website highlighting artists in the Capital region, to a photo and archival exhibit about a group trip to Cuba, to a variety of video projects from MDOCS' graduating seniors. Beyond the MDOCS session, evidence-based storytelling was on display as students in Prof. Eric Morser's Mount McGregor Mysteries - - Power of Doing Public History (History) presented their year-long participation in the Project HAL Incarceration Project. Two senior capstones --in American Studies (Dan Plumer, '16) and Dance (Emma Lanier, '16)--will be reworked as summer Storytellers' projects this summer.



(pictured to the left: *Juliana Boucher, '16* (right), "*How Was Cuba?*" exhibit)

The biggest takeaway of the day was that documentary can mean many things and students are creatively applying and integrating lessons learned in academic curricula as different as social work, art, anthropology, management and business, psychology, history and media and film. Students presenting in MDOCS' Academic Festival session came from over 10 different majors and minors, having been drawn to MDOCS to share a capstone

project engagingly, to tell a personal story through an audio or visual lens, or simply to showcase what can be learned from telling the stories of people from another Skidmore generation.

In case you missed the program, check out some of the projects:

Skidmore Saratoga Memory Project: *60 Years Young*

The Skidmore Saratoga Memory Project was formed to document the history and cultures of the college, city, and county. The project supports independent studies and academic internships for students that add to the ongoing exploration of the contemporary and historical life of Saratoga County and Skidmore College. This past fall Jordana Dym led an independent study to create a video project and archival exhibit to be included in the Saratoga Senior Center's 60th Anniversary Gala. Presenters: Pheobe Radcliffe '17 (*right*), *Social Work/Spanish* & Eli Ruben '17 (*left*), *Management & Business* (<https://vimeo.com/146790767>)



Skidmore Retiree Project: Oral History Interviews

The Skidmore Retiree Project is one of the collections in the Skidmore Saratoga Memory Project and is an online archival database of audio interviews with Skidmore Retirees. Many of these members saw the college through some of its greatest changes in its history and shed a light on how we got to where we are today. Interviews are



continuously being added to the archive through the Interview 101 DS course. This semester, students in Sue Bender's class not only learned the art of the oral history interview, but also how to work an audio recorder and transcribe a piece. Presenters: Olivia Fidler '19 (*right*) & Renato Martins Dornelas '18 (*left*), *International Affairs/Media & Film Studies* (http://ssmp.skidmore.edu/exhibits/show/oral_history/retirees)

Storytellers' Institute: *Upstate Painters Project*

Jackson Bryant was a Student Fellow in the inaugural Storytellers' Institute in summer 2015. The Storytellers' Institute is a 5-week residency hosted on the Skidmore campus in June. During the Institute 4 doc practitioners along with 8 Skidmore Student Fellows and 2 Skidmore Faculty members work on independent doc projects and engage in lively and thought-provoking conversation, workshops and inspiration addressing a timely topic or theme. Presenter: Jackson Bryant '16, *Anthropology* (<http://cargocollective.com/JacksonBryant/Upstate-Painters-Project>)

How Was Cuba?: *La Patria; Tourism at Work; Omnipresent Art of Cuba*

In January 2016, 18 college students and 2 faculty members from Skidmore College and St. Lawrence University traveled to Cuba on a travel seminar. In March the Skidmore students put together an exhibit in Case Gallery to present their impressions of and connections made between their journey and a semester long study of the history of travel to, within and from Latin America. Presenters: Juliana Boucher '16, *Psychology/Honors Forum*, Julianna Quiroz '17 (above), *Theater*



Video Projects

Lisa Fierstein '16, *American Studies/Arts Administration/Media & Film Studies*, ***The Presence Project*** (<https://vimeo.com/165093769>)

Leila Farrer '16, *History/Arts Administration/Anthropology*, ***A Pivot in History***

Bennett Beutel '16, *Management & Business*, ***Dreams***

Pierre Delcourt '16, *Management & Business/English/Computer Science*, ***FreeKing Studios*** (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUimaL7sV_U)

Maddy Tank '16, *Management & Business/Art*, ***Indelible***

SSMP Highlight: States of Incarceration

May 12, 2016



The States of Incarceration project came to Skidmore College from the New School's Humanities Action Lab, supported and developed in collaboration between the History Department and MDOCS, with support from Project Vis.

The ask: Join 19 other educational institutions in a nationwide effort to highlight the local impact of mass incarceration. Each school had the freedom to decide how to explore the topic and the format of their final project would look like (audio, video, exhibit, etc.). In all cases, the end result would be collected and presented into one touring exhibit that would travel to each campus over 2 years, opening up the dialogue about mass incarceration and what it means to communities across America.

Enter Prof. Eric Morser (History) who led Public History students through documenting of the shuttered Mount McGregor Correctional Facility in Moreau, New York, about 10 miles north of Skidmore's campus. The group visited the vacant establishment in the fall, and interviewed ex-convicts, prison staff, and religious leaders in the community to learn about their experience of the prison, including educational programs on site. Student commitment turned this project, initially envisioned as a single-semester assignment, into an ongoing activity. A spring 2016 workshop produced additional interviews and stories for five who found their empathy for the incarcerated, as well as understanding of the long-term impact to individuals, deepened through conversation and dialogue.

The final product: Over 10 audio interviews, haunting photos of the empty space (a former hotel-turned-sanitorium), and a chance for two students, Isacc S and Maya Obstfeld, to travel to New York City in mid-April to present their findings at the States of Incarceration exhibit [inauguration and conference](#) at the New School.

(<http://www.newschool.edu/pressroom/pressreleases/2016/statesofincarceration.htm>)

Rebecca Stern, '16, sat down with Prof. Morser to learn more about the project. Listen to the 14-min interview [here](https://www.skidmore.edu/mdocs/news/2016/media/051216-ssmp-incarcerationproject-7.mp3) (<https://www.skidmore.edu/mdocs/news/2016/media/051216-ssmp-incarcerationproject-7.mp3>) and read more about the context [here](http://www.skidmore.edu/news/2016/0414_states_of_incarceration.php) (http://www.skidmore.edu/news/2016/0414_states_of_incarceration.php).

Below is a selection of photographs taken by Dorothea Truffleman, '16, who took a course on Correctional Rehabilitation and Reentry as a first-year student, and joined the group to document the students' visit to Mount McGregor.





professor Morser (with the shoulder bag) and students.

Doc on Campus: The Artist Interview

May 9, 2016

*A new Spring 2016 course co-listed by Art History and MDOCS explores the artist interview as a form of original art historical research. Working in teams with Ian Berry, Dayton Director of the Frances Young Tang Teaching museum and the course's instructor, students closely examined and researched artworks in the Museum's exhibition *Borrowed Light* and conducted professionally-videotaped interviews with photographers whose work was represented in it.*



Photographer Duane Michals speaking to faculty, students, and community members about his pieces featured in "Borrowed Light."

The interview is an art in itself, especially when engaging with an artist about his or her own work. Tang Director Ian Berry's spring course, *The Artist Interview*, offered students the opportunity to produce professional interviews with visiting artists throughout the semester. In conjunction with the Tang's current photography exhibition, *Borrowed Light: Selections from the Jack Shear Collection*, pairs conducted weekly interviews with an artist whose work is featured in the show. From high fashion portraits to decrepit landscapes, the photographic style of those interviewed ranged widely in technique and subject matter. Reflective of the artists' own creative approach, methodology, practice, and personal relationship to the medium, the photographs were analyzed by the interviewers in an attempt to expose what one perhaps couldn't see outside of the frame. The students drew out the artists with questions such as 'who defines the meaning of an artwork and how one creates meaning.'



Photographer Kurt Markus during his interview conducted by Elise Mumford, '17 (left) and Lenore Wilkinson '16 (right).

"When preparing questions, I tried to anticipate what the artist's answer would be in order to craft a coherent flow to the conversation. I could only prepare so much, however, since the trajectory of our dialogue would almost always flow in an unanticipated direction." - Dorothea Trufleman, '16

Each artist enunciated a discrete response to the questions, often sparking conversation that delved into larger explorations of the medium and its contested relationship with the truth. Like understanding any work of art, it takes a particular patience, detail, and ardent interest to apprehend the mind that created it. The Artist Interview not only honed and instilled these requisites for students, but made history in doing so.

"As an art history major, and one who is interested in museum studies, I was immediately intrigued by the Artist Interview class. The chance to conduct a professional interview with an accomplished artist was an enormous privilege. For most of us, this type of opportunity would not come until much later in our careers.

At the start of the semester we discussed components of an interview, how to prepare and research, how to handle unexpected moments, and how to gear your questions towards specific answers. Then we jumped right into the interview process. It was equally rewarding to engage in my own interview and to watch those administered by my peers. We encountered a wide range of artists, young and old, famous and understated.

Each interview became incredibly personal, with well-prepared questions specific to the artist's work, their life, and their interests. Some interviews were lively and humorous while others were more technical or serious. While preparation was crucial, it became clear that we'd never know what to expect from our interviewees. Regardless of what

you got, the answer to each question yielded something special. No matter how vague, curt, extensive, or intimate a response was, it provided insight into the mind of the artist."

"A lot can be learned from what a person shares with you, but sometimes you can learn the most from what they choose not to say." - Alicia Russo, '17



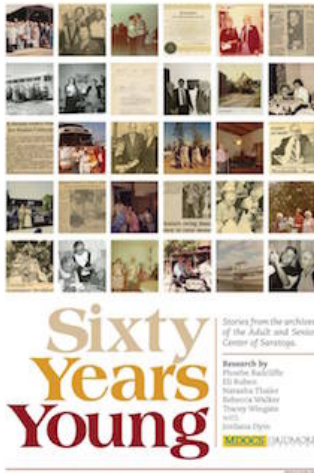
Student filming Sheila Metzner talking to students in the "Borrowed Light" exhibit.

- Written by Dorothea Truffleman, '16 and Alicia Russo, '17

SSMP Highlight: 60 Years Young

May 12, 2016

In fall 2014, five students and two professors set to work to sort through an archive and extract a story that told 60 years worth of tales from the Saratoga Springs Adult and Senior Center.



Professor and MDOCS Director Jordana Dym (History) and (now) Associate Dean of Faculty Crystal Moore (Social Work), presented me, Phoebe Radcliffe, along with Tracey Wingate, '18, Eli Reuben, '17, Rebecca Walker, '17 and Natasha Thaler, '18 with the opportunity to spend a semester creating a short documentary film to be shown at the senior center's 60th anniversary gala. Our assignment was simple: plumb the archive and conduct some interviews, and cover six decades' worth of history-- from founding to mission to community to activities to



(re)locations to current initiatives in just a few short minutes.



One semester's work turned to two, as we learned the scope of and worked through what became a 12-record box collection of photos, newspaper clippings, and official documents from the center dating from the past half-century. Highlights included the initial charter and first newsletter, minutes from early meetings, and hand written notes from "Mrs Vokes" -- a foundational member and early leader.

We organized the archive materials categorically, using broad themes like activities, trips, leadership, holiday parties, and everyday life at the center. Then, with a more informed understanding of the center's climate, we started crafting a story of a progressive center that was one of the first in a national movement to grow from a "Golden Age Club" in 1955 to the active, engaging center it is today.





After months of sorting, scanning and selecting the tangible objects, we moved on to filming interviews with seniors at the center as well as community partners and the executive director, Lois Celeste. Finally, to editing the documentary video "Sixty Years Young", which aired at the center's gala last November 2015. We met Stone Phillips, the event's honorary chair, and showed some of our documents to the community in a pop-up exhibit.



The final step in this process is to document and re-organize the archive in a way that both protects the artifacts and provides finding aids for those wishing to utilize it in the future. Currently, I'm working with Professor Dym to complete this last leg of the journey so that we can return an accessible archive in the hopes that it continues to grow and document the next sixty years of the center's history.

Phoebe Radcliffe, '17, Social Work/Spanish

Watch the short documentary film the students created at: <https://vimeo.com/146790767>