

## SCREEN ARTS & CULTURES: A DEPARTMENT HISTORY

Peter Alilunas  
November 2013

On a cold Ann Arbor morning in February 1973, Steven Fetter, a junior at the University of Michigan, trudged through the snow across central campus toward Tappan Hall. He had an appointment to interview Professor Diane Kirkpatrick in the History of Art Department and was nervous, having never met her or taken her courses. The interview with Kirkpatrick was part of an ambitious project that Fetter had quietly initiated with a simple goal: assemble information for future undergraduates interested in studying film. Fetter, who had arrived on campus in the fall of 1970, found himself with a growing interest in the cinema, but without a clear direction in which to channel his energy. An Honors student, he designed his own major, called "Media," with film-related courses from Radio-TV-Film, Theater, and Journalism, but found himself immediately confronted by a lack of coordination and information.<sup>1</sup> As he wrote later, "In my three years at the University of Michigan, I have found that there is a definite lack of film courses on campus. But even worse than this is the fact that it has been impossible to go to one central source and learn about all of the film courses at once."<sup>2</sup> In early 1973 he resolved to gather that information in one place, not for a class project or at the urging of a faculty member, but purely to make sense of the complicated landscape and to help future students.<sup>3</sup>

The result, "A Guide to the Study of Film at the University of Michigan," is a remarkable collection of interviews with nine faculty members, a list of 24 additional professors with an interest in film studies, and an annotated catalog of local resources for student filmmakers. At the conclusion, Fetter includes a nearly complete list of film-related courses, as well as the two options then available to students with interests like his own:

enter the Honors program and design a major (as he had), or take as many film courses as possible while majoring in something else. Fetter completed the “Guide” on May 15, 1973, made two copies, and hand-delivered them to the desk librarian at the Hatcher Graduate Library, hoping they would somehow find their way into the hands of incoming students. It is unclear if any other undergraduates ever saw Fetter’s “Guide” —but one thing is certain: it captures with remarkable clarity the situation faced by both the students and faculty interested in film studies at the University of Michigan in the early 1970s, and just how far the Department of Screen Arts & Cultures has traveled in the decades since.<sup>4</sup>

Along with Kirkpatrick, Fetter interviewed the other members of a small group of faculty committed to film studies, that, by 1973, were struggling to find the same sorts of cohesion and organization that Fetter experienced from a student’s perspective. Located across eight departments, these faculty members laid the groundwork for what would eventually become the Department of Screen Arts & Cultures, and did so with very little institutional support and limited resources. The irony of the situation was that Ann Arbor was a thriving hotbed of cinema enthusiasm. Multiple film screenings were held seven nights a week by the various film societies on campus, chief among them Cinema Guild and the Ann Arbor Film Cooperative, founded in 1950 and 1960, respectively. The 16mm Film Festival (later renamed the Ann Arbor Film Festival), which has gone on to international acclaim, featuring the work of experimental filmmakers such as Kenneth Anger, Agnès Varda, and Andy Warhol, was created by University of Michigan Professor George Manupelli in 1963, and for its first 17 years was held in Lorch Hall. Thus, the film community in Ann Arbor was at once vibrant and struggling, seeking to find an institutional home amid the wealth of activity and interest.

Yet, the history of teaching media-related courses at the University of Michigan stretches back even earlier, beginning in the Department of Speech, which hired Garnet R. Garrison in 1947. Garrison, who had begun his career as a broadcaster for Detroit-area radio stations in the 1930s, pioneered the study of broadcasting at Wayne State University beginning in 1936. After working for NBC as a director and program administrator, he joined the University of Michigan faculty—and later became director of the university’s award-winning Television Center, which produced and distributed educational television programming.<sup>5</sup> Garrison taught *Speech 151: Introduction to Broadcasting*, an analysis of operational procedures in radio and television stations, *Speech 189: Television Techniques*, an introductory study of the problems in production and writing for television, and *Speech 235: Radio and Television Program Policies and Management*, which prepared students for operating stations, all beginning in 1949.<sup>6</sup> *Speech 287: Advanced Television Writing* appeared in the Fall term of 1952, while *Speech 268: Advanced Radio and Television Directing* was first taught in the Winter term of 1953.<sup>7</sup> Both were taught by Professor Edward Stasheff, who had been a director for ABC-TV prior to joining the university in 1952.<sup>8</sup> Other courses in the Department of Speech in the 1950s focused on writing, directing, and management for radio and television, as well as a proseminar by Garrison in Radio, Television, and Film Production beginning in 1953.<sup>9</sup> Film-related courses at the University of Michigan began to become standard offerings beginning in the Spring semester of 1964. *Speech 426: Introduction to Cinematography*, the first of similar classes, taught students the basic techniques of motion picture production.<sup>10</sup>

By the early 1970s, then, there was a history in place of teaching media at the University of Michigan—as well as the presence of the thriving Film Societies on campus

and the interest of the surrounding community. There was also the challenge of communication, organization, and information, as well as the surge in student interest without centralized guidance. Despite these difficulties, however, the early professors had enthusiasm, interest, and a groundswell of student interest to support what was slowly becoming a growing area of study at the University of Michigan, and they resolved to find precisely the sort of communication and organization for which Fetter (and the hundreds of other students he symbolized) hoped. It is there, in those struggles and hopes, that the story of Screen Arts & Cultures begins.

### **THE BEGINNING: 1972 - 1977**

Even before Fetter finished his guide, eight professors (from eight departments) with an interest in film studies had banded together in an effort to share ideas and improve communication. Kirkpatrick, Hubert “Hugh” Cohen (Engineering Humanities), Alfredo Montalvo (Art & Architecture), Hazen Schumacher (Broadcasting), Frank Beaver (Communication), William “Buzz” Alexander (English), and Marvin Felheim (American Studies) began talking in late 1972 about how they could build a formal program of film studies. Among their many concerns were the overlap in class screenings, the lack of access to production equipment, and burgeoning class sizes. “The courses were everywhere, all across campus,” described Beaver, noting the disorganization.<sup>11</sup> This group envisioned a future in which a complete course of study could be taken by undergraduates, replete with a proper major. Naming themselves the Committee on Film Resources, they began sharing resources and comparing syllabi.

The key to understanding the Committee on Film Resources and, indeed, the history of the Department of Screen Arts & Cultures might lie in understanding Felheim, who joined the University of Michigan faculty in 1948. A remarkably diverse professor, Felheim was the director of the Program in American Culture from 1971 to 1978, beloved by students, and tirelessly willing to expand the offerings at the University of Michigan, not just in film, but also in areas such as women's studies and ethnic studies.<sup>12</sup> He had a wide variety of teaching interests, from Chicano literature to comic books—and had a deep and abiding interest in film studies. According to Kirkpatrick, Felheim “wanted to undermine any tendency of secularization in departments,” and labored to push the boundaries of what was being taught.<sup>13</sup> A 1977 profile in *People* magazine describes Felheim as the “Prof of Pop,” illustrating not only his unique cultural reach, but also his pedagogical passion. “You have to reach students where they are,” Felheim told *People*, “What goes on outside the classroom is as important as what goes on inside.”<sup>14</sup>

What went on inside the classroom, for Felheim, was *American Studies 490: History of American Film*, in which he taught (on overload, out of his passion for the topic) upwards of 250 students at a time a general course in what would now be called Genre Studies. “The course is an approach to American films through cultural history,” Felheim later told Fetter. “We do it in terms of genre—we start with the epic film, then the comic, and then deal with the American forms such as the western, the gangster, and the musical.”<sup>15</sup> According to Kirkpatrick, the Department of Screen Arts & Cultures sprang from this one course—as much for Felheim's enthusiasm and support of film as an object of study as for the course's content.<sup>16</sup>

Felheim also believed passionately in linking junior faculty members, meaning the small group of professors interested in film had an ideal mentor in their midst. The Committee on Film Resources was Felheim's brainchild, and with his status as a full professor, quickly went from conversation group to something more organized. In fact, before Fetter had even envisioned his "Guide," Felheim had already presented a similar document to his colleagues in the Program in American Culture at a faculty meeting. That document, dated February 8, 1972 and called "Some Questions and Observations About the Status of Film Courses on the University of Michigan Campus," outlines virtually the same problems as identified by Fetter a few months later in terms of course dispersal across campus, and offers a concrete set of recommendations to the University:

- 1) An individual faculty member must be given some authority, which means also some support by higher administrative offices either in the form of funds or of definite commitments from the units involved, for the continuation and supervision of these courses so that a unified plan of study can emerge. 2) Some arrangements must also be made for the coordination of films showings on campus. [...] 3) Some kind of kind of consideration must be given to the establishment of honest rather than, as now, subversive degree programs in this area; this would involve both undergraduate and graduate degrees.<sup>17</sup>

Felheim's passion and belief in the topic, as evidenced by the popularity of *American Studies 490*, was equally reflected in his determination to find institutional support for film studies—as well as his goal of full degrees in the area. This would also be the first time the subject of graduate study in film studies would be broached.

The other members of the Committee on Film Resources had similar passion for the topic, all of them teaching on overload to the many students clamoring for film studies. Key among them was Cohen, who joined the University of Michigan faculty in 1961 as a Teaching Fellow in the English Department, and received his Ph.D. in 1970—with Felheim as co-chair of his dissertation committee. That same year, as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Humanities in the College of Engineering, Cohen was given the opportunity to develop his own courses. A film enthusiast, and faculty advisor to Cinema Guild, he promptly created *Humanities 236: Introduction to Elements and History of Film*.<sup>18</sup> He later described the course, which had no prerequisites, as an effort “to introduce the student to the elements and techniques of film-making and to the history of film from its beginnings into the early years of sound.”<sup>19</sup>

The course also offered students a chance to understand their own spectatorship. Cohen believed in linking the film’s content and creation to the resulting emotions and responses within the viewer, as he describes to Fetter in the “Guide”:

First and foremost, our goal will be to assist the student in seeing and feeling how the different elements the film-maker uses in making his film—such things as his choice of film stock, the way he moves his camera, the way he arranges people and objects before he begins shooting, the kind of lighting he asks for, the kind of actor he chooses, his manipulation of the sound, his manner of editing the footage he has shot, etc.—all affect the viewer psychologically and dramatically and thus shape the viewer’s response to the film. In other words, we will try to show the student how the director *creates* the film’s impact and its meaning, and try to show him how these elements

and techniques tip us off to the director's attitude toward his subject matter.<sup>20</sup>

In the Fall term of 1970, *Humanities 236* had 25 students. By the following Winter term, it had exploded to 250, with Cohen lugging his own projector twice a week from his office across central campus for the required screenings.<sup>21</sup> The course became a staple offering, and continues to this day to be among the initial requirements for every student in the Department.<sup>22</sup>

The second member of the early group whose impact would be substantial was Beaver, who joined the University of Michigan faculty in 1969 as Assistant Professor of Speech Communication and Theater. Beaver taught a trio of courses in film studies: *Speech 220: Introduction to Film*, a survey of the history, theory, and aesthetics of motion pictures; *Speech 521: History of the Motion Picture*, a history of the first 20 years of cinema; and *Speech 522: Film Theory*, which traced the writings of the major film theorists. Despite the earlier courses in film-related areas, this trio of courses represents the first dedicated offerings in film studies at the University of Michigan. Additionally, Beaver also taught a pair of production courses: *Speech 423: Introduction to Cinematography* and *Speech 523: Advanced Cinematography*. Beaver describes the latter course in Fetter's *Guide*:

In the advanced workshop (523) course, the students spend an entire term scripting, budgeting, shooting, editing, putting sound on film, "A" and "B" rolling, so that the student has a full and complete film experience, including cutting sound, and sending the film to labs for opticals, using the movieola—so it's the closest thing the student can get at the University of Michigan to a professional film experience.<sup>23</sup>

Beaver's production courses formed the backbone of what would evolve into the filmmaking component of the program, while his studies-centered offerings joined Cohen's course as the foundation of studies component. Along with Felheim's vision and leadership, Cohen and Beaver's early course offerings were deeply instrumental in setting the direction for what would become Screen Arts & Cultures.

The other members of the early group included Kirkpatrick, who taught *History of Art 272: Arts of the Twentieth Century* and *History of Art 575: Media and Visual Arts*, both of which included film study in their overview of art history. Kirkpatrick also had a strong interest in video technology, particularly the Sony Portapak, released in 1967, that allowed for relatively simple video production, and encouraged the group to include video alongside celluloid going forward.<sup>24</sup> Montalvo, an industrial filmmaker, taught *Architecture and Design 223: Cinematography*, an overview of the principles of filmmaking, and *Architecture and Design 224: Cinematography*, which applied the earlier course in practical film production, either for individual projects or for industrial film projects solicited by local businesses. Hazen Schumacher, the director of the University of Michigan Television Center, taught courses in broadcasting. Alexander taught *English 423: The Art of Film*, which focused on the in-depth study of a group of major filmmakers and their films. Sensing, much like Fetter, the overlaps in their curriculum, and with Felheim's leadership, the members of the Committee on Film Resources made plans to seek institutional support, a slow, five-year process that met, at every turn, with disinterest.<sup>25</sup> Yet they maintained a common goal: turning the loose consortium of courses, spread across campus and with various, unrelated faculty, into an official Department—while not losing the

interdisciplinary strength, and mixture of production and studies, that was already defining the group.

### **FROM COMMITTEE TO PROGRAM: 1972 - 1987**

Led by Felheim, the Committee on Film Resources approached the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts in 1976 with a proposal to seek a modest level of institutional support and resources, with the aim of instituting an official and organized program. Dean Frank H.T. Rhodes approved the proposal, granting the new Program in Film and Video Studies a part-time administrative assistant and the use of Lorch Hall 140 as office space. An official major was established, with an expected enrollment of thirty students beginning in the Fall term of 1977. The members of the Committee on Film Resources became the Executive Committee, and were tasked with selecting a director from their ranks—who would receive neither additional salary nor compensatory time off from teaching in their home department. The small, one-room space was quickly divided with a temporary partition to create separate spaces, Vicki Honeyman was hired as secretary, and Kirkpatrick selected as the Program's first director.<sup>26</sup> As beginnings go, the one for the Program in Film and Video Studies was inauspicious: an unpaid director, no official faculty, and a single, tiny room to call its own.

Yet, the enthusiasm that had defined the Committee on Film Resources was also there at the Program's beginnings. In a press release, Kirkpatrick acknowledged the very problems that had plagued students interested in film studies for years: "Before this, the only way for an undergraduate to put together a program of study in the art of film was through a bachelor of general studies curriculum. Our program will provide a much better-focused curriculum, with courses being developed continually."<sup>27</sup> Central to the Program

was the notion of interdisciplinarity that had defined the Committee on Film Resources—an interdisciplinarity that adhered to Felheim’s goal of fostering dialogue among faculty members.

The program installed three prerequisites: either Beaver’s *Speech 220* or Cohen’s *Film and Video 236*, as well as *Film and Video 200* and *Film and Video 201*, production courses taught by graduate students or part-time lecturers—all of which had already long been staples for film students, but were now officially codified into a major.<sup>28</sup> The electives could be selected from other departments, with guidance from Kirkpatrick and Honeyman. But there were other, bigger plans, too, that marked the transition from loose consortium to Program, among them Kirkpatrick’s plan for the Program’s first independent course: an intensive study of director Robert Altman and his films. The course was an overwhelming success, and was highlighted by visits from actor Elliot Gould, star of *M\*A\*S\*H* (1970), and Joan Tewkesbury, writer of *Nashville* (1975), as well as a panel discussion with critics Molly Haskell and Andrew Sarris—all capped off by an appearance by Altman himself to discuss his films.<sup>29</sup> It was the first of many such events featuring industry members that have come to define the Department of Screen Arts & Cultures—other early examples of which include visits from Frank Capra, Fritz Lang, Werner Herzog, and Harold Lloyd, among others.

Part of the commitment to interdisciplinarity was reflected in the Executive Committee’s decision to rotate the directorship of the Program. Following Kirkpatrick, Montalvo took over in the Spring term of 1978, and Cohen assumed that role two terms later. In the Winter Term of 1981, Herb Eagle, from the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, took over as Director, a role he filled for the next seven years. Eagle, who had taken over *American Studies 490* following Felheim’s death, taught courses in Polish,

Russian, and Central European Film, and exemplified the Program's desire to maintain disciplinary heterogeneity. The Program stayed in its single room in Lorch Hall, with a part-time administrative assistant (Badrie Jazair taking over the position from Honeyman in the early 1980s), and soldiered on without much institutional support or resources. The Director coordinated film-related courses across campus, worked with the film societies to plan events and screenings (both for classes and for public events), and tried to build an identity for the Program. Nevertheless, affiliated faculty continued to teach on overload, with no offices, and students, while guided by the Program and now with an official major, still struggled to find the equipment and space with which to complete their work.

This intermediary period might indeed be characterized as a struggle, both for students and faculty, in terms of funding, resources, and equipment. An article in the *Michigan Daily* in February 1978 outlined the various challenges for student filmmakers, with Montalvo, then the Director, even suggesting that students should go elsewhere to study the topic. "Montalvo knows the interest is here, but not the cash," the article reads, "The budgets for the film courses in the Art School [Montalvo's home department] are exceedingly low. Montalvo says it's enough to repair equipment and set up a few work tables."<sup>30</sup> The article notes the creation of the Program, as well as the role played by the Committee on Film Resources, but concludes on a pessimistic note: "What is likely is that the scene will continue much as it does now. The University has no plans to lay out cash to improve the facilities (described by some as 'adequate, barely') or hire the staff. Montalvo will continue to take independent students, 'more than I can realistically handle,' and students will crank away at the cameras."<sup>31</sup> Crank away they did, in increasing numbers,

and the understaffed and thinly stretched Program continued to serve their needs. Slowly, but surely, the Program created an identity, fragile as it might have been.

By 1987, with fifteen years having passed since the Committee on Film Resources began discussions about coordinating film courses on campus, the Program had a clearly defined mission, as outlined in its own official description:

The curriculum in Film and Video Studies offers an integrated, interdisciplinary program of courses in the history, aesthetics, theory, and techniques of film and video leading to the B.A. degree. In this interdisciplinary program, emphasis has been placed on a diverse liberal arts sequence including courses in American Studies, Communication, English, History of Art, Humanities and Foreign Cultures. Courses beyond the first year level provide a greater emphasis on research methodologies, on technical knowledge of the Film and Video media, on theory and genre criticism, and on research areas which relate Film and Video Studies to other academic disciplines such as art, photography, and music. This program is designed to prepare students for careers in Film and Video criticism, media education, and for advanced study in graduate film and video curricula.<sup>32</sup>

This early era was defined by an initial period of enthusiasm and excitement, with the type of collaboration and curriculum planning that Felheim and the Committee on Film Resources had imagined. As the 1980s progressed, an average of between 70 and 100 concentrators were participating each year in the Program, with the introductory courses such as *Communication 320: Film Analysis* enrolling more than 350 students at a time.<sup>33</sup> In 1983, this growth was acknowledged in Leonard Maltin's *The Whole Film Sourcebook*. The

entry reads: “Ann Arbor is one of the most cinematically saturated communities in the country; at any given time there are a number of film societies and organizations in operation. This access to an impressive quantity and range of films serves as an ideal complement to a course of study in the Program of Film and Video Studies at the University of Michigan.”<sup>34</sup> This recognition reflected the labor by the faculty to build national awareness of both the resources and offerings—as well as the enthusiasm for that growth.

Yet, given the lack of institutional support, and absence of a formal identity with faculty and space, that enthusiasm inevitably began to falter. A later external review described the situation in the late 1980s: “The history of the program is one of vain attempts, failed hopes, and diminishing energies.”<sup>35</sup> That was all about to change. In January 1988, Associate LS&A Dean Jack Meiland organized a committee to review the Program in Film and Video Studies, as no review had taken place since its inception. The goal was to make recommendations as to the Program’s future, with a completed report due to LS&A Dean Peter Steiner by the Fall term of 1988. It was, initially, a tenuous moment, as Steiner was unsure as to whether the Program should continue at all. In the end, however, the Review would not only confirm the Program’s value, but would finally fulfill the Committee on Film Resource’s goals, and in doing so lead eventually to the creation of the Department of Screen Arts & Cultures.

#### **STEPS FORWARD: 1988 - 1994**

Assigned to chair the review committee by Meiland was Ira Konigsberg (English), along with other members Timothy Bahti (German and Comparative Literature), Martin Pernick (History), Martin Powers (Art History), and Noel Valis (Romance Languages), and the group had an initial meeting in February 1988. They were tasked, in part, with

recommending a new Director for the program, as well as assessing the current state of the production equipment and curriculum. In the next month, the committee interviewed 29 faculty members, administrators, and students—and realized that the current timetable would put the incoming Director at a serious disadvantage, so they made a decision to accelerate the process in order to have the final report ready by the end of April. The committee, at Konigsberg's urging, selected Dudley Andrew of the University of Iowa and David Bordwell of the University of Wisconsin to perform the external review. Andrew and Bordwell, two of the preeminent scholars in the field, visited the University at the end of March, and contributed to the resulting insightful, provocative, and decisive report that called on the administration to support the program like it had not in the past, replete with dedicated faculty, equipment, space, and leadership.

The Committee on Film Resources had implemented a basic structure based on the resources available to them, but the review committee noted that it was clearly breaking down and not viable for the future. The committee's members channeled Felheim's enthusiasm in their call to renew the Program: "The review committee believes that in this community and as part of one of the great educational institutions in this country, such a program continues to have enormous potential."<sup>36</sup> The fourteen subsequent recommendations, which are paraphrased below, formed the basis of the review, and can be read as a map for the changes that would soon follow:

1. Maintain autonomy while strengthening the long-standing interdisciplinary nature of the program.

2. Stabilize a core faculty dedicated to establishing a professional rapport conducive to active research, publication, and involvement in national societies.
3. Conduct two national job searches: one (in conjunction with the Department of Communication) for production and another (in conjunction with the English Department) for someone to teach film history, industry, and analysis.
4. Revise the curriculum to create a logical sequence, better prepare students for advanced production courses, and add missing topics such as silent film, film economics, Third-World cinema, documentary, and experimental film.
5. Start planning for a graduate program.
6. Include funding in the Program's budget for visiting filmmakers, technical personnel, and scholars to offer talks and mini-courses.
7. The Program's director should take an active part in planning the film courses offered by various departments and selecting the film faculty for teaching such courses.
8. A significant investment should be made by the College toward the purchase of equipment for the production courses, as well as the equipment necessary to screen films.
9. New housing should be found that demonstrates the seriousness with which the College takes the program. At a minimum, that means separate offices for the Director, the administrative secretary, for each of the involved faculty, and a single office for the course assistants; two seminar and

conference rooms; a student lounge and library; a screening room for film; a viewing room for video; a production room; and a storage room for equipment. This would, of course, be an exponential step up from the single room in Lorch Hall that had long housed the Program.

10. The Program should be the central organization in relation to the Film Societies, film and video equipment facilities, viewing facilities, and projection services.

11. The new Director should actively seek outside funds, activities, and grants to develop the Program and its facilities.

12. The Program should strengthen relations and ties to the Film Societies, film festivals in Ann Arbor, and the general film and video community in the area.

13. Add a full-time administrative secretary and whatever help might be needed to oversee equipment and facilities.

14. A director be chosen to develop the Program into a major educational unit in the College and the field at large. The Director must be given traditional levels of support and recognition, including half-time teaching release, financial stipend, research support, and further considerations, as well as a five-year appointment to be given sufficient time to carry out these recommendations.<sup>37</sup>

Given the state of the Program at the time the Report was submitted on April 26, 1988, these recommendations (and Bordwell and Andrew's accompanying external report, which echoed and duplicated many of the same observations) were nothing short of

groundbreaking.<sup>38</sup> The final conclusion was clear: “This report expresses the strong belief of the review committee that the Film and Video program has an important role to play in the intellectual life of this university. [...] The committee is unanimous in expressing its hopes that the College will help this program reach the important status that similar programs have achieved at other major colleges and universities.”<sup>39</sup> Sixteen years after the Committee on Film Resources had made its first tentative steps to establish an official program in Film Studies at the University of Michigan, the time was ripe for a major step forward.

Upon its completion, Dean Steiner and LS&A agreed with the Report’s findings, and made a significant commitment to the Program. Konigsberg, who had been with English Department since 1968, was appointed full-time Director.<sup>40</sup> A suite of offices and other spaces were constructed in the Frieze building, an operating budget for equipment and other resources was allocated, and, perhaps most importantly, funding was committed to hire two faculty members. Leaving Lorch Hall behind, the Program arrived in the Frieze building in the fall of 1989, residing alongside the Speech Communication and Theater department—meaning the vast majority of film production equipment and resources were finally under one roof. Konigsberg later described the period: “The mission was to take it from a small program to a major force on the campus to reflect the growing importance of media on the campus.”<sup>41</sup>

The effect was immediate. Even before the move to the new offices, Konigsberg was able, in the first issue of the Program’s newsletter, to write: “It is hard to believe where we were four months ago and where we are now. Students in our film and video production courses are properly equipped and need no longer scrounge around in the dark corners of

campus to find an odd piece of machinery.”<sup>42</sup> That enthusiasm only increased in the newsletter’s second issue, in March 1989, when the new offices were described, plans for a film library unveiled, and the Program’s first major hire announced.<sup>43</sup> That was Associate Professor William Paul, who joined the Program after a national search. A film historian, former critic for *The Village Voice* and *Rolling Stone*, Paul was joint-appointed with the English department, and assumed teaching responsibilities on theory, history, and genre courses. At the time, Konigsberg noted the significance of Paul’s hire, saying, “It heralds the U-M’s recent decision to make a strong commitment to the area of film and video studies, which it had neglected for many years.”<sup>44</sup> Jonnie Dobeles and Hanna Lore Kober, a husband-and-wife directing team from Germany known for their experimental and innovative films, were also hired to teach production courses, as was Katherine Hurbis-Cherrier. In 1992, after another national search, acclaimed filmmaker and scholar Robert Rayher joined the faculty (replacing Dobeles and Kober) to spearhead the rapidly growing production courses—as well as managing and updating the array of equipment.

Given that a major component of the 1988 review called for the Program to grow its reputation both within the university and nationally, Konigsberg was tasked with crafting a strategy that would raise awareness and interest with a limited budget. Rayher described Konigsberg as having a “very clear plan in terms of what would be successful,” particularly in building interest in the production courses, which were a way to propel the Program forward.<sup>45</sup> Recognizing the importance of public relations, Konigsberg created a two-part strategy along with the renewed focus on the growing interest in production and studies courses: create film events that would draw the campus and community together, and increase fundraising efforts, both in an effort to build recognition for the Program. “We

were new,” recalled Konigsberg, “We were coming from nowhere. I had to make a presence. My idea was to get the alumni interested, and get the Program into the community where people could see it.”<sup>46</sup>

This process began by cultivating relationships with notable university alumni. Introduced by a mutual friend to Robert Shaye, a 1960 UM graduate who had gone on in 1967 to found New Line Cinema, Shaye became a key figure in the Department’s history. New Line Cinema, which began in cult film distribution before turning to production on such films as *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984, dir. Wes Craven), was sold by Shaye to Ted Turner in 1994 and later merged with Warner Bros., and was among Hollywood’s most successful companies. Shaye was invited by Konigsberg to take an active role in the Program, including joining the advisory committee, which also included screenwriter David Newman, a 1958 graduate, and John Lyons, a 1977 graduate who founded Lyons Casting Agency. This advisory committee assisted Konigsberg in shaping the curriculum, strategizing the growth of the Program, and with networking opportunities within the industry for graduates. Peter Benedek, a 1970 graduate, and co-founder of United Talent Agency, was also welcomed in to an active role in the Program’s growth at this time, and has since hosted an annual event at his home in Los Angeles, bringing together alumni and the Department Chair, not only for fundraising opportunities, but also to share the news, developments, and successes shared by current and former students. Current Department Chair Markus Nornes later described the event as a particularly gratifying experience, noting: “It was the greatest affirmation of my career decision I’ve ever had: in one space, I’m surrounded by my old students, and they were surrounded by students who had come before them. Generations of students who had come out of the program with a liberal arts

degree that prepared them to be lifelong learners and smart, flexible, and critical artists.” These alumni, among many that have offered support over the years, helped shape the Program’s development and growth during this formative period.

Shaye offered to premiere New Line films in Ann Arbor as fundraisers for the Program in this period. Beginning with *The Player* (dir. Robert Altman) in 1992, Shaye set in motion a series of highly successful events that brought the community, faculty, and students together to raise funding during a critical era in the Program’s development. Altman’s *Short Cuts* (1993), *Corrina, Corrina* (1994, dir. Jessie Nelson), and *Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle* (1994, dir. Alan Rudolph) also premiered in Ann Arbor. Konigsberg also developed a relationship with Lawrence Kasdan, a 1970 graduate in English (who had been in Beaver’s first production course) who had gone on to a highly successful career as a screenwriter and director in Hollywood, with multiple Academy Award nominations and credits including *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980, dir. Irvin Kirshner) as a screenwriter and *The Big Chill* (1983) as writer-director. Kasdan had long been a supporter of the Program, and had publicly called for a major push in resources and investment by the university for film studies in the early 1980s.<sup>47</sup> Kasdan not only donated equipment during this period, he also premiered his film *Wyatt Earp* in June 1994 as a fundraiser for the Program.

Konigsberg’s commitment to such events brought the Program to new heights in terms of community visibility—and fit squarely into his overall strategy. After all, publicity for the Program’s community events also shared the story of the Program’s resurgence. The new era started with the Film Classics Series, a series of free screenings in both Lorch Hall and the Michigan Theatre—including silent films with live organ accompaniment. The series was Konigsberg’s deliberate effort to continue the tradition of the Film Societies,

initiated when he cultivated a relationship between the Program and Michigan Theatre director Russ Collins, who Konigsberg described as “Enormously helpful and encouraging of the program” during this period.<sup>48</sup> In January 1989, Konigsberg organized the Yon Barna Symposium on Avant Garde Cinema, bringing in P. Adams Sitney, Stan Brakhage, Ken Jacobs, Trinh T. Minh-Ha, and Su Friedrich.<sup>49</sup> The following November, after coordinating with the National Center for Jewish Film, the Program offered the Midwest premiere of a restored version of *The Dybbuk* (1937, dir. Michael Waczinski), which played to packed houses at the Michigan Theatre in its three showings. The Black Filmmakers Series brought Charles Burnett, St. Clair Bourne, Camille Billops, and Michelle Parkerson to campus in February 1990, an event that culminated with the world premiere screening of New Line Cinema’s *House Party* (1990, dir. Reggie Hudlin).<sup>50</sup> Such events became a fixture for the Department, and in the ensuing years included an African Film Series, a Retrospective on Soviet Underground Cinema, A Video Art Series, and, in November 1991, a screening of the restoration of *Intolerance* (1916, dir. D.W. Griffith) at the Michigan Theater featuring a live orchestra conducted by Gillian Anderson, musicologist at the Library of Congress, who returned numerous times for similar events, including the following September to conduct the orchestra for *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924, dir. Raoul Walsh).<sup>51</sup> Events, screenings, and visits from filmmakers and industry members continue to be hallmarks of the Department.

The students in the Program also began organizing and growing their own involvement during this period. The Fall term of 1989 brought the first public screening of films made by students in the department in the form of a one-night festival, and by the second offering in the Winter term of 1990, it was moved to an Angell Hall auditorium to accompany the large crowds.<sup>52</sup> The event became a recurring fixture in the Program, and

led to the creation of the Film and Video Club in the late 1990s, a group formed to foster film production and interaction outside of class. In 2002, under the guidance of student Shrihari Sathe, the group was renamed the Film and Video Students Association (FVSA), which continues to have a thriving, active membership—and sponsors the biannual Lightworks Film Festival, a two-night screening of student films complete with a jury, awards, and large audiences.<sup>53</sup> FVSA and Lightworks remain among the best examples of the vibrant and engaged community of students within the Department, as well as their own role in the history of its growth and changes.

The era following the 1988 Review was a period of impressive growth: the Program in Film and Video Studies, by 1992, had over 100 undergraduate majors, and offered 22 courses. The initial two requirements had grown to six: *F/V 236: The Art of the Film*; *F/V 300: Filmmaking I*; *F/V 301: Video Art I*; *F/V 350: The History of the American Film*; *F/V 360: The History of World Film*; and *F/V 414: Film Theory and Criticism*. Students could then choose their remaining electives from between 32 and 43 other courses, depending on the term, from across various departments coordinated with the Program. Konigsberg's efforts, the work of the new and existing faculty, and the enthusiasm of the students had finally begun fulfilling the promise of the Committee on Film Resources.

In December 1992, Michael M. Martin, Dean of Undergraduate Studies in LS&A, scheduled a five-year follow-up of the 1988 Review. Erik Fredericksen (Theater and Drama) was named chair, and Timothy Bahti (German, Comparative Literature), Martin Pernick (History), Kendall Walton (Philosophy), and Cohen were the other members. John Belton (Rutgers University), Lucy Fischer (University of Pittsburgh), and Stuart Kaminsky (Florida State University) were the external reviewers. Unlike the 1988 Review, which was

deliberately designed to be a mission-oriented, complex review with an overhaul strategy at its core, the 1993 Review was descriptive in nature, and intended to examine the results of the earlier analysis. It began by acknowledging the historically determined circumstances governing the Program's interdisciplinary status. As the external reviewers noted, the "professionalization" of the film studies as a field in the 1970s and 80s meant consolidating such studies within specific departments, a deliberate turn away from its interdisciplinary roots; meanwhile, other departments were branching out just as film studies was consolidating, leading to inevitable tensions, both within the field and at the University of Michigan.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, the interdisciplinary nature of the Program was among its cornerstones, and the Review acknowledged that such strengths needed to be bolstered rather than weakened.

The committee also acknowledged what had become a growing area of discussion. What was the nature and mission of the production component? In a defining moment in the Program's history, the Review confirmed what had always been the approach and firmly set a course for the future:

Perhaps the most obvious and yet most recalcitrant problem is the ill-fit between the Program's emphasis upon the humanistic, critical study of film (and video) and the U-M undergraduate students' desire for more numerous—more accessible and more varied—venues for instruction in film and video *production*. The Program has made it repeatedly and amply clear that this is not its sense of mission: such instruction in "hands-on" media courses as it offers is for the purpose of experience in what it calls the "languages" of its media (like asking students of poetry to learn to write

sonnets, perhaps), and it is not *a fortiori*, in the business of preprofessional, pre-“industry” training.<sup>55</sup>

Such tensions were a natural outgrowth of both the expanding student interest, the visibility of the alumni working within the industry, and the technological advances and equipment upgrades during the Program’s development. Yet, as Rayher later explained, the Program’s mission was not to teach “production appreciation, but a culture of production. This has never been a pre-professionalizing program. It’s building a culture of self-reflection.”<sup>56</sup> From the beginning, the Program’s emphasis on a bridge between production and studies courses and faculty was both confirmed and bolstered during the 1993 Review—setting the tone that continues to be one of the Department’s hallmarks.

Ultimately, the Review committee reached a set of conclusions based, once again, around the need to address the growth of the Program, even as they praised the College and Program for the strides made in the previous five years. “It is... evident,” they wrote, “that the Film and Video Program has grown—some would say too quickly and too much—in accord with the 1988 Review, and to the benefit of the Ann Arbor film public.”<sup>57</sup> The external reviewers agreed, and all sides were unanimous in their belief that more faculty were needed, particularly a senior scholar with a national reputation in feminist film theory and a junior scholar with expertise in television studies, along with more production faculty and the usual need for more resources and equipment.<sup>58</sup> It was clear that the growth of the Program had turned a corner, and that new levels of investment and support would be required to maintain the burgeoning reputation and success.

One aspect of that new investment would be a graduate program, which had been discussed in the 1988 Review but ultimately dismissed in favor of building other areas of

the Program. In 1993, however, the issue was raised again. In an addendum to the Review, Konigsberg noted that the Program was already serving graduate students in other departments (and utilizing them as Teaching Assistants), and, with the right strategy, join other prestigious universities across the United States by offering Ph.Ds.<sup>59</sup> He also added that each year the Program “receives more than fifty letters, phone calls, and visitors asking for information about its graduate program—the response is normally one of astonishment to the fact that there is no such Program at the University of Michigan.”<sup>60</sup> Clearly, it was time to start considering how to construct, operate, and maintain a graduate program that would benefit the University’s mission and reputation.

After Paul’s term as Interim Director in 1991-92, Konigsberg returned from a sabbatical with goals that would address the most recent Review’s findings: locate and hire a new Director that would take the Program into the future with the characteristic growth that had defined it from the beginning, keep the interdisciplinary focus that had long been part of the institutional approach, and begin seriously planning for a graduate program. Konigsberg had laid the groundwork in terms of building a national reputation for the Program, in part by utilizing public relations strategies and strengthening the alumni network. Indeed, in a strategic plan submitted as part of the 1993 Review, Konigsberg and the Advisory Committee further highlighted the importance of the alumni network as a vital and necessary part of the Program’s operations and goals—not only with fundraising, but with campus visits and professional advice as well.<sup>61</sup> These were all ambitious goals, but such ambition had always been a defining part of the Program. As Rayher later explained, Konigsberg was determined to find someone to “do the job of transforming the Program into a Department.”<sup>62</sup> The long, complicated, and ultimately successful journey

would eventually result in the fulfillment of the Committee on Film Resources' original vision.

### **FROM PROGRAM TO DEPARTMENT: 1995 – 2004**

After a national search chaired by Robert Weisbuch, chair of the English Department, and in keeping with the goal of adding an expert in feminist film theory to the Program, Gaylyn Studlar was hired as Director in 1995 in conjunction with English and Women's Studies. Studlar took over the Program during a period of intense growth—but that growth was about to increase once again. "I thought it could only get better, that the administration at the college level wanted it to get better, and that I had the energy to help," said Studlar later of the period. "The philosophy of the unit was in the right place—to combine film studies and production. I could get invested in that philosophy."<sup>63</sup> The next decade would see a cavalcade of changes, from faculty to facilities, that took the Program in new and unforeseen directions. Studlar noted the prospects for these changes shortly after her arrival, and particularly the necessity of keeping the interdisciplinary tradition alive: "We're hoping to expand the program's profile in working with other departments and schools within the University to cross-fertilize both the creative and intellectual aspects of studying film and video."<sup>64</sup> She also emphasized the importance of the liberal arts approach that had long defined the Program, adding "I think our function is to maintain film and video as a concentration in which students receive the full range of the University's possibilities for an excellent undergraduate education in the broadest sense. We're not training students to shoot them into the film industry. We're educating them for life. We're training their minds."<sup>65</sup> It was clear big changes were ahead, but changes that were nevertheless well within the long-standing traditions and paradigms of the Program.

Those changes began before Studlar became Director. In 1994, LS&A decided to consolidate all film and television production and studies courses. The duplication of courses within Communication Studies thus came to an end, and, as a result, Beaver, Assistant Professor Frank Ukadike, and Lecturer Terri Sarris (an award-winning artist brought in after a national search in the Communication Studies department) moved to Film and Video, bringing many of the courses they taught with them, including Sarris's Television Production courses. At the time, Konigsberg described the transition in a departmental memo: "The Film/Video Program will be the central unit teaching classes in film, video, art, television, and digital animation for the entire University. Its focus will still be on educating students about the major media of our time and their impact on cultures and minds, but the Program will now have a stronger hands-on component without which its major education goals could not be accomplished."<sup>66</sup>

As part of this renewal, a significant amount of hiring occurred in the mid-1990s that came to define the Program, particularly its history with interdisciplinary joint appointments. Studlar later described this process: "These joint hires were the key to our tremendous growth in the ten years I was director."<sup>67</sup> Alongside this was a major revision of the undergraduate curriculum, updating and rethinking what was being taught in the Program. Key to this revitalization was the hiring of Jim Burnstein to head the screenwriting component. Burnstein, a UM graduate, had become a successful Hollywood screenwriter. In 1992, Paul had approached Burnstein with the idea of teaching screenwriting courses, but it was not until 1995, after the release of *Renaissance Man*, which Burnstein had scripted, that Konigsberg convinced him to take the position. The success of the Burnstein's first course, in the Fall term of 1995, was a watershed moment,

and led to a conversation with Studlar in which the two strategized how best to build the concentration. Burnstein later described the meeting: “Gaylyn was a visionary. She had a sense of where this was going to go. We could expand this program quickly if we focused on Michigan’s tradition of writing, and it would be inexpensive, because there were no equipment costs.”<sup>68</sup> Burnstein proposed three ideas: add a rewrite class; build a library of screenplays for students to study; and commit to a regular series of visiting writers and writer-directors from Hollywood to teach master classes and interact with students.

That process took on major shape with a significant and substantial donation from Shaye, who had remained an active and involved supporter of the Program. In 1998, through his Four Friends Foundation and with the assistance of UM Development Officer Margie McKinley, Shaye donated \$1 million to the University, in his words to “launch what we hope will become the premier screenwriting program in the country.”<sup>69</sup> The gift created the Donald Hall Collection (named for the former Poet Laureate of the United States who taught at the University in the 1960s and 70s), a large library of screenplays, films, and viewing equipment. It also allowed for the hiring of librarian Philip Hallman, a UM graduate and veteran of the Film Societies. The Collection continues to be the centerpiece of the Department, and, under Hallman’s care, has grown into one of the preeminent libraries of its kind in the country, with thousands of films and screenplays.

The gift also created the James Gindin Visiting Artists and Master Classes Program, named for a former Professor of English at UM. The program brings screenwriters to campus to hold seminars and help students; the first was Kurt Luedtke, Academy Award-winning writer of *Out of Africa* (1985, dir. Sidney Pollack), and many others have visited in the years since, including Alexander Payne, Spike Lee, Nora Ephron, Christopher

McQuarrie, Jeb Stuart, Paul Schrader, John Sayles, and Kasdan. Studlar noted at the time, “Studying with screenwriters who are currently working in the business will provide a tremendous opportunity for our students. We have excellent students and a dedicated and talented faculty. The gift from the Four Friends Foundation gives us the extra we need to offer a really outstanding screenwriting program.”<sup>70</sup> Similarly, in 2006, Benedek donated \$1 million to the University, with the majority going to Screen Arts & Cultures to establish the Peter and Barbara Benedek Artist in Residence Program, which brings writers to campus for extended teaching engagements.<sup>71</sup> Brent Forrester, Scott Rosenbaum, David Pollack, and Danielle Sanchez have all participated in the program, with Tom Benedek the most recent addition to the Program.

New faculty positions were also created, in keeping with the 1993 Review, beginning with a tenure-track position for a specialist in Asian Cinema, authorized in conjunction with the Asian Languages and Cultures Department. Abé Markus Nornes, an expert on Japanese cinema and coordinator of the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, was hired in 1995. A video production position was also authorized by the College, and filled, initially, by Yau Chang, and later by Stashu Kybartas. A position in Television Studies with a joint appointment with Communications was authorized in 1996 and filled in 2000 with Bambi Haggins, while a joint search with German was filled in 1998 with Johannes Von Moltke and Edward Dimendberg. American Culture and Film and Video teamed to search for an expert in American Film History and Latino/a media, resulting in the hire of Catherine Benamou in 1998. Giorgio Bertellini joined the faculty as a visiting Assistant Professor in 2001 as part of the Michigan Society of Fellows, and was hired in 2004 with a joint appointment in Romance Languages and Literature. In conjunction with

the Center for Afro-American and African Studies, Frances Gateward was hired in 2001. In perhaps the most significant hire in the Program's history, Richard Abel joined the faculty in 2002 as the Robert Altman Collegiate Professor of Film Studies. Abel, an internationally recognized expert on early film history, the author of numerous award-winning books, and a former President of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies, brought the Program to new heights in terms of experience, expertise, and reputation. His influence continues to resonate in the Department in terms of a focus on film history and historiography.

The next significant step taken by the Program involved thinking through what was happening in the larger context of the media itself. In the late 1990s, the changes in the media in terms of digital production and exhibition were rapidly coming into focus, and the direction of the Program itself needed to be examined. What was the future of media studies when media itself was changing? Nornes later described this period: "It was quite obvious to us that digital technologies were going to deeply transform the screen arts, from the artisanal modes, like experimental filmmaking, to grand, industrial settings like Hollywood. We couldn't just sit back and watch this happen. We had to be forward-thinking."<sup>72</sup> In February 1999, Nornes applied for a Gilbert Whitaker Grant to undertake a major research project in terms of analyzing the situation, and implementing new strategies and methods. Nornes wrote:

With the innovations in digital technologies, the production and study of moving image media is in great flux. Too often, educators and researchers respond to this flux in reactive, ad hoc ways. This project studies the protean shape of cinema and television, as well as the manner in which comparable academic institutions are re-forming themselves, so that the Program in Film

and Video Studies can strategize for the future needs of our students and researchers. This is the first step in a more systematic, proactive integration of the theory, history, and practice of digitized moving image art.<sup>73</sup>

The result, a nine-month study undertaken between September 1999 and May 2000, set the Program at the forefront of thinking through what has commonly come to be known as “digital humanities.” Nornes noted later, “We were the first department to be dealing with this issue, but since we’ve been dealing this for a very long time, we didn’t have a lot of the anxiety, concern, or even enthusiasm that other departments have had. It’s very much a part of who we are. It did not have the newness that it had for everyone else.”<sup>74</sup> Every aspect of the Program was revisited, and significant strategizing was undertaken to address the proactivity for which Nornes had advocated. New equipment and facilities were acquired, an emphasis was placed upon the use of digital cinematography and editing, and two new hires were made. Chris McNamara, who had been a visiting lecturer in the Program beginning in 1999, was hired to teach digital production, and Sheila Murphy, who had been a visiting Assistant Professor, was hired to teach digital media, both in 2001.

In 1996, Studlar made a formal proposal to add a graduate certificate in Film Studies, fulfilling another of the early hopes of the Committee on Film Resources, and setting in motion the plan, beginning with the 1988 Review, to add a graduate program. In the proposal, Studlar noted that more than a dozen graduate students at the time were writing dissertations either solely or significantly about media, and wrote: “The Certificate in Film Studies would offer an exciting new curriculum that would ensure that those students who pursue film studies in an interdisciplinary fashion at the university have the opportunity to understand the dynamic history of film, to strengthen their analytical skills,

and to develop an awareness of the philosophical and aesthetic issues that have fueled debates in the field.”<sup>75</sup> While Studlar specifically mentioned that the timing was not right for a full graduate program, the certificate nevertheless represented the first step in that regard. The proposal was approved by LS&A, and the certificate students continue to be a vibrant part of the Department’s culture, carrying on the interdisciplinary tradition.

The 2004 External Review committee was composed of John Belton (Rutgers University), Thomas Gunning (University of Chicago), Kristine Samuelson (Stanford University), and Charles Wolfe (University of California at Santa Barbara), and acknowledged the tremendous and remarkable growth of the Program from its early days. They praised the long-standing tradition of integrating production and studies, the interdisciplinary nature of the Program, the diverse expertise of the faculty, and the commitment to a liberal arts education throughout the curriculum. In their conclusion, the committee described their reaction following the campus visit: “We left Ann Arbor with the belief that the Program in Film and Video Studies is among the best programs of its kind in the nation. Its successful integration of film and video studies with film and video practice is a model that other programs around the country would do well to emulate. The curriculum is outstanding.”<sup>76</sup> It was the following sentences, however, that stand out historically. “Given the coherence of the disciplines it studies,” they wrote, “we feel department status is a natural next step. Building on the strength of the program faculty, a small doctoral program should flourish.”<sup>77</sup>

#### **THE DEPARTMENT OF SCREEN ARTS & CULTURES: 2005 – PRESENT**

The process of gaining department status had begun in 1998, when Studlar discussed that desire with the Executive Committee of LS&A. In May 1999, Studlar formally

made a proposal to Patricia Gurin, Interim Dean of LS&A, for the Program to be granted department status and renamed the Department of Film, Television, and Digital Arts.

Studlar wrote:

To grant Film and Video Studies departmental status is the logical next step in the growth and intellectual maturation of the study of the moving image in LS&A and at the University of Michigan as a whole. This change has the potential to significantly strengthen Film and Video Studies and public recognition of its academic concerns. Departmental status is important to giving credence to our unit's treatment of its subject with adequate seriousness in the liberal arts curriculum. Therefore, our request for departmental status is closely related to encouraging and sustaining our disciplinary goals of professionalizing film studies scholarship and teaching at the University of Michigan. It is also important to sustaining the cohesiveness of a unit in which film scholars and talented artists/teachers work together to educate students in all aspects of the moving image. Departmental status will empower Film and Video Studies when it enters personnel and curricular relationships with various departments and schools at the university. It will strengthen LS&A's visible commitment to the arts.<sup>78</sup>

The process of gaining departmental status, however, would take much longer. In May 2005, the Board of Regents finally approved the change. Studlar's term as director had expired, and Abel, with interim status, became the department's first Chair. After further discussion, the name was formally changed to the Department of Screen Arts & Cultures.

The long process from idea to reality was complete, and the hopes of Felheim and the Committee on Film Resources had been fulfilled: the Program was now the Department.

During his time as interim chair, Abel oversaw the Department's temporary transition from the Frieze Building to Haven Hall, which it occupied during construction of the North Quadrangle Residential and Academic Complex, a significant addition to the campus (on the site of the Frieze Building) into which the Department moved in 2010 after discussions that had begun in 1996. Now occupying the entire sixth floor, Screen Arts & Cultures also has significant studio space in the basement, and has nearly all of its resources, for the first time, in a single location. That inclusion came about after Sarris, McNamara, and Studlar visited production studios in Toronto and submitted a proposal directly to UM President Mary Sue Coleman, arguing for the necessity of including the studios in the new facility—an inclusion that could provide a vital link to the community at large. With Coleman's support, the plan went forward.

The graduate program was approved shortly after departmental status was gained, and initiated in 2006, creating what has since become a thriving and important addition to the culture of the Department. *SAC 600: Introduction to Screen Arts & Cultures*, *SAC 601: Theory*, *SAC 602: Historiography*, and *SAC 603: Material Practices* were installed as required core courses, along with comprehensive examinations, a prospectus, and dissertation. Following the tradition of the Department, as Abel describes, efforts were made to “make the Ph.D. as interdisciplinary as possible,” a process built into the curriculum by the presence of the many joint-appointed faculty members.<sup>79</sup> Kristy Rawson was the first doctoral graduate from the Department, in August 2012, followed by Peter Alilunas and Nancy McVittie in August 2013. Currently, the program has 13 doctoral students, and seven

certificate students, who work as Graduate Student Instructors and contribute to the intellectual life of the department and regularly publish their work and present at national conferences.

Abel's term as interim chair ended in 2009, and Nornes assumed the role. Undertaking another curriculum review, Nornes embarked on a three-year revision, guiding the Department through a ground-up reconsideration of the offerings. "There were vestiges of the earlier age that had become outdated," Nornes later described, "and there had been a curricular drift, where teaching practices were out of alignment with what classes we were offering. We had changed as a department, and needed to rethink who we are, where we want to go, and how best to express that through a curriculum."<sup>80</sup> Along with the University as a whole, Nornes also had to engage in budget reductions within the Department—an unpleasant but necessary process beginning in 2008 that streamlined operations and staff. Now stabilized, the Department has recently again undergone a period of growth and change.

Dan Herbert, Candace Moore, Colin Gunckel, and Sangjoon Lee have all joined the faculty as Assistant Professors in recent years, and Senior faculty have also been added to Screen Arts & Cultures: Associate Professor Yeidy Rivero and Professors Matthew Solomon, Caryl Flinn, and Lisa Nakamura. Victor Fanucchi, Terry Lawson, Veerendra Prasad, Dan Shere, and Oliver Thornton are Lecturers in Screenwriting, Dawn Hollison is a Lecturer in Production, and Mark Kligerman in Studies. In terms of staff, Marga Schuhwerk-Hampel serves as Key Administrator, Mary Lou Chlipala is the Assistant to the Chair, Carrie Moore is the Student Services Coordinator, and Mariam Negaran is the Student Administrative

Assistant Associate, while Robert Hoffman is the Department's Chief Engineer, Al Young is the Media Consultant, and Joel Rakowski is the New Media Technician.

One final story must be told in this history, one that has been lingering since the pivotal and groundbreaking 1988 Review. At that time, LS&A declined to offer Dobeles and Kober tenure lines, preferring instead to make them lecturers for the production courses. This eventually led to their decision to leave the Program in 1992, at which time they were replaced by Rayher and, shortly after, Sarris, both of whom were similarly given Lecturer positions not eligible for tenure. This tradition has continued within the Department ever since, with the screenwriting and production faculty, none of whom are eligible for tenure. Nornes later explained the background: "The rationale that was stated to the faculty and every chair, over and over again, was that we cannot decide as scholars how to run a rigorous tenure case for a filmmaker. The consequences for this were vast, and reflect inequities of salary, time off, and within the departmental hierarchies."<sup>81</sup> Nornes embarked on a research project to learn how peer institutions were tenuring their production faculty, and wrote a report on the findings, delivering it to LS&A Dean Terry McDonald.

Once McDonald saw that tenure for production faculty was possible, the issue was sent back to the Screen Arts & Cultures faculty to create a formal proposal. In the Spring of 2013, the faculty voted to move forward, and in Fall 2013 the faculty voted to approve the proposal that will be sent to LS&A. While this remains an open issue, it is an imperative one going forward and will have major impact on the future. Given the Department's long, foundational history in terms of connecting studies to practice—the interdisciplinary roots of which are evident from the moment the Committee on Film Resources was formed—the need to tenure the production faculty has long been clear. Inside the department, the

structural inequities have been addressed through various means, such as the tradition of the Associate Chair position being filled by a production lecturer, but such solutions fail to address the larger institutional problems. “It’s obvious we need to do this. It’s in our DNA,” Nornes explained.<sup>82</sup> The longer the issue goes unresolved, the more apparent it becomes that the structural inequities within the Department, which, unfortunately, are now as much a part of its history as the interdisciplinarity that has long been heralded as its hallmark, hold it back from realizing its full potential.

In the end, this is not just a history of faculty, events, screenings, and course offerings. It is also a history of the many thousands of undergraduates who have gone through the Department’s courses and learned the study of moving images in its classrooms. Fetter, who trudged through the snow in early 1973 to find information on how to study film on campus, represents the determination and enthusiasm of the students throughout the Department’s history, who have long been defined by their passion, enthusiasm, and effort. Currently, Screen Arts & Cultures has 239 student majors, 34 Global Media Studies minors, and offers 84 courses. The Department serves more than 2,000 students annually, and continues to show signs of growth—moving forward not only in the digital technologies that increasingly define the rapidly changing field, but also in reconsidering, as it always has, how the meanings and histories of the moving image must be understood. The Department of Screen Arts & Cultures has changed in ways Felheim and the other members of the Committee on Film Resources never could have predicted, but one thing remains the same: the determination to offer its students the critical tools to understand the media that surrounds them, in an interdisciplinary setting, from a liberal arts perspective.

*The author thanks Markus Nornes, Marga Schuhwerk-Hampel, Phil Hallman, Carrie Moore, Mary Lou Chlipala, the staffs of the Bentley and Hatcher Libraries, and Katherine Sherry for her research assistance. This project would not have been possible without the many faculty members, past and present, who graciously gave their time to be interviewed.*

---

 NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Steven Fetter, telephone interview, August 6, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Steven Michael Fetter, "A Guide to the Study of Film at the University of Michigan," May 15, 1973, Series: Department of Speech, Box 28, Department of Speech Records, Bentley Library, University of Michigan, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Fetter, telephone interview, August 6, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> At some point, the Hatcher librarians transferred the *Guide* to the Communications Department archives at the Bentley Library, preserving its findings for this historian to find, forty years later. Fetter's daughter Jessica graduated from the University of Michigan in 2006 with a dual major in Psychology and Screen Arts & Cultures—thus making his *Guide* even more remarkable for his own family.

<sup>5</sup> Doris E. Attaway, "Finding Aid for Garnet R. Garrison Papers, 1928-1990," 1990, Garnet R. Garrison Papers, Bentley Library, University of Michigan.

John Belton, Lucy Fischer, and Stuart Kaminsky, "Film and Video Review," November 29, 1993, Series: Administrative, 1988-2013, Folder: Review of Film and Video Activities in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts, June 1993, Box 1, Department of Screen Arts & Cultures Records, Bentley Library, University of Michigan, 1-2.

<sup>6</sup> *Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies Announcement, 1949-1950* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Official Publication, 1949): 305, 307, 308.

<sup>7</sup> *Time Schedule and Supplementary Announcement: First Semester, 1952-1953* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1952): 89; *Time Schedule and Supplementary Announcement: Second Semester, 1952-1953* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1952): n.p.

<sup>8</sup> Jared Wadley, "U-M communications professor emeritus Edward Stasheff died Aug. 30 at 93," University of Michigan News Service (August 6, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> *Time Schedule and Supplementary Announcement: First Semester, 1953-1954* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1952): n.p.

<sup>10</sup> *The University of Michigan Time Schedule with Supplementary Announcement and Examination Schedule: Spring Semester 1963-1964* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1963): n.p.

<sup>11</sup> Frank Beaver, personal interview, September 20, 2013.

---

<sup>12</sup> Alexander Olson, "First of its Kind: The Department of American Culture at the University of Michigan, 1935-2013," 17.

<sup>13</sup> Diane Kirkpatrick, personal interview, October 10, 2013.

<sup>14</sup> "Marvin Felheim is Michigan's Prof of Pop," *People* 7 March 1977, 84.

<sup>15</sup> Fetter, "A Guide to the Study of Film at the University of Michigan," 12.

<sup>16</sup> Kirkpatrick, personal interview, October 10, 2013.

<sup>17</sup> Marvin Felheim, "Some Questions and Observations About the Status of Film Courses on the University of Michigan Campus," Executive Committee Minutes, February 8, 1972, Folder: Minutes, 1964-1972, Box 1, Program in American Culture Records, Bentley Library, University of Michigan.

<sup>18</sup> Cohen also created *Humanities 401: The Cinematic Experience*, a free-ranging upper-level course that focused on various combinations of aesthetics, criticism, auteur studies, film history, and genre studies. It required junior standing and either *Humanities 236* or *Speech 220* as a prerequisite—marking Cohen's early effort to build a course of study for undergraduates without overlap in content.

<sup>19</sup> Fetter, "A Guide to the Study of Film at the University of Michigan," 6.

<sup>20</sup> Fetter, "A Guide to the Study of Film at the University of Michigan," 6.

<sup>21</sup> Hugh Cohen, personal interview, August 15, 2013.

<sup>22</sup> Remarkably, Cohen continues to serve on the faculty in the Department of Screen Arts & Cultures, and, 44 years after its creation, to teach what is now *Screen Arts & Cultures 236: The Art of Film*. The author of this history had the pleasure to serve as Cohen's Graduate Student Instructor for the course in the Fall term of 2011. It would be impossible to calculate how many thousands of undergraduates have gone through Cohen's course in the four decades he has been teaching it; needless to say, a great number of them might well remember his trademark counting of the shots in the "Odessa Steps" sequence of *Battleship Potemkin* (dir. Sergei Eisenstein, 1925).

<sup>23</sup> Fetter, "A Guide to the Study of Film at the University of Michigan," 4. Frank Beaver, personal interview, September 20, 2013.

<sup>24</sup> Kirkpatrick, personal interview, October 10, 2013.

<sup>25</sup> Some of the meetings of the Committee on Film Resources, according to Cohen, were held at Felheim's bedside during his decade-long struggle with bone marrow cancer. This was, apparently, standard practice for Felheim—who also completed his final graduate seminar with ten graduate students crowded around his bedside. Felheim died on July 16,

---

1979. Cohen, personal interview, August 15, 2013; "U-M Professor Marvin Felheim dies at age 64," *Ann Arbor News* July 16, 1979, np.

<sup>26</sup> Honeyman later served as director of the Ann Arbor Film Festival from 1987 to 2002.

<sup>27</sup> John Harvith, "Press Release," University of Michigan, March 11, 1977.

<sup>28</sup> Beaver, personal interview, September 20, 2013.

<sup>29</sup> Kirkpatrick, personal interview, October 10, 2013.

<sup>30</sup> Jeffrey Selbst, "Campus Filmmakers, Take 1," *Michigan Daily*, February 26, 1978: 5.

<sup>31</sup> Selbst, "Campus Filmmakers, Take 1," *Michigan Daily*, February 26, 1978: 5

<sup>32</sup> "Program in Film and Video Studies, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, Bachelor of Arts Degree," in "Review Committee Report on the Program in Film and Video Studies," Appendix 5, April 26, 1988, Series: Administrative, 1988-2003, Folder: Review Committee Report on the Program in Film and Video, April 26, 1988, Box 1, Department of Screen Arts & Cultures Records, Bentley Library, University of Michigan, 66.

<sup>33</sup> "Current Number of Concentrators," in "Review Committee Report on the Program in Film and Video Studies," Appendix 3, February 15, 1988, 61; "Enrollment Figures" in "Review Committee Report on the Program in Film and Video Studies," Appendix 4, 62-64.

<sup>34</sup> Louis Black and Warren Spector, "The Study of Film in American Colleges and Universities," in *The Whole Film Sourcebook*, ed. Leonard Maltin, (New York: New American Library, 1983), 28.

<sup>35</sup> "Review Committee Report on the Program in Film and Video Studies," 4.

<sup>36</sup> "Review Committee Report on the Program in Film and Video Studies," 6.

<sup>37</sup> "Review Committee Report on the Program in Film and Video Studies," 6-11.

<sup>38</sup> Dudley Andrew and David Bordwell, "Report on Film/Video Program," in "Review Committee Report on the Program in Film and Video Studies," Appendix 2, 55-60.

<sup>39</sup> "Review Committee Report on the Program in Film and Video Studies," 51, 53.

<sup>40</sup> Ira Konigsberg, *The Complete Film Dictionary* (New York: New American Library, 1987).

<sup>41</sup> Ira Konigsberg, personal interview, September 20, 2013.

<sup>42</sup> Ira Konigsberg, "Director's Comments," *Program in Film and Video Studies Newsletter* 1.1 (November 1988): 1.

- 
- <sup>43</sup> *Program in Film and Video Studies Newsletter* 1.2 (March 1989).
- <sup>44</sup> Karen Grassmuck, "Professor's commitment to films studies stems from lifelong love of movies," *Ann Arbor News* (September 24, 1989): F1.
- <sup>45</sup> Robert Rayher, personal interview, October 24, 2013.
- <sup>46</sup> Konigsberg, personal interview, September 20, 2013.
- <sup>47</sup> Christopher Potter, "They Shoot Films, Don't They?," *Ann Arbor News* (January 1, 1984): E1-E2.
- <sup>48</sup> Konigsberg, personal interview, September 20, 2013.
- <sup>49</sup> "U-M symposium on avant-garde cinema begins tonight," *Ann Arbor News* (January 19, 1989): B9.
- <sup>50</sup> Christopher Potter, "Black Filmmakers Series focus of resurrected film program," *Ann Arbor News* (January 28, 1990): E1-E2.
- <sup>51</sup> "Restored *Intolerance* Shown at Michigan Theater," *Film and Video Studies Newsletter* 4.1 (December 1991): 1; Christopher Potter, "'Thief' strikes again," *Ann Arbor News* (September 2, 1992): E1-E2.
- <sup>52</sup> "Shots in the Dark," April 28, 1990, Flyer, Ira Konigsberg scrapbook; Christopher Potter, "U-M festival features film, video in all formats," *Ann Arbor News* (April 28, 1990): E2.
- <sup>53</sup> Shrihari Sathe, "Introduction: Film and Video Student Association," November 5, 2002.
- <sup>54</sup> John Belton, Lucy Fischer, and Stuart Kaminsky, "Film and Video Review," November 29, 1993, Series: Administrative, 1988-2013, Folder: Review of Film and Video Activities in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts, June 1993, Box 1, Department of Screen Arts & Cultures Records, Bentley Library, University of Michigan, 1-2.
- <sup>55</sup> "Review of Film and Video Activities in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts," June 1993, Series: Administrative, 1988-2013, Folder: Review of Film and Video Activities in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts, June 1993, Box 1, Department of Screen Arts & Cultures Records, Bentley Library, University of Michigan, 8.
- <sup>56</sup> Rayher, October 24, 2013.
- <sup>57</sup> "Review of Film and Video Activities in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts," 21.
- <sup>58</sup> "Review of Film and Video Activities in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts," 3.

---

<sup>59</sup> Ira Konigsberg, "Report from the Program in Film and Video Studies to be Added to the Report of the Internal Review Committee," August 1993, Series: Administrative, 1988-2013 Folder: Review of Film and Video Activities in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts, June 1993, Box 1, Department of Screen Arts & Cultures Records, Bentley Library, University of Michigan, 2-8.

<sup>60</sup> Konigsberg, "Report from the Program in Film and Video Studies to be Added to the Report of the Internal Review Committee," 5.

<sup>61</sup> Ira Konigsberg, John Lyons, Gladys Nederlander, David Newman, Robert Shaye, "Plan for the Development of the Program in Film and Video Studies of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts," March 25, 1993, Series: Administrative, 1988-2013, Folder: Review of Film and Video Activities in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts, June 1993, Box 1, Department of Screen Arts & Cultures Records, Bentley Library, University of Michigan, 4.

<sup>62</sup> Rayher, personal interview, October 24, 2013.

<sup>63</sup> Gaylyn Studlar, email with the author, November 8, 2013.

<sup>64</sup> Bernie DeGroat, "Film, video program 'poised to do many different things,'" *University Record* 51.3 (September 18, 1995): n.p.

<sup>65</sup> DeGroat, "Film, video program 'poised to do many different things,'" n.p.

<sup>66</sup> Ira Konigsberg, "Untitled Letter," January 12, 1995, Series: Relations, 1970-1977, Folder: Film and Video Studies, 1991-1997, Box 4, Program in American Culture Records, 1964-1997, Bentley Library, University of Michigan, 1.

<sup>67</sup> Studlar, email with the author, November 8, 2013.

<sup>68</sup> Jim Burnstein, personal interview, August 19, 2013.

<sup>69</sup> Joanne Nesbit, "Four Friends' give million-dollar gift to film and video studies," *LSA magazine* (Spring 1999): 36.

<sup>70</sup> Nesbit, "Four Friends' give million-dollar gift to film and video studies," 36.

<sup>71</sup> Elizabeth Wahl, "Hollywood alum gives back to the 'U,'" *The Michigan Daily* (January 31, 2006): n.p.

<sup>72</sup> Markus Nornes, personal interview, October 24, 2013.

---

<sup>73</sup> Markus Nornes, "Film and Video Pedagogy in the Era of Digital, Networked Moving Images," The Gilbert Whitaker Fund for the Improvement of Teaching, February 12, 1999, 1.

<sup>74</sup> Nornes, personal interview, October 24, 2013.

<sup>75</sup> Gaylyn Studlar, "Proposal for a Graduate Certificate in Film Studies," January 16, 1996, Series: Relations, 1970-1977, Folder: Film and Video Studies, 1991-1997, Box 4, Program in American Culture Records, 1964-1997, Bentley Library, University of Michigan, 2.

<sup>76</sup> John Belton, Thomas Gunning, Kristine Samuelson, Charles Wolfe, "External Review: Program In Film and Video Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor," April 23, 2004, 13.

<sup>77</sup> "External Review: Program In Film and Video Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor," 13.

<sup>78</sup> Gaylyn Studlar, "Memorandum," May 24, 1999, Series: Administrative, 1988-2003, Folder: Seeking Department Status, Box 1, Department of Screen Arts & Cultures Records, Bentley Library, University of Michigan, 12-13.

<sup>79</sup> Richard Abel, personal interview, August 23, 2013.

<sup>80</sup> Nornes, personal interview, October 24, 2013.

<sup>81</sup> Nornes, personal interview, October 24, 2013.

<sup>82</sup> Nornes, personal interview, October 24, 2013.