



Open City Docs

Ethnographic and Documentary Film [Practical] MA.





© 'Waste' - One World Media Student Award Minmin Wu (2017)

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The films presented here represent the class of 2017, our third year running a practical MA programme in Ethnographic and Documentary film. With more than 50 students from 18 different countries, we are proud to say that we provide a truly global education.

Yet however much we grow, our philosophy remains constant. We aim to provide the best possible practical filmmaking training by employing the finest documentary voices from the UK and beyond to train our students, ensuring that they not only receive the highest-quality, practice-based learning, but do so in a top-level university research environment. We also aim to retain the ethos of a film school whilst embedded in a comprehensive university, a balance that is not always easy.

This allows a student who, for instance, is making a film about children with autism to take a module in the cognitive science of the autistic spectrum; or another working on the challenges faced in old age to take courses on the modern treatment of dementia. More important still is the spirit of the institution in which we work. The raison d'être of a university like UCL is to break down barriers and to rethink the nature of the world we occupy. We seek the students who wish to reinvent the medium they work in, and to redefine what it means to be entertained and engaged by the moving image.

It seems we are doing some things right. In 2017, for the second year running an Open City Docs School graduate from UCL won the Student Award at the prestigious One World

Media Awards. Congratulations to **Minmin Wu** (see prev. page) for her powerful film Waste. It is heartening to see that this year 2 of the 3 nominees for the same award also come from this year's MA cohort - **Natalie Allison** (See p. 4) and **Paul Zhou** (see p. 8). This recognition is only a small part of the picture however, with quality work produced by students across the programme, currently screening worldwide.

In 2017 we started to divide our students into different studios - each with a studio head whose job it is to set the tone and direction of work. Studio 1, led by Sandhya Suri and Grant Gee (supported by James Price and Lasse Johansson) focuses on training in 'Cinematic Non-Fiction'. Students in Studio 2, led by Lucy Sandys Winsch (assisted by Juliet Brown), work towards producing films suited to 'Broadcast Documentary.'

In the current year we have expanded to create two additional studios. Studio 3, led by Dieter Deswarte and Dylan Howitt, falls under the frame of 'Cinematic Reportage'. Also new, Studio 4 ('Immersive Factual Storytelling') breaks ground in VR / AR and other emergent forms of interactive media. It is led by **Dinah Lammiman** (BBC) and **Jayisha** Patel (Notes to my Father) with the assistance of their interdisciplinary team (Rafael Kino, Anatole Sloan, Jeremiah Ambrose and Axel Drioli). The studio's first projects will emerge in September 2018, but do come and meet the team during the Expanded Realities programme at this year's Open City Documentary Festival (September 4-9th, 2018).

I cannot sign off without also announcing that from October 2018, we are launching a new two year MFA programme for which we have recruited a formidable trio, with filmmakers **Sophie Fiennes, Kim Longinotto** and **Riete Oord** as studio leads. This programme offers the opportunity for advanced learning in diverse modes of documentary filmmaking, resulting in one full year working on a mid-length graduation film under the tutor's expert guidance.

Follow developments about the school, students, our festival and filmmakers via the Open City Docs social media channels, site and newsletter. Visit us at our studio, or come to the eighth edition of Open City Documentary Festival, set to be the most exciting yet.

Michael Stewart, Director of Open City Docs



Scraping away the surface of an exotic landscape reveals what remains of the Battle of Okinawa. Bone Collectors, protestors and tourists are the guides on an island that shifts between war and the tropics. People's testimonies give voice to ongoing tensions and its roots remain scattered all over the island.

WHAT REMAINS

Dir. Natalie Allison 29'/ 2017





TEN YEARS IN THE MUD

Dir. Harry Lawson 25' / 2017

Ten Years In The Mud is a film about a gay club that only opens for four nights a year. It is a film set in a seedy warehouse at the heart of New York's Meatpacking District, circa 1982, but was filmed at Glastonbury Festival in 2017.





Replace light cavalry with a 10cc motorbike and you've got the 21st Century reincarnation of King Arthur. Watch as he battles his way through the trials and tribulations of also being a Druid Chieftain.

I AM KING ARTHUR

Dir. Lewis Georgina 18' / 2017





COMING FROM THE MOUNTAIN

Dir. Paloma Duplat Santofimio 30' / 2017

Francy has been a FARC guerrilla combatant since she was a little girl. She has a lot of plans for the future but struggles to leave those she considers her family. After giving up her gun she begins a transition to her new life as a Colombian citizen.





FELICIA AND THE CLOWN

Dir. Oliwia Siem 26' / 2017

"What is it like to have a clown for a father?" "Other kids envy me, but I'd much rather just have a normal dad." Przemyslaw didn't have a choice; he was born a clown. He only wears red and has puppets for his children. Despite being preoccupied with his own world, Przemyslaw promises to be a better grandfather than he was a father.





THE IMAGINARY PRESIDENT

Dir. Marie-Emma Paoli 30' / 2017

The Imaginary President tells the story of a Czech libertarian, Vit Jedlicka, who is trying to start a country from scratch on an area of no man's land in dispute between Croatia and Serbia. In 2015, he proclaimed himself president of a 7 km swamp, which he named Liberland. Two years later, Liberland remains a swamp, and the Croatian police arrest anyone who sets foot on it. The film follows Vit's adventures and those of his henchman, Vladan, a mysterious war veteran from Serbia.





Like many of the avant-garde movements of the 20th century, the Beat Generation has been told from the perspective of the men, but several women told this other side of the story. Minor Characters is an archive film that explores the contribution these women made to the literary movement.

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MINOR CHARACTERS

Dir. Elizabeth Sutton 19' / 2017





HERO IN A BIG CITY

Dir. Ruohan Zhang 30' / 2017

Hero in a Big City is the story of a Chinese Kung Fu master who lives and works in Paris, running a martial arts club there. Lost in this modern metropolis, through his family and pupils, he is searching for his inheritor, his meaning of life and, above all, to find a better sense of himself.





Every year, 2.5 billion paper cups are thrown away in the UK but only 1 in 400 cups are recycled. The Good Cup investigates why paper cups are such an important part of our lives and what can be done to make our takeaway coffee habit more environmentally friendly.

THE GOOD CUP

Dir. Sabine Schwab 18' / 2017





CHINA IN ETHIOPIA

Dir. Paul Zhou 30' / 2017

Seifu and Lei Zhang both work for Everbright, a Chinese manufacturing company in Ethiopia which produces plastic products. Young translator Seifu and homesick resources purchaser Lei Zhang have completely different backgrounds and personalities, but they have the same goal; to earn more money for their family.





A WOMAN OF A CERTAIN AGE

Dir. Alice Norris 27' / 2017

Navigating her way through the menopause, the filmmaker explores some of the issues that arise during this particular time in a woman's life, recording her own personal experiences, and those of her friends, her mother and her sister. Filming over a period of eight months, she uncovers some uncomfortable truths.





THE HOME FOR BROKEN TOYS

Dir. Holly Butcher 24' / 2017

Every weekend a large group of predominantly middle-aged men called 'The East German Ladies Swimming Team' swim in the Highgate Men's Bathing Pond in London UK. The Home for Broken Toys follows the team throughout the winter to discover why they take to freezingcold waters when most of us would run a mile.





In Wuhan City, beside the Yangtze River, the construction of one of China's largest business district is due to take place. Forty elderly residents from the Jiang'an housing estate struggle to come to terms with their impending relocation as these new 'gangsters' move in, threatening to demolish their homes and destroy their livelihood.

NO HOME FOR ELDERS

Dir. Shuwen Chen 21' / 2017





THE ASHES OF WATER

Dir. Antonia Perelló 17' / 2017

Biji, the President of the Fishing Union of the Atacama Region of Chile, takes us on a journey along the Chilean coast, where the lucrative practice of extracting seaweed from the beaches and ocean floor has come to dominate local economic life. Driven by a surging demand for seaweed in China, the resource is being mined at a greater and greater intensity in Atacama, causing environmental devastation and violent social conflicts.





The Baby Game follows the filmmaker, Rebecca, and her childhood friend, Ellie, for a month before and after Ellie gives birth. The film is told from both Rebecca and Ellie's perspectives. Throughout the film Rebecca struggles to understand why anyone would want to take on such a huge responsibility. Meanwhile, Ellie experiences the highs and lows of pregnancy and motherhood. On this journey they tackle the big issues associated with pregnancy such as the lack of adequate maternity pay, employment discrimination and the absence of affordable childcare.

THE BABY GAME

Dir. Rebecca Shaw 27' / 2017





A REQUIEM

Dir. Shrikkanth Govindarajan 22' / 2017

Aziz and Christine Alaoui have just lost their daughter Leila, a photographer, in a terrorist attack. In trying to deal with her death they have let the grief divide them. One loves her memory and the other can't get over it.





RACHEL'S TRAIN

Dir. Jiayu Li 26' / 2017

This film follows Rachel's journey. One day, she met a girl at a station who looks just like her. After meeting again several times they recall their memories and childhood, discovering their relationship with their family members.





STOMACH AND MR. Z

Dir. Boyi Sun 33' / 2017

Stomach and Mr. Z follows the filmmakers journey to identify whether the stomach ache of an 81 year old tobacco seller is real or imagined, and work out where it might be coming from. An investigative documentary of sorts, the film use varying sources to explore Mr.Z's complex history, examining his past in order to understand his present troubles. As the filmmaker watches the man through hidden cameras, she tries to understand his strange desires, reasoning and worldview and uncover the truth about the source of his pain.





LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR

Dir. Irene Carter 19' / 2017

Mark, resident of Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, is a devout Christian and a proud Brit. Love Thy Neighbour captures the uniquely humorous but often frustrating relationship between the filmmaker and her subject. Filmed in the early part of 2017, Mark struggles to reconcile his Christian believes with his fear and increasing distrust of Islam. This film explores some of the most contentious and debated issues facing the UK post EU referendum and a time with unprecedented rates of terrorist attacks – honestly and empathetically.





A-Wen focuses on the filmmaker's grandfather, A-Wen. The film not only aims at observing his daily life and personal story, but also reveals the varying lifestyles of groups of elderly people. Through these differences, we discover how A-Wen and the other ageing folk in his care centre are variously facing the process of becoming old.

A-WEN

Dir. Tien Chang 22' / 2017





PARADE FOR A MODERN MAN

Dir. Dang, Yuemeng 31' / 2017

A series of reflections made from conversations with Lebanese choreographers. Within the film arrives an expression of their will and the struggles of living and working in contemporary Lebanon, not only as dancers and choreographers but also as citizens.





THE RING I HIDE

Dir. Fanyue Kong 23' / 2017

The Ring I Hide follows the story of a Chinese man, Kenny, who has married an American man. Kenny hasn't come out to his parents, let alone told them about his marriage. During the latest Chinese New Year, Kenny took his husband back to China, introducing him as his best friend.





LITTLE CHILDREN

Dir. Jun Leng 24' / 2017

Yuan, Fei, and Guoqiang study in the same boarding school. Their parents work away from home and seldom come back. They hope that their parents will keep them company, but cruel reality doesn't allow for that. Long-term separation creates psychological issues for these children, which the film explores.





THE OTHER HALF

Dir. Mi Mi 18' / 2017

The Other Half (Lao Ban) follows the filmmakers grandparents. Now well into their eighties, who have been married for more than 50 years. The film vividly shows how their relationship materialises in their daily life, whilst also provoking the question: "what is love?"





SAME HOURS, DIFFERENT DAYS

Dir. Matteo Paba 27' / 2017

Same Hours, Different Days is a journey through 24 hours of working, living and loving in London. Filmed in the spring and summer of 2017, the film explores the relationship between the particular and the universal through the lens of a shift-worker. Failing to find unity and coherence, records of the filmmakers past are ordered based on the hours at which they were recorded.





THE WOMEN WHO RUN INTO WALLS

Dir. Rosina Andreou 25' / 2017

In 1989 a woman set fire to her husband as he slept. Seven years later, a woman stabbed her partner with a kitchen knife. The men died, but was it murder? Through exclusive testimonies and archive, this film tells the extraordinary story of two women who found themselves moved from one prison to another.





After centuries of oppression, the Khomani San, one of the last remaining groups of South Africa's first people, have won back some of their historic homeland in the Kalahari Desert. The film follows their struggle for cultural survival as they capitalise on ancient knowledge of nature to run a wildlife hunting ranch.

VOETSPORE

Dir. Sarah Duff 23' / 2017





REMEMBERING THE TASTE OF AVOCADOS

Dir. Laura Alhach 21' / 2017

Remembering the Taste of Avocados recalls the memory of the displacement of the Macayepans in Colombia and the reconstruction of their homes after. The story is told through the eyes of the village as witnesses of violence, and the harvest of the avocados that helped reconcile them.





THE LIDO ON THE HEATH

Dir. Angela Bruce 35' / 2017

An homage to an architectural time capsule on Hampstead Heath. Many people have come to visit the Grade 2 listed Lido since it opened in 1938. The pool is one of the few survivors of the 169 Lidos built in the UK during the golden age of swimming. Spanning three seasons, this film observes a space which serves a multitude of functions from the meditative and meaningful to the fun and boisterous. Over the years the people of the Lido change, but the facts of life, death and the elements that surround it remain.





BLOSSOM

Dir. Zhimi Li 24' / 2017

Inside a school for intellectually disabled youths in China is a group of cute children endeavouring to live independently and blissfully. With the upmost innocence and sincerity, they smile and blossom like flowers.





This is a film about the filmmaker, and her shambolic journey of self-discovery. In pursuit of magic and wonder, Marie Nicholson travels to New Orleans on a Voodoo pilgrimage. Nicholson finds herself mesmerised by a Mambo called Sallie Ann. She is wise, and powerful, and...white. In the South, this is problematic to say the least.

WHITE MAGIC

Dir. Marie Nicholson 24' / 2017





SYNTHETIC TIDE

Dir. Levon Barkhordarian 22' / 2017

Approximately five hundred billion plastic bags are used worldwide annually and more than one million bags are used every minute. But what price are we paying for our addiction to plastic? Synthetic Tide is an anthropological investigation into the unsustainable nature of our consumption and how the events of the present could dictate the future of mankind. It explores this issue through music, interviews, and found footage of real world events which collate to narrate the film.



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50 years after the decriminalisation of homosexuality in England and wales, gay priests in the Church of England must still sign and live with a celibacy clause. This portrait of four experiences explores the damage done by this inequality and the ways priests are fighting for change.

JUST AS I AM

Dir. Florence Browne 29' / 2017





THE TORCH

Dir. Can Huang 33' / 2017

The filmmaker grew up inside a porcelain factory, a place that held a lot of memories for three generations of their family. It was the pride of its town, and even contributed to the foundation of the People's Republic of China. Now, it's closed and abandoned, waiting for its final demolition.





NOT JUST A PIECE OF CLOTH

Dir. Ala Alhussan 28' / 2017

Not Just a Piece of Cloth is a film that explores issues of gender, tradition, modesty and politics. The filmmaker's own decision to remove the Hijab is used as an introduction to the differing narratives of multiple women, each discussing their personal and varied perspectives on the complexity of identity and faith, as well as family and culture.





THE BARBERS OF BUTE

Dir. Joe Steptoe 26' / 2017

Mounzer, a Syrian barber, is rebuilding his life on the small Scottish island of Bute after fleeing the war. While trying to realise his dream of opening a salon on the island, he finds he may have more in common with the islanders than he expected.

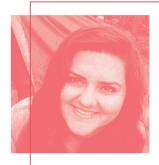




THE PAPA MYTH

Dir. Christabel Mash 30' / 2017

This film tells the story of Mama and Papa, grandparents of the filmmaker. Set against the backdrop of British colonialism, their love conquered the forces of race and religion that tried to keep them apart. The film examines family myths; the stories we tell, and are told, about ourselves. But what role does an attic full of facts have to play in this well woven tale of chiefs, forbidding in-laws, convents, side altars and the ultimate grandparents?





DRINKING THE KNOWLEDGE

Dir. Fatema Niazy 25' / 2017

The seeker goes on a quest to explore how belief transcends all aspects of life. Starting from her hometown, Cairo, she explores traditional architecture. She writes to the healer who helps her make sense of it. She goes on an external journey to a Sufi lodge in Fes where she participates in the preparation of a meal for eighty people exploring the Barakah of the kitchen and how food and drink are both healing and ways of spiritual knowledge transmission.





DEDICATED TO THE DEDICATED

Dir. Daniel Faber 28' / 2017

Young bodybuilder George starts a business encapsulating his two great obsessions: his body and money. Highly driven and ambitious, he forms a close bond with head chef Marco, a man double his age. As the business grows the full complexity of George's character is revealed through his immense desire to help those less fortunate than him, often to his detriment.





ALONG THE RIVER: A FAMILY STORY

Dir. Yihan Shi 31' / 2017

The Yangtze River. Over millennia, the fertile land around it formed through the movement and depositing of alluvial silt. For generations, the filmmaker's family has also lived on this land. This is not only their story; it is offered as a collective memory of all of the people who lived by the river.





MUMS ACTING HUMAN

Dir. Lara Hequet 23' / 2017

A creative weave in storytelling blends performed versions and the real stories of three actresses to highlight issues of post-natal depression and mothers leaving their children. Mums Acting Human puts a spotlight on some of the versions of the idea of 'mum': the super woman, the fragile individual, and perhaps, the world's most loved human.





ROAD OF THE 1000 LOLLOVIANS

Dir. Martina Zola 30' / 2017

Lollove, Sardinia is a village with just 12 inhabitants; a place where the people are outnumbered by their pigs. A meditative, observational portrait of the area, its landscapes, ruins and its people, Road of the 1000 Lollovians explores a place and people that time has left behind.





Langmu Monastery Town is a high altitude small town located in the Tibetan area of China, a site visited frequently by the filmmaker. It is especially famous for its monastery where practice of sky burial is performed, where a human corpse is placed on a mountaintop to decompose while exposed to the elements. The Old Dust explores the lives and deaths of the locals, based upon the filmmaker's own experience.

THE OLD DUST

Dir. Jingyin Zhang





THE STORY OF THE CITY OF STONE PEOPLE

Dir. Arghandehpour, Mohammad 16' / 2017

Through the words of a tragic poem composed by Akhavan-Salés, The Story of the City of Stone People tells the story of the fall of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq in the 1953 coup. Archive material of the coup and related events reveal the links between the poem and the historical events seen in the footage.





NINE YEARS OF DISPLACEMENT

Dir. Tornike Koplatadze 20' / 2017

Nine Years of Displacement concentrates on a journey that residents of the Tserovani Internally Displaced Person (IDP) settlement take after losing their home to Russian invasion. The film follows three girls over the course of their daily lives, exploring their adjustment to the life of a displaced person.





"I have a donkey. It doesn't eat grass, it uses electric power." What this man refers to as his 'don-key', others call an e-cycle. The e-cycle is the most common vehicle in Nan Chang, a underdeveloped city in China. This film explores the vehicle's significance in this impoverished, heavily populated part of China, from the perspective of one man's relationship with the trusty vehicle that gives him his mobility, freedom and peace.

I HAVE A DONKEY

Dir. Liu Chang 20' / 2017





LORD RABBIT

Dir. Xuan Du 17' / 2017

As the inheritor of a longstanding, intangible cultural practice unique to Beijing, Zhang Zhongqiang creates sculptures of Tu'er Ye (known as Lord Rabbit, or the Rabbit God). Observing his life, Lord Rabbit depicts some of the problems the modern craftsmen faces as he continues to hone his art despite increasing disinterest from younger generations.





INTO UNFATHOMABLE

Dir. Jing Wang 27' / 2017

Into Unfathomable Life documents the summer that the filmmaker and her Polish partner Pawel spent between England and Poland, looking at the landscapes of both countries and hearing Pawel's thoughts about his migration experience. The film concludes with people's ongoing movement, and conflicts between xenophobic mentalities and hopes for a friendlier society. The film asks 'what direction will Polish migrants' 'unfathomable life' take?



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A SEPARATE CLASS

Dir. Nii Mills 16' / 2017

The question of Brexit has brought in its wake national extremes, but for eight London based artists, this question has provided new challenges, further questions, and the reframing of art and its artists in both anticipation and concern for Brexit's social and creative impacts on the city's arts community.



Iropean de masters, ic and exotic brand created by designer Barbara outure clothing, ire ethically kshops in London III be showcasing ection at the lery during London 15th September nore at n/ss18 1 Creedy.



CHASE MY DREAM

Dir. Shiyi Xu 16' / 2017

Chase My Dream follows a masters student, who, whilst studying Law, became a model by chance. Having reawakened her dreams of being a supermodel, she tries her best to balance her ordinary studies and her dream vocation. Before long, one element supersedes the other as she becomes sought after by "Vogue "and "Fashion TV", and begins to attend her first fashion shows.





HUNTING AND FISHING IN GREENLAND

Dir. Xinyi Li 21' / 2017

In Greenland, there are many abandoned settlements. In the past, many of the Inuit population lived in these, living by hunting and fishing. However, the Danish government pushed people to move as part of a project enforcing the modernisation of Greenland. While the ancient hunting settlements may be uninhabited now, the Inuit have maintained their hunting and fishing traditions despite their displacement from the sites that they traditionally practised them.



Learn the art and craft of non-fiction filmmaking with a short course at Open City Docs School.

Courses In:

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- Film Theory / History
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UCL

MA Ethnographic & Documentary Film (Practical)

This unique MA programme is based out of UCL but run by leading film practitioners, ensuring that students not only receive the highest-quality, practice-based learning, but do so in a top-level university research environment.

A practical production focused programme offering the choice of four studios: cinematic non-fiction, broadcast documentary, documentary storytelling and our unique immersive factual storytelling (VR/AR/360) opportunity.

Students have their own camera equipment and editing suites year-round, as well as a dedicated senior mentor guiding them through the conception, production and completion of their final graduation non-fiction film.

www.ucl.ac.uk/anthropology/studying/ma-ethnographic-documentary-film

OPEN CITY



MFA Creative Documentary (By Practice)

This MFA provides extended practical training in creative documentary filmmaking and aims to provide all the technical and intellectual resources required to make outstanding non-fiction moving image.

Draws on broad based anthropological and critical thinking about the social and cultural world, and results in the production of a mid-length feature nonfiction film.

Taught by leading practising filmmakers, the programme is led by Sophie Fiennes (Grace Jones: Bloodlight & Bami, The Pervert's Guide to Cinema), alongside Kim Longinotto (Shinjuku Boys, Divorce Iranian Style) and director / producer Riete Oord.

www.ucl.ac.uk/anthropology/studying/mfa-creative-documentary-by-practice

THANK YOU:

TUTORS

James Price Lass Johansson Lucy Sandys- Winsch Dieter Deswarte

SENIOR TUTORS

Sandhya Suri Richard Alwyn Dylan Howitt

MENTORS 2016-2017

Havana Marking Dionne Walker Sophie Fiennes Penny Woolcock Xiaolu Guo Gareth Evans Richard Alwyn Marc Schmidt Grant Gee Christo Hird Simon Chambers Andrew Kotting

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