

DCOM

FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL

BY CHRIS QUIRK



Lycoming film and video students will put their creations on the line against the work of other Pennsylvania students in Lycoming's eighth annual Film and Video Festival, which will be held on April 7 from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

The juried competition has four categories—narrative, documentary, animation and experimental—and is open to college film and video students, who are invited to submit their pieces from across the state. Prizes are awarded in each category, and the best film by a Lycoming student will receive the Tom Woodruff Jr. Grand Jury Prize, a cash prize that comes with a striking sculpture of a film reel created by Academy Award-winner Tom Woodruff, Jr. '80. Woodruff, a special effects artist and actor, worked on "Terminator," "Aliens" and other well-known films. He and his wife Tami '81, both Lycoming College graduates, are also sponsors of the event. The evening's festivities will be held at the historic Williamsport Community Arts Center, and is free and open to the public.

Lycoming's Department of Communication's Digital Media Program (DCOM), produces the festival each spring to showcase student work and share it with the community. "We get a lot of people from the greater Williamsport area who come out to see the films and support the students," said Leah Bedrosian Peterson, associate professor of digital media and DCOM director. "The fact that we have an Academy-Award winning artist from Williamsport involved is also a big deal."

Bedrosian Peterson, whose own artwork focuses on historical and contemporary identity, is a master of several media, as comfortable with a pencil creating stunningly photorealistic drawings as she is behind a viewfinder. She and her colleagues have crafted a curriculum and approach that provides practical experience while nurturing students' artistic and conceptual development. "One of the great things about the program here is that it isn't specialized on a singular focus of becoming a

director or editor. The students can make all different kinds of work and learn all elements of the filmmaking process. They are encouraged to develop their own voice, and we foster that." A recent alumna, Christina Moliterno '14, just had her senior project, an animated film called "The Island Dwellers," admitted to the 2015 Aesthetica Short Film Festival in England.

On the pragmatic side, students begin shooting footage almost immediately. "From the time they are freshman until they are seniors, they are involved in the entire process. They don't have to wait until their last semester to make a 15-minute film," said Bedrosian Peterson. The DCOM stockroom and lab are stocked with up-to-date equipment and software that students need to create professional-quality productions. "We just got a 4k Blackmagic cinema camera," the next generation in high definition, "and the students here are working with the digital equipment that is identical to what they will use professionally, so they are already on top of it. We have students graduate and apply for jobs in New York and other major cities. The companies call and say they can't believe how much our students stand out, even compared to students from Columbia, Yale or NYU. Our graduates are beating them out because they know how to do everything and they are really motivated."

With a video camera on every smartphone, and every aspect of human experience—from the tawdry to the tragic—now being recorded, manipulated and shared, being film- and video-literate is a must for those who aspire to being comprehensive communicators. "Every year we get a good number of students from other disciplines, particularly business majors, coming in to take DCOM classes," said Bedrosian Peterson. "Many of them anticipate that at some point they will need to put together a short video work, either for a commercial or to promote their enterprise in some way. The moving image is now ubiquitous." ☺