A PITCH SESSION FOR ETHNOGRAPHIC FILMMAKERS: 
DEVELOPING YOUR STORY, INTEGRATING YOUR RESEARCH, FINDING 
FUNDING AND DISTRIBUTION

2019 SVA Pitch Session for Ethnographic Filmmakers
Thursday November 21st, 1-5 PM.
AAA/CASCA Meetings, Meeting level Room 1, Convention Center East

Six filmmakers have been selected from an open call to pitch their work-in-progress to a jury of funders, distributors and award winning filmmakers. Following a seven minute pitch, each filmmaker will receive feedback from the jury and audience on the effectiveness of the pitch and the substance of the film project - including strategies for visualizing anthropological content and suggestions for developing narrative and structure. Jury and audience awards will be given.

JURY

Alice Apley (Moderator/Juror/ Pitch Organizer), Executive Director, Documentary Educational Resources (DER), Co-Director Remembering John Marshall, (2006).

Sarah Elder (Juror/Pitch Organizer), Award-winning filmmaker, Uksuum Cauyai: Drums of Winter (1985) a selection of the US National Film Registry (2006), Juror and winner SVA Film Festivals, exhibited at the Flaherty, Anthropos, Mead, Musica Dei Popoli, MOMA, Cinématèque Française, Freiburg Film Forum, Musée de L’Homme and ARTE TV. Professor of Documentary Film at SUNY Buffalo, NY.

Patrice Ramsay (Juror) Coordinator, Independent Production for British Columbia’s public broadcasting network, Knowledge Network. Knowledge Network is committed to working in partnership with independent producers from all over the world. As a member of the Knowledge programming team, Ramsey brings film commissions such as Emergency Room: Life and Death at VGH, Shut Up and Say Something, This Mountain Life, and Haida Modern. She holds a degree in Business Administration and has received The Osgoode Certificate in Entertainment Law from York University.

Shannon Walsh (Juror) Filmmaker and interdisciplinary theorist interested in the social construction of power largely focused on South Africa. Walsh has written and directed four award-winning feature documentaries, as well as multiple shorts and 360 VR projects. Her work has been theatrically released in Canada, the UK and South Africa, and broadcast on Al-Jazeera, CBC, Discovery channel, Netflix and other stations internationally. Her work has screened in over 60 film festivals such as Hot Docs, Visions du Réel, La Rochelle, RIDM, Full Frame, Rome, and Beijing, as well as in museums including the Pompidou Centre, Paris. She is an Assoc. Professor in the Department of Theatre and Film at the University of British Columbia. She holds a PhD in anthropology and education from McGill University.

Dr. Walsh co-edited the book Ties that Bind: Race and the Politics of Friendship in South Africa (Wits University Press, 2016) with historian Jon Soske.

Raúl O. Paz-Pastrana, is a Mexican immigrant filmmaker, cinematographer, and multimedia creator. His work intersects contemporary art, political documentary, and visual ethnography to explore themes of belonging and alienation in immigrant communities. His feature-length film “Border South” follows the migrant routes from southern Mexico to the U.S.-Mexico border. The result is a close-up, nuanced, and highly original view of the migrant experience, one fraught with risk and danger but also comradery, ingenuity, and humor. Border South had its world premiere at the 2019 Sheffield Doc/Fest in the U.K.

Paz-Pastrana is a Princess Grace Awards Special Project Grantee, a Tribeca Film Institute All Access grant recipient, a 2018 IFP Filmmaker Labs fellow, a 2018-20 Firelight Media Documentary Lab Fellow, a 2020 New America National Fellow, and a 2018-19 Ford Foundation, JustFilms grantee.
SVA FILM PITCH PROJECTS 2019

THE STORY OF WĀNAHALUA: HAWAII-WHALE RELATIONS AND THE GEOPOLITICS OF JUSTICE AT THE COASTLINE

Co-producers: Sarah Marie Wiebe & Max Ritts

Synopsis: The Story of Wānalua is a short film that follows an ensuing legal battle between Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners and the federal government around the sea burial of stranded whales in defiance of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Through this conflict, the film explores Indigenous systems of multispecies care on the one hand and the use of whale strandings as regulatory devices for pacifying demands for Indigenous sovereignty.

DOS RIVERS

Producer and Director: Alejandro Palacios,
Associate Producer: Julie Mitchell
Synopsis: Dos Rivers is a bilingual (English/Spanish) documentary film that explores one rural California town’s attempt to integrate two distinct ethnic and linguistic groups through an artistic practice. This project follows photographers of the Latino Photography Project in West Marin as they become versed in advanced photography skills. With photography as their medium, the women in this project carve a path in a community that years ago was foreign to most immigrant farmworkers.

CHEJIAN: LIVING AND WORKING BETWEEN VEHICLES

Producer/Director: Heangjin Park

Synopsis: Chejian: Living and Working between Vehicles, a documentary film about the homecoming trip of kimchi factory workers in China, interrogates the mobility of commodities and factory workers. Shot in the factory, the workers’ hometown, and on the bus trip between the two, the film contrasts the rhythms of life and work in both places. The film examines workers’ reflections on their work, lives, and dreams and aims to critically contemplate the nature of their mobility, particularly the exceptional mobility that workers enjoy during the holiday season when they travel the long distance home.
SAMA IN THE FOREST
Producer: Coralynn V. Davis
Director: Carlos Gómez
In Collaboration with: M.S. Suman
Synopsis: *Sama in the Forest* uses a participatory format to explore the ways that women’s “folk” stories are harnessed for critical engagement with gender norms and for creating new visions for womanhood in Mithila, India. The film centers on the tale of a young girl, Sama Chakeva, who is cursed by her father, the Lord Krishna, for having inappropriate relations with a boy. The film documents a project whereby local residents create a dramatization of the story through which they explore individually and collectively what the story teaches them about gender norms and other cultural values and practices.

SOME BODY TO LOVE
Director & Producer: Manman Yang
Synopsis: By portraying four distinct Chinese LGBT people’s life stories, the documentary *Some Body to Love* presents the survival status of the young LGBT generation in mainland China. From multiple perspectives, the film explores the right to love and to be loved in the current political and cultural environment of Chinese society. It looks at the challenges of fighting for this right, and the impressive individuality and courage shown. This is a film about yearning for love where only the heart can overcome all prejudice.

AMERICAN REFUGE
Producer/Director: Christian Hammons
Director/Cinematographer: Eric Coombs Esmail
Synopsis: *American Refuge* is a documentary feature about homelessness in an unexpected place - the forests of the American West. The film focuses on the residents of a small, mountain town in Colorado who must come to terms with the strangers seeking refuge in the forest around their community. When a forest fire is accidentally started by two homeless men, the residents begin to see the strangers as a threat, and the pastor of a local church must resolve the crisis before someone gets hurt.