



JIM NORRENA, content strategist

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Creative and affable communications specialist with proven storytelling and effective copywriting, editing, content strategy/ management skills (built from an extensive career in the academic community managing the online content for 34 undergraduate and graduate degree programs) offers a unique combination of *front-facing*, audience-driven content management and *back-end* technical and process-oriented skills.

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

California College of the Arts (CCA) San Francisco, CA **2007–17**

Web Content Manager (Marketing & Communications)

Overall content strategy and quality assurance for college website (annual 500,000+ unique users), intranet/portal, and affiliate programmatic satellite websites — including key roles on the editorial content strategy, brand deployment, social media, and public relations teams. This role let me:

- Author top-performing online news/features to build reputation
- Strategize content for best user experience (UX) and information architecture (IA)
- Implement quality assurance and search engine optimization (SEO) best practices
- Develop content solutions, standardize internal procedures, maintain consistent brand/voice
- Train/support staff and faculty with CMS
- Partner with developers on database-driven and static-page content solutions
- Produce editorial style and best-practice online writing guides
- Manage editorial and event calendars
- Generate Google Analytics reports to measure content efficacy
- Deploy effective social media outreach campaigns to build community awareness
- Photograph main events/lectures and maintain digital asset archive

Assistant Director of Publications

Print production management (college magazine, catalogs, newsletters, brochures); co-facilitate award-winning Sputnik studio design group; manage department print budget; coordinate print/online ad placement; hire freelance designers; attend press checks.

California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) San Francisco, CA **2006–7**

Publications Manager (Marketing & Communications)

Production management of print and online collateral pieces (catalogs, brochures, playbills, posters, fliers, online calendar events): writing, editing, copyediting, proofreading, art directing, acquiring/archiving permissible images, approving budgets, serving as liaison with printers for quality assurance.

John F. Kennedy University (JFKU) Pleasant Hill, CA **2004–5**

Senior Editor / Media Contact (Marketing & Communications)

Print and online content management for intranet for departmental marketing and publicity collateral; authored press releases, news stories, website features, print ads, media campaigns, internal promotions, communications, and announcements; applied effective university branding and marketing placement for all local and national print media.

Cont.

Peachpit Press (a Pearson Education publishing imprint) Berkeley, CA **1992–2001**
Senior Academic Marketing Specialist (supervisory position 1998–2001)
Produced, authored, and edited innovative web- and print-based direct-marketing col-lateral for niche sales channel representing 30 percent gross revenue. Authored and designed On the Mark! newsletter (22,000 circ.), project managed CD supplements, delivered strategic monthly email communications, developed collateral to support prestigious Adobe and Macromedia co-publishing relationships, and provided editorial support for semiannual 500,000-piece direct-mail catalog.

COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS (by relevance)

Bay Area Editors' Forum (BAEF) San Francisco, CA **2010–present**
Executive Committee, Program Coordinator
Develop annual programing (quarterly forums) for membership-driven nonprofit.

Media Alliance Oakland, CA **2003–present**
Instructor (Professional Proofreading & Copyediting Intensive Workshops)
Lead instructor for beginning-to-advanced workshops. Develop curriculum that illustrates the mechanics of proofreading and copyediting for book, magazine, and internet publications, including training for how to succeed as a professional freelancer.

TypoSuction (independent professional writing/editing service) Oakland, CA **1998–present**
Copywriter/Editor
Provide traditional and customized content for newsletters, website features, white papers, press releases, fact sheets, technical how-to manuals, book and film reviews, program notes, internet columns, and targeted marketing collateral (brochures, tri-folds, ads). Comprehensive developmental and line editing, copyediting, and proofreading for book manuscripts, website content, marketing materials (brochures, fliers, email).

ACT OUT Photography (independent professional photography service) Oakland, CA **2014–present**
Photographer/Videographer
Event photography targeting nonprofits and press/production photography for Bay Area theaters.

Playwrights Center of San Francisco **2014–present**
Board Member, Communications Director
Media outreach, website management, and public relations for membership-driven nonprofit committed to helping new Bay Area playwrights develop their work.

EDUCATION

California College of the Arts, MFA in Creative Writing
University of California, Santa Barbara, BA English Literature / creative writing emphasis
University of California at Berkeley, Extension, copyediting certification (part of publishing program)

CREATIVE & REFERENCE TOOLS

- Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Bridge, Lightroom)
- Chicago Manual of Style *and* AP Style Guide
- HTML & Markdown
- Drupal (CMS)
- Google Analytics and Google Suite



PIXAR@CCA

INSPIRES DIVERSE VOICES

BY JIM NORRENA
(MFA WRITING 2013)

For animation to be successful all components must come together—character development, sketches and illustrations, sequence storyboarding—but it’s the magic of *storytelling* that matters most. This is a belief that both Pixar Animation Studios, creator of acclaimed animated feature and short films for over 25 years, and the Animation Program at CCA share.

Last summer a unique collaboration took place between Pixar and CCA as a way to nurture authentic, diverse voices among animators of the future while focusing on the craft of storytelling.

Pixar@CCA: Summer Story Intensive / New Voices in Animation, a three-week summer program hosted by CCA and generously supported by Pixar, involved eighteen students (including six CCA Animation majors), all from different cultural, economic, and artistic backgrounds, and representing various California colleges.

“We were interested in gathering a dynamic group of students who are likely to contribute new perspectives in animation storytelling,” explained CCA Dean of Special Programs **NINA SADEK**.

Applicants went through a comprehensive review process that included submission of a portfolio and a written statement. Participants were selected for their potential to contribute to the creation of unique story ideas and their interest in further developing their drawing and storytelling skills.

The CCA students were selected through the Animation Program Junior Review process. Animation co-chair **RIK VERTOLLI** said they were chosen because of their “strong interest and talent in visual storytelling.”

“What a great opportunity the program offered for CCA students to work with students from outside of CCA and to have direct contact with the Pixar studio,” added Vertolli.

PARTICIPANTS BENEFIT FROM PIXAR TREATMENT

Students were also given exclusive tours of Pixar’s Emeryville headquarters and The Walt Disney Family Museum in San Francisco, both located within miles of CCA.

Pixar provided the instructors, paid for all student art supplies, organized an evening lecture series (which was open to current CCA Animation students as well as Pixar summer interns), and even offered daily meals, allowing students to concentrate and immerse themselves in the class. Additionally, Pixar extended free housing to the non-CCA students from other colleges who otherwise would not have been able to attend.

The Oakland-based course was led by Jim Capobianco (nominated for a 2008 Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay for *Ratatouille*) and assisted by Jo Rivers. It included all-day classes and evening lectures in Nahl Hall featuring Pixar guest speakers: Catherine Hicks, animator; Nate Stanton, storyboard artist; Zaruhi Galstyan, sketch artist; Deanna Marsigliese, character designer; Katherine Ringgold, editor; Patrick Lin, camera and staging; and Tia Kratter, manager of art and film, Pixar University.

“I was really impressed by how this group of students came in so prepared,” said Capobianco. “They had a huge background in animation, storyboarding, and storytelling. Everyone across the board had the skills.”

DIVERSE VOICES TELL A TRUE STORY

“With our joint focus on story and interest in fostering diversity in animation,” Sadek explains, “a collaboration between Pixar and CCA seemed inevitable.”

Here’s how several CCA participants described their Pixar@CCA experience.

MAHMOUD ZAINI, Animation major, Visual Studies minor: “Animation needs this kind of diversification, and I hope to be part of it. I come from the Arab world [Saudi Arabia], and the region is in desperate need for content that is illuminating, value instilling, and aspiration providing. A new generation of kids needs this, and animation that is capable of synthesizing Western and Eastern values is a must.

“This will be our job as rising artists in an increasingly interconnected world, and I think the Pixar@CCA program is outstanding in initiating that.”

LANEYA BILLINGSLEY, Individualized major: “My work is definitely out of the ordinary, to say the least. I’m one of the very few experimental animators here at CCA. Prior to CCA I majored in illustration, theater, and graphic design with an everlasting interest in dance and film. Eccentric art doesn’t often make it into the mainstream . . . at least not yet. I’d love to change that.”

MR. KENNEDY (JAMES KENNEDY JR.), Animation major: “The program was another eye-opening situation of how if you gather creative minds in a room, regardless of the age, sex, or ethnicity, the result is an atmosphere that allows

for ideas to surface. Everyone was free to express themselves and tell their personal story. It was through that openness to share that we all were able to trust each other’s insights into narrative style.”

CHARLOTTE NORRIS, Animation major: “I think cultural diversity is an important element of what we did in the program. . . . We cultivated better stories by asking each other for help and hoping that the others could see something in the drawings that we ourselves didn’t.

I’m a unicorn of sorts. As a conservative Christian, I don’t have a lot in common with my fellow students or teachers in terms of political, social, or personal beliefs, and this allows me to offer a differing viewpoint to theirs.

As Pixar always says, ‘Story is king!’ And I think those three weeks in August really embodied that.”

WHAT’S UP NEXT?

“It was great to work with Director of Pixar University Elyse Klaidman,” Sadek added. “We shared a vision of what the program could be. The Pixar/CCA collaboration made it possible for the students to have a life-changing experience.

“I’m hoping this will be an ongoing partnership!”



Instructor Jim Capobianco giving feedback to student Mahmoud Zaini



VINCENT PEREZ

ANATOMY OF AN ARTIST

BY JIM NORRENA

(MFA WRITING 2013)

VINCENT PEREZ (MFA Painting 1966) began teaching anatomy and illustration at the college in 1970, nearly half a century ago. “Anatomy is basically the intense study of organic form that can be applied to any discipline. Architecture, industrial design, furniture, and jewelry—these are just a few of the disciplines that apply organic form to surface and objects,” observes Perez.

He instilled in his students the importance of combining science principles—in this case anatomy—with traditional art and design practices. His teaching approach is further evidence students have much to gain from a combined curriculum of science and art.

“Anatomy in arts education is the place where you can find the tools that will educate you to see the human form,” explains Perez. “It is a place where your drawing or painting can be wrong and it can be proven. It fills your intellectual tool bag with skills that can take you anywhere to any circumstance that requires a human image.

“The human form has historically been the basis for organic form in all the disciplines,” explains Perez. “We see, interact, move, and dream inside the human structure. Consciously or unconsciously, we are applying these tactile sensibilities to everything we make, figurative and nonfigurative.”

FULL S-T-E-A-M AHEAD

Today the discussion about the need to integrate an academic curriculum with both science and art or design is getting deserved attention. President Stephen Beal addressed the STEM to STEAM discussion (integrating art and design—the “A”—into a traditional science, technology, engineering, and math—STEM—curriculum) in a *Huffington Post* blog:

It’s easy to see the effect that science and technology have had on art and design. We have only to look around at CCA to see . . . the arts and sciences have much in common. The studio and the laboratory are learn-by-doing, learn-by-making educational experiences. The iterative process and experimentation are key components to advances and discoveries in both fields.

DRAWING THE HUMAN FORM AS A CAREER

Perez taught a unique combination of illustration skills and comprehensive knowledge of anatomy and movement.

Naturally, creative and inventive careers ensued. From comic book authors and illustrators to animated film artists and designers, many of Perez’s students used their anatomical expertise to draw careers for themselves that exceed most imaginations:

ANDY AMERAL (Drawing 1999) served as director of anatomy at the Florence Academy of Art in Italy, where he taught for six years before joining the faculty (as director and principle instructor) at Golden Gate Atelier. The atelier offers classical training for the realist artist.

MICHAEL JOSEPH “MIKE” MIGNOLA (Illustration 1982) is a comic book artist and writer who created the series *Hellboy* for Dark Horse Comics. He has also worked on animation projects such as *Atlantis: The Lost Empire* and the adaptation of his one-shot comic book, *The Amazing Screw-On Head*.

DAN BRERETON (Illustration 1988), best known for his *Nocturnals* comics series, is a five-time Eisner nominee and Inkpot winner who has garnered critical praise and a loyal fan base over the last 25 years for his vibrant painted comics, illustrations, and stories.

STEVE PURCELL (Interdisciplinary Fine Arts 1982) is a cartoonist, animator, director, and game designer. He is recognized as the creator of *Sam & Max*, an independent comic book series started in 1987 about a pair of anthropomorphic animal vigilantes and private investigators, for which he was awarded an Eisner Award in 2007. Purcell was hired by LucasArts (then Lucasfilms Games) as an artist and animator and then went on to work briefly for Industrial Light & Magic before landing at Pixar, where his main work for the animation studio has been working on the hugely successful animated films *Cars* (2006) and *Brave* (2012).

TERRYL WHITLATCH (Illustration) is considered the foremost creature designer in the world. Her clients include many of the major studios and effects houses (Industrial Light & Magic, Lucasfilm, Pixar, Walt Disney Feature Animation, PDI). Her most notable film projects include *Star Wars: Episode I, The Phantom Menace*; Disney’s *Brother Bear* and *John Carter of Mars*; and Pixar’s *Brave*.

HOW TO PLACE THE “A” IN STEM

Perez is a self-taught anatomist who has spent 40 years learning and illustrating nearly every system in the human body microscopically and macroscopically. The result? Over 125 books, charts, and guides have been published and distributed all over the world.

“What I bring to this field,” asserts Perez, “is the experience of a fine artist with many shows and successes, yet no formal training in the area of medical illustration—except for the 40 years spent at CCA studying and producing over 50,000 four-by-seven-foot anatomy drawings in the classroom lectures.

“This has led to the creation of a body of published work that was not directed by a laboratory, doctor, or publisher, but was based on aesthetic principles of the painting studios.”

In Perez’s case, one can argue the art created the science.

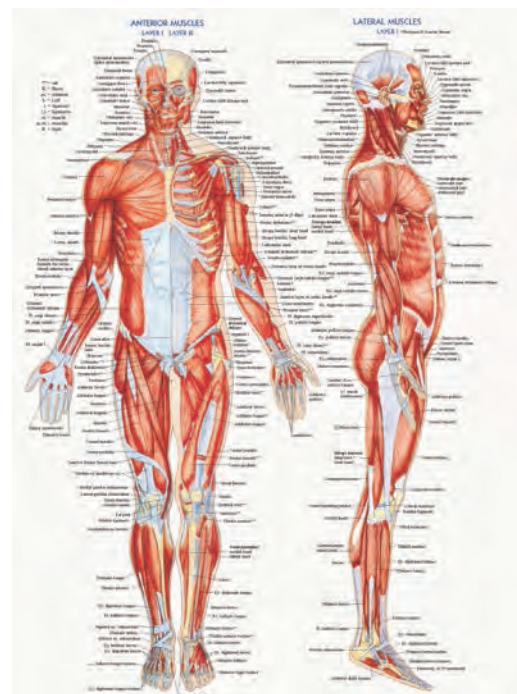
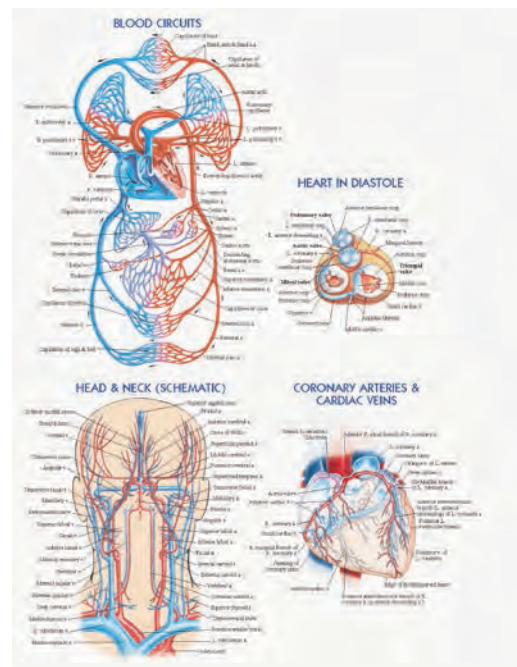
“I worked as my students worked—questioning what I saw and clarifying it for them. Through my drawing skills, I helped them to understand the subject. Many of my solutions to the questions of what I am seeing are original to the field because my fine art training pointed to graphics-based solutions that had yet to be discovered in technical anatomical imagery.”

DRAWING THE LARGER PICTURE

Vincent Perez was named Professor Emeritus upon his retirement in 2007. He has spent half a lifetime teaching as well as learning alongside what he estimates to be 3,000 students during

his tenure. He has honed his own skill sets while helping others shape theirs. And while it’s impossible for him to remember all the students he has influenced, it must be comforting to know many remember him.

Mignola recalls, “Vincent Perez really understood comics and what I was trying to do.”





Filmmaker Alex Gibney (left) and film Co-chair Rob Epstein

Mastering Filmmaking

BY JIM NORRENA

(MFA WRITING 2013)

CCA's Cinema Visionaries Lecture Series offers a popular lineup of public screenings and engaging Q&A sessions with today's most luminary filmmakers. The lecture series is also part of the undergraduate and graduate Film programs' curricula that gives students the invaluable opportunity to learn from the best directors in the industry.

Founded in 2010 with a grant from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the successful lecture series is funded with the generous support of Carla Emil and Rich Silverstein. Past guests include Lisa Cholodenko, Werner Herzog, Michael Moore, Gus Van Sant, Lucy Walker, and John Waters.

Perhaps even more relevant than the on-stage celebrity aspect of the Cinema Visionaries Lecture Series is what happens offstage: Film students have the unique opportunity to learn directly from true masters of cinema. CCA master classes bolster the learning experience for students by giving them access to groundbreaking directors—literally placing them in front of their mentors, where they can engage in real-world conversations about practices in the industry. Every Film student has the opportunity to hear directly from internationally renowned filmmakers who are at the top of their field.

Master class guests typically share how they got started in the business—including pitfalls to avoid—and they offer genuine advice on how to pursue a career in filmmaking.

ROB EPSTEIN ON BENEFITS OF MASTER CLASSES

The opportunity to work directly with both Hollywood and independent heavyweights offers the students studying film at CCA an exceptional platform to take their craft to the next level.

"The highlight of the entire Cinema Visionaries series is the master class for the students in the Film programs," explains **ROB EPSTEIN**, co-chair of the Film Program and MFA in Film, and himself a two-time Academy Award-winning director.

"For these students, to have an intimate session with ample opportunity to ask questions of and be in conversation with someone like Alex Gibney, it's a once-in-a-lifetime kind of thing. All of our [Cinema Visionaries] guests are at the very top of their fields and each has so much experience and knowledge to share. It's really a great privilege to have them on campus for both events."

SF INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL & ALEX GIBNEY

CCA and the San Francisco Film Society (SFFS) collaborated last May at the 58th annual San Francisco International Film Festival (SFIFF), the longest-running film festival in the United States and an essential showcase for international filmmakers, by co-presenting a Cinema Visionaries event that featured Academy Award-winning documentarian Alex Gibney (hailed by *Esquire* as "the most important documentarian of our time").

The Cinema Visionaries event took place at the Sundance Kabuki Cinemas on May 24 and featured Gibney in an in-depth career conversation with SFFS Executive Director Noah Cowan and Epstein. (Gibney's documentary *Steve Jobs: The Man in the Machine* opened the festival.) Known for his cinematic, gripping, and deeply insightful documentaries, Gibney has received the following awards: Oscar, Emmy, Grammy, Peabody, the DuPont-Columbia, the Independent Spirit, and the Writers Guild of America Award, to name just a few.

Gibney's film *Taxi to the Dark Side* won the Oscar for Best Documentary Feature in 2008. His documentary about Lance Armstrong's spectacular fall from grace, *The Armstrong Lie* (2013), was short-listed for the 2014 Academy Award. (The documentary was also nominated for the 2014 BAFTA Award, along with his 2013 film *We Steal Secrets: The Story of Wikileaks*.)

Because SFFS champions the world's finest films and filmmakers through programs anchored in and inspired by the spirit and values of the San Francisco Bay Area, the collaboration was a natural fit. ♦

Gibney giving a master class





A ROADMAP FOR SUCCESSFUL ONLINE LEARNING

Monday, November 22, 2004

Online learning is simplistic in theory, yet this evolving education platform, synonymous with “distance learning” or “e-learning,” offers proliferating benefits to its growing audience. Online education can boost one’s career or perhaps even inspire a career change—or both. Yet because of its unique properties, successful online learning requires you first scrutinize how well matched the course is to your unique learning needs.

Because studying habits vary from learner to learner, it’s essential to measure how adaptable you are to learning online. Obviously the better the match, the greater the chance for successful learning. The suggested preliminary steps listed below, while not exhaustive, will help determine the likelihood of personal success with online coursework.

Know the Course and Take a Test-Run

There’s only one difference between online and traditional courses—the method of delivery. Don’t be intimidated just because it’s new or unfamiliar. Often people discover they’re far better suited to distance learning than they ever imagined.

Before signing up, familiarize yourself with how online courses are structured by taking a sample quiz that measures one’s aptitude for learning online. (*OnlineLearning.net* is just one of numerous sites offering such quizzes.)

Update Your Tools

Whether on a PC or a Mac, you’ll need an Internet connection—preferably using a high-speed Internet Service Provider (ISP)—and at least 64 megabytes of RAM (memory). Because most home systems are older (and slower) than office systems, most online courses are designed with this in mind. Contact the site’s administrator before enrolling if you have specific questions pertaining to your system.

Review the Checklist

Review the following statements that illustrate whether you’re on the right track. The more affirmative responses you provide, the better your chance of adapting well to this new environment. (*The list is not exhaustive—but rather a general overview of key characteristics successful online learners possess*):

- Enjoy working independently
- Accept direct instructor feedback
- Access to computer and Internet
- Can meet deadlines
- Appreciate exchanging of ideas

A Roadmap for Successful Online Learning

- Understand common computer terms, such as “URL” and “hyperlink”
- Possess basic typing skills
- Comfortable asking questions and having one-on-one dialogues with instructor
- Curious to explore new things
- Enjoy learning in a diverse “classroom” setting
- General computer skills
- Responsible study habits (setting own schedule)
- Ten–fifteen hours per week (on average) available for study
- Understanding online coursework is not inherently easier than traditional coursework
- Effective writing skills
- Desire to read material online

Choose Your Best-Suited Course

Now that you know you have what it takes to succeed, understand different forms of online courses exist. For example, *synchronous* courses offer immediate participation between students and instructor in real time; *asynchronous* courses allow for interaction over delayed periods, which can provide greater flexibility and, perhaps, more thoughtful exchange of ideas.

Courses are *student-directed* (passive facilitator) or *self-paced* (independent study); *instructor-led* (instructor directed) or *instructor-facilitated* (instructor provides commentary only). Identifying course structure first facilitates choosing the learning style that’s best suited to you—and the better the match, the greater the success.

Read the Instrument Panel

Once you identify the best-structured course, to be successful you then must assess whether the class incorporates those elements that foster student interactively: bulletin boards, chat rooms, discussion boards, video-conferencing, and other multimedia that build classroom community. (*Caution: the more multimedia a course offers, the greater the minimum technical requirements become.*)

Chat rooms and bulletin boards allow students to post live or static messages, respectively, for expanded discussion offline. Online courses that offer a greater means for communication between students (and instructor) are key to successful learning. The anonymity allows you to speak your mind without intimidation, making conversations lively and enriching. Private one-on-one email exchange encourages useful feedback. Chat rooms also offer students with visual barriers or who are easily distracted in traditional classrooms a place to thrive because they accommodate greater concentration.

(Remember—bulletin boards and discussion boards aid instructors in assessing a student’s overall participation and/or enrollment, so be sure to document your contributions frequently.)

Time Management—Power for the Course

Monitoring and scheduling your time effectively is the greatest ingredient for personal success with online learning. Regardless of how the course is structured, your participation is

mandatory—meaning *you* have to schedule your availability to ensure regular “attendance” and participation. If you’re prone to procrastinating when not on a schedule, online courses probably won’t be successful,

Drive your own desired results with these effective time-management skills that keep your online learning on track:

- 🕒 Set time aside throughout the week to participate in discussions and ask questions
- 🕒 Schedule time to match your personality—that is, when you study best
- 🕒 Monitor how motivated you are
- 🕒 Apply self-discipline as necessary
- 🕒 Allow for “off-line” writing, researching, and studying time
- 🕒 Print longer documents for easier reading
- 🕒 Read all comments to avoid duplicating responses
- 🕒 Develop relationships with other students
- 🕒 Use word-processing programs for longer responses to ensure accuracy
- 🕒 Report technical difficulties immediately to administrator and/or instructor
- 🕒 Motivate yourself to do assignments or prepare for online discussions

Online Learning is a Two-Way Street

Ensuring online learning success means showing up—not literally, of course—but rather being present for self-growth. Education is an investment in oneself. Expect back only what you put in, and don’t treat it as a spectator sport.

Remember—successful online learning is measured simply by your participation; accomplishment of goals; taking responsibility for assignments; providing peers with feedback and support; identifying limitations, and so forth. In short, it’s an *exchange* of ideas and information.

Don’t Give Up Before the Finish Line

Each course is a unique experience. Try a different course if you don’t have the success you desire. Choose carefully. Online learning approaches are vast... if you go off track, choose another course.

—*Jim Norrena is the former senior academic marketing specialist for Peachpit Press. He most recently served as senior editor for John F. Kennedy University, and currently is an instructor at Media Alliance in San Francisco. He continues to write and edit for Bay Area publishers. Email to jim@typosuction.com*

EAST BAY EXPRESS

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Theater

In a posted Sundance Channel interview, when asked what stories or topics need to be covered today, prolific playwright, screenwriter, actor, director, and producer Craig Lucas responded, “America’s collective flight from reality.”

Lucas is one of today’s most prolific and celebrated theatrical and cinematic talents, whose trajectory honors include New York Film Critics Award for Best Screenplay (“The Secret Lives of Dentists”); Sundance Audience Award (“Longtime Companion”); Excellence in Literature Award from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; LAAMBDA Literary Award; Tony Award nomination for Best Book of a Musical (*The Light in the Piazza*); Pulitzer Prize for Drama (nominated: *Prelude to a Kiss*); Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Play (nominated: *Missing Persons*, *Prelude to a Kiss*, *Reckless*); and Tony Award for Best Drama nomination (nominated: *Prelude to a Kiss*).

Berkeley’s Aurora Theatre Company has proudly announced the Bay Area premiere of Craig Lucas’s post 9/11-inspired, off-Broadway comedy-suspense-drama, *Small Tragedy* (2004 OBIE award recipient). He has satiated his desire to portray America’s collective flight from reality (and then some), and now director Kent Nicholson braves to envision it.

Although *Small Tragedy*’s play-within-a-play-motif certainly isn’t making its stage debut, this carefully impastoed drama offers as much on the surface as it does with each underlying layer—not unlike the Greek tragedy *Oedipus Rex* itself, which Lucas masterfully utilizes as a provocative backdrop.

Small Tragedy features six actors rehearsing a new adaptation of *Oedipus*. Yet when the inspired director begins to fuse his personal and professional stages, his mysterious past unfurls layer by layer—on stage and off—highlighting the complex intricacies of trust and deception, and, yes, tragedy.

The Aurora’s “chamber theater” atmosphere is idyllic for Lucas’s seemingly cacophonous, overlapping dialogue that requires sifting through the details of conversations (the “noise”) to extract the relevant information (the “message”). However, the playwright’s genius is evident in that the message unfalteringly manages to upstage all else. (*Hint: wait until the ride ends before asking how far you’ve traveled.*)

Aurora Theatre will undoubtedly broaden its audience appeal with such exciting and provocative programming. Yet established patrons can rest assured the same caliber performance that is indicative of this uniquely intimate setting is alive and well.

Small Tragedy opens Thursday, April 13 at the Aurora (2081 Addison St., Berkeley) and runs through May 14. Tickets: \$28/\$38/\$45 (preview/regular/opening). Box Office: 510-843-4822, or visit online: www.auroratheatre.org.

— **Jim Norrena**

Marius, Marius, Marius!

*It's a play; it's a film; it's a film about a play—it's **Marius**... and it's marvelous!*

Aurora Theatre boldly showcases working-class life in Marseilles, France, with its world-premiere translation of celebrated writer/filmmaker/director Marcel Pagnol's *Marius*, an endearing, lyrical tour de force directed by house Artistic Director Tom Ross.

Originally produced in France in 1929 with a record-setting one thousand performances, Zack Ragow offers the first English-language translation of Pagnol's play in more than 70 years. *Marius* is the first installment of what is affectionately coined the "Fanny trilogy" (aka the "Marseilles trilogy"), a collection that defiantly countered the common boulevard comedies *du jour* with heartfelt working-class sensibility. Each flavorful character—Cesar, Marius, Fanny and Panisse—lives on in Pagnol's subsequent plays, *Fanny* and *Cesar*, which garnered similar popularity in both ticket sales and reviews. (*Legend reveals these are the sources of inspiration for how famous restaurateur Alice Waters and her associates named their famous Berkeley restaurants.*)

Translations often risk losing a certain *je ne sais quoi* from the original, yet Aurora's *Marius* promises to be impervious; the warmth of spirit, coupled with indelible themes—youthful loving, longing, and yearning—depicted among the members of Pagnol's Marseilles seaport community are transcendent. Ragow's script, under Ross's direction, is certain to honor Pagnol's themes that gently brush over the stage canvass, leaving a long-lasting, rich and visual tapestry of characters and themes superbly suited for theater... and film audiences alike. (Yes, *Marius* enthusiasts have a double-decker treat in store, as Pacific Film Archive has included in its Marcel Pagnol's Provence film retrospective Alexander Korda's 1931 film "Marius.")

While Pagnol's "Fanny Trilogy" was specifically written for the stage, the success of the plays allowed the playwright to transition from theater to screen his love and interest in sub-industrialized south France culture. Unlike avant-garde French cinematographers, Pagnol was more concerned with romantic realism that emphasized believable dialogue. The transition to film was seamless. Whether you see it as a play or a film, or both, *Marius* remains a must-see work of art. I think some might call it *l'oeuvre d'arte*. "Darn good show!" works for me. *Marius* plays Aurora Theatre (2081 Addison Street in Berkeley) November 11 to December 18. Tickets: \$28 preview; \$38 regular; and limited \$45 opening. Box Office: 510-843-4822 or www.auroratheatre.org.

Marius (French w/ English subtitles) plays at Pacific Film Archive (2575 Bancroft Way) Saturday, December 17 at 6pm. Admission: \$4 Cal students; \$8 general. Information: 510-642-1412 or www.bampfa.berkeley.edu. — **Jim Norrena**



Comedic Direction Bodes Well for Merchant Ivory

Dianne Wiest snuggles into her role as a bored and narcissistic opera diva in Merchant Ivory Film's **MERCİ DOCTEUR REY**, with aplomb and grace. She is Elisabeth Beaumont, visiting Paris to perform the celebrated "Turandot" and see Thomas, her Parisian son. When asked in an interview about her son, Elisabeth responds demurely, "Yes I have a son... but he doesn't sing the 'Turandot.' I do." Add one Vanessa Redgrave (playing herself!) and all the makings for an elaborate, dramatic, and worldly cinematic experience—typical of this celebrated production team—fall into your lap.

Absent, however, is the *haute couture* typical of this celebrated filmmaking team, as writer and director Andrew Lituack cleverly departs from previous successes (*HOWARD'S END* and *A ROOM WITH A VIEW*). This is a refreshingly eclectic and farcical romp—a hodgepodge of mistaken identities, restless male hustlers, a lesbian sidekick, irresistible pot brownies, moral (not oral) narcissism, and Maud, a film voiceover actress who upholds a rather painfully vicarious identification to actress Vanessa Redgrave.

When Elisabeth reveals some shocking news to her lonely, gay son (Stanislaus Merhar), he goes to therapy and inadvertently meets Maud, pretending to be Docteur Rey—as the doctor had just died during Maud's visit! Despite their personal challenges, they forge a friendship that opens the doors to the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel.

MERCİ DOCTEUR REY dir Andrew Lituack

2003 France 93 min 35mm

(French and English with English subtitles)

Reviewed by **Jim Norrena**, staff program editor
Frameline, Inc.—27th San Francisco International LGBT Film Festival Program
June 12–29, 2003



Beautiful Women *Schöne Frauen*

Tuesday June 21 | 6:00 pm | Victoria

\$8 members | \$9 general | BEAU21V

Thursday June 23 | 9:15 pm | Parkway

\$8 members | \$9 general | BEAU23P

German director and writer Sathyan Ramesh says, "BEAUTIFUL WOMEN is a film for women who like women and for men who love women."

Five independent actors meet at an audition and discover none actually wants to be in the film. So they embark on a single-day journey, chock-full of drinking and persistent questioning that eventually uncovers personal secrets: a hidden pregnancy, an unfaithful boyfriend, a faltering lesbian relationship, a failed career, and even an unforeseen connection between two of the women that threatens to jeopardize everything.

Each of the women suppresses a mystery that makes her vulnerable, and, when exposed, leaves raw emotion — laughter, jealousy, desire, anger, and betrayal. For five women who start off as guarded and frightened, insecure and tentative, theirs is a journey that, after altogether too many sobering observations, develops into something more.

The film is set apart from run-of-the-mill dyke drama in that it neither placates its audience with fanciful illusions nor abandons its characters in despair. Realism is balanced by hope. Ramesh uses five uniquely beautiful women to reflect this balance — as if holding a crystal to the light and balancing the brilliant array of colors, having each dance across the wall.

— JIM NORRENA

BEAUTIFUL WOMEN dir Sathyan Ramesh 2003 Germany 87 min
35mm in German with English subtitles

Eligible for the Levi's® First Feature Award



Bitchy, Witty & Wise: The Films of David Weissman

Saturday June 25 | 3:45 pm | Roxie

\$6 members | \$7 general | BITC25R

Producer and co-director of the hit 2002 documentary THE COCKETTES longtime San Franciscan David Weissman presents a program of his award-winning short films and a discussion of his work. Dating back to 1984, Weissman's films include drag queen comedies, all-singing films, HIV prevention PSAs, a full-length documentary, and one of the Festival's best-loved trailers. Ranging from 30 seconds to 100 minutes in length, these diverse and entertaining films reflect David's offbeat humor and politics, as well as the changing currents of queer life in San Francisco over the past two decades.

Weissman's films have been broadcast internationally and have been featured at countless film festivals including Berlin, Sundance, and Telluride. Weissman was the first recipient, in 1990, of the prestigious Sundance Institute/Mark Silverman Fellowship for New Producers, and was a 1992 recipient of the San Francisco Foundation's James T. Phelan Art Award in Film.

Some of the films to be included in the program are BEAUTIES WITHOUT A CAUSE, 976, COMPLAINTS, and an excerpt from THE COCKETTES.

APPROXIMATE RUNNING TIME: 90 min



Blackmail Boy *Oxigono*

Sunday June 19 | 9:45 pm | Victoria

\$8 members | \$9 general | BLAC19V

Christos is a bad boy...a very bad boy. He wants as much action as he can get his hands on, from sex and drugs to cool new toys and a hot nightclub. So, naturally, he has both a girlfriend and an older woman on the side. There's also Giorgos, a middle-aged bureaucrat who wields considerable power in their small town, with whom Christos runs away to Athens from time to time, and from whom he accepts lavish gifts. But corruption runs deep in Christos's family and in their claustrophobic little town, and the situation is about to explode. In the deliciously labyrinthine BLACKMAIL BOY, Christos is just the flashpoint for a series of sex, lies, land deals, and junkyard blowjobs.

It all comes down to "the cistern plot," a valuable parcel of land that Christos's mother, Magda, doesn't want to sell and that Giorgos has some control over. His sister's greedy husband, Stelios, decides to cash it in nonetheless, so he seduces his mother-in-law and blackmails Giorgos about his secret sexual relationship with Christos. The crosses and double-crosses go awry, as they almost always do, and everyone is forced to make decisions that bring several families tumbling down. Only Christos, the baddest one of all, appears to have any chance of survival in the end.

BLACKMAIL BOY plays out like a Greek tragedy reimagined as a melodrama by Pedro Almodóvar, or maybe "The OC" set on the Aegean coast. Either way, this sexy, over-the-top potboiler is not to be missed.

— COREY EUBANKS

BLACKMAIL BOY dirs Thanasis Papathanasiou & Michalis Reppas
2003 Greece 100 min 35mm in Greek with English subtitles

CO-PRESENTED BY La Lesbian Film Festival

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Curve



Blood, Sweat, and Glitter

Saturday June 18 | 8:00 pm | Roxie

\$8 members | \$9 general | BLO018R

BLOOD, SWEAT, AND GLITTER is not unlike a documentary about professional sports—it highlights the unrelenting stamina of the players, the behind-the-scenes complexities of choreographing each move, and, most important of all, the brutally competitive aspect in which winner takes all. Nothing is as fiercely combative as when contestants square off to become San Francisco's next Miss Trannyshack!

Local filmmaker Sasha Aicken shares his backstage vantage point of the Regency Center's main floor ballroom. Through his lens, many of today's *crème de la crème* in bohemian harlotry (er, I mean artistry) become as oversized on screen as they think of themselves on stage: Heklina (famed Trannyshack founder), Syphilis Diller, Diva Dan, Peggy L'eggs, Ana Conda, Cookie Dough, Falsetta Knockers, and more random trash than a bulky collection day in the Castro!

Behind the glamour, beyond the costumes, real stories reveal the fastidious-bordering-on-compulsive drive to win which fuels each contender. While the performances mesmerize audiences and judges alike, they're just the tits on the iceberg; the true pomp and circumstance of this dyed-in-the-wool San Francisco event is in selecting a winner—a process almost as shocking and ball-busting as the actual performances on stage.

(Disclaimer: the program note writer failed to place in 1999's Queen of the Bay contest.)

— JIM NORRENA

BLOOD, SWEAT, AND GLITTER dir Sasha Aicken 2005 USA 80 min video

BOTH

Wednesday June 22 | 8:15 pm | Victoria

\$8 members | \$9 general | BOTH22V

Rebeca Duarte (played by Jacky Parker) is a strong woman and resolute bisexual. Kicking ass in a flaming Godzilla costume or jumping out of a car in high heels and a big red wig are all a part of her everyday work as a stunt double for independent action films shot in San Francisco. Drawn to the risk and adrenaline-rush that her job provides, outsiders think Rebeca must have it all together. But Rebeca is still looking for something more.

When she receives an unexpected package from an aunt, Rebeca's neatly wrapped life begins to unravel. The package contains a photo album of her family in Peru, including pictures of her brother, who died before Rebeca could know him. The photos set off memories that cannot be silenced. As she follows the leads, Rebeca learns a truth about herself that shakes her to the core: the brother she was always told about was, in fact, herself. Rebeca learns of her childhood diagnosis as a hermaphrodite and the ensuing clitorrectomy that turned her "officially" into a girl, and left her without the ability to have an orgasm.

A compelling and skillful telling of a necessary story, BOTH is based on the experiences of the filmmaker as well as those of many other intersex adults.

— CINDY M. EMCH

BOTH dir Lisset Barcellos 2004 USA & Peru 87 min video

Eligible for the Levi's® First Feature Award

Boys by the Bay

Saturday June 25 | 4:00 pm | Victoria

\$6 members | \$7 general | BOYB25V

Two brothers discover all is not as it appears when it comes to matters of the heart in KATYDID. We continue our sibling theme with PORNO BONDAGE, in which twin sexologists Marsha and Bibi do some important research at the making of a porn film. A visit to a medical marijuana club in San Francisco becomes a tribute to a deceased friend in C.H.A.M.P.

In the meditative TO HOLD A HEART, two men, separated by decades in age and thousands of miles in home and culture, find each other at a not-so-chance encounter at the gym. One of the last readings by Thom Gunn, internationally acclaimed Bay Area poet, is captured in DOUBLE PORTRAIT.

ABRIDGED explores the icons of one gay man's life as he considers the Bay Bridge as metaphor for transitions, working, and sex. KISSES THAT MOVE YOU explores the love between two men and the events that take place through memories. Reminding him of the disastrous relationship with ex-lover Dan, Andrew tries to remove a ring from his finger in REMOVAL.

The PORNO BONDAGE twins are back, and this time their research takes them to a sex club in GLORY HOLE. There's no better way to conclude than with THE FAIRY TALE, in which a superficial gay king loses everything, and is forced to find his heart.

KATYDID dir Scott Boswell 2004 USA 13 min 35mm PORNO BONDAGE dirs David Cutler & Mark Ewert 1999 USA 3 min video C.H.A.M.P. dir Eric Smith 2005 USA 5 min video TO HOLD A HEART dir Michael Wallin 2005 USA 12 min video THOM GUNN — DOUBLE PORTRAIT dir Rudy Lemcke 2004 USA 5 min video ABRIDGED dir Mark McCormick 2005 USA 8 min video kisses that move you dir Elizebeth Chávez 2004 USA 4 min REMOVAL dir Jo J. Barker 2004 USA 4 min video GLORY HOLE dirs David Cutler & Mark Ewert 1999 USA 3 min video THE FAIRY TALE dir Billy Clift 2005 USA 18 min video

TOTAL RUNNING TIME: 75 min

CO-PRESENTED BY Bay Area Video Coalition

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CO-PRESENTED BY Intersex Society of North America

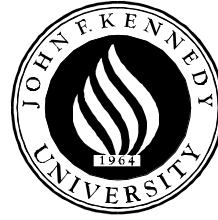
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JFK University and DVC Embark on Seamless Academic Alliance

Pleasant Hill, CA, July 26—John F. Kennedy University President Dr. Steven A. Stargardter met with Diablo Valley College President Dr. Mark Edelstein Tuesday, July 21, to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between the two prominent Pleasant Hill academic institutions. The purpose of the agreement is to share resources and map out ways to facilitate the enrollment process from DVC to JFK University.

Also in attendance at the event, showing support and enthusiasm, were JFK University Academic Vice President Dr. Irving Berkowitz and newly appointed Associate Vice President of Enrollment Services K. Sue Duncan and DVC Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Alice Murillo.

Both Drs. Stargardter and Edelstein stated a commitment to improving the collaborative efforts between the two institutions in order to provide the Pleasant Hill and surrounding communities with a more cohesive academic program that will reach an even greater number of students within the community. Edelstein commented, “This is an excellent example of a public community college and a private university coming together to provide greater access at a time when public educational opportunities are being reduced by budget constraints.”

The agreement essentially means DVC will endorse to its students JFK University’s Bachelor of Arts Completion Programs (including its Bachelor of Science in Business Administration) and graduate-level studies. In exchange, DVC students will benefit from additional student resources, including a \$25,000 scholarship pledge for eligible students who enroll in JFK University after completing their course work at DVC. According to Dr. Stargardter, “the establishment of the DVC Scholarships is only a first step in the partnership between our two institutions. Articulated and co-matriculated programs, joint grant proposals and the sharing of faculty resources are other areas the schools will begin exploring.”

With both JFK University and Diablo Valley College leaders committed to providing students with new and forthcoming resources, students can expect to find greater academic choices at hand. Additionally, the surrounding Pleasant Hill community can offer to its residents an appealing, affordable and pragmatic approach to pursuing higher education.

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Reaffirming Affirmative Action

Two recent Supreme Court decisions have ensured that affirmative action will continue to play a central role in creating equal educational opportunities for minority students at public colleges and universities for many years to come. Though controversial from their inception almost 40 years ago, current law upholds the value of diversity in public educational institutions while rejecting certain blanket quotas and formulaic policies designed to ensure such diversity.

The Case for Affirmative Action in University Admissions attests to the critical role of affirmative action in creating diverse public institutions, describes the turbulent debates regarding such programs, and clarifies the guidelines that will govern affirmative action policies in education in the immediate future.

Recounting the history of the affirmative action debate, Laird discusses the failure of alternative socio-economic “percent plans,” the impact of anti-affirmative action spokesmen, such as Ward Connerly and Dinesh D’Souza, and the legacy of California’s divisive Proposition 209. The book concludes with suggestions for practical affirmative action policies within the guidelines of the law and the practical realities of current public opinion.

About the Author

Director of Undergraduate Admission at the University of California, Berkeley for six years and admissions professional for fifteen, Bob Laird has labored at the eye of the storm surrounding admissions and social policy issues. He is recognized nationally among university administrators as an advocate for affirmative action and an authority on its legal implementation.

Book information

The Case for Affirmative Action in University Admissions by Bob Laird

(with a foreword by the Rev. Jesse Jackson)

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