

MFA SCREENWRITING RESIDENCY  
January 9-13, 2023  
Schedule – all times Eastern Standard Time

**Sunday, January 8**

Dinner  
6:00pm  
Live Wire  
227 W Dougherty St  
Athens, GA

All residency meetings will take place at:

**Special Collections Library  
Auditorium (Room 271)  
300 South Hull Street  
Athens, Georgia 30602**

There will be breakfast each day from 8:00am in Room 285, Special Collections Library.

**NOTES**

- 1. Students doing Table Reads are responsible for casting their actors from among other students, faculty and guests. Please email ASAP a PDF of your ten table read pages to Brittany Shivers at [Brittany.Shivers@uga.edu](mailto:Brittany.Shivers@uga.edu).**
- 2. Students doing pitches may use Power Point visuals but are not required to do so.**
- 3. Although not required, mask wearing is encouraged.**

**Monday January 9**

9:00am to 10:00am  
All students, faculty and guests  
Introductions  
Moderator: Nate Kohn

10:00am to 11:00am  
All students, faculty and guests  
Panel Discussion – Panelists: Faculty and Guests  
“State of the Industry: Streaming Cutbacks, Indie Feature Landscape and other Follies”

11:00am to 11:15am  
Break

11:15am to 12:30pm

Lecture

All students

Kristin Palombo:

“How do you go from graduate school to making a living as a professional writer? *A guide to bridging the gap from student to employed TV / film writer.*”

12:30pm to 2:00pm

Lunch

**STUDENT PITCHES: All students, faculty and guests should attend. Faculty mentors introduce their students.**

2:00pm to 3:00pm

Lecture/discussion

All Students

Tamlin Hall:

“Developing and Funding your first feature film”

3:00pm to 4:00pm

STUDENT PITCHES

Lela Gray (Ramin)

Trisha Horvath (Tamlin)

4:00pm to 5:00pm

MENTORS MEET WITH THEIR GROUPS

(John Strauss’ students caucus with Ramin)

## **Tuesday January 10**

**TABLE READS: All students, faculty and guests should attend. Faculty mentors introduce their students.**

9:00am to 9:30am

Taylor Potter Table Read (Connie)

9:30am to 10:00am

Kristen Palombo Table Read (Connie)

10:00am to 10:30am

Travis Jones Table Read (Connie)

10:30am to 10:45am

Break

10:45am to 12:00pm

Lecture  
All students  
Michell Davis, Esq.  
“What Screenwriters Should Know about the Law”

12:00pm to 1:30pm  
Lunch

1:30pm to 2:30pm  
Lecture  
All students  
Darren Dean:  
“Screenwriting Feng Shui”

2:30pm to 2:45pm  
Break

2:45pm to 4:45pm  
Screening and Q&A with producer Darren Dean and attorney Michell Davis  
All students  
“Kinyarwanda” (2011) 101min

### **Wednesday January 11**

**TABLE READS: All students, faculty and guests should attend. Faculty mentors introduce their students.**

9:00am to 9:30am  
Carter Eldridge (Hadjii)

9:30am to 10:00am  
Daniel Junge Table Read (Hadjii)

10:00am to 10:15am  
Break

10:15am to 12:00pm  
Lecture/Discussion  
All students  
James Ponsoldt:  
“The Writing/Directing Life”

12:00pm to 2:00pm  
Lunch

2:00pm to 4:30pm  
Screening and Q&A with writer/director James Ponsoldt  
“Smashed” (2012) 81min

5:00pm to 6:30pm  
Drinks (optional)  
Cash Bar  
Creature Comforts  
271 W Hancock Ave, Athens, GA 30601

### **Thursday January 12**

9:00am to 10:00am  
MENTORS MEET WITH THEIR GROUPS  
(Strauss students caucus with Ramin)

**TABLE READS: All students, faculty and guests should attend. Faculty mentors introduce their students.**

10:00am to 10:30am  
Darion Wilson (Tamlin)

10:30am to 11:00am  
Reagan Woods (Tamlin)

11:00 to 11:15am  
Break

11:15am to 12:15pm  
Lecture  
All students  
Dr. Richard Neupert  
“Indie Scripts and Openings: The Primacy Effect”

12:15pm to 1:45pm  
Lunch

1:45pm to 2:45pm  
Lecture/Discussion  
All students  
Ramin Serry  
“Abbott Elementary Scene by Scene”

2:45pm to 3:00pm  
Break

3:00pm to 5:00pm  
Screening and Q&A with producer Darren Dean  
“Tangerine” (2015) 88min

### **Friday January 13**

**STUDENT PITCHES: All students, faculty and guests should attend. Faculty mentors introduce their students.**

9:00am to 11:00am  
STUDENT PITCHES  
Daniel Cox (John/Ramin)  
Audra Davison (John/Ramin)  
Bret Miller (John/Ramin)  
Caroline Bonds (Hadjji)

11:00am to 11:15am  
Break

11:15 to 12:30pm  
Lecture  
All Students  
Kristen and Amy McGary  
"From Script to Screen and Everything In-between"

12:30pm to 2:00pm  
Lunch

2:00pm to 3:00pm  
Discussion  
Residency Post Mortem  
All students, faculty, guests

3:00pm to 4:00pm  
MENTORS MEET WITH THEIR GROUPS  
(Strauss students caucus with Ramin)

4:00pm to 6:00pm  
CLOSING DRINKS

## **GUEST SPEAKERS**

### **MICHELL DAVIS, ESQ.**

Michell Davis is an experienced entertainment attorney who has represented writers, directors and producers in the film industry for nearly 20 years. She started her legal career as a patent attorney, but quickly shifted to focusing on other areas of intellectual property law, namely copyright and trademark law. Her love for the creative arts gave her a great foundation for establishing and growing an entertainment law practice, mainly representing independent filmmakers. Her law practice has expanded to include corporate law, but representing artists continues to be her love.

Michell understands the often overlooked pitfalls in the script to screen process. Her experience and expertise in business, contracts, and copyright law have proven to be the right mix of skill and practical experience to successively guide her clients. She represents commercial, narrative and documentary filmmakers for television and film and has had the pleasure of sharing in her clients' tremendous success through the years.

Most recently, living and working by the mantra, "don't wait, create," in 2021 Michell produced her first short film. And as a Meisner trained actress, she has spent time on the stage and in front of the camera, which has further shaped her view of the creative elements needed for a successful production. As she steps into producing her own projects, she hopes to build a body of work that reflects her commitment to telling life-changing stories.

Michell is a combat veteran. She graduated from the US Military Academy and achieved her MBA and law degree from Duke University and The University of Alabama, respectively. Roll Tide!

### **DARREN DEAN**

**Darren Dean** is an American producer, writer and director. A four-time Independent Spirit Award nominee, Dean is responsible for producing the award-winning features *Prince of Broadway* (which he co-wrote with his long-time collaborator, director Sean Baker), *Kinyarwanda*; *tangerine*; and *The Florida Project*. He also produced the Clio Award-Winning short *Snowbird*, as well as *Pioneer High*. He has been nominated for an NAACP Image Award (*Kinyarwanda*) and has won the 2016 GLAAD Media Award for Outstanding Feature (*tangerine*).

Most recently, he produced the Sundance favorites *The Infiltrators* (Sundance Audience Award: NEXT) and *Premature* (Independent Spirit Award nomination). His new award-winning LGBTQ+ wrestling documentary, *Out in the Ring*, is currently on the festival circuit.

In 2016, his body of work was recognized with a nomination for the Independent Spirit Piaget Producers Award. In addition to having several television series in the works, he is producing the soon-to-be-announced *Victor* (dir Chris Brown); *Jack Be Nimble* (dir Alex Thompson); *Yellow Girl and Me* (dir Isabella Issa); *End Stage of Stars* (dir Rachel Mason) and *Barracudas at the*

*Table* (dir Erin Elders). Dean is also directing his first features in 2023 and 2024, *No Sugar Tonight* and *Truth. Lies. Within*.

## **TAMLIN HALL**

Tamlin Hall earned his MFA from UCLA's Screenwriting Program, considered among the finest in the country. Hall studied acting at Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago and is a member of the WGA and SAG/AFTRA.

Hall has over 15 years of experience in the arts as an actor, writer, director, and producer. His feature film directorial debut, *Holden On*, garnered acclaim for its authentic depiction of mental illness and addiction. The film won awards across the country and was nominated by the Georgia Film Critics Association for the Oglethorpe Award for Excellence in Georgia Cinema.

Hall founded the social impact 501©3 nonprofit arts organization IAMHOLDENON. Based in Atlanta, Hall's nonprofit currently produces the uplifting documentary series, *Hope Givers* (Georgia Public Broadcasting/PBS Learning Media).

Hall has various narrative and documentary projects in development. He was recently selected as a coveted Mandela Washington Fellowship Reciprocal Exchange Awardee through a documentary film he is attached to direct in Kenya.

## **AMY MCGARY and KRISTEN MCGARY**

As a writer, producer, Emmy Award-winning decorator, and designer, **Amy McGary** brings a unique perspective of experience to all of her endeavors. Her work in the industry has included everything from small independent films to television movies and series, Academy Award and blockbuster features.

Along with her sister, Kristen, Amy is co-owner of Screen Lloyd ([screenlloyd.com](http://screenlloyd.com)) – a launching pad for their own creative ventures as well as an avenue of support for an ever-evolving community of writers and artists. With Screen Lloyd, the McGarys have seen success as Executive Producers on the coming-of-age feature, *Jinn*, and Co-Producers on the profoundly intimate documentary, *Homemade*, which follows the journey of a decorated marine suffering from PTSD. The McGarys' family feature, *The Adventures of Ociece Nash*, for which they co-wrote the adaption and produced, and directed by Kristen, has been recently re-released by Bridgestone Multimedia Group after the film's initial distribution by 20th Century Fox.

Amy's writing ventures include her recently penned crime-thriller for series entitled *Davenport*, set in the wintry, isolated world of Western New York. Co-writing projects with Kristen include the one-hour drama pilot for series *East Point*, and one-hour pilot *Ociece Nash*, based on their feature film. Feature screenplays also co-written with Kristen include *Flannery*, based on the life of southern author Flannery O'Connor. Amy has also co-written the faith-based film *Awake O'*

Sleeper with Shandra McDonald and the dramatic feature Proxy, with novelist Michele Moore set against the backdrop of Wall Street.

Amy's career in the Art Department includes Melissa McCarthy's Life of the Party and The Boss, Ride Along I and II, We Are Marshall, Drumline, Glory, Driving Miss Daisy, and the very first Terminator. Her episodic television work includes Rectify, Drop Dead Diva, and the acclaimed I'll Fly Away. Outside of the film industry, Amy's design company was responsible for designing the "Deutsche Haus" for the Olympics in Atlanta and creating a 9/11 Memorial for Homeland Security's training center in Brunswick, Georgia, which incorporated a beam from the World Trade Center.

Amy has participated in numerous film production and financing panels and has been a guest speaker at various Rotary Clubs, High Schools, and Colleges. Amy was a past board member of Women In Film and Television Atlanta.

**Kristen McGary's** feature film directorial debut, *The Adventures of Ocjee Nash*, starring Skyler Day, Keith Carradine, Mare Winningham and Lucas Till, was distributed by 20th Century Fox for Home Video, and by HBO Central Europe. Recently it has been re-released by BMG (Bridgestone Media Group) appearing on such platforms as Amazon Prime and YouTube TV.

The script for *The Adventures of Ocjee Nash* won the Southeastern Mediamakers Award from the Atlanta Film Society. The completed feature of *Ocjee* won an iParenting Media Award and was awarded five doves, the highest honor, by the Dove Foundation. *Ocjee* was also named in the top twenty sales of family feature films for home video rental in Video Business Magazine (January 2006).

McGary's most recent independent short as director, entitled *Rain*, which she directed and photographed, was awarded a 2016 Accolade Award for Excellence: Women Filmmakers, and also was selected along with thirty international films to be presented worldwide in the Women in Film International Shortcase (2016). *Rain* was also the official selection for a program sponsored by Actor's Express theater (Atlanta) that offers independent and emerging artists space and opportunity to present their work for an audience with the support of a professional theatre. *Rain* won the Audience Award at Women in Film and Television Atlanta's 2014 Showcase and was featured in both the Golden Door International Festival (New Jersey) and the Macon Film Festival.

McGary produced, directed and shot *The Intruder Within*, a Public Service Announcement for the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence. With *Intruder*, Kristen McGary was nominated for a 2008 Southeastern Emmy Award for Outstanding Achievement in Directing: Short Form. *The Intruder Within* also won a 2006 CINE Golden Eagle Award for its category. Kristen McGary is one of a handful of directors also shooting their own work.

Kristen McGary was listed among the top women filmmakers in the Southeast, USA, Southern Screen Report, and was featured in Kathy Janich's article for In Town Magazine on "People to Watch". She is in the Directors Guild of America, Directors Category. Sister team Amy McGary and Kristen McGary were awarded "Best Girl Power in Film" in Atlanta's Creative Loafing, 2004. Kristen McGary is the subject of Naomi Glauberman's June 2001 article "Dish: My Dinner With" for the New Times (LA).

Kristen most recently completed (2021) writing her first magical realism novel in a Young Adult trilogy. Her short screenplay *Wed* was a semi-finalist in the Atlanta Film Festival 2019. She has also written a short screenplay entitled *sensu eminenti*, a feature adaptation of *Hamlet* set

in the floods of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and a female detective romp called *Poker Face*, as well as worked as script doctor to a multitude of screenplays in order to serve as a champion for other writers. Writing credits with Amy McGary include the pilot series and bible for *East Point*, a feature entitled *Flannery* about the iconic southern author Flannery O'Connor and a feature screen adaptation and pilot series of *The Adventures of Ociece Nash* based on the Milam McGraw Propst novel, *A Flower Blooms on Charlotte Street*.

Credits in the Art Department include Bruce Beresford's *Driving Miss Daisy*, and Ed Zwick's *Glory*, both nominated for Academy Awards for Art Direction. Credits also include scenic artist/on-set/dresser work on James Cameron's *Terminator*.

In 1998, Tom Brown interviewed Kristen McGary on TNT's show *Rough Cut* for spearheading a campaign to include "Film" as a category in the Pulitzer Prizes. Roger Ebert, Robert Altman, and Kenneth Branagh were also featured speakers in this segment. McGary is also mentioned in an October 1997 article by Roger Ebert for the Chicago Sun Times for her efforts in this area. Kristen McGary is a Past President of Women in Film and Television, Atlanta (2007). McGary presided on the Board of Directors of WIFTA (2005/2006). McGary interviewed internationally recognized film director James Ivory of Merchant Ivory Productions called "Conversations with: James Ivory", and also interviewed notable film critic Eleanor Ringel Gillespie as part of WIFTA programs.

McGary graduated summa cum laude with a Master of Fine Arts degree in film directing from the University of Georgia, and received her ABJ in Radio, TV and Film from the same. She is a current member in the Directing category of the DGA, the Directors Guild of America, IATSE, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, an honorary member of Women in Film Atlanta and Film Fatales, Atlanta.

## **JAMES PONSOLDT**

**JAMES PONSOLDT (Director, Writer, Producer)** hails from Athens, Georgia. His films, which include *The End of the Tour*, *The Spectacular Now*, *Summering*, and *Smashed* (among others), have earned honors from the Independent Spirit Awards, Sundance Film Festival and National Board of Review. He's directed pilots and executive produced shows such as "Master of None" and "Sorry for Your Loss." Most recently, Ponsoldt executive produced and directed the pilot and multiple episodes of Amazon's upcoming series "Daisy Jones & The Six" as well as "Shrinking" for Apple TV (starring Jason Segel, Harrison Ford, and Jessica Williams). He's currently developing his next film.

## **MICHELL DAVIS**

Michell Davis is a Georgia-based entertainment attorney, producer and actor.

## **RICHARD NEUPERT**

Richard Neupert is Wheatley Professor of the Arts and Josiah Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professor of Film Studies at UGA. His research areas include French film history, animation, and narrative theory. His very first book was *THE END: NARRATION AND CLOSURE IN CINEMA* and the most recent book (2022) is *FRENCH FILM HISTORY: 1895-1946*.

## **KRISTIN PALOMBO**

Kristin Palombo recently co-wrote an episode of the Peabody Award winning one-hour drama *David Makes Man* (HBO Max) for creator/EP Tarell McCraney (Academy Award winner for *Moonlight*), which garnered her membership in the WGA West. Kristin just wrapped as script coordinator on a new live action Star Wars series, *The Acolyte* (Lucasfilm/Disney) for creator/EP Leslye Headland (Emmy nominated for *Russian Doll*). Originally from Newport, Rhode Island, Kristin graduated from USC Film School and landed her first TV job as assistant to showrunner Nancy Miller on TNT's *Saving Grace*, starring Holly Hunter. She became Nancy's creative producer, and together they sold five TV shows, before Kristin returned to her true love of writing. Passionate to tell stories about emotional growth, Kristin's characters, like her, seek transformation, going from 'gals to Goddesses'.

## **RAMIN SERRY**

Ramin Serry has written and directed two critically-acclaimed feature films, *Maryam* (2002) and *Loveless* (2011). His short films have been official selections at several film festivals. Serry has taught screenwriting at NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Columbia University's Film MFA Program, the Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema, Sarah Lawrence College, and Hunter College.