

# Taylor

## School of Media Arts

### Student 2000 and 2001

### Faculty 2008-2014

#### 1. *Why NYSSSA? (why audition, why did you decide to attend?)*

I really loved art and wanted to do more but the classes at my school were limited. My art teacher was really inspiring, he had a background in experimental film & video from Buffalo, one day he showed my class some video art and I fell in love with it! There wasn't a real video class though at the school so I borrowed my teachers video camera (my family didn't have one we couldn't afford it) and I made my first stop motion animation - this was SVHS at the time and I used the security camera option on the camera to make it. I used that to audition for NYSSSA and was accepted.

#### 2. *How did you find out about NYSSSA?*

I grew up in a very small town in upstate NY (Franklin-population less than 2,500). My school was tiny-it was K-12 with about 20 people in my graduating class. The school was very poor and seemed to barely exist. I applied to NYSSSA in 2000 & 2001 because my art teacher, James Hartel, recommended it. There were very few art classes in the school and I had taken them all. I even "took" darkroom photography "independently"-my science teacher taught me how to develop photographs in this little closet between science rooms. I used to skip gym class and hide in there developing film instead.

#### 3. *Typical Day/Schedule at NYSSSA?*

It was a completely life changing experience for me. It was the first time in my adult life that I felt like I actually made real friendships. It was so inspiring and amazing and really really hard. It was intense because we would work in the classroom from 9am-5pm (learning theory/production that was completely new to me) then break for a quick dinner and then go to lecture for another 2 hours or so. It was so exhausting-like a bootcamp for artists. I remember when I finally got home from the month it seemed like I slept for a week to catch up!

I applied the first year to the video class because I didn't even know what the difference between film and video was. When I got there and saw the students working on 16mm film I knew I wanted to come back and have that experience. One of the most memorable parts of NYSSSA for me was shooting film (16mm) and then sort of having this "film vision" -where I started to 'see' every day life 'in film'. Like my vision included 'grain' and 'frame rates' though my eyes. I think I was just totally exhausted though and was being obsessive but it was kind of a "Brakhage" experience that I didn't even realize later until my late 20's, when I was reading his writings for graduate school. I have had an affinity for film ever since and continue to work with it until this day.

#### 4. *Best Moment at NYSSSA?*

Looking back at my NYSSSA experience I think the lectures were the most rewarding and intellectually challenging. I remember being totally wiped out at the end of the day and struggling to stay awake for them but I remember being blown away by what I was seeing. I remember so much experimental film and video that I had no idea existed! It is a part of art history that is really brushed over. It was incredible and completely life changing to be exposed to that level of challenging work while you are in high school-most people, who even study avant garde cinema, are not even exposed to that work until graduate school! It is really sweet for me to think back on that experience now though, and to think about the visiting artists that came while I was there, and those who were especially inspiring to me. Those people are now my friends and peers!

#### 5. *Why would you encourage someone to audition for NYSSSA?*

I have worked intermittently at NYSSSA (6 years) since I was a student there. I worked one summer as part of the residential life staff and then a few consecutive summers as the film T.A. and now as a co-teacher in the film class. I really like working with high-school students. I think that NYSSSA takes in especially talented students because they are dedicated and ready for a challenge and want to learn. I like to teach at NYSSSA because I like thinking about how totally transformative the experience was for me, and I hope to pass on that impression to the students I teach during the summer. Their work is also totally amazing (often much more interesting and complex than the work produced in the undergraduate production class I teach). I also really like working at NYSSSA because the faculty are really inspiring! It is really really hard work (perhaps even harder and more exhausting than being a student) but I get to be around the most creative people! Bob Harris (the director) does a really awesome job hiring people who are truly amazing working artists. I keep working at NYSSSA every summer because it is like an extension of my education.

#### 6. *Where are you now? When you are not at NYSSSA!*

Since NYSSSA I received a liberal arts degree- concentrating in media studies from The New School in NYC. I stayed in NYC for awhile after I graduated and worked as a projectionist at The Pioneer Theater & Anthology Film Archives and freelance (for many museums around the city-PS1, Museum of the City of NY, etc). I also worked for important organizations of avant-garde cinema including Millennium Film Workshop and The Filmmakers Collective, the organization which distributed many of the artist films I saw while at NYSSSA! I am currently an MFA candidate in the Film Department at The University of Colorado at Boulder. I teach Super 8 filmmaking to undergraduates and make my own "essay'ist" "experimental documentaries". I still work on a bolex (the very camera I learned how to use at NYSSSA) and have shown my work across the US and Canada including; The New York Film Festival-Views from the Avantgarde, The Tribeca Film Festival, CROSSROADS Film Festival in San Francisco, The Chicago Underground Film Festival and the Deluge Center for Contemporary Art in Victoria, B.C. Canada.