

## **Emilie Upczak**

Curriculum vita  
January 1, 2025

640 Parrington Oval  
Wallace Old Science Hall,  
Room 300, Norman, OK 73019

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Nederland, CO 80466  
[www.emilieupczak.com](http://www.emilieupczak.com)

### **EDUCATION**

MFA, Film  
Vermont College of Fine Arts  
2015

BA, Comparative Religious Studies  
Minor in Women's Studies  
University of Colorado, Boulder  
Magna Cum Laude  
2001

### **TEACHING**

**Assistant Professor, University of Oklahoma, Norman**  
Department of Film and Media Studies  
January 2025 – present

### **FEATURE FILMS**

***Moving Parts / Trinidad & Tobago, US / 77' / Writer, Director, Producer***  
2017

Narrative feature – After being smuggled into Trinidad and Tobago, an illegal Chinese immigrant discovers the true cost of her passage.

Writer, Director, Producer: Emilie Upczak / Producer: John Otterbacher  
Cinematographer Nancy Schreiber, ASC / Actors: Valerie Tian & Kandyse McClure

Screenings:

Denver Film Festival (premiere)  
Festival de Cine de La Habana, Cuba  
Nouveaux Regards Film Festival, Guadeloupe  
International Film Festival, Panama  
Nouveaux Regards Film Festival, Martinique  
San Francisco IndieFest

Belize International Film Festival  
Island House Film Festival, Bahamas  
Caribbean Tales International Film Festival, Toronto  
Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival  
Jaipur International Film Festival  
Festival of Cinema, NYC  
Grand Rapids Film Festival, Michigan  
Guwahati International Film Festival  
International Film Series, University of Colorado, Boulder  
International Film Series, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley  
Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Theatrical Screenings:

Movie Towne, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago  
Boedecker Theater, Dairy Center for the Arts, Boulder  
Gene Siskel Film Center, Chicago

Sales Agent:

Flourishing Films

Distributor:

Indiepix, USA; Yard Vibes, Netherlands; and FilmCo, Caribbean

Funding Awards/Support:

Trinidad and Tobago Film Commission, Feature Film Program, \$100,000 grant  
British High Commission  
United States Embassy, Trinidad and Tobago  
United Nations, Trinidad and Tobago  
National Lotteries Control Board, Trinidad and Tobago  
IFP (Independent Filmmaker Project), Chicago

Press:

[Culturego](#)  
[Screen Daily](#)  
[Indiewire](#)

**Silt / US / 90' / Writer, Director, Producer**

2026 - forthcoming

Narrative Feature Film in development/pre-production

Synopsis: During a historic drought, an indigenous botanist is sent by a government agency to monitor two developers proposing new dams on the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon; as they descend into the canyon and navigate the treacherous waters, the lines between the past and present blur, casting doubt on the fate of the river.

*Silt* / US / 10' (proof of concept)

2022

Narrative short – A Diné botanist, grieving the death of a beloved aunt, travels along the Colorado River, where she is nourished by images of the last trip they took together

Writer, Director, Producer: Emilie Upczak

Cinematographer: Nancy Schreiber, ASC

Actor: Morningstar Angeline

Awards:

Special Jury Award, Independent Film Festival Boston

Best Film Score, Los Angeles Live Score Film Festival

Audience Choice & Advisory Board Award, Feminist Border Arts Film Festival

Narrative Jury Prize, Houston Cinema Arts Festival, Borders | No Borders

Federal Emergency Management Agency, Climate Resilience Storytelling Award

Screenings:

Independent Film Festival Boston (premiere)

Chicago Underground Film Festival (opening night)

Charlotte Film Festival

Santa Fe International Film Festival

Hawai'i International Film Festival

Denver Film Festival

Dallas International Film Festival

Wisconsin Film Festival

Centre Film Festival, Pennsylvania

Los Angeles Live Score Film Festival

Feminist Border Arts Film & Media Festival and Exhibition, New Mexico

Green Film Festival of San Francisco, SF Indie

Babel Film Festival, Italy

Huntington Beach Cultural Film Festival, California

Grand Rapids Film Festival, Michigan

Steve Aronson International Film Festival, Costa Rica

Borders | No Borders, Houston

Mother Tongue Film Festival, Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C.

Support:

Walton Family Foundation

Puffin Foundation

The Sonoran Institute

Center for Humanities and the Arts, CU Boulder

Center for Native and Indigenous Studies, CU Boulder

Mimesis Center for Documentary and Ethnographic Media, CU Boulder

Department of Cinema Studies and Moving Image Arts, CU Boulder

Arts & Sciences Fund for Excellence, CU Boulder

Illinois Arts Council

SAG Indie & Helix Collective, Music Connect

Full Spectrum Features, Chicago

New Mexico Film Office

### ***Among the Walkers / Screenwriter***

2026 - forthcoming

Narrative Feature Film Script based on the novel by Anne Garcia

Synopsis: A young Venezuelan woman finds herself unable to care for her daughter following the death of her husband. As the country crumbles around her, she makes the decision to leave and walk to Peru in search of a better life.

### **DIGITAL EXHIBITIONS**

***Feminism and Queer Identity in a 1970s Commune: The Ann Roy Collection***

2024 – <https://www.theannroycollection.com>

Funding Awards:

[Digital Humanities and Arts Faculty Fellow](#)

Center for the Humanities and the Arts & the Center for Research Data and Digital Scholarship & President's Fund for the Humanities

2023

Mimesis Micro Grant, Center for Documentary and Ethnographic Media

Fall 2020

### ***Silt***

Open-source digital exhibit will include visual and textual research, including audio, film, and written materials, which I have been collecting throughout the development of the narrative film project.

2024– <https://www.siltthemovie.com>

Funding Awards:

Research and Innovation Award, University of Colorado, Boulder  
2023 - 2024

## **DOCUMENTARY SHORTS**

***Leo Sacer* / US / 10' / Co-Director**

2025

Documentary Short

*Leo Sacer* centers on the story of a re-located mountain lion that may have killed at least 15 pet dogs in 30 days in a small Colorado community. Panicked, angry, and fearful residents narrativize these animal interactions, creating a social condition that leads to dramatic and devastating results.

Funding Awards/Conferences:

Research and Innovation Award, University of Colorado, Boulder

Presented work in progress at the Visible Evidence Documentary Conference at the University of Udine, Italy

2023

***Ann Roy* / US / 10' / Director, Editor**

2025

Experimental, Documentary Short.

Roy's life as a girl in Tulsa, Oklahoma; as the wife of an historian writing about Ute Territory; as an expatriate living in Mexico and raising two sons; as an instructor at Ivan Illich's center in Cuernavaca, and as a feminist working to bridge the cultures of Mexico and the United States are explored.

## **PAST FILMOGRAPHY**

***The Controlled Wild* / US / 10'**

2021

Experimental short exploring the industrial sector of Denver and the wild spaces of Rocky Mountain Arsenal

Director, Cinematographer, Editor: Emilie Upczak

Co-Director: Nicholas Emery

Public projection:

Colorado History Museum Building, Denver

16th Street Clocktower / Denver Night Lights

Exhibition:

Union Hall, Denver

Emmanuel Gallery, Denver

Salida Film Festival, Salida

Funding Award/Support:

INSITE Fund:

Redline Contemporary Art Center and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts

Department of Cinema Studies and Moving Image Arts, CU Boulder

***Nearest Neighbours / Trinidad & Tobago, US / 20'***

2019

Documentary short exploring Venezuelan migration to Trinidad & Tobago

Producer: Emilie Upczak

Director: Rhonda Chan Soo

Festivals/Screenings:

Third Horizons Film Festival

Hairouna Film Festival

International Organization of Migration

***Claw / US / 4'***

2018

Experimental Super 8 short, exploring the industrial sector of Denver and the wild spaces of Rocky Mountain Arsenal

Director, Cinematographer, Editor: Emilie Upczak

Co-Director: Nicholas Emery

Exhibition:

Vermont College of Fine Arts

Globeville River Arts Center

Union Hall, Denver

Support:

Department of Cinema Studies and Moving Image Arts, CU Boulder

***Play the Devil / Trinidad & Tobago / 90'***

2016

Narrative feature set against the backdrop of Trinidad and Tobago's mystical Carnival

Associate Producer: Emilie Upczak

Directed by Maria Govan  
Premiered at Los Angeles Film Festival.  
Press: [Hollywood Reporter](#)

***Knock About / Trinidad and Tobago /16'***

2013

Narrative short - The city streets of Port of Spain, and its varied cast of characters are the backdrop for this spoofy Trini-style-neo-noir

Writer, Director, Producer: Emilie Upczak

Exhibition:

African Diaspora International Film Festival

Clermont Ferrand International Film Festival - Market screenings

MIPTV – Market screenings

Funding:

Trinidad and Tobago Film Commission

***before the rain / Trinidad & Tobago / 4'***

2012

Documentary short - A look inside an operational coastal steel plant in the Caribbean

Director, Editor: Emilie Upczak

Exhibition:

Festival International Signes de Nuit, France

Globeville River Arts Center, Denver

***y-ning? / Trinidad & Tobago, US / 5'***

2010

Documentary short looking at contemporary social dance in Trinidad

Director, Cinematographer, Producer, Editor: Emilie Upczak

Exhibition:

San Francisco Black Film Festival

Caribbean Film Corner, London

Bahamas International Film Festival,

Director's Circle Festival of Shorts

Antigua Film Festival

Funding:  
Trinidad and Tobago Film Commission

***Two Women and a Bucket of Water / T&T / 2'***

2010

Experimental short

Director, Cinematographer, Editor: Emilie Upczak

Exhibition:

PG Contemporary, New World Creole Exhibit, Houston, Texas

***Weaning Gideon / Trinidad & Tobago, US / 5'***

2009

Experimental short

Director, Cinematographer, Producer, Editor: Emilie Upczak

Exhibition:

AIR Gallery, Mother to Mother Exhibit, Brooklyn, NY.

***dancing deities / Trinidad & Tobago, US / 19' / 2007***

Documentary short exploring the Orisha, an Afro-Caribbean ritual tradition in south Trinidad

Director, Producer, Editor: Emilie Upczak

Exhibition:

Studio Film Club

San Diego Black Film Festival

African World Diaspora Film Festival

Funding:

Boulder Arts Commission

Scientific and Cultural Facilities District, Colorado

Trinidad and Tobago Film Commission

**PUBLICATIONS**

*Peer Editorial Review*, The Cheerful Subversive's Guide to Independent Filmmaking, 2021, 2nd Edition by Dan Mirvish, Routledge/Focal Press

*Contributor*, [A Guide to Caribbean Film Festival](#), Filmmaker Magazine

2019



*Project Director, [Caribbean Film Database](#), the largest single source of information on films produced in and about the Caribbean*  
2015

*Writer, [Surreal Communion](#), *Eat, for This Is My Body*, Caribbean Review of Books*  
2008

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

### **Visiting Film Faculty, Vermont College of Fine Arts**

Low Residency MFA Program  
2024

### **Assistant Teaching Professor, University of Colorado, Boulder**

Department of Cinema Studies & Moving Image Arts  
2018 – 2024

Cinema Production II, BFA (2021, 2022, 2024)  
Screenwriting Workshop, Short Form (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024)  
Cinema Production I (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022)  
Producing the Independent Feature (2020, 2021, 2022, 2024)  
Moving Image Foundations (2018, 2023, 2024)  
Directing Actors (2023)

### **Lecturer, University of Colorado, Denver**

Screenwriting  
Acting for the Camera  
2018 – 2019

### **Lecturer, Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design**

Cinematography  
2018

### **Lecturer, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley**

Short Film Production  
2018

## **CONFERENCES / MODERATOR**

Moderator, Mimesis Documentary Festival  
2020 - 2024

Presentation at Visible Evidence Documentary Conference, University of Udine, Italy:  
“*Leo Sacer: Documentary Approaches to Ecological Violence*”. Funded by the Arts &  
Sciences Fund for Excellence, University of Colorado, Boulder  
2023

Panelist, Conference of World Affairs, University of Colorado, Boulder. Changing The  
World Through Art and Pop Culture  
2023

Moderator, Dragon Boat Film Festival, Denver Film Society  
2022

Panelist, Conference of World Affairs, University of Colorado, Boulder. Filmmaking with  
the Female Gaze  
2022

Panelist and Guest Artist, Vermont College of Fine Arts Guest Artist - Screening &  
Panel on Film Collaboration  
2018

Curator, Bocas Literary Festival, Trinidad and Tobago, Panel Migrant Smuggling and  
Human Trafficking in the Caribbean,  
2018

Moderator, Denver Film Festival  
2016 & 2018

Presentation of Caribbean Film Database and Caribbean Film Mart at the ACP (African,  
Caribbean Group of States), Belgium  
2014

### **ADVISORY BOARDS**

GUT-C, University of Colorado, Boulder. A mentoring initiative for underrepresented  
students in the media arts field that addresses inequality at the student level through  
community building, technical workshops, and professional development opportunities.  
2023

Brakhage Center for Media Arts, University of Colorado, Boulder, The Brakhage Center aims to promote education and research regarding the historical, cultural, and artistic significance of experimental film and media art to students, scholars, and the public.  
2022 - 2024

The ATLAS B2 Center for Media Arts & Performance, University of Colorado, Boulder, A community of radical researchers working at the intersection of art & technology.  
2022

New World Film Center, Trinidad and Tobago. The not-for-profit arm of the trinidad+tobago film festival that implemented filmmaker training, access to equipment, and physical space for filmmakers to meet regularly.  
2012 - 2015

### **JURIES**

Denver Film Festival, American Independent Narrative Feature Films  
2020

CineYouth Film Festival Chicago, Short Narrative Films  
2019

Slamdance Film Festival, Narrative Feature Films,  
2015

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Meisner Acting Technique  
Chris Thatcher, Boulder,  
2016

Meisner Acting Technique  
Kirk Baltz, Trinidad and Tobago  
2014

Rotterdam Producers Lab  
International Film Festival, Rotterdam  
2014

EAVE / European Audiovisual  
Entrepreneurs Producers Network, Trinidad and Tobago  
2014

Roy Hart Voice Technique  
Effie Friend, Naropa, Boulder  
2010

### **ADDITIONAL FILM EXPERIENCE**

First Assistant Director: *Dubios* / Trinidad & Tobago / 31'  
2014

Narrative short: A girl attempting to recover from the grief of the death of her husband.  
Directed by Kaz Ove

First Assistant Director: *After Mas* / Trinidad & Tobago / 20'  
2013

Narrative short story of love that flourishes under the cover of darkness.  
Directed by Karen Martinez

Script Supervisor: *Lioness of Lisabi* / Trinidad & Tobago / 28'  
2008

Narrative short set in 1940's Nigeria, capturing the struggles of a young African girl.  
Directed by Vlady Valentin Oszkiel

### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Creative Director trinidad + tobago film festival** & Project Director, [Caribbean Film Mart](#) & [Caribbean Film Database](#), Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago  
2006 – 2015

**Coordinator Sundance Channel Branded Entertainment, Park City**  
2010

**Fundraiser Caribbean Contemporary Arts (CCA7), Trinidad & Tobago**  
2006 – 2007

**Outreach Coordinator Starz Denver International Film Festival**  
2005

**Development & Outreach Manager Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art**  
2001 – 2005