



# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE: Mar. 24, 2021

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## Documentaries by Carver Center student, teacher to be featured in Bethesda Film Fest

*Films available online for viewing prior to April 16 discussion with filmmakers*

Towson, MD – Documentaries by Pearl Sweeney, a Grade 12 student at George Washington Carver Center for Arts and Technology, and Khalid Ali, film teacher at Carver Center, will be featured in the [ninth annual Bethesda Film Fest](#). Only seven films – all documentaries – were selected for the festival, including only two by high school filmmakers.

All seven selected films are available to [view online](#) for free leading up to a discussion with the filmmakers on Friday, April 16, at 7 p.m. The discussion is also presented at no charge, but [online registration](#) is required. The filmmaker Q&A will be moderated by Erica Ginsberg, co-founder of Docs In Progress.

Sweeney's seven-minute film, "Shi Fu Paul," follows Paul Jakubowski, a kung fu instructor and co-owner of U.S. Martial Arts Academy Ltd. in Maryland, as he awards his newest generation of martial artists their black belts and shares his own journey and philosophies on teaching. Sweeney became interested in documentary filmmaking as a middle school student when she saw a series of documentaries on environmental issues.

"The films completely shifted my perspective on the world around me," Sweeney said, "and I experienced firsthand the impact a documentary could make on an individual. Since then, I've worked on multiple documentary projects centering around the impact of sports on adolescents, and I've began

merging the style of documentaries into more experimental films. I hope to continue studying and creating films in college with an emphasis on social-impact and environmental advocacy documentaries.”

Ali’s 14-minute film, “Squeegee,” explores the lives of the young men known for washing windshields of cars stopped at intersections around Baltimore. Originally trained as a commercial filmmaker in Los Angeles, Khalid developed an interest in documentary film when he began traveling to China with his older brother. Intrigued by the ability of his camera to bridge cultural differences, his experiences there evolved into a series of documentaries about Chinese urban culture, particularly on the margins of society. Since returning home, Khalid has applied the same approach to filmmaking in his native Baltimore. Whether in China or the U.S., his films follow people toiling in humble jobs but who aspire to greatness. Together, their stories show how work can define or defy one’s identity. Khalid has been teaching digital film at Carver Center since 2010. He received his Master of Fine Arts degree from Towson University in 2020.

Films were chosen by the Bethesda Film Fest selection panel, consisting of award-winning documentary filmmakers Sara Barger, filmmaker, professor and executive vice president of Women in Film & Video; Dana Flor, documentary film director and producer; and Robin Hamilton, filmmaker and Emmy-award winning television host and producer.

The Bethesda Film Fest is produced by the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District and supported by Leslie and Bruce Lane. Bethesda Film Fest is also supported by The Bernard Family Foundation, The Donohoe Companies, The Jane Fairweather Team, Suzanne Firstenberg, David Goldberg, Jan McNamara, Jerry Morenoff, Kramer Architects, and Oxman Studios.

*(Editor’s note: Photos of Sweeney and Ali accompany this release.)*

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