

# OXFORD FILM FESTIVAL

By William Carrington • staff writer

## Oxford celebrates 15th annual film festival

The 2018 Oxford Film Festival ran from Feb. 7–11, showcasing movies across town at the Oxford Commons, Conference Center, Powerhouse and Ford Center. This year marked the 15th anniversary of the festival and had a lineup filled to the brim with socially relevant films across genres.

2018's lineup included 204 films, 30 more films than last year's, and more than 60 female directors directed films showed at the festival. This year definitely demonstrated growth within the festival and the progression of Oxford.

This is also the second year that the film festival has included an award in the LG-

BTQ category. Films competing in this category, like Shaz Bennett's "Alaska is a Drag" and Jill Salvino's "Between the Shades," explored necessary conversations in current-day America.

Another notable and thought-provoking film was Cady McClain's documentary, "Seeing is Believing: Women Direct." This film was entirely comprised of interviews telling the story of shifting gender roles in modern filmmaking. By interviewing people from every sector of the shifting industry, McClain told all sides of the complicated history and trajectory of the female lens.

An important and unique

part of Oxford's Film Festival has always been the audience's ability to interact with directors in the panels held after the films show, and the "Seeing is Believing" panel was especially notable. Director Cady McClain and other female directors shared their experiences with the audience, giving a better idea of how the struggles of the industry impacted their individual experiences as directors.

Sophomore Julia Mitchell's film, "Fifteen," also competed in the Mississippi Short Films section of this year's festival. "Fifteen" tells the story of the kids born in the same year as the film festival. By contrasting clips of interviews from with

them at age 10, Mitchell tells a uniquely entertaining story about what it means to grow up in Oxford.

"Alaska is a Drag," "Seeing is Believing" and "Fifteen" stuck out to me as films that exemplified what makes Oxford's Film Festival unique. As the American film industry is always shifting towards more and more blockbusters, it becomes easier for consumers, especially in small towns like Oxford, to only watch the latest Harry Potter or Marvel installment. The Oxford Film Festival gives people interested in artistic filmmaking the ability to see real art being made in their town.

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