

## **Tulane filmmakers make a strong showing at the 2025 New Orleans Film Festival**

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Tulane's Digital Media Practices program gives aspiring filmmakers the skills they will need to thrive in the industry.

Tulane University's School of Liberal Arts (SLA) is taking center stage at this year's New Orleans Film Festival (NOFF) with five films selected for competition, an unprecedented showing for the Digital Media Practices (DMP) program.

The lineup includes work from one student filmmaker, one recent alumna and three faculty members, highlighting the university's growing reputation as a hub for creative storytelling and technical excellence.

Organized by the New Orleans Film Society, NOFF is an Academy Award-qualifying event in the documentary short, narrative short and animated short categories. Out of more than 3,700 submissions this year, only 131 films were selected.

“As a former Tulane faculty member, I’ve seen firsthand the depth of talent and creative ambition that Tulane fosters,” said Dodd Loomis, interim executive director of the New Orleans Film Society. “Tulane’s filmmakers earned their places entirely through the quality of their work.”

Casey Beck, professor of practice and director of Tulane’s Digital Media Practices program, calls this year’s success “a coup” for the university. Beck and fellow faculty members Duane Prefume, professor of practice, and Monica Payne, associate professor, also have films in the festival alongside DMP student Cameron Brown and alumna Olive Wheadon.

The program’s structure plays a key role in that success. With small class sizes, usually no more than 12 students in production courses and access to top-tier technology, Beck said students receive hands-on experience that’s rare in undergraduate programs. Tulane recently [secured a \\$700,000 grant](#) from the Louisiana Entertainment Development Fund to upgrade its film equipment, ensuring students learn on industry-standard tools.

“Our professors are active filmmakers,” Beck said. “That means our students aren’t just learning theory — they’re watching us navigate the same festivals and creative challenges they aspire to reach.”

Senior Cameron Brown’s “I hope I’m somewhere laughing.” is a narrative-documentary hybrid that blends archival home movies with newly staged scenes. The film follows Brown’s longtime friend, Kate Porter, as she packs up her childhood room, interweaving reflections on mental health, memory and growing up.

“The process became deeply cathartic,” Brown said. “The message of self-love at the center of the film helped me heal the same feelings that inspired it.”

Olive Wheadon’s “T.Osborne” takes a different but equally personal approach. The documentary profiles renowned New Orleans painter Terrance Osborne and pays tribute to the city’s artistic spirit.

Beck said that sharing her own work alongside her students is especially meaningful. “I’ve attended NOFF as an audience member for years,” she said. “To be featured this time as a filmmaker, and to see our students doing the same, shows how far the program has come.”

Beck’s short documentary “Loves To Dance” captures her young son’s spontaneous joy and self-expression. Prefume’s “The Inquisitor” and Payne’s “Mimi” round out the university’s faculty screenings.

The DMP program continues to expand its impact beyond the classroom through initiatives such as Green Wave Films, the Tulane Student Film Festival and the Entertainment Business Network. These organizations have helped students gain production experience, showcase their work and connect with New Orleans’ vibrant film scene.

Brown, who leads Green Wave Films, estimates he has worked on 30 to 40 sets since arriving at Tulane. “It’s like a student-run production company,” he said. “You pitch, you crew up and you make the film. Tulane’s program gave me both the technical skill and the freedom to find my voice as a filmmaker.”

### **Tulane at the New Orleans Film Festival**

- “The Inquisitor” — Duane Prefume, professor of practice, Oct. 25, 4:15 p.m., Black Box Theater, Contemporary Arts Center
- “Loves To Dance” — Casey Beck, professor of practice, Oct. 25, 6:30 p.m., Warehouse Theater, Contemporary Arts Center
- “T.Osborne” — Olive Wheadon, SLA ’25, Oct. 25, 6:30 p.m., Warehouse Theater, Contemporary Arts Center
- “I hope I’m somewhere laughing.” — Cameron Brown, SLA ’26, Oct. 25, 7:15 p.m., The Broad Theater 4
- “Mimi” — Monica Payne, associate professor, Oct. 26, 4:45 p.m., Prytania Theatre