

UC SANTA BARBARA

# THE *Current*

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Amy Bentley

## Trans Media

In the documentary “Raising Zoey,” which follows 13-year-old Zoey and her mother and sister as they navigate Zoey’s transition from boy to girl, director Dante Alencastre highlights the legal battles they wage against discrimination in Zoey’s public school.

The film is the first in the Trans Media series presented by UC Santa Barbara’s Carsey-Wolf Center. It will screen Thursday, May 4, at 7 p.m. at UCSB’s Pollock Theater. A Q&A session with Alencastre, moderated by Abigail Salazar of the campus’s Resource Center for Sexual & Gender Diversity, will follow.

The Trans Media series, which continues through May 25, consists of five events that feature documentaries, fiction films and recent television shows that explore the struggles, dreams, achievements and everyday lives of trans people. The series is free and open to the public.

“Trans Media is a curated series of some of the best new work by and about trans people,” said Patrice Petro, a professor of film and media studies at UCSB and director of the Carsey-Wolf Center. Petro noted that while trans people have been represented in film for decades, until relatively recently trans experiences often were limited to victimization, violence and tragedy.

“We are trying to showcase contemporary media work to tell these different stories,” Petro said. “Some are familiar, like stories about false incarceration and the bullying of children. We really want to highlight the work by trans actors and craftspeople to

tell the story of the trans experience.”

The new program seeks to present trans people as they really are — a concept welcomed by many members of the campus’s LGBTQ community. “Something that’s important is that trans people are everywhere,” said Christine Dolan, associate director of the Resource Center for Sexual & Gender Diversity at UCSB. “We’ve had them on this campus forever. To have this series really honors them.” Dolan noted that the films included in Trans Media “are for everyone,” and carry the important message: “Accept me for who I am.”

“There is a real value in showing films that are unapologetic,” said Dolan, who described the series as a positive collaboration between the Resource Center for Sexual & Gender Diversity, the Carsey-Wolf Center and others on campus who support UCSB’s trans and queer community.

“It’s really important to be celebrating our trans people on our campus and make sure they are centered in the work,” Dolan continued. “Trans people are suffering right now, they’ve been politicized in a lot of ways.” Dolan further noted the significance of the series highlighting trans women of color. “Those are the ones that are being murdered and criminalized in a strong way.”

Other films and television episodes in the series include:

- “Transparent,” Saturday, May 6, at 2 p.m. A presentation of two episodes of Jill Soloway’s Amazon Prime series, which garnered eight Emmy awards and two Golden Globes. The series takes a trans-affirmative approach to queerness, trans politics and gender identity. Amy Villarejo, a professor of performing and media arts at Cornell University, will join Petro for a post-screening discussion of transgender emergence, Jewish identity and queerness within this TV series.
- “Free CeCe,” Wednesday, May 10, at 7 p.m. In 2011, CeCe McDonald survived a brutal attack and was incarcerated for stabbing an attacker in self-defense. Her story inspired an international movement advocating for her freedom, and since her release from prison she has advocated for reforms to the criminal justice system. This documentary confronts the culture of violence surrounding transwomen of color. A Q&A session moderated by Lal Zimmerman, an assistant professor of linguistics at UCSB, will follow with director Jacqueline (Jac) Gares and McDonald, who will discuss the process of making the film.

- “Still Black: A Portrait of Black Transmen,” Tuesday, May 23, at 7 p.m. Director Kortney Ryan Ziegler’s documentary centers on the stories of six trans men. The film received an Isaac Julien Experimental Award from Queer Black Cinema International Music Festival and an Audience Choice Award for Best Documentary in the ReelOut Queer Film + Video Festival. A Q&A session with Ziegler, moderated by Jennifer Tyburczy a professor of feminist studies at UCSB, will follow.
- “Tangerine, Thursday, May 25, at 7 p.m. This critically acclaimed indie comedy film offers a compelling and unique look at various subcultures of Los Angeles. The film was entirely shot using modified iPhone 5S cameras. A Q&A session with actress Mya Taylor, moderated by Petro, will follow the screening.

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## **About UC Santa Barbara**

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.