



Britni Harris, '14
Owner and Executive Director at Porch Space

Storytelling has always been a key part of Britni Harris' life. This passion, combined with an interest in cameras, led her to a career in documentary filmmaking. During her final semester at OU, Harris started a documentary about architect Bruce Goff, and her film "GOFF" premiered in New York City in October. Harris, who lives in Chicago, also started a production company called Porch Space. The 2014 broadcast electronic media graduate recently reflected on her journey in Gaylord College, creating "GOFF" and more.

What is your favorite memory from your time at Gaylord College?

During my time at OU, I was fortunate to have a passionate and inventive group of individuals to work alongside. It was a great community to create with and also experience college life with. Some of my favorite memories were sitting at the equipment cage with Kenzie Clark chatting with those that

Talk about your documentary, "GOFF." Why did you choose to tell Bruce Goff's story, and what was your experience like creating the film?

During my final semester at Gaylord I enrolled in an independent study where the main focus was to create a final documentary capstone. I knew that I wanted to tell a story based in Oklahoma and started doing some research on unknown oddities in the area. When I discovered Goff's unusual story and his revolutionary architectural drawings, I was mesmerized. Goff's willingness to explore unprecedented forms often solicited polarized perspectives of his work. As a result of establishing his practice in an otherwise conservative landscape and his unabashed desire to experiment with the possibilities of form, much of his work has been left to decay or forgotten altogether. I felt that someone needed to tell Goff's story and remind the public of the importance of

walked by. Kenzie, who was an actual employee of the cage, would let me come study or we would play games of “heads up.” I believe at one point we even filmed a talk show in the cage and interviewed innocent passersby. That tiny equipment closet was our kingdom.

Do you have a favorite faculty/staff member at Gaylord?

There were a couple of professors that encouraged me along my path toward documentary filmmaking. At the time, the documentary track at Gaylord only consisted of a few students and so the classes were small and full of one-on-one discussion. The two professors I worked with the most in that realm were Gerald Loessberg and Ralph Beliveau. Both of them encouraged me to continue pursuing documentary filmmaking classes and to question the status quo.

What drew you to a career as a documentary filmmaker?

I've been surrounded by a lot of creative people in my life, even growing up in the outskirts of Leonard, Oklahoma. My family consists of artists ranging from actors to installation artists and so storytelling has been a huge part of my life. Growing up I was always gravitated toward cameras and capturing glimmers of authentic human moments. Documentary filmmaking was a perfect way for me to combine my love for creating while also being able to explore life outside of my own comfort zone. What I love most about documentary filmmaking is that it challenges you to create art from everyday life and it allows you to see the world from another person's perspective.

How did your career path lead you to Porch Space?

Porch Space has been an idea in the back of my mind since I graduated from OU. I always knew that I would have to have my own platform and production company if I wanted to create my own films, especially as a female film director. There have been a lot of obstacles in my career but Porch Space was always a place I could retreat to and create whatever I wanted. The production company is still in its infancy, but I'm excited to see where the next steps takes us.

What does Porch Space do, and

preserving these pieces of art.

What do you consider to be the most significant moments of your career so far?

There have been a lot of memorable moments in my career thus far. However, the most momentous achievement personally was finishing the “GOFF” documentary and premiering in New York this past October. There were moments during the process of making this documentary that I never thought I would never cross the finish line. It took incredible perseverance from my team and it was personally one of my biggest challenges as an artist and brand new director. This project helped me find my creative voice and taught me how to stand up for my vision.

How did Gaylord College prepare you for your future career?

Your college experience is primarily determined by what effort and experimentation you put into it. The path that I took at the Gaylord College gave me a lot of freedom to explore different avenues of film and play with various stories that I wanted to tell. Those years encouraged me to take that same spirit of independent filmmaking beyond my time at Gaylord. I'm grateful that I was given the encouragement and space to begin my journey as a director and filmmaker.

What advice would you give to current students aspiring to become filmmakers?

Don't be afraid to fail. The fear of failure can be paralyzing and doesn't help you move forward with your dreams and goals. Fear can also leave you in a stagnant place where you can't develop and expand your creative voice. I have found that all good ideas in filmmaking are outside of those false boundaries and that experimentation is key. Our field of work is changing at a fast and constant pace and as creatives we need to match the evolving technology.

What do you do for fun outside of work?

Outside of work, that's a funny concept! I try to be away from the computer as much as possible on my days off. I currently have a dog that I try to entertain as much as possible, so we like to go on walks around our neighborhood. I'm also always

what is your role there?

Porch Space is a production company made of filmmakers and creatives that are passionate about using documentaries, media and outreach campaigns to generate conversation and empower voices of change. We provide a platform for individuals who are directly affected by the injustices of modern society, overlooked or misrepresented. Our mission is to create a space for diverse human stories that encourage collective transformation. My role at Porch Space is owner and Executive Director.

interested in little days adventures whether it's exploring your neighborhood or driving hours away. However, at the end of the day I do enjoy a good TV series binge at home.

Are there any current or upcoming projects you're working on that you'd like to mention?

To also incorporate your previous question, a lot of the activities that I do outside of work include side passion projects. Some of the current projects that Porch Space is working on include "The Tulsa Sound" a documentary film about the birth of a genre of music in Tulsa. I'm also completing a re-edit on "Grey Matter" a short documentary film that focuses Poetic Justice -- a nonprofit that hosts creative writing classes inside multiple jails and prisons across Oklahoma.



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