

# Tara Merenda Nelson

## Summary of Qualifications

---

Curator | Programmer | Author | Artist | Program Director | Grant writer | Researcher | Editor | Media archivist

### Professional Experience

#### Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester NY

2022 - Present Chief Curator; Lead Programmer, VSW Salon; Managing Editor, VSW Press

2015 - 2022 Curator of Moving Image Collections; Assistant Editor, VSW Press; Programmer, VSW Film Series

#### Responsibilities:

- Oversee the artistic direction for all [VSW exhibitions](#)
- Program the [VSW Salon series](#), collaborating with artists to ensure engaging and diverse content
- Curate 1-2 gallery exhibitions per year
- Support the Project Space Artists Residency Program, including artist selection, studio visits and public programming
- Edit exhibition catalogs and gallery guides
- Design, develop and implement the [Community Curator™](#) program
- Design and implement a public [workshop series](#), fostering community engagement and education
- Act as Managing Editor for the Film Art Book imprint through [VSW Press](#), contributing to the publication's editorial process. Publications include: *Bouquets 11-20: Notebooks* by Rose Lowder (2018); *Go-Rilla Means War* by Crystal Z. Campbell (2018); *Measuring Time* by Ephraim Asili (2021); *Feral Domestic* by Dani and Sheilah Restack (2022); *New Utopia and Light Fracture* by Luther Price (2023), *Sourcebooks* by Peggy Ahwesh (2025), *Anti-Graphics: Early Video Works* by Peer Bode (2026); *Bill Brand: PingPongPing* (working title), 2026
- Present on VSW programs, publications, exhibitions and initiatives at national and international conferences
- Supervise curatorial and collections staff and interns, providing leadership and guidance
- Write grants to support VSW programs and collections, securing funding for continued growth and sustainability. Funded grants include: National Endowment for the Arts (NEA); New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA); Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR); National Film Preservation Foundation (NFPF); Documentary Heritage Preservation Network (DHPSNY)
- Assist in the writing and implementation of an organizational strategic plan
- Design and implement collections management and preservation policies for all collections
- Oversee the cataloging of 10,000 titles in film and video
- Oversee the development of a [Magnetic Media Preservation Lab](#) capable of preserving and digitizing 13 formats of video and audiotape from the VSW collection, featuring the work of early video artists and Guerrilla Television collectives. More than 1000 video tapes have been preserved since 2019
- Oversee the preservation of significant 16mm films in the VSW collection, including *About Us* (1972), a film shot by VSW students with filmmaker Robert Frank
- Assist in development and implementation of a comprehensive marketing strategy for all VSW programs to enhance visibility and reach
- Edit weekly newsletter
- Oversee website to ensure access to collections and accurate, up to date program information

#### Qualifications:

- 20 years of curatorial, teaching and artistic experience in the field of experimental, avant-garde and independent cinema, video art, and media installation
- Organized over 200 public workshops, film screenings and educational events

- Well established relationships with contemporary artists, curators, archivists and programmers, as well as museums and arts institutions nationally and internationally
- Strong relationships with artists, archives, programmers and civic arts leaders in Pittsburgh
- Strong programming skills with the ability to curate engaging content
- Expertise in collections management and preservation policies
- Expertise in magnetic media preservation (video and audio)
- Expertise in 16mm and 8mm film production, projection, and preservation
- Excellent project management skills
- Strong writing and public speaking skills
- Editorial experience, particularly with artist books, newsletters, eBooks and related publications
- Expertise in developing and executing marketing strategies
- Excellent leadership, management and organizational skills
- Grant writing and reviewing experience with a successful track record
- Strategic planning experience
- Well established commitment to fostering community-centered programs
- Technical expertise in digital and analog film and video production and exhibition
- 25 years of non-profit governance and program management experience
- Fluency in German

#### **Gallery and Online Exhibitions (as curator)**

- Rose Lowder in Hamilton: Master Class and Exhibition, McMaster University, Hamilton Ontario (Oct. 2025)
- Various artists, [The Psychic Seance](#), Psychic Garden, Rochester (2024)
- Archival exhibition, [Options in Independent Art Publishing Conference](#), 1979 (online)
- Sarah Friedland, [Social Guidance](#), Visual Studies Workshop, 2024
- Beina Xu, [No Time is Lost](#), Visual Studies Workshop, 2021
- Crystal Campbell, [Go-Rilla Means War](#), Visual Studies Workshop, 2018
- Various artists, [LOOPS:Multi-media installations and performances](#), Visual Studies Workshop, 2018
- [VSW Salon and Film Series, 2015-present](#)

#### **Teaching**

History of American Avant Garde Filmmaking (Graduate Seminar); Curatorial Outlooks (Graduate Seminar); 16mm filmmaking, Super 8 Filmmaking; Media Installation; Video Production; Digital Media; Video preservation (workshop); Handmade Film. *Syllabi available upon request*

- SUNY Brockport 2014-2022
- University of Rochester 2014-16
- Cambridge School of Weston 2013–14
- Cornell University 2013
- Ithaca College, 2012
- Massachusetts College of Art and Design 2011-2012

#### **Related Experience**

- Harvard Film Archive, *Special Collections Intern* 2010-2012
- Massart Film Department, Film Collection Manager, 2009-2011
- WGBH, Boston – Antiques Roadshow, *Interactive Media Intern* 2010

#### **Previous Employment**

---

##### **The Community Design Center of Pittsburgh**

2003-2009 *Program Director*

Responsibilities include: Design, develop and implement the RenPlan™ program; Write grants and create a business plan for a dynamic community design program; Design and implement marketing and outreach strategies; Engage and train an active volunteer network of over 100 architects; Lead a committee of Board members; Supervise staff of 2. Detailed job description available upon request.

## Education

---

2011 Master of Fine Arts, Film/Video, *Massachusetts College of Art and Design Boston, MA*

1996 Bachelor of Arts, German, Cum Laude *University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA*

## Selected Publication

---

- Editor and Contributor, *Sourcebooks by Peggy Ahwesh* (VSW Press 2025)
- Editor, *Anti-Graphics: Early Video Works by Peer Bode* (VSW Press 2026)
- Assistant Editor, *New Utopia and Light Matter by Luther Price*, VSW Press October 2023
- Editor, *Bouquets 11-20: The Notebooks of Rose Lowder*, VSW Press 2018
- Author, «Land of Birds and Salt: Rose Lowder's Fleur de Sel», *Essential Work* exhibition catalog, Berman Museum, March 2023
- Author, «Anthony McCall at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery», *Cornelia*, Issue 02, December 2019
- Author, «Scenes from Scenes: An Interview with Bill Daniel», *OTHERzine*, Issue 30, February 2016, [Othercinema.com](http://Othercinema.com)
- Contributor, *Rose by Rose Lowder*, Light Cone Éditions, 2015 (introduction)
- Author, «Scientific Creativity in the Notebooks of Rose Lowder», *Afterimage*, Vol. 43, Issues 1&2, Oct 2015
- Author, «Follow Your Demons: Forty Five Years of Faccinto», *OTHERzine*, Issue 27, September 2014, [Othercinema.com](http://Othercinema.com)
- Author, «New to New Media: With Apologies to Lev Manovich» [BigRedAndShiny.com](http://BigRedAndShiny.com), v2 #6, April 2013
- Author, Program notes, *TURBIDUS FILM* presents ROSE LOWDER, Fylkingen Sweden, 2013
- Author, «Saul Levine and the MassArt Film Society» *INCITE Journal of Experimental Media*, #4: Exhibition Guide, 2013
- Author, «Kittens Grow Up: Tara Nelson and Luther Price in Conversation» [BigRedAndShiny.com](http://BigRedAndShiny.com), Issue #1, October 2012
- Contributing Editor, *The Boston HASSLE*
- Contributor, *The Boston Viewfinder*

## Awards and Appointments

---

- Panel reviewer, Media Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, 2024-2026
- Board Member, Media City Film Festival
- Advisory Board Member, Mono No Aware, Brooklyn NY (2016-present)
- Executive Committee Member, The Psychic Garden artist collective, Rochester NY (2021-Present)
- Recipient, Individual Artist Grant, Genesee Valley Council on the Arts (2024)
- Recipient, Individual Artist Grant, 2022 New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA)
- Recipient, William S. O'Farrell Fellowship (2019), Northeast Historic Film
- Recipient, Individual Artist Grant, Genesee Valley Arts Grants, New York State Council on the Arts (2015)
- Recipient, 2014 Individual Artist Grant (Producer), Tree of Life Foundation
- Resident, Visual Studies Workshop (2014-2015)
- Recipient, 2013 Artist Fellowship, Massachusetts Cultural Council
- Recipient, 2012 LEF Foundation Emerging Filmmaker Fellowship to the Flaherty Film Seminar

## Selected Exhibitions and Presentations

### 2025

- Panelist, *An Evening of Archival Explorations at Light Work*, Syracuse University
- Curator, [Microcinema Solidarity](#): Video Revelations from Visual Studies Workshop, Spectacle Theater, Brooklyn NY, February 2025
- Moderator, [Both at Once: Video by Peer Bode](#), Spectacle Theater, Brooklyn NY, February 2025
- Artist, Movies from the Multiverse: Expanded Cinema by Tara and Gordon Nelson, Psychic Garden (Rochester NY) and Glitterbox (Pittsburgh PA)
- Artist, *Kinesthetic Cinema*, Wexner Center, Ohio

### 2024

- Presenter, Artists and Archives: A Model for Community Engaged Archives at Visual Studies Workshop, AMIA conference, Milwaukee, WI
- Moderator, *Video Activism Panel*, Guerrilla Television Symposium, University of Chicago, April 2024
- Presenter, *Handmade Slides by Luther Price*, Pittsburgh Sound + Image; Alternative Cinema, Colgate University; LA Film Forum; San Francisco Cinematheque; Binghamton University
- Curator, The Psychic Seance hosted by The Psychic Garden, Rochester, NY

### 2023

- Presenter, *Handmade Slides by Luther Price*, MassArt Ciné Culture, Anthology Film Archives, Light Industry and Light Matter
- Presenter, *Film Labs Gathering*, LIFT Toronto
- Presenter, *EYE International Conference*, EYE Filmmuseum Amsterdam
- Visiting Artist, Emerson College
- Contributor, TAGWERK (online journal), [An Exercise with Objects \(3 pieces\)](#)

### 2022

- Presenter, *The NYSCA Memory Archives Project*, NYPL
- Presenter, *Counter Archives*, Orphans Film Symposium
- Visiting artist, Colgate University
- Visiting artist, SUNY Oswego

### 2021

- Artist, *Solo Exhibition*, Media Arts Watch, Memorial Arts Gallery, Rochester NY
- Artist, Association of Writers & Writing Programs Conference The World is Circular: artis-poets and poet-artists recite (screening)
- Presenter: *About Us: Robert Frank at Visual Studies Workshop*, International Short Film Festival, Oberhausen Germany, Special Archives section
- Artist, *Private Films in Public Spaces* 57th Pesaro Film Festival, Open Access Cinema section curated by Dwight Swanson
- Contributor, Air/Light (online literary journal), [199-41 Clam \(backwards\)](#), March 2021
- Contributor, Distentia Remote Reading Archive, [DF A5 The Plant](#), March 2021

### 2020

- Curator, *Songs To The Sea Goat: All Analog Films and Sounds*; The Liquor Store, Rochester NY

### 2019

- Presenter: *Radical Collaboration: Robert Frank in Rochester*, Orphans Film Symposium, Vienna, Austria
- Artist, *Games for Windows*, Current Scene, Rochester NY

- Artist Talk: *Media Artist and Curator Tara Nelson*, Hobart William Smith College

### 2018

- *Hello, You're On Live: Flaherty* NYC Anthology Film Archives, NYC
- *LOOPS* Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester NY
- Presenter, *Exhibition Activism: Innovative Strategies for Community Engagement*, AMIA Conference, Portland OR
- Presenter, *The Community Curator Program at Visual Studies Workshop*, NE Historic Film Symposium, Bucksport ME

### 2017

- *Sexy Wheel: Anti-Valentines Erotica Show*, Squeaky Wheel, Buffalo, NY
- *DELETE TV (Season 3)* Broadcast television in Austria, England, Germany
- *Video Dimensions*, Lunder Art Center, Lesley University, Boston MA
- Artist Talk: *Media Artist and Curator Tara Nelson*, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs NY

### 2016

- *LAND FORM: Media Installations*, Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester NY
- *Luxus*: An exhibition featuring light as material, Corning, NY
- *Local Shorts: Films from Rochester*, Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester NY
- *Dobra: Festival Internacional de Cinema Experimental*, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

### 2015

- *Compartmented*: Multi-media and performance installations in Rochester, NY
- *Two Serious Ladies: Peggy Ahwesh and Jennifer Montgomery*, Murray Guy Gallery, Manhattan
- Video Association Dallas: *Dallas Medianale*, Dallas Texas

### 2014

- Magic Lantern: *The Locals Show*, Providence, RI
- Mono No Aware, Brooklyn NY
- *Movies from the Multiverse: Films by Tara and Gordon Nelson*, Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester
- *Light Sensitive: Cinematic Installations by Tara Nelson*, Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester
- *Another Experiment by Women*: AXW Online
- *ACRE TV, Psychedelicatesen: Lunch*, streaming Sept-Oct acretv.org
- *SCREEN SHOTS, Experimental Performance Program*, Northwest Film Forum, Seattle WA
- *Haverhill Experimental Film Festival*, Haverhill MA
- *Psychic Panic*, (Group Show) Mixed Media Installation, SPACE Gallery, Pittsburgh PA
- *Last Days of Capricorn – Films by Tara Nelson*; Mono No Aware, Brooklyn, NY
- *Green Dreams*; Kijidome, Boston, MA
- The 8 Fest, Toronto, Canada
- The \$100 Film Festival, Victoria, BC
- Sonic Circuits: *Strange Landscapes*; MLK Library, Washington DC

## 2013

- *Another Experiment by Women Film Festival*; Anthology Film Archives, New York, NY
- Guest Artist, *Focus on Film*; Ava Gallery and Art Center, Lebanon New Hampshire
- *Film and Sound, Improvised Performances*; Washington Street Art Center, Somerville, MA
- *Cuts and Such: Moving Images*, Pittsburgh Filmmakers, Pittsburgh PA
- *Mother at Fylkingen* No.4, Stockholm, Sweden
- *Adept-8*, Milwaukee WI
- Sonic Circuits, Baltimore MD
- Feminist Video Shorts Showcase, Burlington City Arts, Burlington VT (curated by Stella Marrs)
- The International Experimental Film Exposition, *Color Reversal Films*, Denver, CO
- Microscope Gallery, *Now What*, Brooklyn NY
- The 8 Fest, Toronto, Canada
- Chicago 8 Fest, *On the Road*: San Francisco Cinematheque and Echo Park Film Center, Los Angeles
- **Curator**, *The Artists Body in Film*, Monserat College of Art, Beverly MA (Featuring the work of Victor Faccinto and Jennifer Montgomery)

## 2012

- Anthology Film Archives, New York City, *Films by Tara and Gordon Nelson*
- MONO NO AWARE, New York, NY
- Spectacle Gallery, Boston; *Films by Tara and Gordon Nelson*
- Chicago 8 Fest, Chicago, IL
- Balagan Screening Series, The Brattle Theater, Boston
- Fellows Screening, Flaherty Film Seminar
- Millennium Film Workshop, New York City; *Films by Tara and Gordon Nelson*
- *VideoEx* Film Festival, Switzerland
- Montreal Underground Film Festival, Canada
- Chicago Underground Film Festival
- Experimental Film Festival, Portland
- Juror, Milwaukee Underground Film Festival
- **Curator**, The SUPER EIGHTIES: Super 8 Films from the 1980's; Spectacle NU Gallery, Boston
- Lecturer, The Experimental Film Club, School of the Art Institute of Chicago (Presentation on «Cinema Biology»)
- Eye & Ear Screening Series, School of the Art Institute of Chicago; *Recent Film and Video by Tara Nelson*
- The International Experimental Film Exposition, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston
- 100 Dollar Film Festival, Calgary
- The 8 Fest, Toronto, Canada
- Echo Park Film Center, San Francisco and Black Hole Cinematheque, Oakland, CA
- The Thompson Gallery, Weston MA; *Catharsis* (cinematic installation)

## 2011

- Chicago 8 Fest, Chicago, IL
- Balagan Screening Series, The Brattle Theater, Boston
- Residency/Exhibition: 21 Rooms: An Interactive Spectacle of Installation, Performance & Video Art; York, ME
- New York Film Festival, Views of the Avant Garde
- AntiMatter Film Festival, Victoria, BC
- Kommunales Kino Freiburg; Freiburg, Germany
- MoCA Miami, Optic Nerve
- Sydney Underground Film Festival, Australia
- Distilled Motion II, Boston
- 17 Cox, Beverly MA
- 186 Carpenter Gallery, Providence, RI; *Films by Tara and Gordon Nelson*

- Video Underground, Boston
- Massachusetts College of Art, Boston; *Films by Tara Nelson*
- FluxSpace, Philadelphia PA; East Coast Video Night
- The Hallway Gallery, Jamaica Plain, MA; **Curator**, Vision Blast, experimental film & video
- The Hallway Gallery, Jamaica Plain, MA; *The Films of Tara and Gordon Nelson*
- The Hallway Gallery, Jamaica Plain, MA; *Catharsis* (cinematic installation)
- Cuts and Such, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania
- **Curator**, *Rose Lowder Film Tour, USA (Boston, Milwaukee, Chicago, New York)*
- 8 Fest, Toronto, Ontario Canada

## 2010

- Mono No Aware, Brooklyn NY
- Aspect-EZ, Strangely Funny;(on DVD Compilation), Boston MA
- Video Underground Screening Series, Boston MA
- Jefferson Presents...Finale, Garfield Artworks, Pittsburgh PA
- ACRE Artists Residency Screening, Steuben, WI
- Provincetown Art Association and Museum
- **Curator**, *The World as We See It: Super 8 Travel Films* 2010, Video Underground, Boston MA
- MassArt Film Society: The Films of Tara and Gordon Nelson, Boston MA
- Artist Residency, Cape Cod Modern House Trust, Wellfleet MA
- Doran Gallery, Boston MA
- Video Underground Summer Series, Boston MA
- Curator, *A Feast of Rose Lowder*; 16mm films 1976-1989, MassArt Film Society, Boston MA

## 2009

- SCREEN @ MIT, Cambridge, MA
- CAUGHT LOOKING, PNC Park, Pittsburgh PA; *Jumbotron*, DV (Curated by Jacob Ciocci)

## 2008

- Matchwood Festival, Braddock PA
- Jefferson Presents, Pittsburgh PA
- Museum of Modern Art, New York, *PopRally*

## 2005

- Co-Curator, UNHABIT: A night of Multimedia Installation on Penn Ave
- Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh PA; *FishFilm* (with Gordon Nelson); DV
- The Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh, PA; The Light of Text (with Gordon Nelson), looping film installation