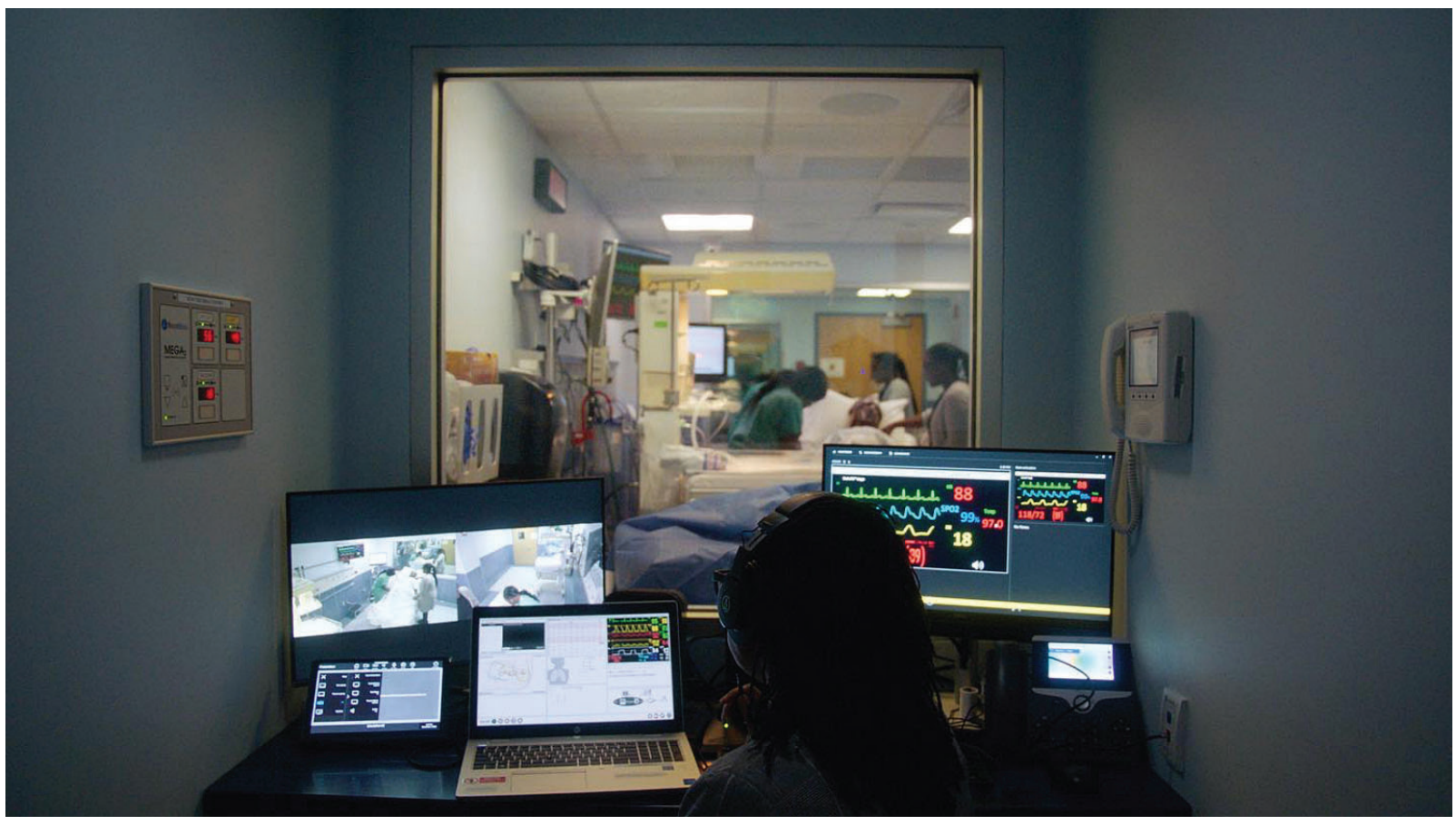
LIFE

UConn students explore health and disabilities in Carolyn Lazard film screenings



Still from Carolyn Lazard's film, 'Fiction Contract' (2025). The short film debuted at the Toronto International Film Festival on September 8, 2025.

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Four Carolyn Lazard films were screened by the University of Connecticut Department of Social and Critical Inquiry on Monday, Sept. 28, at the Dodd Center for Human Rights.

Lazard is an artist that creates work exploring disability, chronic illness, healthcare and labor.

Martine Granby, an assistant journalism professor at UConn, said Lazard's work inspires audiences to think about time, technology, institutions and relationships.

The first film shown was "Crip Time." It focuses on seven containers, each with four compartments. Throughout the film, Lazard opens numerous pill bottles and sorts the pills into the containers.

During a virtual question and answer segment after the films were screened, Lazard said that "Crip Time" is a phrase from the disability community. Lazard mentioned that the weekly task of sorting pills documents time in its own way and that the film demonstrates varying time perceptions among disabled and non-disabled people.

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> EMMA MCCALLA

"It's basically about the way disability changes the way you relate to time," Lazard said. "That we often have ideas about how fast things are supposed to go and that disability really changes our understanding of that because it slows our bodies down for many of us."

Lazard said the film also discusses labor. They affirmed that labor is often thought of as the careers that people have. However, labor also involves necessary tasks for survival. Lazard's weekly habit of sorting their pills into containers exemplifies this.

Next was "Pre-Existing Condition." In the film, over 100 research protocols from the University of Pennsylvania in the 1960s were shown. The protocols were designated for various health situations, including diagnosis, tests for diseases and blood tests after receiving penicillin.

While the protocols were shown, the narrator discussed his experience taking a blood pressure pill. He said the pill made him fatigued. After taking it for two years, his doctor prescribed him a different pill that also made him sick.

After "Pre-Existing Condition" was "Vital," a film about Maxine Smalls, a woman in her 30s that visits the doctor for an ultrasound.

When Smalls arrives at the doctor's office, she finds that her healthcare provider, Dr. Wells, is not available, resulting in the assignment of a new doctor. During the ultrasound, Smalls asks the new doctor for his opinion on different birth procedures. His responses are vague and lack useful information. When Smalls checks out of the doctor's office at the film's conclusion, her insurance doesn't cover the appointment, leaving her with a $765 bill.

The final film, "Fiction Contract," portrays a birth simulation. Taking place in a delivery room, the film features a few midwives and a dummy. Throughout the piece, the midwives treat the dummy like it's having a baby.

Lazard further explained the film's meaning during the virtual session.

"It's about the immediacy of this fictional environment that's created this kind of temporary contract to pretend that this thing is real and to participate in that for educational and professional development," they said.

Lazard discussed their college experience, which relates to "Fiction Contract's" racial themes. They said they were the only Black student in their filmmaking class, and that their mother and professors encouraged them to follow their dreams to become an artist.

Emma McCalla, a seventh-semester allied health sciences student, said the last film was the most intriguing because of the representation of Black female midwives and nurses.

"I think it was really important to see there were so many Black women in healthcare, especially when Black women have the highest mortality rates," McCalla said.



Carolyn Lazard's art installation, 'Vital' (2025). The installation was featured in Lazard's 'Two-Way' exhibition until May 10, 2025.

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