The Problem
According to Casa del Encuentro, a woman’s shelter based on Buenos Aires, a woman is killed by a man every 36 hours in Argentina.\(^1\) The country is known for its píropos, or catcalls—small-scale manifestations of the culture of machismo that makes gender-based violence shockingly pervasive in Argentina. These dominant beliefs affect those across the gender and sexual spectrum. A 2014 report by the National Institute Against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism estimated that 40 percent of Argentines held discriminatory attitudes toward transgender people.\(^2\)

However, the cultural tide is turning. On June 3rd, 2015, thousands of people in Buenos Aires, Argentina took to the streets in protest of gender-based violence. Organizations, schools, and political figures showed their support of this movement, #NiUnaMenos, that is rapidly gaining momentum in society. Yet in spite of a new series of laws to protect the rights of women, transgender and gay people in Argentina, many people remain fearful of being themselves. According to Maitena Burundarena, a feminist cartoonist and writer, “The solution has to come from society, it won’t come from the state.”\(^3\) Through film, we aim to broadcast the voices of local artist-activists working towards that solution.

The Project
Film has the power to facilitate social change by projecting underrepresented voices in the consciousness of thousands of spectators. We propose to produce participatory documentary film work spotlighting the efforts of local artist-activists working towards gender and sexual equality in Argentina. We will do this through interviews and explorations of their art, and we will disseminate our work as an online series of video portraits on Vimeo and Facebook. We will also submit a 20-minute documentary film to festivals like Festival Asterisco, an international LGBTIQ film festival that takes place in Buenos Aires each July.

Goals
Our documentary work will aim to fulfill three major objectives. First, we will support local organizations and artists in sharing their work more broadly. We will measure our success through metrics on the videos we publish online, including number of plays, geographic reach, time spent viewing each video, likes and comments, and social media shares. The artist-activists and organizations that we profile can also use these videos independently to build their audience and advocacy efforts. Second, we will encourage viewers to take action. Within our series episodes and the longer documentary film, we will include information about how to get involved with the artists and organizations we spotlight. Third, we will set up physical and virtual spaces so that like-minded viewers can connect with one another. We will hold screenings of our videos in local community centers, and we will submit our documentary film to festivals within Argentina and beyond.

Our impact will be sustainable in that our videos will live online and connect viewers with other people and local organizations as they continue their work into the future. This will create a ripple effect that will extend our project’s capacity for social change far beyond the film’s release online and in festivals.

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\(^1\) [http://www.lacasadelencuentro.org/femicidios.html](http://www.lacasadelencuentro.org/femicidios.html)


Partners
This project will benefit from our strong ties to the community. Meghan studied in Buenos Aires for the fall semester of her junior year, and while there she developed Spanish fluency as well as a nuanced understanding of Argentinean culture. During the fall and the following summer, she collaborated with an Argentinean musician, Denise Metzger, who is a student at the University of Buenos Aires and has agreed to help us navigate any cultural and linguistic difficulties that may arise.

Denise Metzger has introduced us to Ivanna Colonna Olsen and her band, Bife, which uses provocative lyrics to challenge traditional gender conventions. Olsen has a wide network of like-minded artists and organizations with whom we will connect in the creation of our film. She is highly involved with Brandon, “an alternative cultural space where activists, poets, designers, digital designers, musicians, and students studying art and culture find each other to grow and expand.”

Both Olsen and the Brandon Cultural Center have expressed strong interest in working with us and connecting us with their respective wide networks. In keeping with essential moral code for documentary filmmakers, we will explain to our interviewees how we intend to use the recordings, and we will only use them with their approval. Because we plan to edit the film while in Argentina, we will ask for our collaborators’ feedback at every juncture of the post-production process. We will keep in close contact with them throughout production and beyond, as we plan to tie our final products directly to their advocacy efforts.

Relevant Experience
Meghan is a Film and Media Studies major and Sarah is an Art and Art History major. Together, we created a video production agency, Pioneer Creative. This semester, we completed promotional videos for both the on-campus Peer Advocates of Sexual Respect and the Student Wellness Team. Additionally, we have produced a successful series called Show & Tell, which uncovers meaningful narratives behind the objects that people carry. We are also both currently working on our own Honors Senior Thesis projects, which will result in two 25-minute documentaries to be screened on-campus in the spring. After we graduate in May, we will continue to use film as a vehicle for social change beyond Amherst College. While we cannot now anticipate all the ways that the Love Through a New Lens project will change us, we are confident that it will draw on our existing experiences and also sharpen and deepen our skills for the social documentary work to which we are committing our futures.

Timeline and Plan of Action
Development and Production- Beginning in May, we will begin contacting Argentine artists with the help of Metzger and Olsen. Setting up meeting times and expanding our network will provide a foundation for the work we plan to undertake upon arrival. In June, we will fortify relationships with organizations and individuals, recording preliminary interviews with our existing contacts, conducting research, and establishing further shooting dates.
Production- In late June and into July, we will film local artists and activists and build an ongoing series of short (3-5 minute) videos that profile individuals and groups. The videos will be released weekly online and disseminated through social media.
Post-Production and Distribution- By August, we will have a significant amount of edited footage from our online series. We will weave this footage together and complete the post-production process for our final 20-minute documentary film. We will then organize screenings in spaces like Brandon and submit our film to festivals. Most of these festivals will take place after our summer timeline, which will allow us to build sustainable momentum into the future.

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4 http://brandon.org.ar