

UPFRONT
NEWSFEED**SF School of Digital Filmmaking
Revamps Film Acting Program**

“There are two ways to make it as an actor in the Bay Area,” says veteran film actor and **SF School of Digital Filmmaking** (SFSDF) teacher Jeffrey Weissman. “One is to be willing to fly to L.A. (or Seattle, or New York) at the drop of a hat. But if you want to stay here in the Bay Area and make a living as an actor, you’ve got to diversify.” For some, that diversification could include voice-over work or modeling. For others, this might mean making the leap into film acting. San Francisco School of Digital Filmmaking, one of the Bay Area’s most intensive film programs, has recently overhauled its acting program to better suit the needs of the community. “We now offer drop-in classes and a yearlong certificate program,” school cofounder and director of productions Jeremiah Birnbaum explains, “so that when the actors come out they are agent-ready and have a reel.”

SFSDF has five sessions a year, with each session offering different electives

and the same basic core acting classes.

The school holds auditions for interested actors, Weissman says, “so that we can place actors into the appropriate course.” Though, according to Birnbaum, the local film scene is largely independent and low-budget, he notes that it is growing rapidly and the SFSDF has played a major role in this growth. “Our students are driving the independent filmmaking renaissance happening in the Bay Area, and our acting students get the chance to work at the forefront of this all.” Most importantly, Birnbaum continues, “All of the staff at SFSDF have worked in the industry, and it is important to us to be sure that when students are done with this program, they know that they’re ready to go out there and get work.”

SFSDF offers film acting open houses once a month for those interested in the program. Visit sfdigifilm.com for more info.
—Elana McKernan



**SFSDF filmmaking students
working with actors.**

Photo: Joshua Smith