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University of Pennsylvania Libraries

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2009 Mashup Awards Reward Student Creativity

The Penn Libraries congratulate the winners of the third annual Mashup Contest. Sponsored by the Libraries, Cinema Studies, Penn Humanities Forum, and College Houses and Academic Services, the Mashup Contest celebrates student creativity in video. Students submitted 33 mashups to this year's contest, a substantial increase over previous years; several entries were created for class assignments using the Weigle Information Commons.

William Strasser (C'09) received first prize for "Video + Poem + Painting". To explain the goal of his work, he said, "Whether in Classical mythology, Renaissance painting, 20th-century poetry or modern music videos, depictions of suffering have never ceased to captivate audiences. I aimed to juxtapose these depictions in order to highlight ways they have changed and ways that they remain the same, identifying something inherent to the human condition." William combines the poem "Musee Des Beaux-Arts" written by W.H. Auden in 1938, an audio recording by the poet, the music video created in 2004 by Mark Romanek for Jay-Z's song "99 Problems", and the painting "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus" created by Pieter Bruegel in 1558. Created for a Video 2 class taught by Ellen Reynolds, the mashup combines interesting elements across centuries and cultures.

Aaron Walker (C'09) received second prize for "The Muppets Take 'Manhattan'". His work splices the audio from the Woody Allen film "Manhattan" with video from the Jim Henson film "The Muppets Take Manhattan", and fine editing creates a startling and hilarious result.

Allison Seelig (C'10) received third prize for "No Way Out of the Field of Dreams". She created this mashup for Louise Krasniewicz's Spring 2008 class "Anthropology and Popular Cinema". Allison's goal for her fictitious film trailer, she said, was "to show how baseball serves an important mythic function for the nation by making it into a national security issue obsessed over by the government."

This year, Penn Libraries added an online popular voting component to the contest, attracting attention from several national new media sites and receiving votes from several countries. The Popular Choice Award went to "Slumdog Millionaire 2", a re-enactment created by Akash Barot (C'09) with Adam El Sehamy (C'09) and Zhibo Wang (W'09).

Dr. Peter Decherney, Assistant Professor of English and Cinema Studies, moderated the awards ceremony, which was held on April 17. He commented, "Each year I have been more impressed and amazed by the quality and creativity of the entries. Mashups have become a common element of coursework, and the media lab is always full of students creating their own mashups. The biggest change that I have seen in three years is that, when we tell people we are holding a mashup contest, they no longer say, 'What is that?' – at least most of the time."

All of the entries can be viewed on the [WIC website](#), and through iTunes U and YouTube.

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