Game On

Video games and behavioral science converge to “get stuff done.”
CONVERSATIONS
in the Arts

A year-long exploration of trends and issues in disciplines taught by Columbia’s School of Media Arts, focusing on social media, journalism, and the moving image.

Mira Nair
Wednesday, April 28, 2010

Mira Nair is the director of Salaam Bombay!, The Namesake, Mississippi Masala, Monsoon Wedding, and Amelia.

Past Speakers

This series opens a three-year cycle of programs dedicated to each of Columbia’s three schools: Media Arts, Fine and Performing Arts, and Liberal Arts and Sciences.

All lectures at 7:00 p.m. at Film Row Cinema, 1104 S. Wabash Ave., 8th floor.

Tickets are available at no charge on a first-come, first-served basis at colum.edu/conversations.

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Columbia COLLEGE CHICAGO PRESENTS

CONVERSATIONS
in the Arts

President’s Club donors enjoy invitations to VIP receptions with the speakers following each event.

To learn more about the President’s Club, call Kim Clement at 312-369-7084.

Cover

John Lomax, a senior majoring in 3D animation, wears a homemade crown in Interactive Arts and Media professor Dave Gerding’s CONSTRUCT project. Story, page 14. Photo: Drew Reynolds (B.A. ’97)

Features

Game On
Columbia’s Interactive Arts and Media Department is creating innovative games “to get stuff done.” By Paul M. Davis. Photography by Drew Reynolds (B.A. ’97)

(Hopeful) Hit Men
With Chicago Overcoat, six alums are looking to hit the big screen, and the big time. By Nora O’Donnell. Photography by Chad McGavock (B.F.A. ’09)

Portfolio: ESB Institute Fellowship Program
Projects by five recent fellows at the Ellen Stone Belic Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media

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ANNOUNCING COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO’S NEW MEDIA PRODUCTION CENTER

Reinventing Media Arts Education for the 21st Century

Now open, Columbia College Chicago’s state-of-the-art Media Production Center is the first educational facility of its kind, designed to foster cross-disciplinary collaboration among students in film, television, interactive arts and media, audio arts, journalism, and other areas of study.

Designed by Jeanne Gang /Studio Gang Architects, the innovative structure is a model for the incorporation of green building practices. The facility also commemorates Chicago’s role in filmmaking history by incorporating the arch from the former Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, parent company of Paramount Pictures.

colum.edu/mpc
The term "innovation" is used very loosely in higher education, but we don’t take it lightly at all, because we practice it every day. We push our faculty to be cutting edge. We push our students to be cutting edge. We encourage them to be always looking at the next opportunity in their disciplines or their majors: What’s the next technology? How are the disciplines evolving? What majors are converging? Where do we need to be providing instruction, or perhaps discontinuing instruction, as industries change? That whole thing about innovation in the arts and media isn’t just a tag line for us, it’s the way we live.

Our new Media Production Center is a fine example of this. It is the first building we’ve built from the ground up, and it’s important from a variety of standpoints. It’s important because it’s a building we need, because there’s no other building like this. We could not have purchased a preexistent building and reconfigured it, the way we’ve done with our other buildings. We built a facility that precisely reflects our approach to teaching media arts in the twenty-first century, and there isn’t another one on the face of the globe that can do what this building does. It’s also important because of what it says about us as an institution. When we decided to do this, we brought in a consultant to assess our ability to raise the necessary money, and he said, “You’re lucky to raise five million dollars, because you’ve never done it before. You have no history of fundraising at that level, of board giving at that level, and you have no friends out there that know you that well.” Well, we’ve raised more than $24 million for this project, with additional pledged. It shows that the consultant was wrong. But what it really shows is that Columbia College Chicago is positioned very differently than some folks thought we were. Our trustees, our alumni, our faculty and staff, and our students all know what we can do. We set a goal that some felt was impossible, and we reached it. We built a facility they said couldn’t be built. And this points to all the other things we know are possible at this institution. All the things that people said Columbia College couldn’t do, we did. And now we know we can do more—there are no limits. There are no dreams we can’t dream, because we know we have the wherewithal to get it done.

In Chicago, we have always attracted, and been attracted to, young creatives. Professionals in the creative industries know us—many of them are our alumni—but for a long time we were under the radar for everyone else. Not anymore. The Media Production Center offers physical evidence of our commitment to innovation, and the results that innovation produces. We have a safe place in which students, faculty, and others can take creative risks. That doesn’t mean it’s chaotic, or that we lack structure or design in what we’re doing. But we are always looking forward, searching, reaching for the next thing. We are always taking informed risks. And that’s what leads to innovation.
As a member of the college advising staff, J. Wayne Tukes was among the first to see the effects of the recession on students. He began talking with other faculty and staff about how they could help. “We came up with the Faculty/Staff Scholarship Initiative after consulting with a lot of folks about it,” Tukes recalls. The initiative dovetails with Scholarship Columbia, a matching-fund campaign aimed primarily at alumni. Tukes and his colleagues expanded the idea over brown-bag lunches and through viral videos and mailings, carefully keeping the message peer to peer.

That’s been key to their success, notes Bill Britt, director of advancement services. “It’s reinvigorated faculty and staff giving.

It’s really quite extraordinary what they’ve done,” Britt says the effort has garnered commitments of more than $30,000 from faculty and staff since its inception in 2009. Combined with matching funds from the college, that translates to more than $70,000 in scholarship funds available to students.

“I’ve always wanted to do something for the students,” says Mark Gonzalez, a 28-year member of Columbia’s building services staff. “I’m glad I was able to help.”

Visit colum.edu/createchange to watch the videos and learn more about the initiative and a faculty/staff showcase being planned for April 1.

—ANN WIENS

GRASS ROOTS GIVING (FACULTY/STAFF SCHOLARSHIP INITIATIVE)

news from the Columbia community

WIRE: JIM SULSKI, 1957–2010

He was a colleague to some, a mentor to many, and a friend to all who knew him. Jim Sulski, associate professor and adviser to the Columbia Chronicle, lost his three-year battle with cancer on January 7, 2010. Known for his humor and humbleness, Sulski joined the Journalism department as parttime faculty in 1991, became a fulltime faculty member in 1999, and was promoted to associate chair of the Journalism department in 2006, a position he held for two years.

An investigative journalist by nature, he stressed to his students the importance of holding decision makers accountable. “Jim was a wonderful teacher and mentor who took special pride in his work with the Columbia Chronicle newspaper,” said Columbia’s president, Warrick L. Carter. “He will be incredibly missed by his colleagues, students, and those whose lives he touched.”

In addition to his role as faculty at Columbia, Sulski was an alumnus of the college. He earned a B.A. in journalism in 1984 and went on to receive an M.A. in communications from the University of Illinois at Chicago. He wrote for a number of publications, including Crain’s Chicago Business, the Chicago Tribune, and Consumers Digest. He is survived by five children and his wife, Jo Cates, associate vice president for academic research and dean of the library at Columbia.

CAROL ANN STOWE, 1951–2009

Columbia lost a universally loved and respected colleague, teacher, and force in progressive early childhood education when Carol Ann Stowe died unexpectedly on October 4, 2009, of complications from a 1979 automobile accident.

In 1996 Stowe, a lifelong educator with a Ph.D. in educational processes from Northwestern University, became the founding director of the Harris Center for Early Childhood Education in the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Columbia College Chicago. Her leadership and dedication brought critical grants to the progressive program, which trained new teachers in Chicago using the world-renowned Reggio Emilia approach, an art-based, child-focused method regarded by many as the most successful in the world. The B.A. program Stowe put in place has grown to include 120 majors.

Stowe is survived by three daughters, two of whom are early childhood education teachers in the Chicago area; two grandchildren; and her husband, Tim.

A memorial to Carol Ann Stowe was created by students in the Early Childhood Education department.

Photo: Alexa Rubinstein (B.F.A. ’09)
Columbia’s new Media Production Center. Photo: Tari Khan

MEDIA PRODUCTION CENTER OPENS FOR CLASSES
Columbia College Chicago has completed construction on the new, 35,500-square-foot Media Production Center (MPC), the first new construction building erected in the college’s 120-year history. Spring semester classes began in the facility on January 25, 2010, almost exactly one year after the initial groundbreaking. Designed from the ground up to accommodate a new way of teaching filmmaking and media production for the twenty-first century, the facility opened January 25, 2010, almost exactly one year after the initial groundbreaking. The innovative structure was designed by Jeanne Gang of Studio Gang Architects, who won the commission through a highly competitive architectural selection contest. The building is a model for the incorporation of sustainable design and construction processes, a hallmark of Gang’s practice. One such element is the green roof that covers 50 percent of the building. The facility also commemorates Chicago’s long role in the history of filmmaking, incorporating a large terra-cotta arch salvaged from the former Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, a parent of Paramount Pictures, whose facilities on the Near South Side stood nearby. The 40,162-square-foot lot at the corner of State and 16th streets, appraised at $3.2 million, was purchased from the City of Chicago for $200,000. The building is anchored by a 7,350-square-foot main stageaudience, a 2,085-square-foot motion capture studio, a small stageaudience, prop and wardrobe studios, classrooms, an outdoor deck for the college’s remote media trucks, a rooftop terrace, and a lofty, glass-walled lobby that acts as an informal gathering space for students. For more information about the Media Production Center, including the complete benching, visit colum.edu/mpc.

COLUMBIA MAKES SUSTAINABILITY A PRIORITY
Warrick L. Carter, president of Columbia College Chicago, has signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), thereby adding Columbia to a list of more than 550 institutions of higher education in the U.S. that have made this pledge. By signing the ACUPCC, Columbia commits to strive for climate neutrality by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and staying current with new technological advancements to help achieve this goal. This dedication is demonstrated by current building projects on campus, such as the new Media Production Center, designed from the ground up with sustainability at the core. Another recent project, the renovated fifth floor of the 33 East Congress Parkway building, was awarded a Silver Certification under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Commercial Interiors category by the USGBC. It was the first Columbia building project to receive LEED certification.

NAMI MUN WINS WHITING WRITERS’ AWARD
Fiction writing professor Nami Mun was awarded the prestigious Whiting Writer’s Award for her 2009 novel Miss from Home. The award, which includes a $50,000 stipend, has been given annually since 1985 to 10 writers of exceptional talent and promise early in their careers. In addition to the Whiting Award, the widely acclaimed Miss from Home was shortlisted for the Orange Award for New Writers. The novel follows Joon, a 13-year-old runaway, through the streets of New York as she struggles with addiction, exploitation, and her own past. This is Mun’s second year as an faculty at Columbia. When asked what has struck her most about the college, she answered, “The students, hands down. They seem to be more work and study and think and talk and work creatively … I was never that cool in college.” Mun is currently working on a book about crime.

JOURNALISM DEPARTMENT RECEIVES $45,000 TO SUPPORT EMERGING NEWS SOURCES
Columbia’s proposal for a website, AustinTalks.org, is among a dozen selected to share $500,000 that the Chicago Community Trust has pledged to support the development of emerging local news sources through a series of new grants called the Community News Matters Award.

Columbia will receive $45,000 for the development of the site, which will serve as a clearinghouse of news and information important to the Austin neighborhood on Chicago’s West Side. The project, a collaboration with the Chicago Tribune, is led by a local professional journalist who will work with the students to cover government meetings, businesses, churches, and other institutions in the neighborhood, and distribute content via the website, the Tribune’s Chicago New Blog (chicagonow.com), and other media. Suzanne McBride, an assistant professor in the Journalism department, plans to launch the site this spring. “We’re honored to have been given the opportunity to partner with the residents, businesses owners, civic leaders, educators, and people of faith in Austin,” she said. McBride and her partner in the project, associate professor Barbara Iverson, will edit and distribute the news and information gathered by student and citizen journalists through mobile devices, text messaging, and newsletters to reach as many Austin residents as possible and to build audience involvement.

The Community Media Workshop, a nonprofit housed at Columbia College, also received a $45,000 grant. The Community News Matters Award is funded jointly by the Chicago Community Trust and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. It is part of the Knight Community Information Challenge, a five-year, $24 million national effort “to help place-based foundations find creative ways to use new media and technology to keep residents informed and engaged.”

The Chicago Tribune is one news site that will serve as a model for the AustinTalks.org community journalism project.

The fifth floor of 33 East Congress in the first Columbia building project to receive LEED certification. Photo: Tari Khan

BROADCAST JOURNALISM AND TELEVISION STUDENTS RECOGNIZED BY EMMY ORGANIZATION
The work of several Columbia students was recognized by the Chicago/Midwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS), the organization that awards the Emmy. A team of students from Frequency TV, Columbia’s student television station, won an award in the College Student Production: Entertainment Program/Segment category for a segment they created about the Chicago Outfit, a roller derby team. Michael Petroshus, Leo Flores, Chris Smith, and Mailey Ryan entered “Roller Derby” into the running almost as an afterthought. “We made this show called ‘Charlie and Isabelle,’” said Petroshus. “And we all thought it was our best work, so we entered that.” But the team had also created a segment about the roller derby that they thought was interesting and well done, “so we figured it couldn’t hurt to put that in, too,” added Petroshus. Their initial entry, “Charlie and Isabelle,” was also nominated for the award.

Broadcast journalism students Frankie Jublie, Corinne Rowland, Lauren Royala, Steve Nichols, and Candace Pierce won first place in the Information Program/Segment category for their work on an Election 2008 package.

Mary Hynes, an Emmy judging committee cochair, noted that the goal of the student awards is “to recognize excellence in college student productions and encourage the next generation of television professionals. These television students are the future Emmy Award winners.”

The Chicago Outfit Roller Derby segment

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**STUDENTS SUCCESSFULLY RALLY TO SAVE MAP FUNDING**

When funding for the Monetary Aid Program (MAP) fell victim to budget cuts in the Illinois legislature in October, Columbia students responded as Columbia students always do: they got creative. In just 24 hours, a group of students, faculty, and staff wrote, shot, and produced a four-minute music video of an original composition, I Wonder What I Could Be, to raise awareness of the crisis. The video was distributed via YouTube and other social networking sites. Meanwhile, Columbia’s Student Government Association organized a letter-writing campaign and trip to Springfield to rally the legislature to restore funding for MAP; which provides tuition assistance to thousands of Illinois students.

About 140,000 students, or one fourth of those in the state, rely on MAP funding to help pay their tuition, including thousands of Columbia students, who receive an average of about $1,940, according to an estimate the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. Columbia students joined others from throughout the state at the October 15 rally. That afternoon the Illinois House and Senate voted to allocate $205 million to MAP, securing grants already promised to tens of thousands of students for the spring 2010 semester. It remains unclear, however, how the program will be funded in future years.

To see the music video and the Columbia Chronicle’s coverage of the rally, visit colum.edu/demo and look for this story in the “Wire” section of Demo online.

**JOHN FISCHETTI MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION NOW ONLINE**

The Columbia Library Archives hold the definitive collection of notebooks and sketches by the late John Fischetti. A syndicated cartoonist, Fischetti worked primarily for the Chicago Daily News, reaching a nation-wide audience and garnering him the Pulitzer Prize for political cartooning in 1969.

Recently, the library was awarded a grant by the Illinois State Library, a department of the Office of Secretary of State, using funds provided by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the federal Library Services and Technology Act, to digitize the 3,300-work collection, making it available online.

The physical materials from which this collection is derived are housed in the College Archives. To view the collection online, visit colum.edu/fischettisketches.

**PHOTOGRApher CURTIS MANN SELECTED FOR WHITney BIENNIAL**

Curtis Mann, a 2008 graduate of Columbia’s M.F.A. program in photography and current adjunct faculty in the department, has been invited to exhibit his work in the 2010 Whitney Biennial, among the most prestigious annual contemporary art exhibitions in the world.

Mann creates new photography by physically erasing and manipulating found, amateur snapshots. This tension between creation and destruction is the process that expands the boundaries of photography, incorporating experimentation to form unique, often beautiful new works. “Curtis Mann discovered his own distinctive artistic voice very early in his graduate program,” said Rob Thrl, chair of Columbia’s photography department, “He then developed his work with great intelligence, energy, and ambition. We are very proud of Curtis and delighted that his work will be finding an enormous new audience.”

Mann is one of 55 artists chosen by curators Francescon Bonami and Gary Carter/Murray for the exhibition, which runs February 25 through May 30 at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

**COLUMBIA NIGHT A HIT AT CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**

Columbia was the presenting sponsor of the 45th Chicago International Film Festival, which ran October 8 through 22, 2009, at the AMC River East 21 Theaters. Among the highlights was Columbia Night on October 9, which included the world premiere of Chicago Overcoat, the debut feature from Beverly Ridge Pictures, a Chicago-based production company founded by several recent Columbia alumni. Chicago Overcoat is a gangster story about an aging Outfit hit man with a chance to reclaim his lost glory. The film stars Frank Vincent, Katherine Narducci, Mike Starr, Danny Golding, Stacy Keach, and Armindo Assante. Appearing at Columbia Night’s reception and screening were several of the film’s stars, along with several alumni, including Mike Starr, Katherine Narducci, Frank Vincent, and Danny Golding, who participated in a panel discussion.

Recent grad Brad Bisciotti (B.A. ’09) and his production company Rubbish were present with the Chicago Award during the festival for the short film Metro, which Bisciotti wrote and directed as part of a Production class at Columbia. Metro is the story of a young man faced with the grim reality of being homeless, and having to decide whether he belongs on land or in water. A sci-fi/horror, Burden, was also screened at Columbia Night. That film, a special effects-rich story about an invader from outer space who has a change of heart, shares several alumni production team members with Chicago Overcoat. See our story on Chicago Overcoat, “Hopeful Hit Man,” starting on page 22.
This is my favorite movie so far," says Marlon West, effects animation supervisor on the holiday blockbuster The Princess and the Frog, Disney’s first movie featuring an African American princess. The animated fairy tale is set in the Louisiana bayous and boasts an all-star cast including Anika Noni Rose, Oprah Winfrey, and John Goodman.

It’s a long way from the “little short films and animations with clay and G.I. Joe” that West made with a Super 8 camera he got for his twelfth birthday.

It was that camera that sparked West’s passion for filmmaking and animation. The St. Louis native earned a degree in film and video from Columbia, then worked for Encyclopaedia Britannica for three years before heading to L.A. After freelancing for four years, he landed a job at Walt Disney Animation Studios. During his 16-year tenure at Disney, he has worked on many notable films, including The Lion King, Pocahontas, Tarzan, and Chicken Little, and served as visual effects supervisor on Home on the Range and Atlantis: The Lost Empire.

“I have a daughter who’s five years old. This is probably going to be the first movie she sees in the theater and for it to be an African American princess is really cool.”

—Leah Banks (M.A. ’07)
In a modest conference room in Columbia College’s Department of Interactive Arts and Media (IAM), we’ve stepped into what could pass as a set from the ‘80s sci-fi classic. It’s a futuristic space where individuals interact on screens as small sensors track their eye movements, pupil dilation, and even facial expressions, all in the service of teaching machines to understand how people communicate and collaborate with one another.*

Gerding is one of several visionaries in Columbia’s IAM department who are leveraging video game technology to create what he terms “constructive games,” or “games to get stuff done.” Gerding heads the project CONSTRUCT, an effort to merge video gaming with behavioral and computer science to quantify the ways in which individuals communicate—such as speech, body language, and facial movements—in order to facilitate more constructive interactions.

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“This is like the quarter-million-dollar table,” says Columbia professor David Gerding, sitting in front of a modest conference table outfitted with six laptops that are connected to optical sensors. As Gerding speaks, an avatar of his face appears on the laptop screen before him. A click of a button, and beams of light appear to radiate from the eyes of his digital self. “It’s detecting the iris. Can you see the laser beams coming out of my eyes? It’s like Blade Runner!”

Columbia’s Interactive Arts and Media Department Is Creating Innovative Games “to Get Stuff Done.”

* In a few months, the system will be used to analyze the speech and eye movements of four Columbia students as they interact in meeting-like settings in Columbia’s Media Production Center.
Building on the success of the department’s High-Rise Evacuation Project—a 2007 collaboration with the City of Chicago to develop a video game that helps train first responders to evacuate a building in a disaster—Gerding began work on CONSTRUCT, a two-phase project to teach machines to analyze the interactions among humans as they collaborate. The project is funded by a cooperative agreement between Columbia College and the U.S. Army Research Laboratory concerning Conglomerated Networked Telemetry to Raise Understanding of Collaborative Teams, or CONSTRUCT. Gerding explains that what this basically entails is conducting “human factor studies”—how do people work together, how can they interact with each other? “The idea was they could deploy what we make and use it in their lab. We’re creating research tools for the broader research community.”

The first phase of the research took place largely within a video game space. “We made the game in about a year and a half,” Gerding says. “We built a lab with five game-playing workstations set up, and five other workstations that were doing speech recognition in real time on the players. Everyone was wearing wireless headsets, and as they played the game, all the data was streaming to this database.”

The game is deceptively simple in its execution. Built on a software engine often used in first-person shooter games, it places five players in a confined virtual room. But instead of shooting at one another, players must collaborate to succeed. The center of the virtual room contains a stack of colored blocks, and a simple image is displayed on one wall. The players are given two rounds to reproduce the image using the blocks, working within 10- and 20-minute time limits to complete the task more quickly than other groups.

Gerding’s project team was able to pull reams of data from the avatars’ movements and points of visual focus, as well as from the conversations between players, which were captured using speech-recognition software. The data was then harvested into a custom piece of software Gerding has dubbed Timeline, which visualized the separate data streams side by side. Doctoral students from Chicago’s DePaul University used the software to label patterns of data as distinct forms of human behavior. These patterns, once identified by humans, can be taught to the software so that it can automatically recognize types of behavior in future trials. As Gerding explains, “Instead of having a human being map out the data, the machine can make those assertions based on the probability that a human would have marked that scope of data that way.”

Once the Timeline system had been trained to recognize certain types of behavior, Gerding and his team began to introduce new forms of input and study interactions in the real world. “In the new round of research,” Gerding says, “instead of only having five people playing a game, we’re going to have some number of those teams in other labs and four people sitting around a table of screens in the real world and acting in some kind of supervisory role.” While one group plays the game, another group will sit in the Biele Fumer meeting room, advising the players over headsets while their own real-world interactions as a team are tracked.

“The gaze trackers will look at them and gather data,” Gerding explains. “There is useful data for humans in things like eye contact, body language. The trick is getting machines to recognize those patterns. When the gaze trackers are all running together, we’ll get the data back as 3-D heads in a 3-D space. It will say, ‘Dave was looking at subject one, or subject two,’ and you can get that data as well.” By re-creating these real-world interactions, the software can then apply the same algorithms already established in the video game world to determine which types of interaction best achieved the shared goal of the individuals.

The project team was able to use data from the second phase of the research to help train first responders how to evacuate a building in a disaster—Gerding says, “We’re going to try and find what you would do if you were going to make a smart classroom,” he says, “What kinds of data would you try and collect?”

When Gerding speaks of smart classrooms, he’s not talking about rooms outfitted with computers and a projector. “Imagine if we had a traditional classroom learning environment where everyone’s facing a board,” he says. “But we have gaze-tracking sensors on the students, and as the professor, you get the sensor data in my glasses, so when I go up to the board and am drawing, I can see data showing which students are looking at which part of the board. What can we do to make the environment literally facilitate the goal that of room, that in this case would be learning? Gaze tracking could wake up the student who is falling asleep before the professor has to. Or the room will connect to the learning management system, and as the professor is lecturing, related documents are automatically being pulled up on a screen based on keywords that the professor is saying.”

Gerding is clearly energized by the prospect of opening up these high-end technologies and theoretical concepts to Columbia students, providing them with opportunities to think about and experience media and sensor-rich environments. The equipment involved with CONSTRUCT and the earlier High-Rise Evacuation Project provided the foundation for the motion capture studio in Columbia’s new Media Production Center, which goes online this semester. “The students will get the chance to try these different, cool toys,” notes Gerding, who also sees possibilities to apply this research to media criticism and analysis, presenting students with a method of quantifying types of human behavior to better understand how players react to student-developed game worlds, or how directors respond to film shot on the Media Production Center soundstages.

The CONSTRUCT project exemplifies the possibilities that Doreen Bartoni, dean of Columbia’s School of Media Arts, envisions for students as a result of successful efforts to bring increased research dollars to the college. “Dave has taken his role as a researcher very seriously,” she says. “He is a remarkable fellow to work with, and I see him as one of the most exciting and creative individuals on our faculty, someone who is able to transform the way students engage with faculty in the classroom and the school to the next level. I feel very confident when he’s involved in a project that he will be able to have developers that not only satisfy the project but also have other applications.”

“INSTEAD OF SHOOTING AT ONE ANOTHER, PLAYERS MUST COLLABORATE TO SUCCEED.”

GERDING PRESENTED THIS VISION OF SMART CLASSESROOMS IN MEDIAKIT †November AT THE INTERATIONAL CONFERENCE OF EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION (ICERI), WHICH INCLUDED REPRESENTATIVE FROM MORE THAN 60 COUNTRIES.

1. Gerding presented this vision of smart classrooms in MediaKit November at the International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation (ICERI), which included representatives from more than 60 countries.
creating games, creating change

At Columbia, this sort of original thought about gaming and collaboration is not confined to Garding’s work with CONSTRUCT, however. Work being done by Mindy Faber, another innovative thinker, demonstrates that these ideas and approaches are part of the ethos of the IAM department. Faber is the founder of the nonprofit Open Youth Networks, which she launched in 2007 to explore how video games and social media could empower women and urban youth.

“I was interested in figuring out ways to train youth in participatory culture and media, and to introduce them to Web 2.0 tools that could empower them to better their own lives and communities,” Faber says.

Faber knew the chair of the IAM department, Annette Barbier, and made her aware of the project, suggesting a partnership between the nonprofit and the college. When Faber joined the IAM department as academic manager in 2009, she and Barbier developed a strategy for turning Open Youth Networks into a program within the department, working on projects with urban youth based on new and emerging technologies and games.

One of Faber’s first projects at Columbia was Games for Change, a High School Summer Institute course she taught in the summer of 2009 with Emily Kuehn, an adjunct professor. “We introduced youth to the idea of creating games that have a social issue message,” she explains. “We showed them examples and led them through a fascinating curriculum showing how values can be built into the mechanics of a game itself—not so much through the context of the game, but what you’re doing inside the game. For example, are you cooperating with others, or are you trying to undermine them? Are you trying to build collaboration among teams of people, or are you trying to just do all out for yourself?”

“In that class, our students came up with an idea for a game called Surviving High School,” Faber continues. “They broke up into four teams, and each team worked on one year of high school. Then they combined that into one game about how to survive. What are the moral and ethical issues high school kids deal with every day as they navigate their adolescent years? It was great. I never would have been able to come up with that idea, and in the process they’re basically computer programming, which is a really high level skill.”

This semester, Faber will involve Columbia students in community outreach through a course she’s working on with Andrew Hicks, an IAM professor, called Interactive Arts Media Team. “The class has a client, and the client comes to them with a problem that requires an interactive media arts solution,” she explains. “The class is charged with trying to figure out how to solve this problem using emerging technologies and interactive media.”

The first client chosen for the course is the Chicago Youth Voice Network, a nonprofit that is seeking assistance with an effort called the Youth 2.0 Recovery Reporting Project. Faber’s students will collaborate with 12 Chicago youth media organizations to design an interactive solution to the problem the client has posed, which involves creating Facebook apps, quizzes, and social media tools to aggregate polling data about how youth are faring during the economic recovery. “They’re applying their technology skills to address real community issues,” says Faber. “We’re trying to figure out how we can create opportunities for our college students in Interactive Arts and Media and Game Arts in a mentoring/tutoring/service learning capacity, in which they’re applying their skills to collaborate in a community-based setting with high school students around social issues or ideas of using technology to create a better world.”

Barbier believes Faber’s work is serving an important role in Columbia’s community outreach efforts and in the development of the culture of the department, “What we’re finding is that there’s not a whole lot of diversity in the kind of students who are coming to us for an education in game design,” Barbier says. “We’d like to diversify the character of the program by bringing in a broader range of voices and backgrounds. One of the reasons that we wanted to do this was as a recruitment and development effort—recruitment in the sense that we would like to bring young people from various backgrounds into the game program, particularly young women who don’t generally feel empowered to make games.”

Faber is particularly concerned with issues of women in gaming. Despite recent Nielsen and BBC studies suggesting that more than half of gamers are women, the stereotype that women don’t play games has led to a stunning gender divide in the industry. “We hope to prototype and build games that girls are actually in control of—in online games, Facebook games, Wii games that teach self-defense for women,” Faber says. “Our goal is to form collaborative relationships with high schools through which we can create an incubator where girls can come in and be trained as game designers, and be asked, ‘What do you want to play and why?’ And then our IAM students can build and prototype those games, put them in the marketplace, and begin changing things up.” To that end, Faber is currently organizing the 3G Summit: The Future of Girls, Gaming, and Gender, an exposition planned for August 2010 at Columbia, in which 50 urban teenage girls will collaborate with faculty and women game designers over three intensive days to build gender-inclusive game prototypes for the future.

As Barbier notes, the current conception of what gaming is and can be is very limited. “There’s a narrow bandwidth for what’s considered appropriate for games, so that’s one of the areas we’d like to develop into—to give voice to other reasons for games to exist, other strategies and stories to tell.”

While Faber’s and Garding’s work differs widely in execution, both are committed to reimagining video games and social media to turn these technologies into tools that engender fruitful collaborations—ensuring that Columbia will play an important role in the ongoing evolution of games and electronic media.

Paul M. Davis is a Chicago-based freelance writer, designer, and musician focusing on media and independent culture.

Drew Rainola (B.A. ‘97) is a photographer based in Chicago and Los Angeles.
This ability is “innate,” according to Cook, an assistant professor with Columbia’s American Sign Language–English Interpretation program. Cook has been deaf since contracting spinal meningitis when he was three years old.

That sense of innate rhythm and musicality comes through in Cook’s poetry and storytelling, which has won raves from audiences around the world.

“Most of my poetry is visual,” he says in American Sign Language (ASL). We’re speaking with the help of Candace Hart, a full-time staff interpreter with Columbia. “It looks like a film,” continues Cook. “It looks like a movie in my mind. It’s a sequence of images.”

His sign language is so fluid and mesmerizing, it seems surprising that Cook, 48, didn’t learn ASL until he went off to college at the Rochester Institute of Technology. (He grew up learning lip reading.) It was the mid-1980s and there was an explosion of deaf poetry in Rochester, he says. Cook, who was studying graphic design, performed some poems at a publishing conference and was approached by Gregory Kolovakos, the head of the literature program of the New York State Council on the Arts. Funding from the agency allowed Cook to start the Flying Words Project with Kenny Lerner, a poet who is not deaf but is fluent in ASL.

Cook began his work at Columbia in 1995 at the very start of the ASL-English interpretation program. He left the college for a couple of years to work full time as a storyteller but returned in 2003. He teaches a variety of classes, but one of his favorites focuses on creativity and sign language by having students use ASL to write stories and poems—much like what he does in his own performance pieces.

Cook says he considers both deaf and hearing people to be his primary audiences, but he changes his material depending on who’s in the crowd. For a deaf audience, Cook uses “hand-shape rhymes,” which are like plays on words, the same sign taking on different meanings.

Cook says he feels fortunate to be at Columbia, one of only a few universities with a four-year ASL program. “As an artist, I just want to keep on creating and being creative,” he says. “Academically, I hope whatever I’m doing with my time will contribute to deaf studies.”

—HEATHER LALLEY

Peter Cook signs “I want to do with you what spring does with the cherry trees” from a poem by Pablo Neruda.
The billboard beckons him, bright and bountiful.

Daniel Baldwin—star of reality television shows such as *Celebrity Fit Club*, *Celebrity Rehab with Dr. Drew*, and *I'm a Celebrity… Get Me Out of Here!*, and filming the low-budget crime thriller *The Devil’s Dominoes*—is on his way to his hotel in Rockford, Illinois, when he sees the sign looming over the expressway. He turns to his bespectacled young driver and rasps, “Bro, we gotta get some wings at Hooters.”

As the pair nears the restaurant, Baldwin signals to pull over. He exchanges his flannel shirt for a black leather jacket. He gestures toward the driver’s can of soda in the cup holder and grumbles, “Can I get a swig off your Mountain Dew, bro?” The driver nods. Baldwin grabs the can, pours the neon liquid into his hands, and runs it through his hair. Showtime.

“I haven’t had a Mountain Dew since,” says John Bosher (B.A. ’06), Baldwin’s driver that day. But three years later, he remembers the experience and others gained on the set of that film. It’s part of what gave him the confidence to make his own picture with his friends.

Bosher is sitting with several of those friends—Chris Charles (B.A. ’07), Kevin Moss, and Phil Plowden—in a tiny rectangular office on the sixteenth floor of Chicago’s Three First National Plaza building. The four, along with Brian Caunter (B.A. ’06) and William Munschy (B.A. ’05), are the team of young Columbia College Chicago film alumni behind Beverly Ridge Pictures, an independent production company on a mission to grow the film industry in Illinois. They’re off to a promising start: the partnership’s first feature-length film, *Chicago Overcoat*, sold out five screenings at its October debut at the 45th Chicago International Film Festival.

For Bosher and his band of Chicago bros—none yet over 30 when the film was made—it’s an impressive feat. Charles, an associate producer of *Overcoat*, says, “When celebrities
come on set and see a bunch of goys in their twentys, it’s disconcerting. They’re ready to call up their agent and say, “What the hell did you get me into here?”"  

That’s how veteran actor Frank Vincent, the 70-year-old star of Chicago Overcoat, felt. Known for playing mobsters in The Sopranos and Goodfellas, Vincent found himself working with a group of unknowns about a third his age, and he doubted the project’s prospects—for about a week. What defined his preconceptions? “Hard work,” Fiddelson says.  

Respect for hard work (and, to a lesser extent, a love of Ultimate Fighting Championships) eventually glued the Beverly Ridge sextet together. Brosher and Moss (Overcoat’s cinematographer) met briefly as teenagers in Columbia’s High School Summer Institute, a five-week arts-immersion program. When the two reconected as Columbia College students in 2003, Bosher already had a side project producing music videos with his roommate, Brian Caunter (Overcoat’s director). Their videos for local rappers Joe Glass and Tru fell into regular rotation on BET, and Moss joined the determined duo for some followup videos. “At Columbia,” Moss says, “there are a lot of film students, but there are only so many that you think might make it—like the ones who really try hard enough.” They recruited Charles, Maurus, and Fiddelson and formed Beverly Ridge Pictures in 2005. Their first project as a company, an ambitious 20-minute film based on Ray Bradbury’s short story “The Small Assassin,” became their calling card. Set in the 1950s, it’s a psychological tale of a woman’s struggle with postpartum depression that quickly escalates to full-blown paranoia when she starts to believe her child is trying to kill her. It’s a lot Twilight Zone wannabe meets movie of the week, but then the astonishing kicks in: this is a student film, and it has accurate period cars? A former Columbia film professor, Peter Hawke, oversaw this, but the project blossomed outside of the classroom. “I think we learned the real responsibilities involved in filmmaking, and the stress involved,” Charles says. “We made a lot of mistakes, but more importantly, we learned from them.”  

Hungry for a chance to work on a real feature film, the pack picked up jobs on The Devil’s Dominoes, the aforementioned Daniel Baldwin flick. There, among other things, they gained experience handling eccentric celebrities. “It was a good training exercise on somebody else’s watch and somebody else’s dime,” Bosher says. By the time shooting wrapped on Dominoes in October 2006, all were committed to trying their hands at their own production. The team considered a horror movie—a common but successful genre for first-time, independent filmmakers—but found the slasher market flooded. They wanted to film in Chicago—it would be cheaper and offer an opportunity to use the locations they’d fallen in love with as students—but there had little else. Then it hit them like Joy “the Crown” Lombardo. The Family Secrets trial was filling the daily news with real-life Chicago Outfit stories. Why not do a mob movie?  

Brosher, a crime-drama nut with a boyhood love of Bruce Willis movies, and Caunter, the conceptual brains behind and eventually the director of the venture, penned several drafts before handing the script over to two other Columbia grads, Josh Staman (B.A. ’07) and Andrew Dowd (B.A. ’06), for the final touches in May 2007. They envisioned Frank Vincent as the perfect person to play their aging, down-on-his-luck hitman. “During the writing process, choosing Frank Vincent was key,” Caunter says. “The process was a little more fluent because we knew who we wanted to play our lead. We molded the character around Frank, and made the character so good he wouldn’t be able to refuse the role.” Vincent signed on.  

As producer, Bosher spearheaded a 40-page business plan, and the team began pitching it to investors. But ultimately, they kept it close to home. The film’s executive producer and provider of Plaza office space is Moss’s mother, Arlene, who heads a real estate title network and now co-owns Beverly Ridge. Neither Moss nor Bosher will say how much she personally invested in the film’s $2 million budget, but both confirm she became the main banker after Vincent attached himself to the project. “It wasn’t so much a gift as a trust in us,” the younger Moss says. “She believes in the company going on to make bigger, better movies.”  

Several new projects are already under way. Charles is developing a border-patrol story with his former screenwriting teacher Daniel Kraziet, and Plowden is working on a comedy about a struggling actor. (“It’s got some legs,” Plowden says.) But for now, Beverly Ridge’s main focuses are hitting the festival circuit, finding a distributor, and recouping that $2 million.  

Fame and fortune are still elusive, the debt is looming, and several members of the close-knit group still work part-time jobs or live at home. But a shared passion for making movies and a deep sense of pride in what they have already accomplished keep them optimistic. “We’re all very fortunate to have families who have supported us and trusted us,” Charles says. “To be able to have them come to the premiere was really rewarding.”  

“We’re on the right track,” Plowden assures the families. Then Charles adds, “All those years and dollars didn’t go to waste.”

Clockwise from top left: Panel discussion featuring Brian Caunter, Frank Vincent, John W. Bosher, and Danny Goldring at the 45th Chicago International Film Festival; Frank Vincent on screen at Chicago Overcoat’s world premiere; production still from Chicago Overcoat’s world premier; production still from Chicago Overcoat; aerial view of the crew shooting in Logan Square; John Bosher and Mike Capulli; Kevin Moss frames a shot; Frank Vincent and Chris Charles, aerial view of the crew shooting in Logan Square.
You can tell from its title that Erica Watson’s one-woman show Fat Bitch! is not exactly family-friendly—not even for her own family. After a recent show at the Chicago Center for the Performing Arts, Watson’s father told her, “Erica, you have a nasty mouth! Where did you learn to talk like that?” Her response? “Well, I learned it from listening to your old Rudy Ray Moore and Redd Foxx records!”

That’s not to say her parents—or the audiences at the sold-out shows—didn’t enjoy it. Sure, there were awkward moments, particularly when she faked a protracted orgasm as her mother sat in the front row. “My mom blushed while two of her friends gave each other a high-five,” says Watson, 35, perhaps best known recently for her role in the film Precious. But more on that in a moment.

Fat Bitch! is Watson’s comedic reflection on body image, sex, stereotypes, and life as a large woman. The title, she says, challenges people, but overall “it’s definitely an asset. Some people were really put off by it, because they weren’t able to understand the statement I was going to make. Men have been very offended by the title. I had one man say, ‘Why are you disrespecting yourself?’”

But, she adds, that’s not the point. She is trying to retake the term, make it her own, and recast it onstage. “I try to be smart, to speak about my life in a truthful and honest way.”

Watson hasn’t always been onstage. She took home a bachelor’s degree in film and television production from Columbia in 1998, then returned to earn a master’s in media management in 2005. Throughout her time at Columbia, she was always working behind the scenes, as a producer or director.

“The funny part of me was something that I was trying to suppress in many ways,” Watson says. She preferred gaining respect as a smart businesswoman and savvy producer.

It wasn’t until Watson was 30 and unable to find any directing jobs in New York that she said, “Hey, I’ll take a stand-up comedy-writing class and see where this can go.” Where it went was Fat Bitch! And, almost counterintuitively, Watson’s comedy has landed her some serious movie roles—most notably in the critical darling Precious. Watson plays Sheila, the abusive mother of a little girl who “shows how the cycle of violence will continue if we don’t stop it.”

Watson said she doesn’t see any disconnect between her comedic and dramatic sides. In fact, they feed one another. “Tragedy makes comedy, and I think most people who are driven to comedy have something about them that made them the outsider,” she says. “Comedy is an armor in your life to protect you from some of the crap you go through. It’s easy to pull from that stuff when you’re doing a dramatic role.”

—ROBERT K. ELDER
SPECIAL EVENTS

Fashion Columbia
May 11
Chicago Public Library
Winter Garden, 400 S. State St.
Tickets: $200 at colum.edu/fashioncolumbia
The third annual Fashion Columbia luncheon showcases student work with proceeds benefiting the Dennis Brozynski and Diane Erpenbach Scholarship.

May 14
Campus wide
colum.edu/manifest
Columbia College Chicago’s urban arts festival celebrates the work of seniors and graduate students from every department on campus.

MUSIC

The Chicago Jazz Ensemble® Presents Jazz: Past, Present, and Future

March 5, 7:30 p.m.
Narva Teatar for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph St.
chijazz.com
Tickets: $15–$45 at 312.334.7777
An exploration of jazz featuring CJE drummer Dana Hall with special guests Alioune Faye and Baba Faye.

The Chicago Jazz Ensemble® Presents In the Mood for Moody

April 16, 7:30 p.m.
Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph St.
chijazz.com
Tickets: $25, $5/students at colum.edu/chijazz
Jazz master and Grammy nominee James Moody brings his saxophone and songs to two exciting performances with the CJE.

GALLERIES

Di/Believer: Reconciling Science and Religion in Contemporary Art
Through February 19
Glass Curtain Gallery, 1104 S. Wabash Ave.
colum.edu/deps
312.369.6643
An investigation of the relationships between science and religion through multimedia installations.

50% Grey: Contemporary Czech Photography Reconsidered
January 29–March 28
Museum of Contemporary Photography, 600 S. Michigan Ave.
colum.edu/mocp
312.663.5554
Work by contemporary Czech artists who investigate photography’s potential to tell stories.

LITERTY

Story Week Festival of Writers
March 14-21
Full schedule at colum.edu/storyweek
This annual festival offers readings, conversations, panels, performances, and book signings featuring renowned literary voices. Highlights include Joyce Carol Oates, Aleksandar Hemon, Bonnie Jo Campbell, David Morrell, and Marcus Sakey.

DANCE

All Dance performances take place at The Dance Center

February 18–20
This army of award-winning companies brings its explosive, rhythm-driven storydances to Chicago.

March 4–6
Complex technology and digital media intertwine with original music and live performance.

March 18–20
London-based choreographer Wayne McGregor presents Entity, which cuts across dance, film, music, art, technology, and science.

Modest Dances
April 1–3
Three new dance works honoring women choreographers both emerging and established.

THEATER

Visit colum.edu/theater for a full schedule.
Tickets: $10–$14 at 312.369.6126

The Wild Party
February 10–21
Getz Theater, 72 E. 11th St.
This musical by Michael John LaChiusa follows a motley crew of New Yorkers and their excessive vices.

March 10–21
New studio Theater
72 E. 11th St.
An Ideal Husband
April 14–25
Getz Theater, 72 E. 11th St.
Oscar Wilde’s comedic play revolves around blackmail and clashing values among English aristocrats.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEE MORE AND GET MORE INFORMATION AT COLUM.EDU/CALENDAR.
EVENTS ARE FREE UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.

WINTER/SPRING ’10
The book skillfully illustrates how monsters both fascinate and repel us. The uncanny power they hold in childhood imagination remains present in both the entertainment and the overall worldview of adults. Asma presents this resistance not only as an expression of our fears and weaknesses but also as symptomatic of a more existential angst caused by all things unclassifiable or irrational. From Medusa to John Wayne Gacy, from Dracula’s castle to the compounds of the Khmer Rouge, from starship aliens to campus shooting sprees, the things that violate our understanding of the normal also help us define society’s conventions and taboos.

A rational and levelheaded look at the terrifying, On Monsters is one of the best books on the subject yet, Asma defines the human relationship to monsters with compassion, never letting us forget that whatever things may go bump in the night, the fear belongs to us all.

The book explores and pushes the boundaries between past and present, spirit and flesh, permanence and impermanence, the profound and the mundane. Niffenegger employs a direct, unadorned prose style that provides a sharp contrast to the gothic themes of the novel. This stylistic device complements a narrative in which the reader feels familiarity at the twin’s naively adolescent engagement with their menacing and increasingly dire circumstances.

Niffenegger has noted that her literary influences range far and wide: Her Fearful Symmetry included Wilkie Collins’s The Woman in White (1860) and Henry James’s The Turn of the Screw (1908), and The Turn of the Screw (1898). Her tribute to these masters of mood and character is clear.

Encountering Life’s Endings

In a regular column, “On the Other Side,” Silverstein hid some of its meaning behind the words, preferring us to discover the meaning ourselves, in our own time. He gives us a lot to think about, and the book stays with us long after we’ve put it down.

Chicago: A Biography

“Believing we can die this very day is not a morbid thought,” Silverstein writes, “it’s a life-affirming principle, an acknowledgment that the present, the here and now, is all that exists.”

“A wasted life is a kind of death,” the author says, and that’s really the core of the book. The inevitability of death allows us to examine “those aspects of ourselves that need to be allowed to die, to let go of.” We might not be able to choose precisely how or when we will die, but we can choose, each and every day, the kind of people we want to become. Dylan Thomas wrote: “Do not go gentle into that good night / Old age should burn and rave at close of day.” This book is all about saying “No, we live, we shall die.”

Death, the author points out, is an integral part of life’s continuum, less an ending than another stage of a process that each of us will continue after death. We should at least acknowledge that it’s going to happen. “Believing we can die this very day is not a morbid thought,” Silverstein writes, “it’s a life-affirming principle, an acknowledgment that the present, the here and now, is all that exists.”

“A wasted life is a kind of death,” the author says, and that’s really the core of the book. The inevitability of death allows us to examine “those aspects of ourselves that need to be allowed to die, to let go of.”

The writing is sometimes stilted, and there are passages, such as this one, that are virtually indecipherable: “Howlet, let me remember that it is not a finite I who is being birthing, but the temporal embodiment of a living process in existence prior to the individual self being formed out of waves of energy.” There must be an easier way to say that.

But here’s the thing: the act of reading and rereading, some tricky passages allows the ideas within them to enter the mind almost without our being aware of it. If it’s as fine as writing the book, Silverstein has hinted of some of its meaning behind the words, preferring us to discover the meaning ourselves, in our own time. He gives us a lot to think about, and the book stays with us long after we’ve put it down.

Chicago: A Biography

By Dominick A. Pacyga

Reviewed by Con Buckley

Teachers and students of Chicago history, as well as general readers, will find much to applaud in this single-volume survey of the city from its earliest days to the current issues. Pacyga’s series of the same name, which makes the case for higher-quality biographies of the urban landscape that consumed so much of the last half of the century. Both the issues and the people who lived through them play vibrant roles in Pacyga’s account.

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THE SCOTLAND YARD GOSPEL CHOIR
. . . and the horse you rode in on
Bloodshot Records, 2009. xygj.com

COLUMBIA CONNECTION: Non Wazihue (M.A. ’03) is the sound engineer at Bloodshot. Records. Kegan Simon (M.A. ’06) is Bloodshot’s retail director. Mary Ralph, who sings and plays guitar in SYGC, studied early childhood education at Columbia from 1999 to 2002.

THE SOUND: Indra THE WORD: “Everything that happens in my life goes into the music in one way or another,” singer/songwriter Elia Einhorn told the Chicago Sun-Times recently. So there’s a sad irony when Einhorn sings in the album’s title track: “These days I find staring pictures in my mind / Of you as a mangled traffic accident.” Nine days after this album’s release, a fire on the band’s van blew, the van flipped several times, and everyone in the band suffered injuries, some serious. But this is not a record about unintentional irony; it’s a concept album about a brutal breakup—a sort of romantic tragedy that lugs and pulls at your heart.

THE AARON WILLIAMS BAND
The Everwinding Road
Wake Up Productions, 2008. myspace.com/aaronwilliamband

COLUMBIA CONNECTION: Aaron Williams (lead vocals, guitars) earned a B.A. in sound engineering in 2005; Zachary LaMotte (keys) earned a B.A. in music business management in 2003.

THE SOUND: Modern rock THE WORD: Taking cues from ’90s bands such as Blues Traveler, Black Crowes, and early Dave Matthews Band, the Aaron Williams Band relies on much of what made those bands so successful: simplicity, rock-infused dynamics, and a flair for Phish-inspired jam. Yet The Everwinding Road is less a generic rock album and more a modern rock/western hybrid (think kiss “Hee-haw” and more Brad Paisley), with its uplifting lyrics, clean sound, and occasional southern twang. Poppy and punchy, Williams was made for modern rock radio.

KID SISTER
Ultraviolet
Downtown: Pool’s Gold, 2009. kidsistersmusic.com

COLUMBIA CONNECTION: Melissa Young, also known as Kid Sister, earned a B.A. in film from Columbia in 2004.

THE SOUND: Hip-hop/rap THE WORD: In an industry where the turnover happens quicker than at McDonald’s, Kid Sister is generating an enormous amount of buzz. One listen to Ultraviolet and it’s clear why: infectious grooves, catchy choruses (“Right Hand Hi” is incredible), and an attitude that is simultaneously cute and serious. MIA and Lady Sovereign have nothing on this new kid on the block. There are moments listening to this record where I want to jump out of my chair, throw up my hands, and dance like the uncoordinited white man that I am. Collaborating with Cox Lo-Sirato Bankley, Kanu West, and many others, Sister is destined to break with a force as power as any female hip-hop artist since Beyoncé. When she does, look for me on the dance floor, where I’ll be attempting floats and fancy footwork while raising my right hand high, waiting for you to slap it.

Here, we present projects by five recent Institute Fellows: Lynsey Addario, E. Patrick Johnson, Invincible, Red Tremmel, and Lynn Nottage. **There’s more at colum.edu/demo/portfolio11.**}

**PORTFOLIO:**

**Ellen Stone Belic Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media Fellowship Program**

“**Art can encourage our greatest human capacity and is a strong tool for effecting lasting social change. I believe creating art is a social political act in and of itself because it creates necessary dialogues and advocates for deep human response and engagement. The individual creative voice presents the rich possibilities of shifting perceptions and leading personal and social exploration.**” —Jane M. Saks, executive director, ESB Institute

This firm belief in the power of art is among the founding principles of the Ellen Stone Belic Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media, established at Columbia College Chicago in 2005. Merging cultural production with critical theory and academic research, the ESB Institute addresses issues focused on women, gender, human rights, access, representation, equity, and participation, as well as race and class. The arts and media are the central means through which the institute carries out the creation of new and original works, research, engagement, public education, and advocacy.

The ESB Institute Fellowship Program is central to this mission, providing opportunities for the development of new creative voices that reflect a diversity of experiences, disciplines, visions, and identities. Since 2006, the program has supported more than 25 individual artists and scholars with financial resources, dedicated research assistance, project and audience development, and cross-disciplinary networking. A few projects involve partnerships with other organizations, such as the Goodman Theatre and 3Arts, which will sponsor two upcoming fellowships.

A defining principle of the Fellowship Program is the support it provides for the creative and intellectual processes. “One of my most important priorities and greatest privileges as executive director of the institute is working closely with the fellows during the rich period of development and research with which all new artistic work and creative investigation begins,” says Jane M. Saks. “The original creative voice always has the opportunity to be a ‘leadership voice’ and create paradigm shifts. That is why I encourage risk taking, experimentation, and innovation within the program.” Fellows engage in developing a new creative, scholarly, or academic work and participate in expanded learning opportunities for students and faculty such as lectures, curricular intersections, workshops, and roundtable discussions.

**Fellows are selected both by invitation, not application, from within the Columbia College community, including faculty and students, and externally, including artists, scholars, and cultural workers. Fellows work closely with the executive director to develop each project, including articulating their creative visions, determining future goals and aspirations for possible production and collaborations, and creating interdisciplinary networks to increase the impact and visibility of their work.**

“**With our concentration on women, gender, and underrepresented artists, scholars, and innovative ideas, the fellowship program provides a platform for new voices, experiences, and reflections that represent the full breadth of our society,” Saks explains. “All of the cultural workers chosen for the program are pushing their own creative processes and voices, as well as adding to and shifting the discourse on issues related to gender, race, access, agency, human rights, creativity, culture, and community.**”

**NEW RECORDINGS FROM THE COLUMBIA COMMUNITY**

By Brent Steven White (B.A. ’08)

DEMO32

DEMO

DEMO
Photojournalist Lynsey Addario is based in India. She photographs for the New York Times, National Geographic, and Fortune among other publications in countries including Cuba, India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Chad, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Addario was given a 2009 MacArthur “genius” award and a Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting as part of the New York Times team.

**PROJECT:** Addario created a new body of work comprising the central large-scale portraits for Congo/Women, an internationally touring photography exhibition and educational campaign to raise awareness of the widespread sexual violence facing women and girls in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Congo/Women is an original coproduction of the ESB Institute and Art Works Projects. It debuted at Columbia College Chicago in early 2009 and has since been viewed by more than 100,000 people. It has been shown nationally and internationally including on Capitol Hill and at the United Nations headquarters in New York and will travel to more than 20 venues over the next two years.

“My fellowship enabled me the freedom to focus on documenting rape in the Democratic Republic of Congo and to eventually produce enough work for the Congo/Women exhibit. Without the backing of the fellowship, I never would have been able to take the time out to interview and shoot portraits of women in the DRC for such an important project. The institute provides a wonderful network of strong, intelligent, creative women who are making great strides in their respective fields, and it’s an honor to be part of such a network of women.”
E. Patrick Johnson is professor, chair, and director of graduate studies in the Department of Performance Studies and a professor in the Department of African American Studies at Northwestern University. He is the award-winning author of Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity; Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology (with Mae G. Henderson); and Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South—an Oral History.

PROJECT: Johnson’s fellowship focused on the creation and performance of Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South, a full-length work adapted from his book. Johnson and Saks hosted a series of workshops with distinguished artists, performers, and scholars to investigate the concepts, forms, and content of the production. Sweet Tea will be produced by Jane M. Saks, the ESB Institute, and Chicago’s About Face Theatre and premiere in May 2010.

“Becoming a fellow at the ESB Institute has changed the trajectory of my career as an artist and scholar. The fellowship program afforded me the opportunity to have an intensive workshop environment to develop my work that I have never had before. Jane Saks’ commitment to and investment in my work helped me see its potential beyond an insular academic community to imagine how it could impact the lives of people around the world.”

Invincible

Detroit-based hip-hop artist and activist Invincible began penning lyrics at age nine, shortly after moving to the Midwest from the Middle East and learning English by memorizing her favorite songs. She has performed around the world both solo and as part of the all-female hip-hop collective Anomolies. In 2008, she released her acclaimed debut album, ShapeShifters, through the label and media company she founded, Emergence.

PROJECT: Using hip-hop, media, and popular education, Invincible is exploring whether and to what extent complex sciences can be applied to make social movements stronger and more effective. Her goal is for the resources she creates to make these ideas accessible to a wider range of people who can build upon them through everyday practice.

“Working with the institute has given me support to reflect on my art and activism in ways that deepen my internal process, as well as my connection and accountability to the communities I am part of. It has been especially helpful to think out loud with Jane and be affirmed to take my work in new directions that are not beholden to any standard definitions of success.”
“Many scholars/artists keep their intellectual and artistic lives separate, discouraged by the lack of institutional support to bring the most meaningful aspects of their lives together. The fellowship provided me with that unique opportunity—supporting and guiding me both academically and artistically. In particular, Jane Saks’ vision and invaluable counsel has encouraged me, and held open a place for me to experiment, think and create in unexpected ways. The strategies of the institute are so clearly marked by a love of thought, creativity, nuance, beauty, and complexity that I have been humbled to be a part of their work.”
When I began working with the Student Alumni Association (SAA) a year and a half ago, I was both excited and nervous. Excited about all of the possibilities for the students and the ideas I had for them; nervous because there were no students in the group. One by one over those first few weeks, the students who would become the SAA’s core leadership group trickled into my office and into their integral roles for this unique organization: President Vicky Dezos (B.A. ’08), Executive Vice President Ross Rylance (B.A. ’84), Vice President of External Affairs Stephanie Tanner (B.A. ’08/M.F.A. ’06), and Vice President of Internal Affairs Niles Howard (B.A. ’11). And yes, they are all so awesome that they deserve the word “president” in their titles!

Together, we hosted several alumni guest speakers at events that quickly gained momentum. In December 2008, more than 70 students, alumni, and guests attended a monthly feature film, and our group has been growing ever since. Students from departments across campus have embraced the opportunity to learn from our rock-star alumni through the SAA Alumni Guest Speaker series. Alumni who have graciously volunteered their time and talents to the SAA include Sean Chercover (B.A. ’03), Stephanie Kunesh (B.A. ’03/M.F.A. ’06), Justin Kolovsek (B.A. ’00), Gabe Pastrana (B.A. ’05), Yvonne Davis (B.A. ’00), Elbert Phillips (B.A. ’97), Jay Beverna (B.A. ’74), Carmine Means (B.A. ’92), and many others.

The SAA’s programming is a tremendous asset to the students’ experience, as they benefit from the professional insight and opportunities the alumni provide. This year, the students hope to expand the annual Etiquette Dinner (an event created to instruct students in proper dining etiquette in a business setting) to include more alumni participation, and are working to raise enough funds to double the number of students who can attend. To this end, they’re taking orders for Columbia’s first-ever student business cards, and will embark on a phone-a-thon soon, so be on the lookout for a call!

The SAA has raised the bar in terms of student philanthropy. These students are our future alumni, and it gives me great pleasure to be part of this organization and watch these students create their own processes of “giving back” that will become part of Columbia’s alumni culture for decades to come.

Kind regards,

Michelle Passarelli (B.A. ’96)
Assistant Director of Alumni Relations

For more information about CAAN: Denver or any of Columbia’s regional alumni chapters, visit colum.edu/alumni or contact Cynthia Vargas, assistant director of alumni programming, at cvargas@colum.edu or 312.369.8640.
What are You Doing Out There? We Want to Know!

To submit your news, log in to the alumni online community at columbia.edu/alumni.

The listings here are for length, the website features expanded news, notes, and pictures.

1970.

Paul Broeuc (B.A. ’74) was appointed president for Warner Brothers Studios. He is responsible for developing programming ideas related with the motion picture division.

Albert (Bill) Williams (B.A. ’73) is a singer, an actor, a musical theater composer, and a librettist. He is the chief theater critic for the Chicago Reader and winner of the George Jean Nathan Award for Drama Criticism and Peter Lisagor Award for Outstanding Arts Journalism. Bill is on faculty in Columbia’s Theater department and a member of the City of Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame. He recently compiled the book Nothing Personal: Chroncles of Chicago’s LGBTQ Community, 1977–1997.

Robert Fritts (’72) was recently nominated for the 2008 Emmy Award for Outstanding Individual Achievement in a Craft: Music and Sound for his work on the American Geographic Channel’s Superpumplines.

1980.

Domenico Cagney (B.A. ’80) moderated the panel Winning Case Studies from AIP: Thriving and Surviving in the Downtown in October as part of Illinois State University Student Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Innovation’s Fresh Ideas for Nonprofit Sustainability series.

Paulo Cascio (B.A. ’84) was recently selected as one of the honorees for Chicago Magazine’s 2008 Emerging Cinematographer’s Awards for his work on Almost Perfect. View Paulo’s work at vimeo.com.

Jeff DeLong (B.A. ’83) was marketing director of the Ramada chain and is now in New York. He has worked as a consultant for Comcast, developed promotions and sponsoredship for Chicago’s Museum of Science and Industry, launched Women’s Entertainment Television (WETV) as director of consumer marketing and promotions in New York, and worked as a territory manager for American Movie. He also performed with the Tempos players in Oak Brook, Illinois, was a board member of the Free Associates Theater Company, and currently works as a freelance writer.

Mauro Fiore (B.A. ’83) was director of photography for the bloodbath-Australo. The cover story of the Januvary issue of American Cinematographer includes an interview with Mauro and comments how, as the film’s cinematographer, he combined handheld motion and counter-light technique to capture history director James Cameron creating this groundbreaking film (and new ear for post).

Michael Gol (B.A. ’80), president of the American Society of Cinematographers, was honored by Fondue with a full-page tribute on the back cover of the January issue of American Cinematographer magazine.

Dino Stanitopoulos (’80) and Andy Dick (’83) performed at the Jazz for Laugh Comedy Festival in Chicago last summer. The final day festival included a comedy competition, with acts featured several top-name comics.

Laura Stella (B.A. ’84) is on the brew 93.7, Maxwell’s classic rock station.

1990.

Arnold Bernstein (M.A. ’94) book Bath Museum: America’s First Swimming Pool opened in February 2009 and is now in its third printing. The book is the story of the deeded act of school violence in American history, on May 25, 1927, a group of students shot six adults (including the killer and his wife) and killed. Visit artmuseum.com.

Bruno Bonugli (B.A. ’92) was production supervisor on Nothing Personal: Chronicles of Chicago’s Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame. Visit bustoutburlesque.com or relatedfun.com.

Hank Grover (’84) is musical director and arranger for the Arden Pohundy Project at the LA Shorts Film Festival. Hank directed and wrote the piece; the video show themed it.

Robert Fritts (’92) was recently nominated for the 2008 Emmy Award for Outstanding Individual Achievement in a Craft: Music and Sound for his work on the American Geographic Channel’s Superpumplines. His company, the company of the American Geographic Channel’s Superpumplines, was the first to use the term “pumpkin” for the project of the year. The project, which included holding, which deals with issues of progress, was produced for the National Geographic channel’s Superpumplines.

Frank Goldbeck-Josephy (B.A. ’92) and Lisa Lewis (’94), photographers Brian Waring (B.A. ’95), and video artist Mark Hubert (B.A. ’88), released the book.

Scott Nyachy (’95), an award-winning political cartoonist, is writing and illustrating his memoir, Drawing Strength. Scott developed his skills as a visual satire drawing consultant for the Columbia Chronicle. The Journalism department also connected Scott with an interview with Jack Higgin’s of the Sun-Times, and he received the John Pitchford Penrith Award.

Morgan Lewis (B.A. ’96) is a new grad at the Sappho’s Salon.

Noreen M. Paholak (B.A. ’94) is the national director of the United States Association for the Performing Arts. She was the managing director of the Little Gym of Northampton, Pennsylvania.

Jane Richlovsky (’93), principal at Jane Richlovsky, has a role in the Oprah Winfrey-produced film, Precious. Her one-woman show, Fat Albert, will be performed at the University of Iowa. Visit janeart.com.

Three Tall Women at the El Centro Theatre directed a production of Edward Albee’s Arrangement.

Hettie Barnhill (’62) directed her Broadway debut in the production FEA this winter. Visit fotofest.org. Hettie previously performed in Malignant at the Murna Opera, St. Louis, and in Broadway in Amsterdam and choreographed Surrendor off-Broadway in 2009.

Jane Boylee (’60) opened a recording studio in a building in Ukrainian Village, it offers professional recording and production.

Katie Burgquist (B.A. ’61) is also the co-founder of The Chicago Auction House, which specializes in live concert photography.

Erica Hubbard (B.A. ’61) is a movie composer and scripted and directed the movie Ali My Friends Are Funerals, for which she was nominated, and Call Me performed the soundtrack.

Shreya Sulpat (’67) moved to California to pursue acting after five-year hiatus working in film.

Jane Boylee (B.A. ’60) recently created her own photography company called Future Nostalgia Photography, where he specializes in live concert and promotional band photography. Visit futonostalgia.com.

Jian Angiaino (B.A. ’61) is working in a Spanish-language television station in Tyler, Texas, as an assistant producer.

Lynn Breitfeld (B.A. ’62), president of the Chicago Independent Film Group International at the ninth annual Reading Room Award in the ‘62 film category for innovation, creativity, and accomplishment in Chicago.

John Buha (B.A. ’92) graduated magna cum laude from Brooklyn Law School in June.

Amelia Caracciolo (’02) is a short script writing fellow at the 2009 Midwest Screenwriters Festival on L.A. Kelly’s website. The W Hotel exhibited her film worldwide as part of a competition.

Katie Camacho (B.A. ’96) and Chelsea Chan (B.A. ’96) decided to use their talent and take a substantial risk in the film industry. Their start-up, SinCityBug, launched its own online retail business. Launched in August 2009, Shopitup.com introduces a new kind of shopping experience to the fashion-forward generation of the Millennial generation. Visit Shopitup.com.

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Michael Matthews (B.A. ’72) served as the artistic director of Galveston Theatre from 2005 to 2008 and recently directed a production of Edward Albee’s Three Tall Women at the El Centro Theatre in Hollywood.


Sean Spencer (B.A. ’11) was the winner of the National African American Film Festival of Production of Health Care Debate with President Obama! The shot took place at a time of the film’s release.

Erica Watson (B.A. ’91) has a role in the Gorill Wethy-produced produced, Precious. Her one-woman show, Fat Albert, will be performed at the University of Iowa. Visit janeart.com.

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Mark Hubert’s Finalist Award. Of course, his limited-edition, is a carved out of wood and is体现了 the life and work of a well-known Chicago artist.

Arrangement.

Arrangement.

Arrangement.

Arrangement.

Arrangement.

Arrangement.
QUALIFIED SALES PROFESSIONALS FOCUSING ON THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

Ben Hitch (B.A. ’03), co-founder/writer/director/painter, Carmen Nardi (B.M.A.), production designer, and Jon Paussin (B.A. ’03), co-founder/painter, formed Elephants Dreams Pictures last May. The production company, which finances, markets, creates, acquires and distributes independent films, promises to release several of its films to large studios or distribution companies, so they can achieve a unique and uncomprromised voice in filmmaking. Visit eleaphantsdreampictures.com.

Jan Simpson (art director) of the Linklaters law firm in Hong Kong addressed the assembly. The residency program supports independent artists in the research of their work and encourages them to do new and innovative work in movement-based practices.

Brian Hughes (B.A. ’04) made his first film in 2007, the short thriller Dead Guy’s Last Wish, which was screened on DIRECTV’s horror channel and in Driller’s biweekly nantivede 24-hour film competition. Hughes’ film art and graduated from the Victorian University of the Arts in Melbourne, which produced the film. The film was make-up artist for the film.

Brandon Keiler (B.O. ’06), Vanessa Pan persona (B.A. ’06), and Leslie Taylor (B.A. ’06) were recently featured in the Marriott Theater’s acclaimed production of Hairplay.

Allison (Wright) Kucharzak (B.A. ’06) was appointed public relations/public communications officer in Chicago. She was also recently appointed as the new executive producer and Juanita Santiago (M.F.A. ’07) an associate producer for the Chicago Urban Business Roundtable’s first annual Urban Business Roundtable Rocks! The show focuses on business, business owners, and the economy.

Mallick Matlock (B.A. ’05) is a writer and an editor of in consonance along with fellow Columbia grad Kat Zemal (B.A. ’09).

Amanda Maurer (B.A. ’08) is an online producer for the Chicago Tribune.

Chicago Maxwell (B.A. ’03) is now with the CAC/Art Review association. She is also a marketing coordinator.

Matthew Kugelman (B.A. ’04) short video series was selected as a finalist in the Chicago Film Competition. Visit instructions/chr/; watch/5/25558.

Michael D. Lynch’s (B.A. ’05) directorial debut from the film

Adam Saks (M.A. ’04) co-produces the RE:Action reading series for the SouthRidge Community. He has been publishing in Harborfront, River Oak Review, To Boogie, and the Madison Review. He has won two Chicago Public Radio’s StoryCorps projects. His novel “In A Novel,” which he wrote and published, features new visions of the American workforce. Visit manfredhell.com.

Lauren McKague (B.A. ’07) and Carly Singer (B.A. ’08) created Pink Slip, a new look at science fiction, in Melbourne's, Ireland. Pink Slip came as an inspiration to Chris Garber. He was nominated for a special award for his film "Best Animation." Visit pinkslipboutique.com.

Phil Messina (B.A. ’05) is a drummer with various heavy metal bands. His band Impaler’s latest demo will be out soon, and he will be going on a two-week European tour with his band. "Pompeii," the band’s first tour in the United Kingdom, was a success. Phil played drums for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame at the Elmo Reserve. He was also a member of the Grand All-Star League for Seniors.

Benjamin Pietrucha (B.A. ’08) is now based in New York City, where he is a photo journalist for the West Hollywood Film Festival. In 2009, he was also the assistant production manager for the West Hollywood Film Festival and the West Hollywood Film Festival in 2009. Reina also starred in the Hollywood debut of a new Broadway show show "Book of Mormon," where she was cast in a supporting role and recording artist Diana DeGarmo at the Music Box Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard. The show received rave reviews, and is currently being performed at the ArtShark exhibition at the John G. Shedd Aquarium last fall.

Melissa K. Stallard (M.F.A. ’08) photographic series were first shown at the Judd Foundation in the Annual 1, 2008. They look forward to the 10 year reunion at the 4th Annual ArtShark exhibition at the John G. Shedd Aquarium last fall.

Louise Vazquez (B.A. ’08) is a freelance illustrator/artist and has been published in the Spanish-language newspaper published by the Dallas Morning News.

Ashley Waugh (B.A. ’09) is a production assistant for KGSP, W2AZ, and WQRR, produces two shows on the Xfinity service, which is the national show "Keep Hope Alive" with Jesse Jackson, and is a board operator for the American Top 40 with Ryan Seacrest on W2SRX. Her two pieces of work were awarded "Best In Show" at the "Will and I aka Microsoft (W)” and "I Was a Laptop (G)". Waugh is also a board member of the Greater Alliance League for Seniors.

Miss Youth (B.A. ’08) is also set to perform in the next edition of the West Hollywood Film Festival and the West Hollywood Film Festival in 2009. Reina also starred in the Hollywood debut of a new Broadway show show "Book of Mormon," where she was cast in a supporting role and recording artist Diana DeGarmo at the Music Box Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard. The show received rave reviews, and is currently being performed at the ArtShark exhibition at the John G. Shedd Aquarium last fall.

Melissa Young (B.A. ’04), a high school student at West Orange High School in March, 2009, was named assistant editor at LIFE. Previously, she had been a temporary editorial assistant at LifeStyle.

In Memoriam
Prince Akbar (B.A. ’84)
Jesse Callaway
(B.A.
Robert Michael Cannan
(4, Telegraph)
Rick Coen
(formerly
father,
Department
of
Film
&
Video)
John Callaway
(56, Radio/Journalism)

Marriage & Unions
Jodi Miller (M.A. ’14) married John Hand (M.A. ’11, June 20, 2009), in Evergreen, Colorado. Jodi works in magazine publishing and is an active member of the GAMA, Denver.

Kelly Zavalza (B.A. ’17) married Ryan Schutz, her love of six years, on October 3, 2016. They look forward to sharing a creative and meaningful life together.

What are you doing out there? send us your news: college.edu/alumni
Riley Parr, a feature documentary that debuted at the 2009 Festival in Indore, India. A national press screening for the film was held in Chicago in February.

Adam Brooks and Matthew Wilson (Art & Design), a k-a, an Industry of the Ordinary, had an exhibition, Super Market, at the Northeastern Illinois University Art Gallery.

Bonnie Brooks (Dan) and Debra Riley Parr (Art & Design) were honored with the first of such Fine and Performing Arts Excellence in Academics Leadership Awards.

Ivan Brunetti (Art & Design) did the color illustration for the summer 2009, Issue of the New Yorker. This is Brunetti’s fourth New Yorker cover since 2007.

Michael Caplan (Film & Video) wrote, directed, and produced a Magical Vision, a feature documentary that debuted internationally at the Global Cinema Festival in Indore, India.

Peter Carpenter (Dance) presented his evening length dance theater with My Fellow Americans, about the shifting identity of Ronald Reagan, at the Hamad Park Field House in Chicago.

Ted Cho (DEPS) performed with Poi Dog Pondering at the Austin City Limits Music Festival.

Garnett Kilberg Cohen (English) published essays in a Big Ole Review and Glass inflation. Other recent and forthcoming publications include stories or poems in the Michigan Quarterly Review, Nature’s Bridge, and the Connecticut Review.

Lisa Formosa-Parrinello (Film & Video) directed the musical Piece to Eat Like a Child for Chicago Street Theatre in Valparaiso in August.


Jennifer Greenhouse (Art & Design) new book, The Rockefeller, was published in December for the Center for American Places at Columbia Chicago. A discussion of her new book will be held at the Round Table Symposium on The Three Cultures: Science, Humanities/Arts, and Religion on July 27. The title of her presentation was “Science, Humanities, Arts, and Religion: Different, Equal, and Complementary.”

Mark Porter (IDEAS) has exhibitions recently at the Front Gallery in New Orleans, the Whitwer Studio Gallery in Logan Square, and the Art Center in Michigan.

Corey Postiglione (Art & Design) had a solo exhibition, Synchrotones, at Thomas Meiners Gallery in Chicago.

Bruce Sheridan, Don Smith, Kevin Cooper, and Jim Sultz (Film & Video) presented the award-winning feature documentary Education for the 21st Century at the 2009 conference of the University Film and Video Association in New Orleans. Dan Singer (Journalism) launched a website, CollegeStories.net, that posts a short story every weekday to any email-enabled mobile device for free.

Jose Stoff (Film & Video) one-man shine Golden Dental was presented at the International Dublin Gay Theatre Weekend Festival and the 2008 New York Drama Critics Circle Award.

Kenny Williams (Film & Video) City Under Water, a documentary that looks at a year in the life of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, following the floods of June 2008, aired on WTTW Channel 11.

Get your Columbia gear on!
CHICAGO/LA LINK EVENT
Columbia and others celebrated “Chicagoans in entertainment in L.A.” at the Chicago L.A. Link Event in Santa Monica. Jerrod and R.J. Melman and Bob Lynn were the restaurant hosts, while Tom Dreesen emceed and Richard Roper and Bill Zwecker worked the red carpet.

Photos: Mitch Canoff


CONVERSATIONS IN THE ARTS: BIZ STONE
The first Conversations in the Arts event of the year brought Biz Stone, co-founder of Twitter, to campus, where he gave an insightful presentation on the role of this burgeoning social network in changing the way people communicate around the world.

Photos: Vandell Cobb (B.A. ’75)


CHICAGO IMPACT AWARDS
Jeff Garlin was the honoree at the 7th Annual Columbia College Chicago Impact Awards. Alumni joined others in the entertainment industry at the Paramount Theater in Hollywood to honor the native Chicagoan, who has made his mark as a writer, producer, director, or actor in a range of productions from The Second City to Curb Your Enthusiasm.

Photos: Michelle Pullman


GREENTOWN CHICAGO BREAKFAST
Robert F. Kennedy Jr., named one of Time magazine’s “heroes for the planet” for his role in leading Riverkeeper’s fight to restore the Hudson River, was the keynote speaker at the Green Town Chicago environmental conference in October. He joined members of the Columbia community for a breakfast reception on October 25, 2009.

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REUNION 2009
Evoking Through the Decades was the theme of this year’s alumni reunion, which took place on campus September 24-27, 2009. Alumni reconnected with old friends and faculty at a series of receptions, workshops, and a Sunday gospel brunch at House of Blues.

Michael Wolf
Kern Worrack
Susan V. Dowling
Brent M. & Susan H. Folts
Todd Gillen
Bill L. & Vicki Hurd
Nancy & Kevin G. Inches
Barry M. & Anne M. Salsiboff

Raymond J. & Kristine Spencer
Allen M. & Lynne Turner
Greg Zuman

In fiscal year 2009, which ended August 31, generous individuals and organizations contributed a total of $11,611,291 to support the educational mission of Columbia College Chicago. Many of those gifts were designated for Scholarship Columbia, a five-year, $3 million challenge to raise unrestricted scholarship support for deserving students who need it. Many were in support of the Media Production Center, Columbia’s first-ever new-construction building, which opens for classes this semester.

Our HONOR ROLL OF DONORS includes individuals and organizations that gave $500 or more in fiscal year 2009 (September 1, 2008, through August 31, 2009), followed by a list of those that contributed $100 or more during the first quarter of fiscal year 2010 (September 1 through November 30, 2009).

Donors who contributed $1,000 or more annually are members of the PRESIDENT’S CLUB, the college’s most prestigious giving society. For more information about giving to Columbia, visit col.cu.edu or call Kim Cherwin at 312.663.7844.
OBSERVATIONS

$500,000 to $49,999
Chicago Public Schools

$100,000 to $149,999
Robert H. McCormick Foundation

$50,000 to $99,999
Folger Shakespeare Library

$40,000 to $49,999
National Endowment for the Arts

$30,000 to $39,999
Shaw Weber Foundation

$100,000 to $149,999
Chicago Public Schools

$75,000 to $99,999
The Boeing Company

$70,000 to $79,999
The National Endowment for the Arts

$50,000 to $99,999
National Endowment for the Arts

$40,000 to $49,999
National Endowment for the Arts

$10,000 to $19,999
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$50 to $99
National Endowment for the Arts

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National Endowment for the Arts

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National Endowment for the Arts

$25,000 to $49,999
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees

$5,000 to $9,999
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees

$250 to $499
National Endowment for the Arts

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