

# DEMO

The Alumni Magazine of  
Columbia College Chicago



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SNL star Aidy Bryant '09  
takes *DEMO* on a  
tour of her formative  
Chicago spots.

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“I worked hard for everything I accomplished while in college, and I want to reach my highest highs to do the same for others that was done for me: funding dreams and aspirations.”

**BRIANA FENNELL '19**

Music Business Management Scholarship Recipient

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# DEMO

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# Message

## FROM PRESIDENT KWANG-WU KIM

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**FIVE YEARS AGO**, Columbia College Chicago launched a strategic plan in which the overarching goal was to support the continued enhancement of the value of the education that we provide to our students. To that end, and in accordance with our mission, we made a conscious decision to focus on student degree completion and post-graduation employment as key benchmarks. I am happy to report that we have made progress on both fronts—with help from you.

Our graduation rate for students entering as freshmen has increased by 10 points over the past decade and now approaches 50 percent this year, and our graduation rate for transfer students has topped 75 percent for the first time. All of this reflects our systematic investments in academic quality and student support systems, to which alumni have contributed in the form of guest lectures and student mentoring.

On the employment front, our latest survey of recent graduates shows that 90 percent of them are employed within a year of graduation. Alumni have helped by providing job and internship opportunities for our students, the latter being an especially valuable way of positioning them for professional success. Alumni have helped fund the Columbia Internship Award, which provides a stipend to students who accept

unpaid internships that build their skills and resumes—opportunities they would otherwise have to turn down for lack of financial support.

As we work on these critical endeavors, we have been resolute in staying true to Columbia's purpose: Offering an educational home for creatives from all walks of life and backgrounds. Last fall, nearly 50 percent of Columbia students identified as students of color, compared with fewer than 40 percent 10 years ago. This year, we expect our most diverse cohort of freshmen in many years.

A key driver of these changes has been our heightened focus on financial support for our students. Over the past five years, we have increased scholarship spending by 50 percent to ensure that a Columbia education remains within reach for aspiring creatives who are strong academic performers but who may have limited financial means. Much of this increase has been made possible by a calculated reallocation of college funds, along with gifts from alumni that help to defray the cost of this education.

While much work still lies ahead, I am confident that, given the creative and entrepreneurial energy of our students and the commitment and talent of our faculty, we will continue to advance our college. Having such devoted alumni in our corner helps move us forward.

## COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO NAMES NEW PROVOST

Columbia College Chicago has named Marcella David, a legal scholar and former provost and vice president for academic affairs at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), as its new senior vice president and provost, effective June 3. Currently the Betty T. Ferguson Visiting Professor of Law at Florida State University, David previously served as the chief academic officer at FAMU, one of the nation's top historically black colleges and universities with almost 10,000 students across a broad range of disciplines.

"I am honored to become Columbia's next provost," said David, whose faculty appointment will be as a professor in the Business and Entrepreneurship Department. "The college has a distinguished faculty and a rich history of helping students master creative practice in the context of a rigorous liberal arts education. As someone who is passionate about the arts, I feel a deep connection with Columbia and its programs."

"I am honored to become Columbia's next provost."



Marcella David (far right) at this year's Manifest.



## STUDENT CENTER OPENS

Columbia College Chicago's first-ever Student Center will open this fall to provide an on-campus hub for student creativity and collaboration. The grand opening event—open to the greater Columbia community—will take place on Wednesday, September 18.

## CONGRESS PARKWAY RENAMED IDA B. WELLS DRIVE THANKS TO COLUMBIA FACULTY MEMBER



More than 85 years after her death, the name and legacy of civil rights champion Ida B. Wells were memorialized on February 11. The change marks the first downtown Chicago street to be named after a woman or person of color.

Wells' great-granddaughter Michelle Duster, a native Chicagoan who teaches in the Business and Entrepreneurship department at Columbia, had long advocated for the recognition of Wells' efforts as an anti-lynching activist, suffragist, journalist, and founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

"Ida B. Wells Drive reminds everyone that regardless of where they start in life, or what their gender, race, religion, or ability may be, that it is possible to make their voice heard and impact change," said Duster.

Duster raised funds and lobbied the Chicago City Council which voted to officially change the street name on July 25, 2018.



Red Clay dancer Chaniece Holmes rehearses in their Fuller Park space.

### THE DANCE CENTER AND RED CLAY DANCE COMPANY WIN 2019 NEA GRANTS

The Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago received \$20,000 from the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) to support dance presentations and residencies. Red Clay Dance Company received \$10,000 to support the creation and presentation of *The Art of Resilience 2.0*, a site-specific dance work choreographed by Columbia alum Vershawn Sanders-Ward '02.

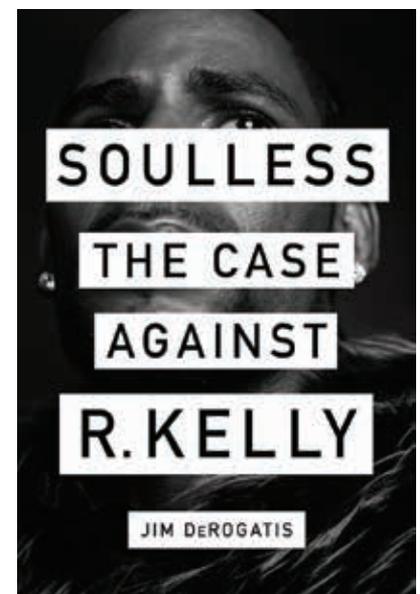
Both the Dance Center and Red Clay Dance Company received Art Works grants, the NEA's principal grant-making program. The Arts Endowment convened panels to review 1,605 eligible applications for funding, and the agency awarded 972 grants ranging from \$10,000-\$100,000, totaling more than \$25 million.

"The arts enhance our communities and our lives, and we look forward to seeing these projects take place throughout the country, giving Americans opportunities to learn, to create, to heal, and to celebrate," said Mary Anne Carter, acting chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts.

### FACULTY MEMBER'S NEW BOOK MAKES THE CASE AGAINST R. KELLY

English and Creative Writing Associate Professor Jim DeRogatis has spent more than 18 years reporting on allegations that R&B superstar R. Kelly sexually abused underage girls. DeRogatis has interviewed hundreds of people regarding the allegations and reported more than 50 stories, including a July 2017 BuzzFeed article that went viral and led to increased scrutiny of Kelly by the media, the record industry, and law enforcement. After the January 2019 broadcast of the Lifetime docuseries *Surviving R. Kelly*, which built on DeRogatis' investigation, Kelly's record label RCA and parent company Sony dropped the singer from their roster. On February 22, 2019, Kelly was indicted on 10 counts of aggravated criminal sexual abuse—a Class 2 felony—in Cook County, Illinois.

After breaking the story in 2000 and advocating for truth for nearly two decades, DeRogatis' forthcoming book *Soulless: The Case Against R. Kelly* was released on June 4. Despite the progress being made, DeRogatis knows that there is still much work to be done in order to give justice to Kelly's victims. "I imagine that when the book comes out, I'll continue to hear from others, just as I have for years," says DeRogatis. "I would like to be done. But I'll never not take the call." *For more info on DeRogatis' decades of music journalism, check out Backstory at the end of the issue.*





# Aidy's CHICAGO

By Megan Kirby

Illustrated by Dani Knight

*The Shrill star remembers her formative years in Chicago.*

Aidy Bryant '09 has a framed map of the Chicago Transit Authority hanging in her New York City living room. It's an official map, ripped from a train by her Chicago-native husband when he was a teenager. ("Bad boy," she says.) This contraband souvenir serves as a fitting reminder of the years that shaped her, from enrolling at Columbia College Chicago to performing on the Second City stage.

Before she was a repertory player on *Saturday Night Live (SNL)*; before she wrote and starred in her own Hulu comedy *Shrill* (based on Lindy West's memoir of the same name), Bryant was a Columbia Comedy Studies student performing at comedy clubs every night of the week. From 2005 to 2012, Bryant called Chicago home—and built the foundations of her comedy career while earning her degree.



Image provided by NBCUniversal.

Phoenix-born Bryant learned about Chicago's legendary comedy scene from a hometown improv teacher who studied at iO Chicago.

After a year in the University Center dorms, Bryant tried out a few North Side neighborhoods, from Andersonville to a stint on Clark Street in the heart of Wrigleyville. (She recalls, "a lot of peeing and puking men around my apartment—I was like, 'I think I gotta get outta here.'") She ended up settling in Lincoln Square, living with roommates in apartments off of Montrose and Western avenues. "That's my damn neighborhood," she says. "One hundred percent, that's where I spent most of my years."

At the same time, Bryant performed incessantly at the city's top comedy clubs like iO Chicago and the Annoyance

Theatre. "From freshman year on, I would do Columbia by day and improv by night. All night, every night of the week," she says. She even met her future husband, fellow comedian Connor O'Malley, when they performed together at the Annoyance Theatre.

On the side, Bryant paid her rent by babysitting and working at a barbershop on Southport. "I answered phones and folded towels and swept up hair," she says. "I worked there for most of my time at Columbia." In 2009, she graduated and left the barbershop to tour the Midwest with comedy group Baby Wants Candy, where she took part in an original, improvised musical in every single show. "I was doing shows in Indiana and Ohio, in a van with like five other improvisers, and then driving back to Chicago," she says.

Her work with Baby Wants Candy caught the eye of legendary Chicago comedy club The Second City. In 2009, Bryant was hired by The Second City, the place that launched the careers of Tina Fey, Stephen Colbert, Amy Poehler, and countless others. While writing and performing her second show there, Bryant got big news one day: SNL creator and executive producer Lorne Michaels would be in the audience for that night's performance.

"Thankfully, the people at Second City told us [Lorne was there], because you do a lot of audience participation," she says. "It would be bone-chilling to go out there and be like, 'Sir, do you have a suggestion?' and oh my God, it's Lorne Michaels."

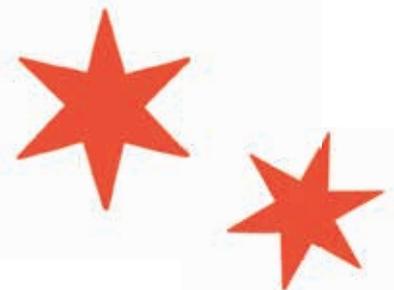
That performance led to an SNL audition, which led to a follow-up audition.

## Aidy takes us on a tour of her formative Chicago spots.



### The Second City 1616 N. Wells St.

"Where I spent my last two years in Chicago, nearly every day. I got to write two shows on the e.t.c. stage, and that's where Lorne Michaels and the SNL producers first saw me."



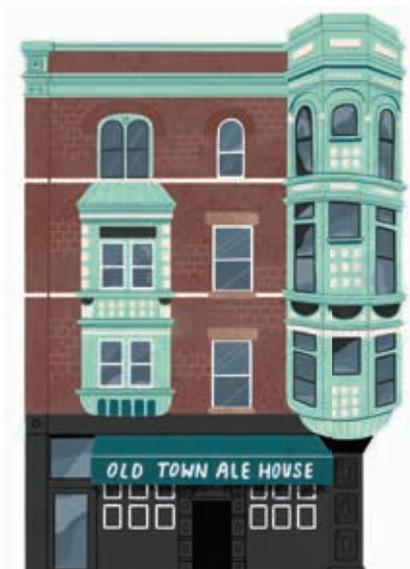
In 2012, at 25 years old, Bryant was cast as a featured player on *SNL*. She's been in New York City ever since.

At *SNL*, Bryant made her name with characters like Morgan, the awkward teen co-host of *Girlfriends Talk Show*, and Li'l Baby Aidy, her brash hip-hop alter ego. Now, she's celebrating her biggest project yet: writing, producing, and starring in Hulu's *Shrill*, which dropped in March 2019. Season one's six episodes follow budding Portland, Oregon, journalist Annie as she battles her fatphobic editor, dances joyously at

a body positive pool party, and learns to take up space unapologetically.

While she films *SNL* in New York City and *Shrill* in Los Angeles, Bryant continues to draw on her time in Chicago, where she worked on improv stages seven nights a week, hustling toward her career to come. "It was certainly where I found my comedic voice, which was very fortifying for getting to a place like *SNL* or going through something like writing my own show for Hulu," she says. "I knew my comedic voice, and it's really all thanks to my time in Chicago." ▣

*"From freshman year on, I would do Columbia by day and improv by night. All night, every night of the week."*



—  
**Old Town Ale House**  
**219 N. North Ave.**

"This was my post-Second City shows spot. Open until 4 a.m., and very late at night, someone would come in selling tamales ... and as a drunk person, those were helpful to me."



—  
**Handlebar**  
**2311 W. North Ave.**

"My absolute favorite vegetarian spot. I still always go for the Green Meanie sandwich when I'm back in town."





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**The Annoyance Theatre  
851 W. Belmont Ave.**

“Where I learned to write, met my husband, and did some of my favorite shows. Highly recommend. *Holy Fuck* is a favorite show of mine that still runs today.”



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**Merz Apothecary  
4716 N. Lincoln Ave.**

“My beloved Lincoln Square apothecary. I want to live in this store. Established in 1875 and filled with all kinds of lovely and vaguely old-timey soaps, lotions, and remedies.”



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**HarvesTime Foods  
2632 W. Lawrence Ave.**

“This was my go-to, number one, ultimate favorite locally owned grocery store. I lived with four roommates nearby and we would go here and truly buy enough food for an army.”






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**Music Box Theatre**  
**3733 N. Southport Ave.**

“My favorite movie theater in the city. I used to work down the street at the barbershop and would treat myself to a movie after.”




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**Pick Me Up Cafe**  
**3408 N. Clark St.**

“There were a few years where I lived off their hummus plate. They are open laaaaate, so this was my spot for some midnight fries.”

**BROADWAY  
 ANTIQUE  
 MARKET**



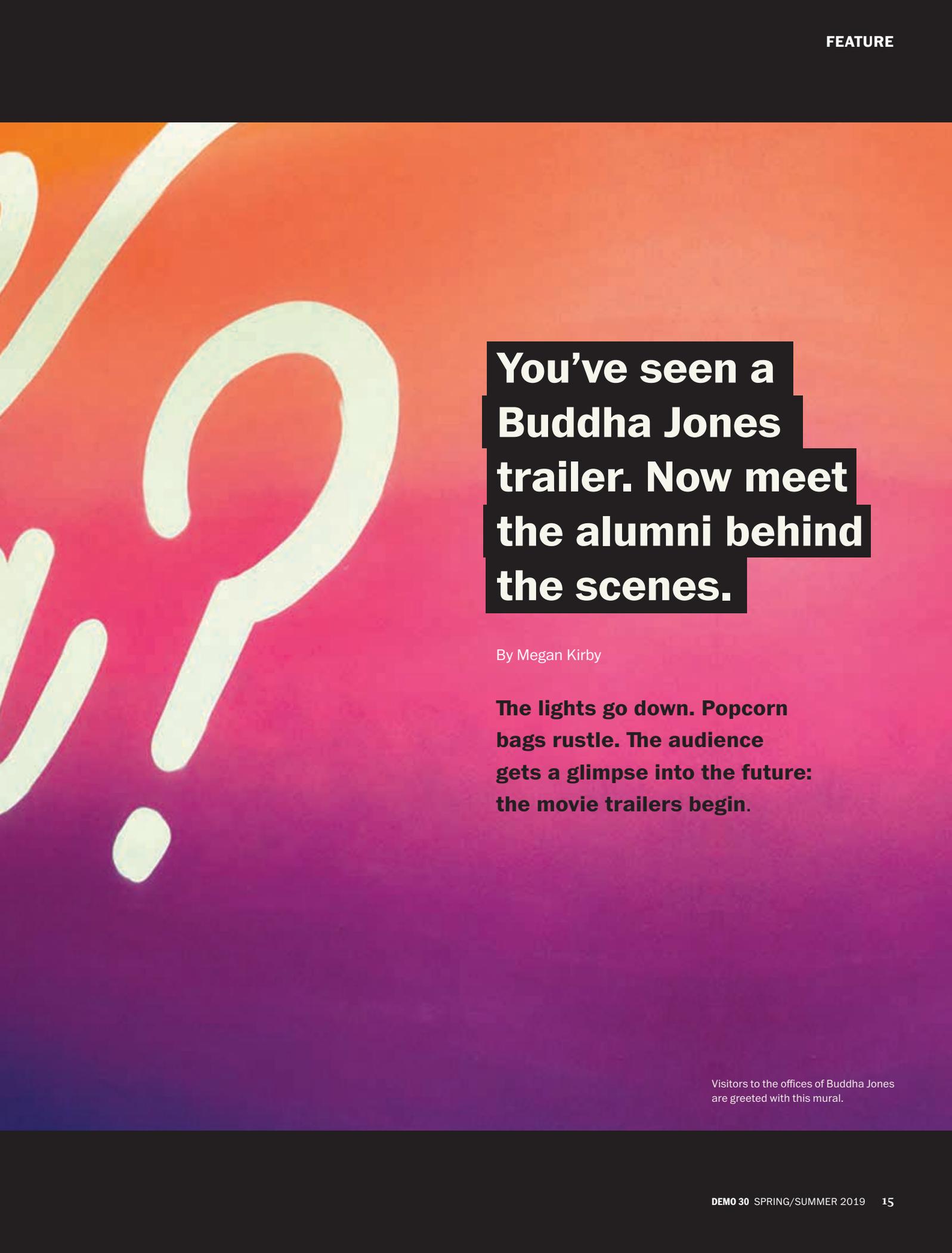

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**Broadway Antique Market**  
**6130 N. Broadway**

“This is one of my favorite vintage stores. I still wear some of the jackets I bought here. Fun fact: I was here when I got the call that SNL wanted me to fly to NYC to audition.”







**You've seen a  
Buddha Jones  
trailer. Now meet  
the alumni behind  
the scenes.**

By Megan Kirby

**The lights go down. Popcorn  
bags rustle. The audience  
gets a glimpse into the future:  
the movie trailers begin.**

Visitors to the offices of Buddha Jones  
are greeted with this mural.

Movie trailers are really the only kind of advertising where you get to sample the product,” says Dan Asma ’92, owner of media company Buddha Jones. “When you see a commercial for Coca-Cola, you can’t really taste the Coca-Cola. But when you see a trailer, your goal is to communicate the feel and flavor of that movie.”

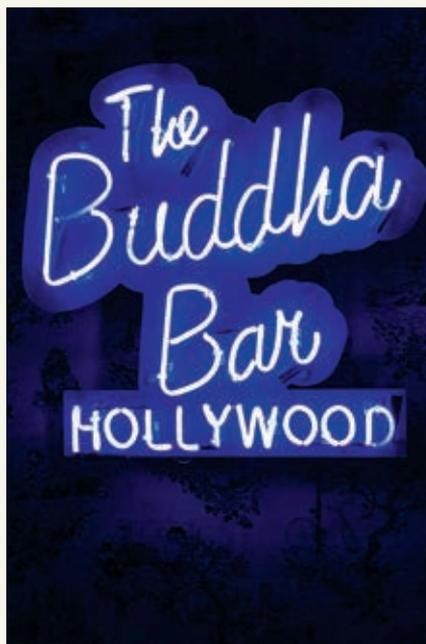
Over the last 15 years, you’ve probably seen Buddha Jones work without even realizing it. *IT*, *Wreck-It Ralph*, *Ocean’s 8*, *Wonder Woman*, *Get Out*, *Suicide Squad*, *Moana*, *Captain America*, *Mother!*, *The Wolf of Wall Street*—the list goes on and on. Since 2001, Asma has run Buddha Jones with an eye for creativity and collaboration. And the company has grown beyond movie trailers; today, they make trailers for video games, television, and streaming services.

Of course, in 2019, trailers aren’t just in movie theaters. They’re on television and between YouTube videos and in 60-second Instagram snippets. *DEMO* visited Buddha Jones’ Los Angeles offices in March to get the scoop on how the company has stayed on the cutting edge of movie trailers while shaping the direction of Hollywood storytelling.

## THE BIRTH OF BUDDHA JONES

2003 was a bad time to start an agency. The Los Angeles market was crowded with trailer shops. But Asma and the other three founders came from a variety of company backgrounds, and they were fed up with a singular, solo approach to creativity.

They had an idea: what if they founded a media marketing company built on creative collaboration? “What we figured was, let’s bring together a small but creatively nimble group of people to do unique editorial, storytelling, and writing,” he says. “We



The Buddha Jones space mixes work and play—including this neon sign for the Buddha Bar.

do not operate from the place that we’re the smartest people in the room. We want to be very, very open to ideas. That was always kind of the philosophy of the agency.”

The name Buddha Jones came after a night of dinner and drinking. Buddha points towards the spiritual: an evolved state of mind. Jones points to the practical: the everyday responsibility of getting things done. “The idea was to come up with a name that inferred a real sense of fun in the work,” says Asma. “Because you know it is—being creative is a joyous process.”

When Asma graduated from Columbia in 1992, he was thrilled by the industry shifts in non-linear editing. In the past, cutting a trailer involved literally cutting and splicing film. Now digital programs, like Avid, allow editors to be faster and more flexible than ever before. During his first LA job as a production assistant, Asma got to see how editing technology worked in the real world. “There is this special magic

that happens when you’re telling a story and the software’s really empowering you,” he says.

The first trailer Buddha Jones ever produced was for the 2005 hip-hop drama *Hustle and Flow*. Today, the Buddha team crafts marketing campaigns for television, streaming, social media, and video games. They also create motion graphics for movie titles and logos. When a lightning-struck DC Comics logo or the curling metallic letters for *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* appear on screen, that’s Buddha Jones’ work.

The Buddha Jones philosophy allows for a mashup of productivity and play: an all-hands-on-deck mentality that lets employees explore new creative challenges. Buddha Jones editor Bryan Coleman ’07 was drawn to the opportunities that his job brings.

“I always have opportunities to flex different creative muscles every day,” says Coleman. “Sometime the deadlines are a little crazy, but when you’re in the thick of it and you’re in the zone, there is that thrill of having the creative fire really burning.”

## KEEPING IT COLUMBIA

Caitlin Nordigian ’11 always wanted to make movie trailers. “When I was a kid, I loved seeing trailers, especially in the movie theater,” she says. “It was amazing to watch a trailer and get that goosebumps feeling. I always wanted to just have that feeling over and over and over again.”

Today, Nordigian is an editor at Buddha Jones, where she’s worked on everything from the reveal trailer for video game *Assassin’s Creed Odyssey* to Netflix’s *Glow* trailers. She joins six other alumni who work on the Buddha Jones team.

“I get a very strong sense of real discipline and passion from Columbia students,” says Asma.

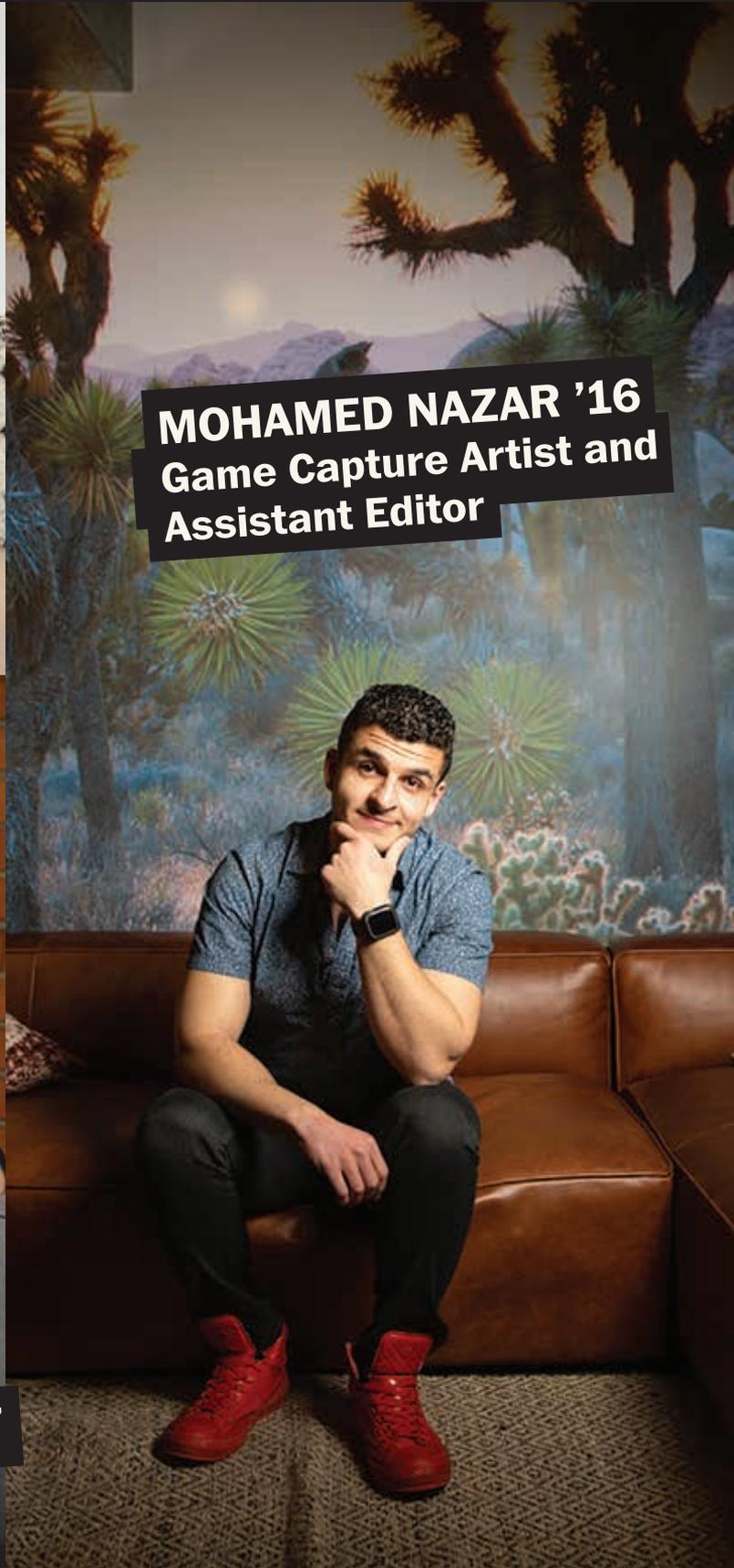


**DAN ASMA '92**  
Buddha Jones Owner

**CAITLIN NORDIGIAN '11**  
Editor



**MOHAMED NAZAR '16**  
Game Capture Artist and  
Assistant Editor



**BRYAN COLEMAN '07**  
Editor



Gamer capture artist and assistant editor Mohamed Nazar '16 first heard of Buddha Jones when Asma spoke on campus his sophomore year. When Asma came back during his senior year, Nazar specifically requested to work on an alumni video featuring Asma—and start networking with the head of the company where he hoped to work after graduation. They hit it off, and Asma offered advice about moving to LA and jumping into the business. “I just really appreciated somebody wanted to take the time out of their day to help me out,” Nazar says. When he moved to Los Angeles, he hit up Asma again—and Buddha Jones happened to be hiring.

The Buddha Jones offices feel like a playground. Visit the Buddha Bar to mix a Friday afternoon cocktail, or cozy up in the courtyard’s Airstream trailer for a lunch break. Even the music in the common areas comes from a company-wide collaborative Spotify playlist. It’s a little Willy

Wonka: a space where art, work, and fun combine for unexpected results.

Building a vibrant creative space was very much intentional. “When people are able to break away from their work to socialize or [discuss projects...] it lets them feel like they’re very much integrated with each other,” says Asma.

“I love how collaborative it is,” says Nazar. “We’re all working together on a central goal, but at the same time everyone is seen and heard. Everybody’s creative input is valued, all the way from the bottom to the top.”

## CHANGING THE GAME

A lot of considerations go into a good trailer: music and sound design, transitions, motion graphics, narrative, and even different cuts for different platforms and audiences. Buddha Jones handles it all.

“Trailers have developed into their own art form, with their own styles and conventions and language,” says

Asma. “To be playing in that space allows you to have an impact on it.”

Right now, action trailers tend to follow a particular staccato rhythm. Take, for example, a recent Buddha Jones trailer for *Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs and Shaw*. Quick cuts of car crashes and karate chops are combined with a kitschy soundtrack—War’s iconic funk song “Why Can’t We Be Friends.”

“What leaves a very big impact is the way it’s rhythmically cut,” says Asma. “Everything lands at the right time—that’s an example of a convention that is part of the art form.”

As Buddha Jones continues to grow, Asma hopes students see this line of work as a stable creative career. “I wish there were more opportunities for students to gain that information earlier so that by the time they’re maybe a junior, they’re able to say, ‘Oh, I want to edit for trailers. This is the world I want to live in. These are the styles and rhythms and tones that I want to be able to command, to make it work, and to create.’” ■

## DAN ASMA EXPLAINS HOW A TRAILER GETS MADE

### 1. The studio sends footage

A Hollywood studio will send Buddha Jones a full feature, or they will send daily footage—especially if it’s on a big-name project that needs early marketing. “We find ourselves working on a lot of dailies, which is a little difficult, because there’s just so much stuff,” says Asma. “There’s terabytes of media that come in.”

### 2. Buddha Jones has a creative meeting with the studio

Once the Buddha Jones team goes through footage to see what they have to work with, they meet with a production studio’s creative executives who will share any relevant information about the project. Together, Buddha Jones and the studio develop a creative brief for the direction of the trailer.

### 3. Buddha Jones makes a cut of the trailer

“Sometimes the process is really thought-through and detailed and really strategic. And other times it’s a little like, okay, here’s the movie, this is the direction, now go make it awesome,” says Asma. “Our staff is built to handle those.”

### 4. The revision process begins

The studio responds to a trailer draft and gives feedback on things, like how well it fits the creative brief and how the music fits the vibe. From there, Buddha Jones works through more drafts to narrow down the final result. “You’ll go up to two, three, four, five versions—they can go really high,” says Asma.

### 5. The trailer is tested

The trailer is sent to testing agencies to see how audiences receive it. Depending on that feedback, Buddha Jones produces additional drafts of the trailer until the studio is happy with the results.

### 6. The trailer is released

Then Buddha Jones begins working on marketing campaign strategies—including producing alternative trailer cuts for television markets and other viewing platforms.

# From Beginning to End

## A PLAY IN FIVE ACTS

By Audrey Michelle Mast '00

INTRO

How a friendship forged at Columbia has survived—and thrived—through decades of theatre and some Tony Awards

### CAST OF CHARACTERS



**DAVID CROMER HDR '17**

Freelance theatre director with extensive credits in Chicago and on Broadway. Winner of the 2018 Tony Award for Best Direction of a Musical for *The Band's Visit*. 2010 MacArthur Fellow. Hailed by *The New York Times* as a “visionary wunderkind.” Stage and screen actor known for TimeLine Theatre’s 2013 production of *The Normal Heart* and a recurring role on Showtime’s *Billions*. Slated to direct Tracy Letts’ *Bug* at Steppenwolf Theatre in 2020.



**ANNA D. SHAPIRO '90, HDR '15**

Artistic Director of Steppenwolf Theatre Company, where she has spent more than two decades sharpening her directorial voice and helping shape theatre in Chicago and beyond. Winner of the Tony Award for Best Direction of the Broadway production of *August: Osage County* in 2008; nominated for 2011’s *The Motherfucker with the Hat*. Directing the upcoming musical adaptation of *The Devil Wears Prada*, featuring music by Elton John. Professor at Northwestern University.

## SYNOPSIS

Two old friends, Tony-winning theatre directors DAVID CROMER and ANNA D. SHAPIRO, connect via video call to reminisce about their college days as Theatre students at Columbia in the late '80s. The conversation quickly turns to their mentor, Sheldon Patinkin, the legendary actor, director, writer, and educator who helmed Columbia's Theatre Department for nearly 30 years. After his passing in 2014, the college dedicated the basement theater at 72 E. 11th St. in his name and created the Sheldon Patinkin Award in his honor.

## SETTING

A video chat between DAVID in his NYC apartment and ANNA in her Chicago office.

## TIME

A Thursday afternoon.

*in March 2019*

## PROLOGUE

(At DEMO's behest, a Zoom meeting begins. DAVID sits in his New York living room. ANNA enters the chat from her Chicago office.)

**DEMO:** Anna, in your 2015 Columbia College Chicago commencement address, you said the two of you met in Sheldon Patinkin's directing class in 1987. Maybe we could start there: What were your first impressions of each other?

*→ Anna laughs*

**DAVID:** Mine was overwhelmingly positive. Right away, there were a few people I latched onto immediately, and Anna was one.

**ANNA:** I thought David was one of the funniest people I'd ever met. I still think it. And I don't laugh out loud easily. But I spent that whole first year laughing out loud every day.

**DAVID:** I'd say Sheldon considered it a special class as well.

**ANNA:** I totally agree. I think that he was also kind of figuring out how to teach directing. It was a mutually beneficial relationship for all of us.

**DAVID:** The class was in Sheldon's crazy eclectic mess of an office, filled with books and posters and toys. There were six of us. We smoked cigarettes the whole time.

**ANNA:** I think that David is probably still—and I know that I am—a good note giver. We actually wanted to help make each other's work better, and understand what each of us was trying to accomplish. They weren't notes about how we would have done it. They were about how the other could be successful. We learned that from Sheldon.



Columbia's  
legendary Theatre  
Department chair  
who passed  
away in 2014

## ACT I: SHELDON

**DAVID:** My college experience is ultimately characterized by a man who was just ... endlessly generous. He taught us to be generous to each other. He wasn't into the star system, maybe because of his improv training. He was always about the ensemble.

**ANNA:** His ethos was a really good balance for our narcissism. It was a safe space, as the kids would say, to be full of ourselves. Sheldon never damned us for that. I think he saw it as ambition. He balanced that ambition with what we needed to learn. He was incredibly practical. I often think, "What would Sheldon want me to do right now?" Which is a lot different than saying, "What would Sheldon do?" That's not what he taught us.

Sheldon was never going to go out of style. What he said was timeless and it was true and it was eternal. The essence of it is: Tell your story from beginning to end.

**DAVID:** His notes were very simple. But they were like DNA; something you could take and clone into a whole dinosaur.

(Beat)

**ANNA:** David, I think you showed Herculean restraint, not putting your Tony Award on the dresser right there.

(DAVID reaches out of the frame and reappears, clutching a Tony statuette.)

**DAVID** Aaany-waay ... *In a singsong tone*

**ANNA** See? How did I ever finish school?

*to DEMO incredibly*

## ACT II: BACK IN THE DAY

**DEMO:** What was Columbia like back then?

**ANNA:** We had to go to the well and pump our own water. We made our own candles and soap.

**DAVID:** It was small. We *lived* in the Theatre building, and dated everybody, and went to lunch. The third floor was this big open space ...

**ANNA:** I never left the 11th Street building once I went in. It was like dork summer camp. You always knew your friends would be there—a bunch of people with shared affection for something.

I still get such a visceral feeling, even when I walk in the door to the building now. It's so different, but I have the same giddiness.

## ACT III: MUTUAL ADMIRATION

**DEMO:** David, what's your favorite work of Anna's? And the same question to you, Anna, about David.

**DAVID:** *August: Osage County*, which I saw at least four times. *Three Days of Rain*, a play she did at Steppenwolf a few years ago. It was so fundamentally her.

It was incredibly dense but bone-dry, witty and dark and really devastating.

**ANNA:** So far ... his *Our Town*. I am never emotionally surprised in a theater. Ever. Interestingly, I was about to direct *Our Town* months afterward. So I had to see his. While I'm watching, I'm

thinking, “I can do this. I can come up to this level.” And then *that thing\** happened. Literally, my heart stopped. The image is burned in my mind.

I was like, “Wow, this [expletive] is truly a theatre artist.” It was a bittersweet feeling, because I felt him pull away from me in that moment. When you come up with someone as talented as David, you measure yourself

\*David made a very bold directorial choice in his production of *Our Town* that caused a buzz in the theater world; it's best to preserve the mystery.

The late Martha Lavey, Steppenwolf Theatre's former artistic director

**DEMO:** Have you ever worked together professionally?

**DAVID:** No, but Anna and Martha gave me wonderful opportunities at Steppenwolf throughout the years. And I made a bit of a name for myself when I was young at Big Game Theater, which Anna ran, directing a play called *Women In Water*. It was very ambitious and very showy. Later that summer I worked in a dog food factory, ‘cause there’s no *arriving*. There’s just ... moving. Anna graciously invited me to Steppenwolf to direct a show there [*Bug*] next year.

**ANNA:** I’m so excited. We’re going to eat so much grilled cheese.

against him. I hold myself to a high bar and he is part of that.

He also directed the best Chekhov I’ve ever seen, *Three Sisters*. We were, like, 24, so that pisses me off a bit, too.

(DAVID reclines on his sofa with his Tony and wiggles his bare feet.)

**ANNA:** Is there a way you can say that he did this while I was talking? *laughing*

## ACT IV: THEN AND NOW

**DEMO:** What was it like for each of you post-college, before you hit it big?

**ANNA:** I went to grad school [at Yale Drama] and was hired at Steppenwolf in ‘94. I didn’t have the stamina to be a freelance director like David did. I still don’t.

**DAVID:** I liked freelancing, but I was also doing a lot of things I didn’t want to do, which were riddled with failure and misery. You were doing something that honestly terrified me: You were committed to new plays, finding playwrights, developing them. Our artistic lives led to those choices. Our paths diverged, in terms of the tracks we took. But we’ve ended up someplace very similar, I feel.

## ACT V: FULL CIRCLE

**ANNA:** What we both share is being really lucky, because we just kept doing what we loved, and people wanted us to keep doing it in bigger ways.

**DAVID:** On that level, we are in a small percentile. Because there’s plenty of better artists than me.

**ANNA:** Sing it, sister.

(Beat)

I don’t know where my Tony is. I’m going to have to get it out when you get here.

**DAVID:** You don’t know where it is? *surprised*

**ANNA:** No clue. Never put it out.

**DAVID:** That’s—I put it out. I mean, it’s among other tchotchkes. It’s not on a plinth or anything, but ... okay, you win.

**THE END.**



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# Bryan Smiley

## IMPOSSIBLE AMBITION

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At Columbia Pictures,  
Bryan Smiley '09 gets movies made.

### **BRYAN SMILEY '09 WEARS A DETROIT TIGERS HAT EVERY DAY.**

It's a reminder of his time growing up in Detroit, creating documentaries about homelessness, single-parent homes, and the culture of American barbershops, as he dreamed of making it in the movie business.

"The idea of getting to one day work in Hollywood was so exciting to me that I could spend hours and hours and hours working toward that goal," he says. "That kind of hunger and fire doesn't really go away."

Today, that Tigers hat serves another purpose: It helps Smiley stick in people's minds as he moves between Hollywood meetings in his job as vice president of production at Columbia Pictures. In broad strokes, Smiley decides which movies get made. He reviews projects, brokers deals, builds partnerships, and ultimately, develops movies.

These projects include a five-picture deal with *Insecure*'s Issa Rae, which will support and spotlight five up-and-coming writers. Smiley also made headlines for brokering a deal with NBA star Steph Curry, developing films and television for Curry's company Unanimous Media—the largest athlete media deal in history.

Smiley came to Los Angeles through Columbia College Chicago's Semester in LA program, and immediately saw that in Hollywood, networking is everything. He spent eight years moving up the ladder at Regency

Entertainment—from humble beginnings as an assistant to Regency's owner to a stint in home entertainment, marketing and distributing DVDs and digital videos. At the end of his time at Regency, Smiley ran new business development, where he focused on creating new revenue streams around film and television.

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**"The idea of getting to one day work in Hollywood was so exciting to me that I could spend hours and hours and hours working toward that goal. That kind of hunger and fire doesn't really go away."**

Through it all, he built and maintained industry connections—including with Columbia Pictures president Stanford Panitch. "He's someone I knew for 14 years, speaking of networking," says Smiley. "It's very

important to maintain relationships, and this is one that definitely led to my current opportunity."

Smiley can't discuss everything he's working on, but the two projects he can talk about show a wide range. One is *Once Upon a One More Time*, a feminist musical set to Britney Spears hits. The other is a yet-to-be-titled action movie in the vein of *John Wick*. With every project, Smiley asks a simple question before jumping in: Is this a movie he'd want to see? "If the answer is yes, we put a lot of time and work to get it off the ground," he says.

But Smiley remembers his roots—and he's constantly encouraging Hollywood newcomers. Joining Columbia's National Alumni Board put him in touch with students who have the same filmmaking fire that fueled him as a teenager. "I've met incredible students and hopefully helped people see a path for themselves in Hollywood," he says.

At the same time, Smiley's ambitions continue to spur him on—just like when he was a highschooler making documentaries in his hometown. "It's a business of believing in hope and really believing you can accomplish the impossible," he says. "That's really what the movie business is—it's an impossible task, it's really hard, but you've got to have faith that you're going to succeed."—*Megan Kirby*



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# Annick Wolkan

## WESTEROS WRANGLER

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*Game of Thrones* co-producer Annick Wolkan '05 won't forget her time behind the scenes.

**IT'S 2015.** Jon Snow is dead. And people won't stop asking Annick Wolkan '05 about it. As soon as they find out she works for smash-hit fantasy show (and cultural phenomenon) *Game of Thrones* (*GoT*), the questions flood in—from her mechanic, her grocery store bagger, even her dad begging for Westeros intel over the phone.

When Wolkan began working on *GoT* in 2012 as season two filming started, she had no idea what a huge deal it would become. Flash-forward seven years later: The HBO series based on George R.R. Martin's novels just wrapped up its eighth and final season. *GoT* has won 47 Primetime Emmy Awards, averaged 3.2 million viewers during its seventh season, and inspired too many Comic Con cosplayers to count. And Wolkan has been promoted from an assistant to an associate producer in season three, and then to a co-producer in season six.

At Columbia College Chicago, Wolkan gravitated toward the organizational aspects of filmmaking, and her *GoT* journey is a typical Los Angeles tale of hustling and networking. Wolkan started out as a freelancer and a page at Universal Studios, giving tours and working events. ("You become an expert at walking backwards and talking.") A Universal connection led to her first television gig, which led to a job on HBO's *Big Love*, where she

became executive producer Bernadette Caulfield's assistant. In 2012, Caulfield shifted to *Game of Thrones*—and Wolkan did, too.

The show took her all over the world—from a home base in Belfast, Northern Ireland, to locations in Spain, Iceland, Croatia, and more. As the show's popularity soared, so did the production team's ambitions. "Every season was exponentially harder than the previous season," says Wolkan.

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**"Every season was exponentially harder than the previous season."**

Wolkan spent three years coordinating with the show's wolf trainer in Canada to film the Stark family's faithful direwolves. Direwolf scenes are filmed after those of their human counterparts, and then the scenes are edited together. "So the wolf needs to start on that mark, walk to this mark, turn, and look. And then sometimes our VFX supervisors would be like, 'He should feel confused,' and you're like..." Wolkan says. "Our animal

trainer was always very realistic. He and his wolves are the best in the business."

Over six years, Wolkan has learned things she'd never even dreamed of—like how to set people on fire. In season five, the team shot at a Spanish amphitheater with 500 extras and a giant blowtorch programmed to mimic the movement of dragon fire. Before a stunt person is set on fire, they don a special full-body suit with a breathing tube. Right before the flames hit, the tube is removed and their mouths are sealed shut. The entire time someone appears on fire on screen, they are holding their breath. "At that point, I think that was the most people we'd ever set on fire," she says. "That was one of those moments where I was like, 'This is a very unique experience, and I feel very fortunate to experience it.'"

Wolkan talked to *DEMO* in March 2019, when she was wrapping up her final administrative tasks for the show—fact-checking credits, organizing Emmy submissions, and saying goodbye. "It'll be tough to talk about it in the past tense," she says. But *Game of Thrones* will always be a part of Wolkan's history, and her name will be forever tied to Westeros, too. Back in season five, she got a script introducing a new character—a peace-loving scholar named Maester Wolkan.

—Megan Kirby



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# Aaqib Usman

## DIGITAL DREAMER

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Aaqib Usman '13 hopes to make reality better with multimedia company Midwest Immersive.

### A LOCKER ROOM WITH LED LIGHTING.

An audio visual hallway with wall-to-wall video displays, a light show, and a sound system. And a “boomerang” photo op for guests to capture their experience. This may sound like a theme park attraction, but it’s actually a 2018 Adidas merchandise launch event in New York City, where consumers could check out the sportswear company’s latest threads and kicks in a vibrant “Immersive RV” trailer—all developed by the team of Aaqib Usman '13, founder and producer of the multimedia company Midwest Immersive. The Adidas event is a prime example of what Midwest Immersive specializes in: “interactive experiential marketing,” a new form of product promotion that is equal parts technology, publicity, and art.

“What people of our generation are craving these days are unique, emotional connections with people, brands, products,” says Usman. “What we do, as a company, is create those connections for them.”

In order to fulfill that engagement, Usman always approaches his projects with the same question: How do you bridge the divide between the digital world and the physical world?

“We’re constantly thinking about how we bring digital into reality,” says Usman, “and how we can make the real world better by augmenting it with digital assets and digital experiences.”

Midwest Immersive frequently utilizes augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies. Popularized by products such as Google Glass and Oculus Rift, AR adds digital overlays to the real world, like Snapchat lenses and camera filters, while VR immerses a viewer in a completely digital world.

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Usman graduated with a degree in Film at Columbia College Chicago and went on to work on film and advertising projects, where he discovered he had a knack for technology. He began to explore tech fields such as production development, design, and management.

Usman was eventually hired as an interactive producer for the Chicago startup QualSights, based in 1871, a digital startup community. There, he was able to combine his filmmaking skills with his gift for technology.

In 2016, he founded Midwest Immersive with a five-person team at the Merchandise Mart in downtown Chicago. Usman’s company is on the forefront of building the tech community in Chicago, and has been commissioned by a number of high-profile companies such as Adidas, Cadbury, and Nike to create interactive brand experiences for their products.

As the company keeps growing, Usman wants to continue to develop products, services, and experiences that bridge the divide between physical reality and digital reality.

“My mission is to create experiences that improve the quality of people’s lives,” says Usman. “That’s where I see [Midwest Immersive] going. Essentially it all boils down to, ‘Let’s make reality better.’”—Christine Hickman



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# Bob Teitel

## A BIG PRODUCTION

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Producer Bob Teitel '90  
knows a good story when he sees one.

### WHEN BOB TEITEL '90 AND DIRECTOR GEORGE TILLMAN, JR. '91 HDR '13

came across the 2017 young adult novel *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas, they knew it was a story that needed to be told.

“It was an amazing story, and unfortunately timely,” says Teitel. He was interested in the unique perspective of the novel, in which a young woman finds her voice after losing her best friend to an act of police brutality.

The film adaptation of *The Hate U Give*, starring Amandla Stenberg, produced by Teitel, and directed by Tillman, was released in 2018 and received widespread critical acclaim. It is only the latest of cinematic successes for Tillman and Teitel, who teamed up at Columbia College Chicago in the 1980s, formed the company that would eventually become State Street Pictures, and released hits such as *Barbershop*, *Men of Honor*, and *Soul Food*.

Teitel recently sat down with DEMO to discuss his career and approach to producing films.

### WHAT ORIGINALLY INTERESTED YOU IN WORKING IN FILM?

Growing up in Chicago as a kid, my father would take us to the movies every Sunday, and I just fell in love with cinema. Didn't know what I was going to do in that field, but I knew I wanted to be a storyteller somehow. When I went to Columbia, it really formed my decision to become a producer in that field.

### HOW DID YOU MEET GEORGE TILLMAN?

We were neighbors in the dorms. I remember him coming up to me and saying, “I heard you're a producer.” And I said, “Yeah, I guess I am.” We just started talking about movies and we clicked. We both had the same work ethic of wanting to do things and trying to go above and beyond. If we were supposed to do a short 10-minute film, ours would be 30.

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I remember him coming up to me and saying, “I heard you're a producer.” And I said, “Yeah, I guess I am.” We just started talking about the movie and we clicked.

### WHAT INSPIRED YOU AND GEORGE TO START STATE STREET PICTURES?

I graduated a year before George because I was a year older, so I was PAing a lot of commercials in Chicago while working for my father in the automotive business—just trying to

shoot as much as I could all the time. We were always thinking about the next thing, and we started with this film called *Sings for the Soul*, which was shot in 1993. Our first company was [originally] called Imaginary Films. There were five of us in the company, but after we found out we were the only two really doing all the work, it was more of a stepping stone to grow. We whittled down to two rather quickly and we just stuck with it and worked our asses off.

### HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHICH PROJECTS YOU WANT TO PURSUE?

There's no rhyme or reason to it; it's just kind of what your gut tells you. It changes constantly. If somebody asks what I'm looking for, I say I'm looking for something good and character-driven, but I'm not looking for a particular genre. I could fall in love with any story, but it's always got to be character-driven and have a lot of heart. That's our strong suit. —Megan Kirby

# ALUMNI SHORTS

ALUMNI UPDATES AT A GLANCE

Illustrations by Dani Knight



## A STORIED HISTORY

Vulture writer **Angelica Jade Bastién '12** reflects on three pieces of formative media.

As a staff writer for *New York Magazine's* culture site, Vulture, Angelica Jade Bastién '12 explores everything from the newest season of *Riverdale* to her deep obsession with Keanu Reeves. We asked her to reflect on three pieces of media that shaped her love of storytelling and her successful writing career.

### 1. *In a Lonely Place*

I don't remember the first time I saw Nicholas Ray's dark 1950 gem *In A Lonely Place*, starring Humphrey Bogart and Gloria Grahame. But I remember the impression it left: Bone-chilling recognition. Bogart plays Dixon Steele, an impossibly named, down-on-his-luck screenwriter with a mordant air and the sort of wit that can be easily confused for cruelty. Bogart and I are separated by time and space, race and class, political outlooks, and personal philosophies. Yet in him, I see a bit of my own journey wrestling with the beasts of madness and anger.

### 2. *The Devil Finds Work* by James Baldwin

In the pages of James Baldwin's *The Devil Finds Work*, an incisive work of film and cultural criticism, I see the kind of art I aim for. Baldwin proves that criticism can be an art of its own as he threads in historical considerations, cultural insights, and memoir—using film as the lens. This is the lofty aim I have held myself to when I was juggling multiple low-paying jobs between freelancing, and still hold today as a staff writer for Vulture.

### 3. *The Bloody Chamber* by Angela Carter

My desire to both seduce and challenge readers likely comes from my long-held obsession with Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*. This 1979 short story collection takes familiar fairy tales—Little Red Riding Hood, Bluebeard, Snow White—and sets them aflame with bold considerations of power, desire, and womanhood from a perspective that is fiercely feminist. Every time I feel creatively stymied or I doubt why I write, I open up the pages of *The Bloody Chamber* as a reminder: To make sense of the chaos of my mind and find my place in this world, even if it's just on the page.



## KEEPING SCORE

Hollywood composer **Jesi Nelson MFA '15** scores a scene from her life.

Jesi Nelson MFA '15 composes full-time in LA and has worked on popular animations such as *Ninjago: The Legend of Spinjitzu* and *Lego Starts: The Freemaker Adventures* series as well as several indie productions. In December 2018, the director of Sundance's music program selected Nelson to teach an animation-scoring workshop in Israel. While she and her colleagues were dining in Tel Aviv in March, a missile attack from Gaza forced everyone into the city's state-mandated bomb shelters. The authorities gave the all-clear after 10 tense minutes, and life returned to normal. But for the moment, it was like a scene out of a movie. This is how she would score it.

"[I would score it from] my perspective, which was this mute moment where I'm watching everything happen around me, and I'm still for whatever reason quite calm. So there would be this droning, then the sound drops out. I would stick to synth tones and [electronic] pads, and then I would probably bring in strings, but I wouldn't do anything aggressively because I think the best way to score it would just be in a sort of empathetic way. I wouldn't do brass and percussion because I feel like it would take away from the importance of the moment and the reality that this is something that happens all the time.



## TINY BOOK, BIG CITY

Artist **Maura Walsh '11** captures Chicago's massive music scene in a mini sketchbook.

Artist and illustrator Maura Walsh '11 has completed multiple sketchbooks as part of the Brooklyn Art Library's "Sketchbook Project." The library distributes, collects, and archives sketchbooks from around the world for their permanent collection in Brooklyn, New York.

Walsh's latest contribution is "Our Tiny Guide to Chicago's Best Music Culture Spots," a tiny sketchbook (2.5" x 1.75") that was conceived as a guide to Walsh's favorite music venues in Chicago. A video of the "Tiny Guide" that Walsh posted on her Facebook page has been viewed more than 20,000 times, and the sketchbook has been featured in local publications such as Block Club Chicago.

Since music plays a large role in her life and art, we asked Walsh what the soundtrack to "Tiny Guide" would sound like.

1. Daughters: "City Song," *You Won't Get What You Want*  
(Seen at Beat Kitchen and Bottom Lounge)
2. Drug Church: "Attending a Cousin's Birthday Party," *Paul Walker*  
(Seen at Cobra Lounge)
3. Gouge Away: "Uproar," *Dies*  
(Also seen at Cobra Lounge)
4. Xiu Xiu: "Grey Death," *Dear God, I Hate Myself*  
(Seen at Empty Bottle, Metro, Lincoln Hall, and more)
5. The Body: "Nothing Stirs," *I Have Fought Against it, But I Can't Any Longer*  
(Seen at the Empty Bottle with Uniform)



## DESIGN IS IN THE DETAILS

Graphic designer **Eavan Wallner '14** discusses her latest project: the Google Hardware Store.

Not even a year into her tenure as a designer for Google's Events + Experiences department, Eavan Wallner '14 was tasked with creating the look of the tech giant's latest venture—the Google Hardware Store. The pop-up retail experience showcases Google's three hardware products: the Pixel phone and tablet, and the Google Home Hub smart speaker.

Wallner became the design lead for the project, and her team set forth to create an "experiential and joyous" space.

- Wallner's team was responsible for modeling the store's visual concept, from defining the overall look and feel of the space (long, blonde wood tables and concrete floors), down to designing the smaller details like the carry-away tote bags.
- Google Hardware's newest location in Chicago's Bucktown neighborhood has features such as a prop kitchen outfitted with a Google Home Hub that opens drawers, a "treehouse" with a Nest doorbell that adjusts lights and temperature, and an Instagram-friendly photo station that invites guests to test Pixel's Top Shot feature.
- While Wallner had never given design feedback before and had no formal 3D or interior design work experience, she and her "scrappy" internal design team were able to make the best of it. "[Our team] gave me the chance to flex outside of traditional graphic design and help shape the overall space," says Wallner.



Diane Dammeyer (left) with 2018 recipient of the Diane Dammeyer Fellowship in Photographic Arts and Social Issues, Anahid Ghorbani MFA '17 (right).

# Diane Dammeyer Believes in the Power of Photography

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With the Dammeyer Fellowship and the new Dammeyer Initiative, Diane Dammeyer promotes photography as a tool for social justice.

By Megan Kirby

For former photography student Diane Dammeyer, photographs are more than just an art form—they are one of the most useful tools for highlighting social justice issues.

“With a visual, you can express a person’s mood and human condition,” says Dammeyer.

The Diane Dammeyer Fellowship in Photographic Arts and Social Issues, the first of its kind at Columbia College Chicago, was established in 2014 by Diane Dammeyer. The fellowship creates an opportunity for a socially engaged postgraduate photographer to

immerse themselves in the community of Heartland Alliance to produce a new, original, and compelling body of photographic work that speaks to the human rights and social issues revealed through these experiences. The fellowship was created from Diane’s interest in photography and passion for social justice through previous work with Heartland.

Building on this vision, Dammeyer and her husband Rod recently made another generous donation to Columbia to create an overarching initiative, encompassing the existing fellowship

“With a visual,  
you can express a  
person’s mood and  
human condition.”

and providing additional sustaining support for youth photography workshops that connect faculty, alumni, and students to young people in marginalized communities. One of the programs—a part of the *Eyes on Mainstreet* outdoor photo festival in Wilson, North Carolina—is known as the Wilson Project. This initiative, spearheaded by Photography Department Chair Peter Fitzpatrick, connects more than 100 local youths with cameras and education.

A second program called Camera for Kids, led by Photography alum Dan Wessell '14, was just completed in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with preparations for a similar program at the Pine Ridge Reservation in Kyle, South Dakota. Fitzpatrick is developing

strategies to bring both program opportunities to parts of the Chicago community in 2020, and to other parts of the U.S. and the world in the future.

#### WHAT DREW YOU TO PHOTOGRAPHY?

I’ve always been a visual learner, and I’ve had many opportunities to witness a lot of different situations and a lot of people in poverty. And I wanted others to experience that. I’ve always been drawn to telling personal stories about people. What are they about? What are they thinking? What are their needs? How do they live?

#### HOW DOES THE WILSON PROJECT HELP YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHERS?

The Wilson Project is for young photographers to learn and express themselves with this art form, be with other photographers, and really decide if they want to work in this environment. Photography is something you learn by doing. It’s a perfect way for them to take the learning experience of the classroom and then try to integrate it into their own experience and their own formation of how they use photography.

#### WHY DO YOU THINK COMMUNITY-BASED PARTNERSHIPS ARE IMPORTANT?

When trying to tell the story of a certain population group, photographers not only support the individual experiencing it, like the homeless person or the person living in poverty, but they’re also supporting the social worker who’s trying to help a certain population. So, it’s the bridge between the two that tells the story to others. Not everybody has the experience of actually observing [these issues] firsthand, or working with the individuals that need help. So, a visual is the beginning of a conversation about what is happening there.

#### THE FELLOWSHIP HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR FIVE YEARS. WHAT HAS SURPRISED YOU ABOUT IT?

Gee, where to start? Everything. All of the recipients have their own personality that they inject into the project, and what has surprised me is the variation in their approaches to their work. I did this myself when I was a student at Columbia. It made me grow and think in a different way, and that’s the beauty of photography.



2018 Dammeyer Fellow Sasha Phylars-Burgess



2016 Dammeyer Fellow Ervin A. Johnson '12



# Dance

# Apocalyptic

By Lindsey Romain '11

The Seldoms bring real-world issues to the Chicago dance scene

Imagine bodies that shift not with the carefully articulated precision we normally ascribe to dancers, but with the texture of ordinary human movement. These are bodies telling stories of history, of social impact, of cultural evolution. They occupy the stage with a primal purpose. They are The Seldoms, a Chicago-based dance company founded by Dance faculty member Carrie Hanson. Since forming the group in 2001, she has watched it grow into the acclaimed institution it is today; one that's been praised by the *Chicago Tribune*, *Chicago Reader*, and *TimeOut Chicago*, and has received a National Performance Network Creation Fund and a National Dance Project Production Grant.

Hanson began her dance career as a performer before transitioning to choreography, where she started with smaller projects, like solo work and the occasional duet concert. After attending graduate school at Trinity Laban in London, she came to Chicago, where she began teaching dance at Columbia. The Seldoms was formed around this time, as Hanson found her roots in the city. Through her work at Columbia's

**“I’m interested in dance being understood as another viable way of perceiving the issues that we’re all dealing with in our daily lives.”**

Dance Center, she met and trained with various dancers—many of whom would eventually join the group.

“That was more accidental than it was an intentional or formalized relationship,” Hanson said of the inclusion of Columbia alumni in the company. “It’s because that was my home base, and that’s where I was seeing a lot of young dancers.”

The Dance Center was ripe with talent that lent themselves to Hanson’s vision of a dance company that takes the art form “out of the realm of mere entertainment,” as she puts it. “I’m interested in dance being understood as another viable way of perceiving the issues that we’re all dealing with

in our daily lives, whether they’re issues around political power, issues around identity politics, issues around environmental concerns and crises.” Dance Center students were uniquely equipped with skills transferable to this idea because they’re grounded in theory and technique, and have a grasp on composition, according to Hanson.

“One of the reasons why it’s worked for me to pull from Columbia is because I know they’re getting good training there, not just in the studio but in terms of how they’re thinking about themselves as a whole artists,” she said. Within The Seldom’s DNA, there was an interdisciplinary thrust from the beginning.”



Sarah Gonsiorowski, Cara Sabin '06, and Hannah Santistevan '16 perform a section of *RockCitizen* (2016) about the Women's Lib movement of the 1960s and 70s. Photo: Maureen Janson Heintz



Sarah Gonsiorowski and Philip Elson '11 perform a section of *RockCitizen* (2016) about the power of and protest by the people. Photo: Maureen Janson Heintz



From top to bottom: Sarah Gonsiorowski, Hannah Santistevan '16, and Philip Elson '11 perform a section of *RockCitizen* (2016) called "Free Love Gymnastics," about the 1960s sexual liberation. / Matthew McMunn '10 and Damon Green, former student, perform in *RockCitizen* (2016). / Philip Elson '11 and Cara Sabin '06 perform a section of *RockCitizen* (2016) about psychedelic and LSD exploration by hippies. Photos: Maureen Janson Heintz

Philip Elson '11 is a former student of Hanson's who joined the company in 2008. "I knew right away from taking [Hanson's] classes and learning from her that this was someone I wanted to align myself with," Elson said. He was also intrigued by The Seldoms after attending *Convergence*, a site-specific work that the company performed in a 17,000-foot garage. "After seeing that and seeing the audition announcement, there was no hesitation in my mind that I wanted to be a part of this organization that worked in the untraditional and did it with such excitement and excellence."

Matt McMunn '10 worked with The Seldoms summer intensive program in 2010 before joining the company in 2015. His first performance as a company member, *Power Goes*, used Lyndon B. Johnson as a figure to explore the cost and benefit of power. "One of the things I enjoy the most about working with The Seldoms is that I get to explore a variety of subjects and curiosities through novel artistic

approaches with groups of fascinating people," McMunn said.

The company is currently working on a project called *Floe*, which is about the issue of climate instability. The idea came from *Ocean Geographic*, a conservation and ocean awareness magazine, which approached Hanson with the idea of exploring climate concerns through dance performance in an effort to merge the line between art and science. The Seldoms previously tackled the topic of climate change in 2012's *Exit Disclaimer: Science and Fiction Ahead*, so Hanson wanted to take a different, "back door" approach.

"One of the paths that we're taking towards this topic is to think about conspiracy theory, because one of the ways that the Republicans, Donald Trump, and the fossil fuel industry try to discount the climate crisis is to still call it a hoax, a conspiracy theory," Hanson explained. "So we're kind of looking at that anti-science prejudice or the distrust of science in our country."

*Floe*—which will see its full-length premiere in January 2020—is just one example of the unique perspective The Seldoms lends to the Chicago dance scene: One that's constantly evolving and challenging conceptions about what dance can and should look like, and one that owes a hand to Columbia's Dance Center but that's ultimately a part of the Chicago dance landscape as a whole.

"We are truly an artist-led organization in the administrative sense, and we are truly collaborative in the making and construction of our productions," Elson said. "To say it's a team effort doesn't scratch the surface of how tightly knit we all work together to achieve success."

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**“To say it’s a team effort doesn’t scratch the surface at how tightly knit we all work together to achieve success.”**

# Class Notes

SUBMIT YOUR CLASS NOTES AT [COLUM.EDU/CLASSNOTES](http://COLUM.EDU/CLASSNOTES)

## 1970s

**GARY WHITNEY '74** completed his graphic novel *Song of the Avatar - Visual Riffs on the Bhagavad Gita*.

## 1980s

**MARY P. CARROLL, former student**, published her novel, *President Kennedy's Promises*, under the name Anna M. Carroll. She has also published a book of stories, *Anushka: Stories of the Mind in Transition*, and two poetry books: *Pieces of a Thief* and *Gulag*.

**DON HOWZE '84** is a TV and film documentary producer and an Emmy Award-winning editor at DVIDEO 79 Productions.

**BRAD MAGON '87** celebrates 19 years as an Emmy Award-winning coordinating producer and associate director for *Entertainment Tonight*.

**KATHLEEN NESBITT '84** published her novel *Sentencing Silence*.

**JIM RICHARDSON '86** teaches at Woodbury University, CA, where he created *Ambassador Goodtime Ear Tango Radio Show*. He also collects interviews from animators, artists, and other creatives and posts them to his YouTube channel, *Animateducated*.

## 1990s

**CARYN CAPOTOSTO '99** produced the documentary *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* and won a Producers Guild Award and an Independent Spirit Award for her work on the film.

**JON COLLINS '95** was the supervising story producer on *Ashlee+Evan*, a reality show about Ashlee Simpson and her husband Evan Ross. He was also the senior story producer for *Chad Loves Michelle* on OWN.

**MICHAEL DUBENSKY '97** is part of the 2019 Piano/Poetry Recitals at the Chicago Public Library and Children's Story Time at the Chicago Park District.

**SEAN GERACE '96** has worked in the film and television industry on projects such as *Felicity*, *Alias*, *Mission: Impossible 3*, and *Star Trek*. He also self-published his first horror novella *Special*.

**RALPH HARDY MFA '98** published his new novel *Argos: The Story of Odysseus as Told by His Loyal Dog*.

**R. EARL HARVILLE '97** released his new album *ME - Vol. 1*. Earl also teaches voice at International Voice Teachers of Mix, HGS Music, and his Earl Harville VOX studio.

**ERIC H. HEISNER '99** released his fifth novel, *Seven Fingers a' Brazos*, as a sequel to his first western novel, *West to Bravo*.

**KEN JAROSIK '97** is the manager of videography and content strategy for the Better Business Bureau of Dayton and Miami Valley in Dayton, OH. He is also a freelance camera operator, videographer, and photographer.

**LISA KRAMER MFA '98** was the lead developmental editor on two textbooks: Berg's *Biochemistry 9e* and Tymoczko's *Biochemistry: A Short Course 4e*, both published by Macmillan Learning.

**STEVEN ORDOWER'S MA '99** podcast, *Sounds of the Game*, is available on iTunes and Stitcher.

**ZELDA ROBINSON '93** has written an eBook about her health journey, *Diabetic Donut: How I Reversed Type 2 Diabetes*. She was also invited to speak at the Diabetes Awareness Conference hosted by the American Diabetes Association.

**SEAN SPENCER '91** was awarded a National Technology & Engineering Emmy as Assistant Chief Engineer for the Big Ten Network.

**ROGER STEVENS '92** the new permanent artist at the Greenleaf Art Center in Chicago, exhibited photographic work on May 10, 2019.

**GEORGE TILLMAN '91, HDR '13** and **BOB TEITEL '90, HDR '13** have signed a first-look TV producing deal with 20th Century Fox.

**LIDIA VARESCO RACOMA '94**, vice president of marketing and communications for the Association of Consultants to Nonprofits, was appointed to its board of directors.

**TOMMI ZENDER '93** released an original music album called *More Songs About Time*. He is also a teaching artist at Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago.

## 2000s

**BRADLEY BISCHOFF '09** was featured as one of *Filmmaker* magazine's "25 New Faces of Independent Film."

**JOHN BOSHER '06, CHRIS CHARLES '07**, and **KATE GRADY '06** produced the indie film, *Heirlooms*, which is the feature directorial debut of alum **ERIN ELDERS '05**. Many other alums joined the creative team, such as cinematographer **JEFF TOMCHO '07**, music supervisor **KEVIN MERLET '06**, gaffer **WILLIAM E. COLEMAN '04**, 1st assistant camera **MATT BOREK '07**, Steadicam operator **BRENNAN MAXWELL '05**, and boom operator **STEPHEN HARROD '10**.

**BRETT BUGANSKI '07** is the new morning anchor of *Kansas Today* for KSNW-TV.

**ELIZABETH CALHOUN MA '08** started her own photography and video business in 2009, and recently photographed at the bridal shower of Kirsten Korley, wife of Chance the Rapper, and took headshots for model Mariah Bozeman.

**NICK CAPRIO '08** met with Mattel Inc. to discuss the creation of a variety of different doll wedding sets, including same-sex couples.

**SYLVIA CLAUSELL '00** is Mz. Coffy Delight, B.L.U.E.S. artist and native to Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood.

**EMILY COHEN '07** joined ORBA's Cloud CFO Services Department as an associate.

**JOHN CRONE '07** opened the Law Office of John R. Crone in Littleton, CO, which advocates for the rights of employees in workplace disputes.

## ALUMNI NEWS & NOTES

**MAE CROSBY MFA '09** was hired as concert development manager for Disney Music Group of Walt Disney Studios.

**JAMES EDWARDS '07** served as producer for the podcast series “16 Shots,” a collaboration between WBEZ Chicago and the *Chicago Tribune*. The podcast has been honored with an Amnesty International USA Media Award (Domestic News) and a National Headliner Award (Best Podcast).

**SHANE ENGLISH '02** won a Regional Emmy in the category of Outstanding Achievement for Sports Programs—One Time Special for producing *Scout Story*, a Cubs Production documentary.

**LAURA FARBER '06** produced and directed her first feature documentary, *We Are Columbine*, along with **CHRIS CHARLES '07**, **JOHN BOSHER '06**, **RYAN URBAN '06**, **KAT THOMAS '06**, and **MICHAEL SIMONEAU '07**.

**PAIGE GRAY MA '08** received her PhD in Philosophy and English from the University of Southern Mississippi.

**ANGELA HOCHMAN '08** wrote and directed the award-winning film *Must Fool Everyone*.

**RASHID JOHNSON'S '00** debut film *Native Son* premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in the U.S. Dramatic Competition. The film was acquired by HBO Films and premiered on HBO in April 2019.

**KEVIN KARPA '00** composed new music and a full-length video for his band Signal the Launch, for which he is the drummer. They released their first EP titled *Dance Like a Vampire*.

**THOMAS KEMENY '05** published a new book *Junior: Writing Your Way Ahead in Advertising*.

**JASON KLAMM '03** released a landmark episode of the “Comedy on Vinyl” podcast, chronicling the search for disappeared comedian Dick Davy.

**ALISON MANN '04** was named Vice President of Creative and Strategy for Sony Pictures Animation.

**SHANA MONTANEZ '00** released her debut EP, *The Fatal*, with her band She Killed in Ecstasy. Their music is on rotation at 101.1 FM WKQX.

**BETH MORGAN '02** was nominated for a Costume Designers Guild Award in Excellence in a Period Television Series for her work on *GLOW*.

**ASHLEY NEUMEISTER '06** was the music supervisor for the CBS comedy *The Neighborhood* and BET's *American Soul*. She is also working on a Christmas movie for Bounce TV, an indie movie starring Sean Hayes, and the new OWN show *Ambitions*.

**BABETTE NOVAK '02** and her band Femme de Champagne released their album *Impulsive Sky*.

**FRANCES OLIVER '08** has organized events for *Garden & Gun* and Young Adult Literature Fest, and is coordinating product development for Slideshow Press.

**LOLA OMOLOLA '05** was named a BellaNaija WCW for her creation of FIN, a Facebook page that provides a safe space for women to talk about their experiences of sexual abuse.

**AARON ROBINSON '04** founded the national publication *Consciousness Magazine*, which inspired him to publish his first book *How to Self-Publish a Magazine*. He has also started Still I Rise, a non-profit organization that promotes societal change.

**JACOB STAHLMAN '09** is a member of Local 600 International Cinematographers Guild in New York City. He also works on the CBS television show *Blue Bloods*.

**MOLLY TOLSKY '08** is the founder and editor of Alma (heyalma.com), a website for millennial Jewish women.

**Wafa UNUS '08** recently published a book titled *A Newsman in the Nixon White House: The Enduring Conflict Between Journalistic Truth and Presidential Image*. He is also a professor at Fitchburg State University.

**ERICA FAYE WATSON MA '05** recently launched her makeup collection “Fierce” for Nena Brands, Inc.

**ELISABETH WENNERSTROM MA '05** celebrated her fifth year at Uppsala City Theatre in Sweden as the manager for communications, PR, and press.

**SCOTT WETENDORF '05** received a 2019 Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching. He teaches math at Bartlett High School in Bartlett, Illinois.

**SPAIN WILLINGHAM '05** released his third feature film *Beast Mode*.

**LOU YOELIN '02** is an award-winning TV composer who has written for *How I Met Your Mother*, *Criminal Minds*, and *Days of Our Lives*. He co-founded the publishing company Fat Sound Music and teaches at DePaul University, Elmhurst College, and the Music Institute of Chicago.

### 2010s

**KENDRA ALLEN '17** won the 2018 Iowa Prize for Literary Nonfiction for her book *When You Learn the Alphabet*.

**JAKE BASS '12** composed a full concert with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra that was performed in December 2018. The show includes deaf singer Mandy Harvey from *America's Got Talent*, Sean Forbes, and Dame Evelyn Glennie. He is also working with Motown legend Paul Riser to arrange Motown songs into orchestral arrangements.

**QUINCY BINGHAM '12** released the Solar Republic Card Game at the Museum of Flight Gift Shop in Seattle, Washington. The brand Solar Republic also includes products such as yoga pants and other active gear.

**DAVID BREMER'S '14** solo art exhibition was held at the Frisbie Senior Center as part of the Des Plaines Arts Council's “First Thursdays” series.

**DILLON BRESLIN '13** launched a marketplace app for baseball players to buy and sell gear and equipment to each other, as well as a tool for local business to unload sale, clearance, or restocked inventory.

**DEVON BROWN '16** and his co-author Alana Mills released a new book *Superfood Cocktail: Delicious, Refreshing, and Nutritious Recipes for Every Season* in June 2019.

**ALEXANDRA BUHROW '17** is the lead photo and video producer for Claire's stores, as well as merchandise coordinator, wardrobe stylist, and prop stylist.

**DEVLYN CAMP**, started a new podcast “They & Them,” a weekly LGBTQ interest radio show recorded live at Que4 Radio on 98.3FM.

**MONICA CHAPMAN '14** works for the American Library Association's Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services as the Coretta Scott King Book Awards coordinator.

**SAMMIE CROWLEY '11** and **WHITNEY WETTA '11** won a Daytime Emmy in the category of Outstanding Writing for an Animated Program for *The Loud House*.

**ERIC ELLIS '10** is the senior designer at Fuzzco, a creative agency based in Charleston, South Carolina, and Portland, Oregon.

**NIKO GERENTES '18** and **JOSH GIORDAN '18** reached the Top 150 in the performing arts category on iTunes for their podcast "Death by Dying."

**TEMEEKA GLASS '15** is a quality assurance analyst for Everi Games, a company that creates slot machines.

**ERIC HANSON '10** was a lead actor in *The Challenger Disaster*, which was released nationally in January 2019.

**KACY HINTZ '15** is a weekend sports anchor at Sinclair Broadcast Group's WPDE ABC 15 in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

**CHARLIE JUNGWIRTH '10** is the Corporate and Family Volunteer Coordinator for Cradles to Crayons, a nonprofit that provides Chicagoland children essential items they need at home, at school, and at play.

**ERIKA KOODA '17** was hired as a sports marketing specialist for the running team for Mizuno USA, located in Norcross, Georgia.

**PAUL LATZA '12** was assistant editor for the film *When Jeff Tried to Save the World*.

**JIM LORDEMAN '11** composed music for *Call of Duty: Black Ops 4*.

**NICK MCDOWELL '15** is the artistic director at Breakfast of Champions, an inclusive improv team with a residency at the iO Theater in Chicago.

**GIOVANNI MCEASTLAND, former student**, is a trust accountant at Creative Artists Agency in Beverly Hills, California, as well as personal assistant to Chicago-based rapper Vic Mensa.

**GRANT MELTON '10** won a Daytime Emmy Award for his work as a producer on *The Rachael Ray Show*.

**BLAIR MISHLEAU '12** and **CARO GRIFFIN '12** are traveling around the globe with Remote Year, consulting with U.S. schools and companies about educational technology.

**ALLISON MORSE '15** was the design coordinator for *Bojack Horseman*, *Final Space*, and *Tuca & Bertie*. She is also an animation coordinator for Shadow Machine, an animation studio in Hollywood.

**KELSEY MYERS '15** is an improviser and musician who has performed at the iO Theater, the Annoyance Theatre, and CSz Theater in Chicago. Her work includes a two-person show with alum **NICK MCDOWELL '15** and directing Huggable Riot's 22nd sketch revue, both held at The Second City.

**LUIS ANTONIO PEREZ '15** was named President of the Board of Directors for the Association of Independents in Radio.

**RYAN PIGG '13** is the co-executive producer of *Historical Roasts*, a live comedy roast show on Netflix.

**TARAJAH RAMSEY '17** is a public relations coordinator for Lambert & Company, a PR firm based in Detroit, Michigan.

**ELIZABETH RANGEL '18** is an ASL interpreter for the Chicago Mayor's Office.

**BRANDON REICH '11** recently made a feature-length version of his short film *The Bob Zula*. He had a cast and crew screening at the Austin Film Society Cinema and is submitting to film festivals.

**RICK ROMANOWSKI '12** was an editor for the docuseries *Seeing Brave*, which was nominated for Outstanding Achievement for Human Interest Programming at the Chicago Midwest Emmy Awards.

**MEG SANTISI '13** is a development associate at Ox-Bow School of Art and Artists Residency.

**NICK SHINNERS '18** joined the NBC Universal East Coast page program in New York, New York.

**LARNIECIA SMITH '15** graduated from the World Wide College of Auctioneering, Iowa.

**ANTHONY TORRECILLA '18** was promoted to junior web editor at TMZ in Los Angeles, California. He also secured a three-year distribution deal with KQED for a stop-motion film he created while attending Columbia.

**BLAISE VONBRUCHHAEUSER '10** won the Groupon Green Award for Respect, Integrity, and Inclusion. They have written articles for the Inclusion & Diversity Newsletter and sit on the Board of Directors of Parents at Groupon.

**KATIE WATERS '11** is a producer and Foley Artist at NoiseFloor in Chicago, which was nominated for a Motion Picture Sound Editing Award for their work on *Destiny 2*.

**JACOB WATTS '12** was named one of *Lurzer's Archive's* 200 Best Digital Artists for 2019-20. Watts is also the creator of the Pink Bubble Gum Moose mural on the side of 33 E. Ida B. Wells Drive in Chicago.

**STEVE WEIRICH '10** worked as a producer on the film *Landline*. He has also worked for the NFL Network for Superbowl LII, locations department for the second season of *Chicago Med*, and as camera operator for Lynyrd Skynyrd and K-Pop group BTS.

**ALYSSA WEES MFA '15** published her debut YA fiction novel *The Waking Forest*.

**CHELSEA WRIGHT '14** is the current media manager for the SYFY Channel at NBCUniversal.

**YSA YANEZA '17** was nominated for Best New Artist at the inaugural Youth Music Awards in Singapore. She has performed in New York City, Chicago, and Singapore, and was featured as one of *FEMALE Magazine's* "16 Most Influential Singapore Creatives Under the Age of 24."

#### IN MEMORIAM

Eddie L. Edwards '58

Chet Coppock '71

Steven Lattimore '88

Blair Rainey '89

Carolyn O'Day '95

Edward Collins MA '00

John Cibula '16

LeeAnna Giastko '16

Diego Trejo, Faculty

Quentin Mare

Lavita Russell '00

Laura Mather

Sabina Ott, Faculty

# CAAN Updates

GET INVOLVED WITH THE COLUMBIA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AND NETWORK (CAAN)



1. **New York City Visual Arts and Media Mixer**—On October 24, alumni and friends gathered to network, share Career Center collaborations, and learn about alumni successes with local visual artists and industry professionals. Commercial photographer Katie Levine '14 and Assistant Director of Industry Relations for the Career Center and Photography professor Melissa Hennessy were the evening's guest speakers. *Photographer: Silkway Photo*
2. **New York City Broadway Experience with David Cromer**—On November 3 and 4, Columbia College Chicago's Board of Trustees Chair Bill Wolf, Bill's wife Meredith Bluhm-Wolf, and President Kwang-Wu Kim hosted a New York City Broadway Experience for a small group of trustees, donors, alumni, and special guests. From a stellar performance of *The Band's Visit*, directed by Columbia's very own Tony-Award winning David Cromer HDR '17, to a talk-back with cast and crew to an intimate breakfast with Cromer as guest of honor, the weekend was a truly incredible experience. More than \$15,000 was raised to support current and future Theatre students.
3. **2018 Albert P. Weisman Exhibition Opening Reception**—On October 19, dozens of alumni came to support the 2018 Albert P. Weisman Award recipients at the opening reception for the Albert P. Weisman Exhibition. The Weisman Award has funded creative endeavors of Columbia College Chicago students for many years. The exhibition was on display in the Arcade Gallery from October 18 to February 12, 2019.
4. **Student Center Tour and Reception**—On November 29, Columbia celebrated and recognized our generous donors of the Student Center project. Donors and event attendees including Columbia leadership, staff, and student representatives were given a hard-hat tour of the construction site by the Gensler architecture firm and Pepper Construction. Following the tour, attendees enjoyed a reception in the recently renovated Getz Theater Center, another Columbia space designed by Gensler. There, President Kim and Student Government President Jazmin Bryant bestowed supporters with framed special edition renderings of the Student Center. Thank you to the entire Columbia community for coming together to produce this special event. *Photographer: Jordan Fuller '12*
5. **Pre-Game the Holiday**—Columbia alumni kicked off the holiday season with our Pre-Game the Holiday party at Vespaio in downtown LA. Libations, appetizers, and quality networking made for a festive evening! *Photographer: Mari Provencher '09*
6. **NYC J-Term Student and Alumni Social-Advertising**—As part of a J-Term course trip, students in Advertising, Marketing, and PR networked with New York alumni at McCann Worldgroup on January 7. McCann's Senior Vice President of Corporate Communications (and National Alumni Board member) Rahel Rasu '10, Manager at Warner Music Group Dick Joseph '14, and CNN Chief Photojournalist and National Alumni Board VP Jeff Kinney '87 hosted. *Photographer: Mike Rundle '20*
7. **Miami J-Term Alumni Panel-Business and Entrepreneurship**—On January 9, Business and Entrepreneurship students visited Miami as part of a J-Term course trip. Students networked with Miami alumni working in creative industries at the home of Business and Entrepreneurship associate professor Jason Stephens. A very special thank you to Jennifer Rodriguez '14 and Virgil Solis '07 for sharing their experiences and career advice. *Photographer: Michael Agrifolio*
8. **NYC J-Term Alumni Panel-Fashion**—Fashion students took part in an exciting J-Term trip to New York City to meet with industry companies. The trip included an industry professional panel and networking event on January 10 with NYC-based fashion alumni who shared advice and mingled with students at Ripley-Grier Studios. Panelists included Kjersten Bradley '12, Rachel Hentrich '18, Kate Jacobsen '11, Gilda Khajehhosseini '12, and Kelsi Klatzky '05.
9. **Alumni Coffee Connection**—Chicagoland alumni were all smiles at the Alumni Coffee Connection on January 16. Guests enjoyed coffee, perused the "Where the Future Came From" exhibit at the Glass Curtain Gallery, and heard from three outstanding panelists: Michele Anderson MA '90, Meka Hemmons '00, and Maggie O'Keefe '11. A special thank you to the event's host committee: Kate Alpert '01, Al Eidenberg '05, Kate Nicolai '08, Dafna Nussbaum '03, Lidia Varesco Racoma '94, and Rebecca Resman '05.
10. **Theatre Alumni Social**—On February 20, LA Theatre alumni gathered in Hollywood to reminisce about their days in the Theatre department and share their LA experiences. The social was hosted by Michael Matthews '99 and Michael Shepperd at Celebration Theatre. Many thanks to our hosts and student speakers, Haleigh McKechnie '19 and Karsten Cox '19. *Photographer: Alex Kinnan '95*
11. **Faculty and Staff Donor Reception**—On February 20, Columbia faculty and staff (many of whom also count themselves as alumni) came together to celebrate all those who have given back to the college. Held at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, the Faculty and Staff Donor Recognition Reception also honored trustee member Andreas Waldburg-Wolfegg, who supported faculty and staff with a generous matching gift, as well as former faculty and staff members Jan Chindlund, Bob Blinn '73, Mark Gonzalez, and Chris Richert '99 for their outstanding contributions. Student scholarship recipients Quinn Rigg '20, Adriana Baca '20, and Briana Fennell '19 shared how they've been impacted by scholarship support, and the evening was rounded out with live music provided by Dave Dolak, George Bailey '74, Bob Blinn '73, Nick Muilaert '22, Adan Pena '22, Emma McDermott '22, Erini Nicolaidou '19, and Sara Griffin '20. Special thanks to the Faculty and Staff Scholarship Initiative (FSSI) planning committee for their help: Norman Alexandroff '84, Bethany Brownholtz, Andrew Causey, Kim Livingstone '92, Pattie Mackenzie, Dolores Marek, Jennifer Sauzer '99, Mark Sramek, and George Zarr MA '18.

# Upcoming Events

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND EVENTS,  
VISIT [EVENTS.COLUM.EDU](http://EVENTS.COLUM.EDU)

**JULY 18–SEPTEMBER 29**

## ***Go Down Moses***

Museum of Contemporary Photography, 600 S. Michigan Ave.  
[mocp.org](http://mocp.org)

The exhibition “Go Down Moses” is guest-curated by acclaimed writer, photographer, and critic Teju Cole. For his first major curatorial project, Cole presents “Go Down Moses” as a reinterpretation of the MoCP’s permanent collection that can be understood as a visual tone poem of contemporary America, exploring elemental themes of movement, chaos, freedom, and hope.



**SEPTEMBER 18**

## **Student Center Grand Opening**

Student Center, 754 S. Wabash Ave.  
[colum.edu/news-and-events/  
student-center](http://colum.edu/news-and-events/student-center)

The corner of 8th Street and Wabash Avenues has become Columbia College Chicago’s new hub for creative practice and collaboration. The 114,000-square-foot Student Center—the first in our college’s history—will hold an all-day celebration featuring student performances, tasty treats, and the opportunity to explore all five floors of the new building.



“Couple Embracing”, 2016. Courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Photography. Photo: Whitten Sabbatini MFA '17.

**SEPTEMBER 28–29**

## ***Then a Cunning Voice and a Night We Spend Gazing at Stars***

Calumet Park, Chicago  
[dance.colum.edu](http://dance.colum.edu)

*Then a Cunning Voice and A Night We Spend Gazing at Stars* weaves together stories and performance with the exchange of ideas, the sharing of food, and the endurance of spending a night together outside under the stars and sky at Calumet Park. Beginning at dusk and continuing until after sunrise, the show invites audience members into a multilayered, participatory work that focuses attention on the space we share and on envisioning the future.



Photo: courtesy of Emily Johnson/Catalyst.



**OCTOBER 18-19**

## Columbia Family Weekend

Columbia College Chicago Campus  
[students.colum.edu/columbia-weekend/](https://students.colum.edu/columbia-weekend/)

Columbia College Chicago's students, their families, faculty, staff, and alumni are invited to come together for a weekend to connect across departments, view student works in progress, and experience the pride we feel for our college. Enjoy the sights and sounds of the city of Chicago and our vibrant South Loop neighborhood.



Krista Franklin '13

**SEPTEMBER 11, 2019–JANUARY 29, 2020**

## Art Now! Lecture Series

The lecture series brings artists, curators, researchers, and practitioners to Columbia to give students exposure to the rich range of perspectives, practices, and professional pathways possible for the contemporary creative.

More information about the schedule will be available soon: [colum.edu/academics/initiatives/art-now-lecture-series](https://colum.edu/academics/initiatives/art-now-lecture-series)

## OCTOBER 18-26 "SPACE"

Courtyard Theatre, 72. E. 11th St.  
[theatre.colum.edu](https://theatre.colum.edu)

The world premiere of the thought-provoking drama *SPACE*, by playwright Keli Garrett '91, doubles as the Theatre Department's season opener. Directed by Brian Shaw '86, *SPACE* washes the 1927 Mississippi Floods into the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. It is a tangled tale of rising waters, high ground, and floating refrigerators—and you'd better be careful who you get in a boat with.



Keli Garrett '91



Photo: Amit Kumar

**NOVEMBER 7-9**

## Natya Dance Theatre

The Dance Center, 1306 S. Michigan Ave.  
[dance.colum.edu](https://dance.colum.edu)

Chicago cultural treasure Natya Dance Theatre debuts a world premiere on the Dance Center stage with *INAI-The Connection*. A partnership between Natya's Artistic Director Hema Rajagopalan and Astad Deboo, a pioneer of modern dance in India, the work will explore how to find connections with each other and oneness with the self.



“My scholarship allowed me to concentrate solely on my internship and classes while at Semester in LA. I didn’t have to worry about working another job. I could be one hundred percent committed to my passion.”

**FRITA BEAUCHAMP '19**  
SiLA Opportunity Fund Recipient

## SiLA Opportunity Fund

Make a gift to the SiLA Opportunity Fund to help increase access for talented students.

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COLLEGE CHICAGO

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Click “Give Now” and designate SiLA Opportunity Fund

# DERO'S HEROES

By Kristi Turnbaugh

As a lifelong music fan, Jim DeRogatis has a lot of (jukebox) heroes, and he's permanently inked more than 20 of them on his arms. The tattoos come in handy as a journalist, co-host of the WBEZ-FM radio show "Sound Opinions," and associate professor in Columbia's English and Creative Writing department. When DeRogatis wants to make a point, he simply points to his limbs. "It's always helpful to have visual aids, for kids especially," he says.

Here, an explanation of a few of his favorites, all of which were done by Chicago tattoo artist Ben Wahhh, owner of Deluxe Tattoo in Lakeview.



**JIM DEROGATIS**

A rock critic for *Creem* magazine, Jim's hero Lester Bangs died in 1982 at age 33, just two weeks after DeRogatis interviewed him for a high school journalism project: "This man changed my life in the course of an afternoon, and I have never stopped thanking him proverbially." DeRogatis wrote the definitive biography on Bangs, *Let It Blurt* (2000). About the tattoo: "People don't understand who Lester is. They ask, 'Is that Frank Zappa?'"



The most recent band to brand DeRogatis is Savages, an all-female English post-punk band that DeRogatis' friends urged him to see at 2013's SXSW in Austin, Texas. "I can't get a cab, so I've got to walk, two-and-a-half miles. I trudge all the way there, and it was one of those experiences that you live for as a critic: Top of my head sheared off, brains splattered on the floor. This is the best band I've seen since Nirvana." Also shown: Cover art of a woman in headphones and a stack of speakers from 1993's *Transmissions from the Satellite Heart* by the Flaming Lips. DeRogatis wrote a book about the Oklahoma-based psychedelic pop band called *Staring at Sound* (2006).



Hailing from New Jersey, just like DeRogatis, the Feelies are an influential art-punk band who became the critic's lifelong friends. Also shown: Andy Warhol's famous banana from the cover of the seminal 1967 album *The Velvet Underground and Nico*.



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