

# ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

## COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

April 2018

Dear School of the Arts Alumni,

Our first Art Monster panel was a huge success. Thank you to **Meghan Daum '96**, **Courtney Hunt '94**, **Daaimah Mubashshir '15**, and **Jordan Rathus '12** for participating in such an important discussion. Our next panel in the *Art Monster* series, "The Revolutionary," will be held tonight at 6:30pm in Dodge Hall room 401. Please RSVP [here](#). Food and beverages will be served at 6:15 p.m.. Also addressing important issues in her work is Ilana Harris-Babou '16, this month's Alumni Spotlight. Read more about Ilana below. Finally, it's the time of year where graduation preparation goes into full swing. As announced by Dean Carol Becker, guest speaker for the School of the Arts graduation ceremony is [Joyce Carol Oates](#). Livestream information will be sent as we get closer to the event.

**Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah '11** won the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for Feature Writing for her piece in GQ magazine, [A Most American Terrorist: The Making of Dylann Roof](#). **Adva Levin '12** won the "Amazon Alexa Skills Challenge: Kids" with her game: [Kids Court](#). The game features a virtual courtroom where children have fun learning the ins-and-outs and vocabulary of court proceedings. **Devyn Elizabeth White '17** received the Stegner Fellowship for 2018-2020 by Stanford University. **Frank Meola '93** published his short story *The Letting Go* in Breakwater Review, where it was named a finalist in the online journal's fiction contest. Another Meola short story, *The Spanish Retreat*, is a finalist for Dappled Things 2018 J.F. Powers Prize for Short Fiction. **Elizabeth Jacobson '88** will publish her second book in Fall 2018: *Not into the Blossoms and Not into the Air*, winner of the [2017 New Measure Poetry Prize](#). **Iris Cohen '13** launches her debut novel, *The Little Clan*, on April 18 at the Powerhouse Arena in Brooklyn. **John Ebersole '07** debuts his first podcast based on his non-print literary journal, Tourniquet Review, where critics and authors discuss their latest works. Listen to the first episode [here](#).

Join CAA Arts Access for a tour of the solo exhibition, [Tree Streets](#) by **Kristopher Benetict '02**. His work is displayed at the David Richardson Gallery near campus. Click [here](#) for tickets. **Jordan Rathus '12** has a new exhibition, [That's Why I'm Here](#), at the Cody Gallery at Marymount University. The exhibition considers location and landscape as an impetus in creating work, and questions our sense of placement within the grander scheme of space. *That's Why I'm Here* runs from March 22 - May 5. **Kamrooz Aram '03** holds a solo exhibition in Fort Worth, TX at the Modern titled [FOCUS](#) where he "investigates the complex relationship between Western modernism and classical non-Western art." At the Serpentine Galleries in London, **Ian Cheng '09** exhibits a two-part exhibition, starting with [BOB](#) where he explores artificial life until April 22. The second part, *Emissaries*, will run from April 24. **Cy Gavin '16** has a group show at the Whitney Museum of American Art until July 22 titled [Between the Waters](#). The work is in response to "the precarious state of the environment through a personal lense."

**Caroline Boyd '17** produces [Twenty Minutes](#), which will screen at the IFFBoston Film Festival. The film tells the story of a thirty-year-old with Asperger's syndrome who attempts to move out of his parent's home. Fresh off its premiere at SXSW, where it won the Audience and Gamechanger Awards, **Olivia Newman '12** debuts her feature film, [First Match](#), which will open at the iPic Theater in Westwood. The film follows a teenage girl who's been bounced around foster homes, and decides to join an all-boys high school wrestling team as a way to connect to her father. **Dina Emam '16** produces [Yomeddine](#), or *Judgment Day*. *Yomeddine* is the first independent feature by a first time Egyptian director to be selected for screening and competition at Cannes. The film depicts a road trip where two outcasts discover the harshness of the world outside the leper colony where they have spent all their lives. **Mark Raso '12** directed [Kodachrome](#) starring Ed Harris and Elizabeth Olsen which will debut on Netflix May 20.

If you're visiting the Miami area this month, join the Columbia University Club of South Florida to see [Queen of Basel](#), directed by **Michel Hausmann** '14. The play revamps Strindberg's classic *Miss Julie*, and creates an only-in-Miami story of power, class, desire and tragedy. *Queen of Basel* runs from April 12 - May 6. **Ito Aghayere** '12 is one of the stars in [Mlima's Tale](#), a play at the Public Theater by Professor Lynn Nottage running until May 20. For tickets, see [here](#). **Caroline Watters** '14 is currently touring Asia as the [Stage Manager](#) for *Cirque de Soleil on Toruk - The First Flight*. And finally, acting alums **Lauren Cipoletti** '13 and **Dave Register** '15 will be on Broadway in the latest play, [Harry Potter and the Cursed Child](#) opening April 22.

To keep receiving news and updates, make sure we have your most recent [contact information](#). If you know a fellow alum who is not receiving emails from us but would like to, have them email us at [artsalum@columbia.edu](mailto:artsalum@columbia.edu).

As always, please continue sharing your news and achievements with us via [artsalum@columbia.edu](mailto:artsalum@columbia.edu), like and follow our [Facebook page](#), and add [Columbia University School of the Arts](#) to your **LinkedIn** profile to start connecting with fellow School of the Arts alums.

Best,  
Laila Maher  
Dean of Student and Alumni Affairs

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Are you showing at **Cannes 2018**? We are still gathering information. If so, please email us at [artsalum@columbia.edu](mailto:artsalum@columbia.edu).

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## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

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This edition of the Alumni Spotlight features Visual Arts alumna **Ilana Harris-Babou** '16. If you would like to submit your own stories to be included on our website, you can do so at this [link](#).

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**Ilana Harris-Babou** '16 was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY. She creates videos and sculptures in an abject exploration of the American Dream. Her work confronts the increasingly shaky notion that hard work, entrepreneurialism, and ingenuity will amount to upward mobility in the always uncertain future.

She has shown her work throughout the US & Europe, with solo exhibitions at The Museum of Arts and Design & Larrie in New York City. Other venues include the De Young Museum, the Jewish Museum, SculptureCenter, Abrons Art Center, the Zuckerman Museum of Art, Kunsthal Charlottenborg in Copenhagen, La Casa Encendida in Madrid, and Le Doc in Paris. Her work has been written about in *The New Yorker*, *Vice*, *Artforum*, *Frieze*, and *The Village Voice*, among others.

She received a BA from Yale University in 2013, and an MFA in Visual Art from Columbia University in 2016.

She is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor of Art at Williams College in Williamstown, MA.

***Was there a specific faculty member or peer that especially inspired you while at the School of the Arts? If so, who and how?***

There were an innumerable number of people that shaped my work I was at while at Columbia. Most of my learning came outside the classroom. My peers were especially valuable, since we spent day and night together in the studios. My classmate Ektor Garcia taught me how to work with clay over the summer between first and second year. Ceramics now play a central role in my work, and I'm so grateful.

My videos would not be what they are today if I hadn't had a service position with Peter Clough in digital media. It was kind of like video installation bootcamp. He was so generous with his knowledge, so I got to learn on the job. The process of installing other student's work gave me so many ideas for my own.

***What were the first steps you took after graduating?***

After graduation I moved to Richmond, VA. I was immensely lucky to be awarded a Fountainhead Fellowship in Sculpture + Extended Media at Virginia Commonwealth University. I taught two classes a semester, and was given a stipend, studio, and an apartment. The community there was so supportive, and Richmond was a great place to clear my head after the rush of grad school.

***What advice would you give to recent graduates?***

Don't be afraid to leave New York! If you're working all day to have a studio you never get to use, it's not worth it. I feel I can say this because I grew up in Brooklyn and will always love the city more than anyone. It's so easy to connect via the internet these days that it's not worth beating yourself up over moving. [More](#).

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## ALUMNI BENEFITS

- +[Artists' Resource Center \(ARC\)](#)
- +[Update Your Information](#)
- +[Email Forwarding & CU Address](#)
- +[Online Alumni Community](#)
- +[CAA Arts Access](#)
- +[Complete List of Benefits](#)

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