

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

December 2018

Dear School of the Arts Alumni,

I hope the start of the holiday season finds you all doing well. If you'd like to kick back after your New Year's celebrations, I encourage you to head down to Lower Manhattan [Tuesday, January 8](#), where Pen Parentis will be hosting a Winter Poetry Salon at the Irish bar, Killarney Rose. [Pen Parentis](#), co-founded by Writing alumnae **Milda M. De Voe '01** and **Arlaina Tibensky '99**, is a nonprofit arts organization based in Lower Manhattan that builds and supports communities of authors who are also parents. Everyone 21+ who loves the written word is welcome to attend. **Erika Meitner**, **JP Howard**, **Octavia McBride-Ahebee**, and **Max Stephan** will be reading. For those not in New York, Pen Parentis has an active online support network and fellowship program.

Film

I'm delighted to share that five School of the Arts alumni have been nominated for [Spirit Awards](#): **Nicole Holofcener '88**, Best Screenplay, *Can You Ever Forgive Me?*; **Christina Choe '12**, Best First Screenplay, *Nancy*; **Sandi Tan '00** and **Jessica Levin '02**, Best Documentary, *Shirkers*; and **Shrihari Sathe '09**, Producers Award. **Darya Zhuk '15** was interviewed by [The Wrap](#) about her film *Crystal Swan*, which she co-wrote & directed. *Crystal Swan* will be showing in January at the [Slamdance Film Festival](#) in Park City, along with **Nicole Brending's '11** *Dollhouse: The Eradication of Female Subjectivity from American Popular Culture*, and **Kevin Contento's '18** *Hierophany*.

If you're connected to a film that will be showing at the Sundance or Slamdance Film Festivals, [please complete out this short survey](#). If you will be in Park City for the festivals, you're invited to attend an alumni gathering at Spur Bar and Grill (352 Main St) on Saturday, January 26. The event will include a School of the Arts-only panel from 3:00 - 4:00 PM, with a university-wide alumni party to follow from 4:00 - 6:00 PM.

Theatre

Sam Chanse '12 has been selected for The Lark's [Venturous Playwright Fellowship](#) for her play *Trigger*. **Gina Stevensen '18** was selected for the [American Stage's 21st Century New Voices Play Festival](#) for *The Colony*. Across the pond, **Marc Atkinson '16** will direct *Beginning* by David Eldridge at [Dublin's Gate Theatre](#) this spring. Acting alumna **Kea Trevett '16** [is in two short](#)

[films](#), *Girl Talk* and *Ice Cold*, which were shown this fall at [NewFest](#), New York's LGBT Film Festival. Dramaturg and playwright **Hannah Hessel Ratner '11** [was featured](#) in *DC Metro Theater Arts* for her work with the DC playwright collective, [The Welders](#).

Visual Arts

Last month we mentioned alumni who were showing work at Art Basel Miami Beach and at nearby art fairs. Also showing work were **Steven Alexander '75**, **Derrick Adams '03**, **Josephine Halvorson '07**, **Corinne Jones '07**, **Zoe Nelson '09**, **Dana Lok '15**, **Matthew Morrocco '15**, **Allison Janae Hamilton '17**, **José Zuniga '17**, and **Adama Delphine Fawunda '18**.

Adama is also part of a [group exhibit](#) at the Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute titled "Race, Myth, Art, and Justice," which will be up until June 15. Also in New York, **Hugh Hayden '18**, **Asif Mian '18**, and current student **Kiyan Williams** [have been commissioned](#) along with 49 other emerging artists to create work for The Shed, a new visual and performing arts center being built in Hudson Yards.

Writing

Two alumnae recently published debut collections with Argos books: [Two Hunters](#) by **Marina Blitshteyn '12** and [The Fat Sonnets](#) by **Samantha Zighelboim '11**. [Argos Books](#) was founded in 2010 by poetry and translation alums **E.C. Belli '11**, **Iris Cushing '11**, and **Elizabeth Clark Wessel '12**. In *BOMB Magazine*, **Erica Trabold** [gave an interview](#) with **Kristina Tate '16** in which they discuss the Swedish capital of Nebraska, life in Portland, and the lyric essay. Rock aficionados will be interested in **Ian S. Port's '16** new book, *The Birth of Loud*, just out from [Simon & Schuster](#).

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

As always, please continue sharing your news and accomplishments with us via artsalum@columbia.edu, and like and follow our [Facebook](#) page. You can also keep an eye out for exciting new alumni achievements on our Twitter feed by following [@cusoaalumni](#).

Best,
Laila Maher
Dean, Student and Alumni Affairs

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

This edition of the Alumni Spotlight features Visual Arts alumna **Heidi Howard '14**. If you would like to submit your own stories to be included on our website, you can do so at this [link](#).



Heidi Howard (b.1986, New York, NY) has exhibited her work at Nancy Margolis Gallery, New York, NY (2017, 2016, 2015); Gaa Gallery, Provincetown, MA and Cologne, Germany (2018, 2017); The Hunterdon Museum of Art, Clinton, NJ (2017); James Cohan Gallery, New York, NY (2016), and many more. She has been an artist in residence at Palazzo Monti (2018), Byrdcliffe (2014), and the Vermont Studio Center (2011). She lives and works between Amsterdam, The Netherlands and Queens, New York. Her collaborative installation with her mother, the interactive sound sculptor Liz Phillips, "[Relative Fields in a Garden](#)," will be on view at the Queens Museum until August 2019. Photo Credit: Leonardo Anker Vandal

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

When I came to School of the Arts I spent a lot of time alone looking at art. The artists I met are now a part of my daily life, including my partner **Esteban Cabeza de Baca '14**. It was important for me to be able to have conversations with a lot of the women whose work I had admired from afar for years: **Josephine Halvorson '07, Sarah Sze, Patricia Trieb, Chitra Ganesh '02, Nicole Eisenman, Elizabeth Peyton, Susanna Coffey, Cecily Brown, Mary Heilman, Charlyne von Heyl, Dana Schutz '02, Rineke Djikstra, Kara Walker, Valerie Hammond, Kiki Smith, and Joan Jonas '65**. It was an opportunity overload. I had a lot of panic attacks. I also gained the confidence to be a professional artist, to feel like I was a part of an amazing community that had something to say about the world. I have a strong vision but I am also constantly plagued with doubt. I think many artists experience this anxiety. Art is about really digging into the grey areas and into your imagination. When I need to feel grounded I reach out to artists whose work I admire. I learned how to do this at the School of the Arts.

What were the first steps you took after graduating?

I got a studio. I was trying to follow in the footsteps of my classmate **Lauren Silva '13**. She had come to the studio to model for me over winter break and was just piecing things together, doing lots of part-time jobs and still making time to be in the studio and make huge crazy paintings. She

was having her first show with Zeiher Smith that January 2014. I planned the same sort of the thing, having a show of large paintings with Nancy Margolis Gallery in January 2015 after graduating in May 2014. It seemed like a dream to get to fill a ground floor gallery in Chelsea with my work.

What advice would you give to recent graduates?

See the opportunities your peers are getting as advantages. I want to be an artist for the rest of my life. Most of the time since I graduated I have been struggling to survive, to afford rent and a studio. Sometimes it has not been possible. Maintaining focus on what could be possible rather than missed opportunities has allowed me to build relationships that are supportive and has helped me find solutions to artistic and practical problems.

ALUMNI BENEFITS

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- +[Update Your Information](#)
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- +[Online Alumni Community](#)
- +[CAA Arts Access](#)
- +[Complete List of Benefits](#)

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