

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

November 2017

Dear School of the Arts Alumni,

In September, we mentioned our participation in the **2017 Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP)** – a one-of-a-kind survey that explores the lives of arts alumni nationwide. The time spent sharing your experiences will help participating arts institutions across the country better prepare students for success, whether they stay in the arts or use what they've learned in other professional fields. The SNAAP survey closes soon. Question? Email us at artsalum@columbia.edu.

Later this month, look out for an official invitation to **Columbia Women's Conference** running **February 9-11, 2018**. Columbia University alumnae are invited to a weekend-long program of events celebrating Columbia's powerful network of women including a special talk given by U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice **Ruth Bader Ginsburg '59LAW**.

If you are at **Art Basel Miami Beach** next month, please join us at the Columbia University Alumni Reception on Saturday, December 9 from 6-9pm at the Bass Museum of Art in Miami Beach featuring the work of Visual Arts alum **Mika Rottenberg '04**. Until November 18, use the promo code CUArtBasel to receive \$10 off. [Click here for more](#).

Congratulations to the following participating films in FilmLab Palestine's Days of Cinema Film Festival [www.doc.flp.ps/content/days-cinema-2017-program] in October: *Nocturne in Black* written and directed by Film alums **Jimmy Keyrouz '16**, produced by **Felecia Hunter '16**, co-produced by **Ellie Fombi '17**, **Mickey Liu '16**, **Brittany Northcross '17** and **Mustafa Kaymak '17**; *Red Apples*, directed by Film alums **George Sikharulidze '16**, written & produced by **Ophelia Harutyunyan '15**; *Submarine*, written and directed by Film alums **Mounia Akl '17**, co-written by **Clara Roquet '16**, produced by **Cyril Aris '16**, co-produced by **Andrew K. Li '16**, edited by **George Sikharulidze '16**. *The Strange Ones*, directed by **Lauren Wolkstein '10** & **Christopher Radcliff '10**, will open in theaters in January 2018. It was recently [reviewed](#) in the Los Angeles Times. **Federica Gianni '17** was chosen as a 2017-2018 [Queer/Art Fellow](#), and will begin a mentorship with filmmaker Rose Troche. *Head Above Water*, co-written & directed by **Eric Shahinian '16** and co-written & produced by **Yimei Maya Huang '16**, was selected for the [Shnit Worldwide Shortfilmfestival](#) last month. It also screened at the Golden Apricot Yerevan International Film Festival this summer, where it won the award for [Best Short Film](#). Film alum **Ken Kristensen '08** is a writer on a new Netflix series called *The Punisher* and a new SyFy channel series called *Happy*. He also published graphic novel [Fairy Godbrothers](#) this fall available exclusively at Barnes & Noble. *Absent*, produced by **Steven Chua '16** and co-produced by **Sola Fasehun '15**, had its world premiere at the 2017 [Hamptons International Film Festival](#).

Congratulations to Playwriting alum **Paola Lázaro-Muñoz '13** who has been chosen by The Public Theatre for its Emerging Writer Fellowship, a new \$50,000 grant from The New York Community Trust. Acting alum **Kea Trevett '16** understudies *The Last March* at Roundabout Theatre through December 23. Theatre alum **Anne Hamilton's '94** story, ["Choosing a Solar Roof over a Diamond Ring"](#), is on Columbia University's storytelling platform, ColumbiaYOU. To submit your own story click [here](#). Playwriting alum **Jocelyn Bioh '08** was recently featured in the New York Times around her current play, [School Girls: or, The African Mean Girls Play](#). Look for Acting alum **Liba Vaynberg's '13** appearance on HBO's *The Deuce*. Playwriting alum **Kate Mulley's '16** play, [The Year Before the Civil War](#), will be published in Issue 004 of *The Dionysian*.

Non Fiction Writing alum **Jordan Kisner's '15** piece, ["Frances McDormand's Difficult Women"](#) was featured in a culture issue cover piece in The New York Times Magazine last month. Non Fiction Writing alum **Jullia Bosson's '16** essay ["Jew-in-the-Box"](#) was just published in *Guernica*. Poetry Writing alum **William Brewer '14**,

author of [I Know Your Kind](#), selected by Ada Limón for the National Poetry Series, was featured on PBS NewsHour. Will's work was featured as part of the vital series *America Addicted*, about the growing opioid epidemic. Click [here](#) to view the video segment. Fiction Writing alum **Naima Coster** '15 won the 2017 CA Non-Fiction Prize judged by Roxane Gay with [Reorientation](#).

Visual Arts Alum **Ilana Harris-Babou** '16 shows work at Abrons Arts Center showing, [Let me tell you something you already know](#), October 14 - November 17. Visual Arts Alum **Michael Berryhill** '09 shows work in [Symbolisms](#) at Cooper Cole, Toronto, October 28 - December 2. Visual Arts Alum **Josephine Halvorson**'s '07 [As I Went Walking](#) shows at Sikkema Jenkins & Co through November 22. [Engender](#) by Visual Arts Alum **Emily Mae Smith** '06 opens November 11 at the Kohn Gallery and runs until February 18th. [Bêlé Noire](#) by Visual Arts Alum **Nancy Cohen** '84 opens at FiveMyles and run November 11 – December 17, 2017.

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.

As always, please continue sharing your news and achievements with us via artsalum@columbia.edu and like and follow our [Facebook page](#).

Best,

Laila Maher
Dean of Student and Alumni Affairs

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

This edition of the Alumni Spotlight features Film alum **Sarah Nerboso** '12. If you would like to submit your own stories to be included on our website, you can do so at this [link](#).



Sarah Nerboso '12 graduated from the University of Chicago with a B.A. in East Asian history and received an MFA. in Film from Columbia University. A born and bred New Yorker, she now lives in Los Angeles with her wonderful husband and oppressively nice weather. Her screenplay *The Adventures of Awesome Girl* received faculty honors from Columbia and went on to be an Academy Nicholl Fellowship Semifinalist. She is currently a staff writer on a new series for Dreamworks Animation Television that will premiere on Netflix in 2018.

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

I had a lot of great, inspiring teachers at Columbia: Evangeline Morphos taught me to have confidence in my instincts and embrace my love of television; Katherine Dieckmann taught me to push through difficult rewrites and not be satisfied with 'good enough'; Tom Kalin taught me to think visually and ask myself tough questions about intent and impact; and Andy Bienen maybe had the most impact because he straight-up taught me how to read and watch movies differently. After taking Andy's Elements class and Screenwriting 3 and 4 with him, I can't watch a film or read a script without a tiny voice in the back of my head trying to map the narrative structure, anticipate the story's natural arc, look for the launch into the second act, etc. All of Columbia's faculty members challenged me with their high expectations and rigorous standards, helping me grow as both creatively and personally.

How did attending the School of the Arts impact your work and career as an artist?

Columbia drilled the importance of story into me. Your dialogue may be hilarious and that shot may look cool, but it doesn't matter if the story doesn't work. Now, working in TV, I use tools I developed at Columbia every day to scour out kinks in narrative rhythm and identify how to make story and plot work in concert.

And, of course, my network of fellow alumni have been an invaluable resource post-Columbia, connecting me to opportunities, exchanging notes, and giving advice on how to navigate "the real world."

What was your favorite or most memorable class while at the School of the Arts?

Screenwriting 3 and 4 felt like the embodiment of "what grad school should be." It was two semesters of writing alongside the same students, with the same instructor, and seeing (mostly) the same scripts evolve and grow. I learned so much from the other writers in the class and it was exciting to see how much we all grew as artists over the course of the year (shoutout to Elizabeth, Lena, Lisa, Ian, Andrew, Claudia, Jeff, Brian, Jeremy, Matt, and Marcelo).

What were the first steps you took after graduating?

First, I learned to drive (as someone who grew up taking the subway to high school, I skipped that milestone in adolescence). A month later, I moved to Los Angeles with two suitcases and tempered expectations. Then, it was a lot of balancing out survival jobs, continuing to grow my portfolio, and meeting as many people as I could.

What advice would you give to recent graduates?

Don't be afraid of asking people you barely know to have coffee or drinks with you. Networking can be weird and awkward, but everyone knows the score and you never know where that 8am breakfast meeting might lead.

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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