

# ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

## COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

November 2020

Dear School of the Arts Alumni:

In a time when many are in need of connection and encouragement, a reminder that as a Columbia alum, there is a huge community of fellow alums at your fingertips. The [Columbia Alumni Community](#) is an online University-wide platform that is helpful for finding collaborators, crowd-sourcing questions, and meeting others with similar interests and pursuits. There are also many [location-based alumni clubs and shared interest groups](#) that may be of particular interest to those who no longer live in New York City. You can be an artist anywhere, and no matter where you are, finding a creative and supportive community is important to so many people's practices.

Please continue to send your updates to [artsalum@columbia.edu](mailto:artsalum@columbia.edu), and follow our alumni [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) pages, as well as the Artists' Resource Center's [LinkedIn](#) page. Opportunities for networking with the Columbia Alumni Association, as well as helpful career resources, [can be found here](#).

With that I will leave you with this month's updates from your peers, as well as our Alumni Spotlight of Visual Arts alum **Korakrit Arunanondchai** '12.

My best wishes to you all,  
Laila Maher  
Dean of Student and Alumni Affairs

### Film

**Adel Ben Bella** '17 co-organized a virtual film screening and panel conversation "[Unbound Imaginaries: Expanding Blackness in Recent Films](#)" with Magic Lantern Cinema. **Afia Nathaniel** '06 was chosen to participate in NBC Universal's [Female Forward Program](#). **Apoorva Charan** '18 was selected as a [Film Independent Producing Lab Fellow](#). The project that was selected, *Gulaab*, will be written and directed by **Saim Sadiq** '19. Apoorva, Saim, **Mayuran Tiruchelvam** '13, and **Ellie Fombi** '17 were selected as finalists for the SFFILM Rainin Fall 2020 Grant. **Eva Zimet** '90 will release a new collection of poetry under the title [The Lost Grip](#) on December 15 with Rootstock Publishing. **Gabriel Wilson** '19 produced *To the Moon* which was selected as the Winner of the [AFF in Poland](#), the 10th edition of U.S. In Progress Wroclaw. *Tumbling Towards Home*, co-written & directed by **Imelda O'Reilly** '08, screened at

the [DOC NYC Film Festival](#). *Lonely Blue Night*, written, directed and edited by **Johnson Cheng** '20, produced by **Apoorva Charan** '18 and associate produced by **Ewing Luo** '18, won the [Audience Award](#) for Best Short Film at the AFI Film Festival. It premiered at the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival in September, as part of HBO's Asian Pacific American Visionaries showcase. Johnson was interviewed about the film for HBO's site. **Nic Yulo** '18 wrote her debut picture book *Patch of Sky* which will be published by Penguin Random House in the Spring of 2022. *Thirsty*, directed by **Nicole Delaney** '14 and co-written & produced by **Nicole Goddy** '15 and **Sonya Goddy** '15, was featured on [Le Cinéma Club](#). *Totally Under Control*, co-directed & co-produced by **Ophelia Harutyunyan** '15, is now available to stream on [Hulu](#). *Tangles and Knots*, written & directed by **Renee Marie Petropoulos** '17, won the prize for Best Foreign Short Drama at the NewFilmmakers Los Angeles Awards (NFMLA). **Victoria Rivera** '20 was featured in [Filmmaker Magazine's 25 New Faces of Independent Film](#) list. *Amal*, a project written & directed by **Waleed Alqahtani** '20, was selected to participate in [CineQuaNonLab's Script Revision Lab](#). *Canusa Street*, a comedy script by **Zack Morrison** '18, was [announced as a quarterfinalist](#) in the ScreenCraft television pilot competition. **Sherman Payne** '10 spoke with SOA Film students about his film *Charm City Kings* as part of the [Carla Kuhn Memorial Speaker Series](#).

## Theatre

This year, 24 members of the School of the Arts community worked on 12 [Tony nominated productions](#). **Marc Atkinson Borrull** '16 received the [Gate Bursary 2020](#) by The Gate Theatre in Dublin, an award that supports the development of new work. **Benita de Wit** '16 directed *One More Thing Not to Talk About (A Sondheim Project)* with the [Post Theatre Company](#). It will stream December 2-4. **Hal Miers** '20 is a series regular the 5th season of *Blood Queens* on YoutubeTV. **Simón Adinia Hanukai** '12 presented [Spaces: Saint-Denis](#), an immersive site specific piece at the Market Hall and the Basilica of Saint-Denis, France. **Kareem Fahmy** '07's play *A Distinct Society* had virtual reading as a part of International Voices Project (IVP) Chicago in collaboration with the Consulate General of Canada in Chicago, Silk Road Rising & Citadel Theatre. **Shayok Misha Chowdhury** '16's play [The Other Other](#) joined the Ars Nova Supra Fall lineup. **Grayson Powell** '11 co-produced and has a supporting role in the short film *Niles Dean Lives In a Parking Space Under a Bridge* which screened at [YoFiFest 2020](#). **Nana Dakin** '18 and current student **Keenan Tyler Oliphant** have joined [Clubbed Thumb's 2020/2021 Directing Fellowship](#). **Ayvaunn Penn** '18 is a finalist for the [Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference](#) for her play *For Bo*. **Pirronne Yousefzadeh** '09 is a [2020 Zelda Fichandler Award](#) finalist. **Melody Bates** '00 announced the new publication of her play [R & J & Z](#). **Nana Dakin** '18 and **Ikumi Kuronaga** '20 were accepted into [The Civilians 2020-2021 R&D Group](#). **Tara Ahmadinejad** '14 directed [Karen, I Said](#), a Zoom theatrical written/performed by Eliza Bent, presented by bentertainment & New Georges in association with All For One Theater. **Michael Scholar, Jr.** '16 directed Duncan Macmillan's *Lungs* for [Mitch & Murray Productions](#) at Studio 16 in Vancouver, Canada. **Nick Mwaluko** '09's essay, *XXYX Queer Africa: More Invisible*, was published in the Best American Essays 2020 anthology. **Michael Rau** '08 directs *Temping*, [a solo theater experience](#) that begins performances at the Wild Project. **Jeffrey James Keyes** '10 has been awarded the [PEN America/L'Engle Rahman Prize](#) for Mentorship which honors four

mentor/mentee pairs in PEN America's longstanding prison writing mentorship program, which links established writers with those currently incarcerated. **Elana Boulos '20** and **Katherine Wilkinson '19** launched [Camp Joy](#), a virtual camp experience for individual adults and teams who want to take a break in their day to focus on joy. In connection with River L.A., **Mikhael Tara Garver '10** is currently developing a slate of new interactive experiences called [Rio Reveals](#), which debut on November 27 with a new virtual platform called Rio Records.

### **Visual Arts**

NARS Foundation in New York City is showcased **j.p.mot '15's** exhibition [Holding Breath](#). Midnight Projects announced its inaugural show and the opening of **Kamari Carter '19's** first solo exhibition in the New York metropolitan area called [Temporary Parallelism](#). **Kiyan Williams '19** and **Fontaine Capel '20** have been selected for The 2020 Socrates Annual artist fellowships and have work in the [Monuments Now](#) exhibition, open through March 14, 2021. **Dylan Vandenhoeck '17's** paintings are exhibited at [Jack Barrett Gallery](#) through December 20. **Dante Migone-Ojeda '19's** installation titled [Future Is Latinx](#) is up at Connecticut State University Gallery through December 3. **Yifan Jiang '20's** installation [The Practice of Everyday Life](#) is exhibited at Meliksetian Briggs Gallery through December 19. **Jackson Polys '15** is one of the key contributors of the exhibition *New Red Order: Crimes Against Reality*, at the [Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit](#). As part of the *Fictive Witness* series curated by Goethe-Institut, **Tali Keren '16** and **Alex Strada '16** will present the lecture-performance [Accounting for Integration](#). [Project Gallery V's](#) online exhibition *In the Cool of the Evening*, curated by **Cary Hulbert '16** and Trinity Lester, features paintings by **Nathan Catlin '12**, **Cara Lynch '20**, **Erica Mao '20**, and their mentor Craig Zammiello. **Heidi Howard '14** gave a Zoom lecture for the University of Tennessee Knoxville's School of Art, where she is a fall 2020 co-artist-in-residence. **Rola Khayyat '16** led a panel for the Columbia Arab Alumni Association: [Art and Representation Amid Crisis](#). The discussions with the artists and designers circled around their art practice amid current political crises. **Klara Hobza '05** participates in three exhibitions over the next months. Her work will be shown in Germany at Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg until May 4 and Nassauischer Kunstverein Wiesbaden until July 2. In Switzerland, she is part of an ongoing show at Naturama Museum in Aargau until August 2021. **D. Wah '08** led a workshop on crafting an artist/personal statement for current SOA students. **Caitlin Cherry '12** and **Kambui Olujimi '13** are two of the [2020 Colene Brown Art Prize Recipients](#) at BRIC. From April 24 – May 22, 2021, **Helen Levin '63** will present her solo art exhibition *Helen Levin: Gestural Abstraction* at the Cultural Council of Palm Beach County. **Catherine Czacki '08** is part of the *get the house in order* exhibition at Best Practice in San Diego, open through December 18.

### **Writing**

**Claudia Rankine '93** [spoke with the Columbia College Alumni Community](#) about the making of *Citizen: An American Lyric*. **Becky Shirley '19's** short story "Poppy" was selected as the winner for [The Sewanee Review 2020 Fiction Contest](#). **Anne Whitehouse '79** published the mini-chapbook [Surrealist Muse](#) with Ethelzine, her second book publication this year after [Outside from](#)

[the Inside](#) with Dos Madres Press. **Aaron Poochigian** '16's translation of [Euripides's Bachae](#) was published by W.W. Norton. The Faux-Real Theatre Company will present a free Zoom [staged reading](#) of my translation on Monday, December 7th at 7pm EST **Grant Bergland** '15 won Excellence in Filmmaking with *Metric s* at the [Anthem Libertarian Film Festival](#). **Francisco González** '19 won the [2020 Gulf Coast Prize in Fiction](#) with "Clean Teen". **Michele Herman** '85 will publish her novel *Save the Village with Regal House* in February 2022. Herman also has two upcoming poems in the Summer 2020 issue of The Hudson Review. **Carlie Hoffman** '16's essay [Just One More Block: On Driving and Estrangement](#) was published in The Smart Set, a journal of arts and culture. **Sigrid Nunez** '75 talked about "Finding Your Subject" [in an interview](#) with The Creative Independent. **Rachel A.G. Gilman** '20's piece [Committing to the Short Story: Rachel A.G. Gilman talks with Kelli Jo Ford](#) appeared in Triangle House. **Tadhg Hoey** '18 published an essay titled "[On Not Getting A PhD](#)" in Headstuff. **Abigail Rosewood** '17's collaboration with *She Who Has No Master*, a multimedia poetry, art exhibit at Eccles Gallery is now [viewable online](#). **Chris Vola** '10 published a work of nonfiction titled [I is for Illuminati: An A-Z Guide to Our Paranoid Times](#) with Morrow Gift/HarperCollins. **Daniel Felsenthal** '15 published reviews of Nate Wooley's [Seven Storey Mountain VI](#) and [Hey Clockface](#) by Elvis Costello in Pitchfork. **G'Ra Asim** '18 published an essay titled "[If They're Losing, Who's Winning?](#)" in Guernica Magazine. **Sasha Bonét** '16 published a piece titled "[You Ever Heard?](#)" with Gallery Eva Presenhuber for the exhibition *Cotton Mouth* with artist Tschabalala Self. **Lacy Warner** '16 [published an essay](#) "Growing Up Abroad, the Delia's Catalog Was My Connection to America" in Vogue. **Ravi Shankar** '00 will publish his memoir *Correctional* with University of Wisconsin Press next year. **Louis Elliot** '19's "[To Ease](#)" was published in Pandemic Publications. **M.M. De Voe** '01 and **Christina Chiu** '00 will moderate a livestream conversation at the [Pen Parentis](#) salon on December 8 with Film Faculty Member **Trey Ellis** and alumna **Patty Dann** '83.

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## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

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**Korakrit Arunanondchai** '12 (b. 1986, Thailand) lives and works in New York & Bangkok. The artist's multi-layered practice – which includes film-making, painting, installation and performance – reflects on technology and spirituality, the accumulation of data, the fragility of memory and the interfaces between world history and personal experience, and the Anthropocene. Paintings in Arunanondchai's universe never go alone: they are autonomous objects, but they belong in relation – physical and spiritual – to everything else. Arunanondchai's solo exhibitions include MoMA PS1, NY; Secession, Vienna; Palais de Tokyo, Paris, UCCA, Beijing and Museu

Serralves, Portugal. His work has been included at Venice Biennale, Whitney Biennale, Dhaka Art Summit and will be included in the 2021 Gwangju Biennale.

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

It's hard for me to highlight one faculty member since they were all so important to me. I felt I had a really close relationship with many of them, even after graduating. In my second year of graduate school I had Fia Backstrom for the critical issues class and it was so formative to my thinking about my practice.

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

I think attending the School of the Arts started off my career. It gave me a visa to stay in the USA first of all and put me with a few connecting dots that led me later on to start my art career. In my undergraduate education, I learned to envision what a life as a fine artist would be and at the Columbia MFA program, I was able to explore and build my practice. So much of what I do now in my work, 10 years after starting at Columbia, completely grew out of what I was doing and what I learnt there.

*What were the most pressing social/political issues on the minds of the students when you were here?*

I went to Columbia from 2010-2012, during the same time Occupy Wallstreet was happening, so the conversation really centered around the idea of the exploitation and devastation that is the effect of neoliberal systems and politics. It was the center around many of the conversations we were having around our work. Prentice, the building the MFA program is in is also on 125 street across from the upward expansion of Columbia University, so there were a lot of conversations around gentrification, displacement and eminent domain as well. It was quite a political program. It took me a while to catch up at first but it was so important to be in a program that is critical of all these issues.

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

Group Critique. Nothing like it outside an MFA program.

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

I went to a residency called Skowhegan. Right after, I got a job working for another artist and got a small studio to make work. After around 6 months, I showed work in an art fair in Miami and then had an offer for a solo show in a gallery In Brooklyn. I've been a full time artist since then.

*What advice would you give to recent graduates?*

Find a way to be happy with what you're doing while still being in dialogues with the peers that you respect. Try to see a way you can continue your practice onwards ideally forever without that mindset.

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## ALUMNI BENEFITS

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- +[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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