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**School of the Arts Alumni Newsletter | April 2024**

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To: jp3709@columbia.edu

Thu, Apr 11, 2024 at 2:30 PM

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

## ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

March 2024

Happy Post-Eclipse Thursday!

We have lots of wonderful alumni news and events to share with you in this month's newsletter. Speaking of eclipses, check out **Rivka Galchen's '06** April 8, 2024 article in *The New Yorker*, [A Guide to the Total Solar Eclipse](#). Rivka is also head of the Fiction Concentration in the School of the Arts Writing program.

We are thrilled that Visual Arts alum **Esteban Cabeza de Baca '14** is our April Alumni Spotlight. Fun fact: Esteban met his partner, fellow alum **Heidi Howard '14**, at SOA. Some students leave the School of the Arts with more than a degree!

Last week, our alumni reading series at KGB bar in NYC continued with readings by **Kai-Lilly Karpman '23**, **Chukwuma Ndulue '18**, and **Sophie Unterman '16**.

The **Artists' Resource Center** is hosting several events this month, including professional development workshops on [applying for a creative visa](#), [creating successful grant, fellowship, and residency applications](#), and an [alumni career panel](#) on working across artistic disciplines.

As always, don't forget to keep us [updated](#) on your achievements and read about more alumni news on our [Class Notes page](#).

With warm regards,

**LAILA MAHER**  
DEAN OF STUDENT AND ALUMNI AFFAIRS

**JESSICA PIERSON**  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF THE ARTISTS' RESOURCE CENTER AND ALUMNI AFFAIRS

### IN THIS NEWSLETTER

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1. Alumni Events
2. Alumni News
3. Alumni Spotlight
4. Career Development Tips from the **Artists' Resource Center**
5. Alumni Benefits

ALUMNI EVENTS



**Immigration & Artist Visa Q&A Session**

Thursday, April 11, 2024 (5:30-6:30 pm) ZOOM

You are invited to attend an information session on artist visas and steps to consider post-graduation. This session will be conducted with Rakhel Milstein and Christina DiCerbo, immigration attorneys who have extensive experience with various work visas, including Os, Ps, H-1Bs and many more.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

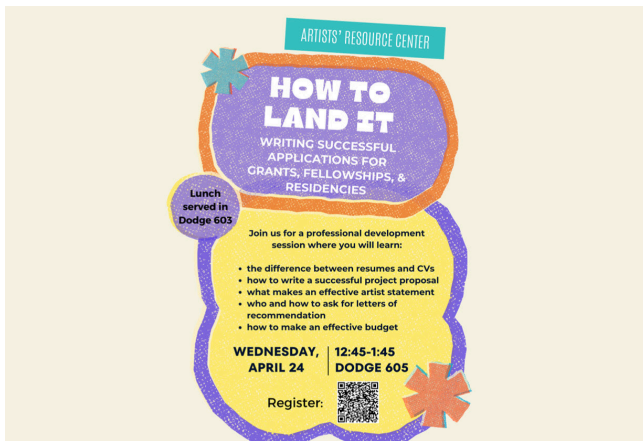


**Artists Across Disciplines:  
An SOA Alumni Career Panel**

Wednesday, April 17, 2024 (12:45-1:45 pm) Dodge 605

A panel of multidisciplinary alumni from each program will discuss their career paths & how they crossed over into different artistic fields.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



**How to Land It:  
Writing Successful Applications for  
Grants, Fellowships, and Residencies**

Wednesday, April 24, 2024 (12:45-1:45 pm) Dodge 605

Join us for a professional development session on how to write a successful grant, fellowship or residency application, facilitated by ARC Fellows Aziza Kasumov and Benjamin Viertel! During the event, we will cover everything from the difference between resumes and CVs to the dos and don'ts of writing a successful project proposal. You will learn what makes an effective artist



**Conversation with Professor Jorge Otero-Pailos  
and Jennifer Whisenhunt '13 GSAPP**

Thursday, April 25, 2024 (6:00 pm) Hispanic Society  
Museum & Library

You are invited to join Columbia Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation for a conversation with Professor Jorge Otero-Pailos, Director of the Historic Preservation Program, and Jennifer Whisenhunt '13 MSHP, Preservation Architect at Beyer Blinder Belle, in the Hispanic Society Museum Library as they speak about the strategic architectural plan for the museum and the work

statement, who and how to ask for letters of of BBB as executive architect after six years of detailed recommendation, as well as how to make an effective restoration. Even if you're not currently in the process of applying for a funding opportunity, it's never too early to learn how to do it successfully so you're ready when the time comes!

REGISTER HERE

REGISTER HERE



**SOA Professor Chloé Cooper Jones in conversation with Catherine Lacey**

Friday, April 26, 2024 (7:30pm Pacific Time) Sydney Goldstein Theater, San Francisco, CA

How do we decide what is beautiful? How does our understanding of beauty affect our lives? Chloé Cooper Jones looks to philosophy and her personal experience to unpack these questions in her book, *Easy Beauty*.

GET TICKETS

### ALUMNI NEWS



*Bob Trevino Likes It*, produced by **Sean Mullin '06**, won the Jury Award for Best Narrative Feature at the SXSW Film Festival. (Photo: Errich Petersen)



*Lost Angel: The Genius of Judee Sill*, a film directed by **Brian Lindstrom '91** and **Andy Brown '91** and produced by **Peter Kenney '91**,

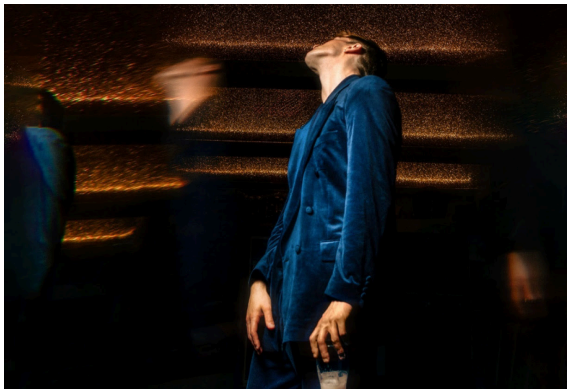
opens April 11th at the IFC Center and elsewhere nationwide.



**Claudia Rankine '93** inaugurated the Speak Now Series at School of the Arts, a series of events featuring artists whose work reaches a broad public and embodies a spirit of adventurous creativity.



**Karen Moulding '02** recently launched the East Village Writers Workshop—featuring simultaneous Zoom and in-person fiction, poetry, and screenwriting workshops on both coasts, with childcare for parents who attend in person.



*Boys on the Verge of Tears*, a new play by **Sam Grabiner '21**, will premiere at Soho Theatre in London and run from April 11 to May 18. (Photo: BroadwayWorld)



*Gun & Powder*, featuring a book and lyrics by **Angelica Chéri '13**, runs at Paper Mill Playhouse until May 5.



**Kelsey Shwetz '22** is a featured artist in the group exhibition *Collapsed Narratives* at Dinner Gallery in New York until April 27.



*Enduring Amazon: Life and Afterlife in the Rainforest*, an exhibition by **David Brooks '09**, is at Crystal Bridges' Momentary in Bentonville, Arkansas until April 14.

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

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**Esteban Cabeza de Baca '14**, born on the US-Mexico border, employs hybrid techniques and influences forming a complex braid interrogating the dialectical relationships between colonialism and its critique, between cultural extraction and its inversion.

Cabeza de Baca's recent solo exhibitions include *Alma*, Garth Greenan Gallery, New York, NY; *Let Earth Breathe*, The Momentary Museum, Arkansas; *Nepantla*, Garth Greenan Gallery, New York, NY; *Life is one Drop in Limitless Oceans...*, Kunstfort, Vijfhuizen, Netherlands. Group exhibitions include *Plein Air*, MOCA Tucson, Arizona; *Wasteland*, The Drawing Center, New York, NY. Cabeza de Baca has completed residencies at the Rijksakademie, Amsterdam, Netherlands; the LMCC Workspace Program, New York, NY; and the Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program, New York, NY, among others. His work has been featured in *Art21*, *Vogue Magazine*, *The Boston Globe*, *The New York Times*, *Frieze Magazine*, and *The Brooklyn Rail*. His work is in the collections of MCA SAN Diego, Phoenix Art Museum, Williams College, and Harvard University. Cabeza de Baca has an MFA from Columbia University and a BFA from The Cooper Union. He is represented by Garth Greenan Gallery.

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

Gregory Amenoff understands my perspective of growing up in the Southwest and the artistic connections of Mexican to New Mexican culture. He inspired me to see how painting in that region shaped modernism. Gregory showed me how landscape painting can imagine spaces of the suppressed stories of Chicano, Indigenous peoples, the environment and ecosystems beyond the borderlands.

Also, Tomas Vu inspired me during and after my time at Columbia. Tomas would welcome me into the Leroy Neiman printmaking lab to experiment with monotypes and how that image making process could invigorate my painting process. Tomas would make connections towards larger systems of artistic envisioning and a speculative fictive method of storytelling in painting. Tomas, Rirkrit Tiravanija and Sarah Sze's openness to socialize with us was fun and an education on how to be an artist, friend and a good human being to one another.

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

The way Columbia impacted my work was through the rigorous conversation of art with friends. I met my partner and artist Heidi Howard. Heidi was my first friend at Columbia's orientation and with their kindness got me to see past myself. Heidi is a brilliant portrait painter, sculptor, performer and limitless conceptualist. Watching how open they are to invite people to pose and how they engage the sitter

during the process of the painting, building our community of friends, inspires me to this day. Heidi paints beyond the surface level of representation to feel the soul of the sitter in an intersectional perspective. I was inspired by Heidi's inclusive engagement when organizing the Visiting Artist Lecture series with the whole community. During these lectures I saw how the interdisciplinary community of graduate visual arts students developed a thrilling dialogue helping me to think about my painting, sculpture and installation practice to this day. Columbia sowed the seeds to make friendships with professors, mentors and students. Most of all, Columbia helped me think about how a good life is with a community intellectually nurturing each other.

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

Looking back, feminism and diversity were on much of the minds of the grad students. Most of the painters we admired were women and that upward trend in the art world was refreshing. We were looking at the work of Charline Von Heyl, Kerstin Brätsch, Chitra Ganesh, and Josephine Halvorson. Seeing these newer voices emerge alongside older artists inspired us to believe that we could have an impact on art history. Also coming from the Latinx community I wanted to make my unique contribution to art history. I would research in Columbia's Art History and Humanities department how Indigenous and Non-Indigenous societies impacted the way we live today. It was there I made friendships with members of my community, forging resilient story telling as the progression after the civil rights movement of the 1960's. I would discuss with graduate peers how cultural exchange existed for centuries on this continent before the concept of America existed. Most of all, these enriched conversations with friends strengthened our resolve to keep imagining past what society has given us.

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

My favorite class was mentor week. I had Kara Walker, Dana Schutz, and Ann Craven as mentors. It was amazing getting to hang out for a week every semester with artists at the cutting edge of contemporary art. Their generosity was something so life changing for us young graduate students in the arts. Mentors introduced us to curators, writers, galleries, artists, and the most important ideas. They would help us see their grand vision of where an art practice could go; also, the mentors would show how the conceptual framework of their practice fed into their everyday life.

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

I applied to many residencies and got accepted to few and rejected by many. I never got a residency before Columbia, so having time and space outside of an educational institution to develop your work in a new context was fantastic. That really helped my path in the art world where for a time, I just needed to paint, and that was it. But residencies also helped me see and learn new techniques from professionals and refine my love of sculpture and installation. Having a space to support taking risks that began at Columbia really helped me and led me to where I am now.

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

Listen and trust your inner voice. As artists we begin by listening to our inner child and refine it into wisdom of adulthood. And through that process in the studio making messes, we figure out how to hone in on our sensitivities. Most of all, this process trains us to see our instincts. Trust those instincts, especially if they're pushing you to where you don't know they're taking you, and continue to take risks in art. But also when building relationships with professionals in the arts trust your instincts, and if they are telling you to go forward, listen to your gut.

# ARTISTS' RESOURCE CENTER

CAREER DEVELOPMENT TIPS FROM THE ARTISTS' RESOURCE CENTER

## How to Make a Career Change 101

Whether you wish to align yourself more closely with your passion, your desired compensation, or your ideal work-life balance, a career change can promise new and exciting opportunities. But pursuing a new career can often feel daunting and unclear, which is why we at the ARC are excited to provide you with some tips and tricks on how to pull it off.

### Find Your Angle

At first glance, you may feel that your work experience doesn't align much with where you want to go. But sometimes, there are pockets of your new industry that might overlap with your prior experience and lend themselves as a natural point of entry. Say you come from a science background, but want to work in publishing: applying for jobs in the scientific publishing industry, either at academic journals, or at publishers' educational imprints, might be an easier way for you to get your foot in the door.

### Do Your Homework

Research your new desired job extensively to determine what employers in this field value, which skills you need to bring to the table, and whether there are any certifications or other formal requirements you must fulfill—and then get them done. Short-term classes or certifications can provide you with a wealth of knowledge, while demonstrating your interest, passion, and initiative.

### Rework Your Resume

While you may not bring specific industry experience to the table, you should ask yourself whether there are any soft skills, such as problem-solving or communication, that are applicable to your new field, or any technical abilities that you'll continue to engage with. Prominently highlight those in your resume, while also adding any relevant certifications or classes you've taken. You can also include a one- to two-sentence summary at the top that touches upon your desire to switch careers.

### Use Your Cover Letter

Your cover letter is a wonderful place to expand on your desire to transition into a new field, and to make a strong pitch for why you can pull it off. Be honest while explaining your desire to transition careers, but don't badmouth prior employers/industries. Rather, focus on how your new desired industry—and the organization you're applying for specifically—better aligns with your values, interests, and passions.

### Build New Networks

Are there any networks or organizations related to your new desired career, or any volunteer groups where you could gain experiences while connecting with insiders? Engaging with your new field in such ways, and then making note of that in your resume and cover letter, signals that you are serious about making a change, while also putting you in touch with people who can help you pull it off.

### Learn from Alumni Who Have Done it

Join the **Artists' Resource Center** in Dodge Hall 605 on Wednesday, April 17th at 12:45 to hear a panel of alumni speak about how they have crossed over and worked in different fields. [Register here!](#)

## ALUMNI BENEFITS

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[Artists' Resource Center \(ARC\)](#)  
[Update Your Contact Information](#)  
[Email Forwarding & CU Address](#)  
[Online Alumni Community](#)

[CAA Arts Access](#)  
[Complete List of Benefits](#)

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