
School of the Arts Alumni Newsletter | March 2024

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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

March 2024

Happy Spring, SOA Alumni!

This newsletter is chock-full of incredible alumni news and events!

Check out our Alumni Spotlight on Playwright **Andy Boyd '18**, whose play *Three Scenes in the Life of a Trotskyist* just ended its run at The Tank in NYC.

A host of [SOA alumni](#) were showcased at the Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference & Bookfair (AWP) in Kansas City. We were glad to see so many alums at the networking happy hour we hosted!

Our alumni group, Columbia University Entertainment (CUE), held a successful fireside chat with NYT bestselling author **Melissa De La Cruz '93CC** in Los Angeles.

This month, our alumni reading series at KGB bar in NYC continued with work from **Julia Burgdorff '22**, **Mitchell Glazier '20**, and **Mina Khan '22**.

The [Artists' Resource Center](#) has got you covered on all of your career-related needs! In this newsletter, you'll find tips on pursuing an academic career. If you're ever uptown/on campus, the ARC is introducing Resume Review Drop-in Hours (more on that below). Coming up on March 27, the Artists' Resource Center is hosting an event on [Financial Wellness for Artists](#).

Remember, you can always keep us [updated](#) on your achievements and read about more alumni news on our [Class Notes page](#). Connect with us on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

With warm regards,

LAILA MAHER
DEAN OF STUDENT AND ALUMNI AFFAIRS

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

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ALUMNI EVENTS



Alumni Gather in LA for a CUE Book Talk

Last month, Columbia University Entertainment (CUE) held a fireside chat with NYT bestselling author **Melissa de la Cruz '93CC** to celebrate her suspenseful thriller, *Going Dark*. Moderated by CUE President **Kathy Chang '01CC**, they discussed Melissa's writing journey, creative process, and running her own imprint with Disney Publishing.



Call for Visual Artist Volunteers for CU-There!

Thursday, April 11, 2024 | 6:00-8:00 pm | Blanc Gallery

CU-There! is looking for alumni working as fine artists local to NYC who would like to volunteer 90 minutes of mentorship at this free event for current students from throughout the university.

[SIGN UP HERE](#)



SOA Alumni at AWP

Alumni connected at the AWP Happy Hour that the Office of Alumni Affairs hosted in Kansas City.

(from left to right) **Emily Simon '21**, **Jonathan Fletcher '23**, **Loisa Fenichell '23**, **Ryan Cook '23**, **Brandan Griffin '19**, **Hannah Risinger '19**, **Phil Anderson '18**, **Anya Lewis-Meeks '19**, **Mina Seçkin '18 ('15CC)**, and **Alex Watson '15**.

NEWS FROM CAMPUS

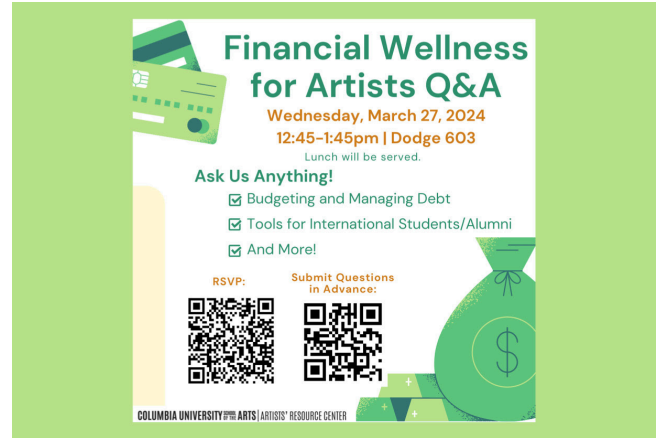


ARC Resume Review Drop-In Hours

The ARC is designating drop-in hours this month where you can meet with one of our ARC Fellows for a one-on-one resume review session.

So, come see us in Dodge 305 during any of the following times and BRING YOUR RESUME!

- Tuesday, March 26, 2:00-4:00 pm
- Thursday, April 4, 11:00-1:00 pm



Financial Wellness for Artists

Wednesday, March 27, 2024 12:45-1:45pm | Dodge 603

Join us for a question-and-answer session about student and alumni finances facilitated by the Financial Wellness Initiative! This event is your chance to ask questions about developing a spending plan or budget, and the resources available as you endeavor toward financial wellness. This includes iGrad, a complimentary financial wellness and education resource for students and alumni.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

ALUMNI NEWS



Invisible Beauty, co-written & co-directed by **Frédéric Tcheng '07**, is now streaming on Hulu.



Doin' It, co-written & directed by **Sara Zandieh '11**, is premiering at the South by Southwest Film Festival this month.



Carlie Hoffman '16 received The National Jewish Book Award in Poetry for her poetry collection *When There Was Light*.



On March 1, **Parul Kapur's '89** debut novel *Inside the Mirror*, which won the AWP Prize for the Novel, was published by the University of Nebraska Press.



Theatre alum **Shayok Misha Chowdhury '16** received an Obie Award for Direction for his play *Public Obscenities*, produced by Soho Rep and National Asian American Theatre Company. (Photo: Playbill)



Fish, a play written by **Kia Corthron '92** and co-produced by Keen Company and Working Theater, is showing at Theatre Row until April 20, 2024.



Vivian Chiu '19 is an exhibiting artist in *This Side Up*, a group exhibition at the Houston Center for Contemporary Art that will showcase until May 4, 2024. (Photo: Vivian Chiu)



Plan B, a solo exhibition by **Susan Chen '20** is on view until April 20, 2024 at Rachel Uffner Gallery.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Andy Boyd '18 is a playwright and songwriter based in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. He is a graduate of the playwriting MFA at Columbia University, where he studied with David Henry Hwang, Lynn Nottage, Charles Mee, Kelly Stuart, and Doug Wright. His plays have been produced by The Tank, Otherworld Theatre, Theater in Asylum, Naked Theatre Company, and IRT Theater. His plays *Occupy Prescott* and *The Trade Federation, or, Let's Explore Globalization Through the Star Wars Prequels* are published by NoPassport Press. His chapbook of short plays *Lil' Sweetums* is published by Bottlecap Press. He is a member of the theatre band Friend of Friend.

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

There were so many faculty members who inspired me, but one who particularly did so was Lynn Nottage. Many people know that Lynn is one of the greatest living playwrights. A smaller (though still quite large!) group know that Lynn is one of the great teachers of playwriting. Lynn set the bar very high on the first day of class. She had us fill out a questionnaire about our work. One question was "Who are five living philosophers that influence your work?", which I think inspired more than a few of us to read more philosophy! But the question I carry with me like an amulet was "Does your work tell the truth?" At the time I thought of playwriting as a clash of competing truths, different perspectives presented without comment or judgement, allowing the audience to sort out their own opinion. But this question challenged me. THE truth? As Pontius Pilate says, "Truth? What is that?" But one rarely wants to be on the side of Pontius Pilate. Lynn inspired me to figure out what truth I wanted to communicate. She pushed me to take braver stands as a playwright. While still giving space to perspectives that were not my own, I could still make clear what I believed. I write a lot of historical work, and telling the truth doesn't have to mean getting every fact right. This is art, after all. But it does mean that in some deeper way I must write something that tells the truth about being a human being.

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

I was on the University Senate. I ran on a platform of supporting student unionization efforts and the BDS movement in support of Palestinian rights. I won partially because of the strength of my platform but mostly because nobody else ran. While I was on the Senate, one resolution kept coming up in every meeting and being soundly defeated. It was a resolution in favor of free speech. We were never able to define the exact boundaries of free speech on campus. Did it include advocating violence? Did it include slurs? Did it include protests designed to prevent others from speaking? The repeated efforts to pass a resolution were both dispiriting and kind of funny. A group of one hundred or so renowned and accomplished students and academics can't agree on something so simple? But maybe especially such a group would have a hard time drafting a statement like this. At the time it seemed the most important debates were about the parameters of debate itself. We failed to define these, and Columbia is worse off because of our failure.

What advice would you give to recent graduates?

I used to think that success meant having a play at a major theatre before I turned thirty. Then I realized that such timelines were silly, and that the best way to achieve success was to stay the course, writing new plays and getting them produced at whatever scale available at the time. Then I realized that staying the course WAS success. If you're making your art and sharing it with an audience, however small, you are doing the thing. You are a blade of grass in the ecosystem of culture.

ARTISTS' RESOURCE CENTER

CAREER DEVELOPMENT TIPS FROM THE ARTISTS' RESOURCE CENTER

Quick Tips: How to Land a Teaching Gig

So you think you can teach! Well, then you're surely wondering how to get your foot in the door at one of the many arts departments at colleges and universities across the country. Luckily, we've compiled a short list of tips and to-dos to consider as you embark on the path to leading your own classroom!

The Long Road

Before you start, keep in mind that many college departments, whether they are hiring for adjuncts or tenure-track positions, begin the application process months before you'll actually stand in front of a classroom. It's not uncommon for colleges to be hiring up to a year out from the start date for the position. That's not to say that there won't be any quicker opportunities, but you'll be well-advised to anticipate the long road ahead.

Where to Look

There are a variety of job boards available for higher education gigs. The most common ones are the [Chronicle for Higher Education](#), [HigherEdJobs](#), [Inside Higher Ed Careers](#), and [Educaloxy](#) for global opportunities. If you're looking in a particular geographic area, it's also a good idea to check the career website of the college networks in that region—such as CUNY's jobs page for New York City. Another cool resource is [Academic Jobs Wiki](#), which includes listings of most higher ed jobs and updates from candidates.

CV vs. Resume

Most teaching positions will require you to submit a [curriculum vitae \(CV\)](#) instead of the standard one-page resume. If you don't already have a CV, make sure you create one. For the record, a CV is essentially an expanded version of your resume, including all the accomplishments in your field, including awards, honors, and publication record. Make sure to especially highlight your teaching and leadership experience!

Teaching Philosophy

In addition to submitting a cover letter and curriculum vitae, you'll need to include a [teaching philosophy statement](#). Typically this is a two-page essay document that includes your philosophy and approach to teaching and features concrete examples of your philosophy in practice. Remember, you are telling a story of who you are and the principles that guide you and that reveal who you will be in the classroom and as part of a university community.

About those Letters...

Asking for letters of recommendation, especially when you're applying for several positions, can be tedious. Luckily, Interfolio—which many universities use as their application system—lets you create a free Dossier account, through which you can store recommendation letters and resend them whenever you're applying to another gig. Note that teaching jobs don't always require you to send letters until

later in the application process.

For more resources on how to embark on a career as an artist-teacher, [check out the video recording](#) of the Artists' Resource Center's fall 2023 event, featuring esteemed SOA alumni **Vrinda Condillac '09 (Writing)**, **Kyle Haden '02 (Theatre)**, **Patrice Aphrodite Helmar '15 (Visual Arts)**, and **Bent-Jorgen Perlmutter '07 (Film)**, who are teaching in various capacities at Barnard, Carnegie Mellon, Harvard and Princeton.

If you have any questions about landing a teaching gig or wish to receive constructive feedback on your application materials, including CVs, teaching philosophy, or cover letter, don't hesitate to contact the ARC and make an [appointment](#)!

ALUMNI BENEFITS

[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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