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#### School of the Arts Alumni Newsletter | December 2023

1 message

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## COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

## **ALUMNI NEWSLETTER**

December 2023

We hope you are having a wonderful holiday season!

Looking for some alumni holiday inspiration? Check out the Netflix holiday movie <u>Best. Christmas. Ever!</u>, line produced by **John Foss '13**, or the Christmas slasher novella <u>Candy Cain Kills</u> by **Brian McAuley '13**.

Do you have some work, holiday-themed or otherwise, to share? <u>Update us</u> on what you're working on. In addition to sharing alumni news on our <u>Class Notes page</u>, we're posting daily on our Alumni Facebook and Twitter, accounts, and our newly minted Instagram page!

We hope you enjoy December's Alumni Newsletter. This month, we are spotlighting Poetry alum, **Terese Svoboda '78** and our Artists' Resource Center section includes tips on writing a great cover letter! Don't forget to follow the <u>Artists' Resource Center's LinkedIn page</u> to find grant, fellowship, and residency opportunities.

We are taking a break over the holidays. Our next newsletter will be in February. We hope you each have a joyful holiday season and wishing you all the best in 2024.

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**



Photo: Jose Zuniga '17 (right) and John Marquez stand in front of a piece from Jose's solo exhibition Cusp at Marquez Art Projects. Photo by Kevin Beltrán.

#### Art Basel 2023

Art Basel Miami Beach 2023 hosted a notable group of SOA alumni exhibitions.

CHECK OUT ALUMNI



#### **Sundance Film Festival 2024**

Are you **showing** at Sundance? Let us know!

If you're at the festival, be sure to attend our exclusive alumni party!

I HAVE A FILM AT SUNDANCE



#### Crafting Story with Acclaimed Writer/Directors

Tuesday, January 9, 7 p.m. PT

Join CUE in Beverly Hills for an exclusive conversation with **Susanna Fogel '02CC** (co-writer of *Booksmart* and director of *Cat Person*), and **Olivia Newman '12SOA** (writer/director of *First Match* and director of *Where the Crawdads Sing*). Moderated by Katherine Chang (Co-

RSVP FOR ALUMNI PARTY

President of CUE), the panelists will discuss their professional journeys, writing process, and directing for television and features.

RSVP

#### SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT



#### **Calling All Alumni Employers!**

Looking to expand your candidate pool? Join SOA and 6 other graduate schools for a **virtual Career Expo on Feb. 15th.** 

The expo is a unique opportunity to connect with a talent pool of graduate students from across the university. There is no cost to attend and employers can choose their preferred schedule.

**Please note:** registration is open to **employers only** at this time. We will send an announcement when students and alumni can register, likely in late January. Stay tuned!

REGISTER HERE

#### **ALUMNI NEWS**







Festival, making it Oscar eligible.



Brysen Boyd '20 has been named one of twelve Beth Raymer's '08 debut novel Fireworks Every finalists for the 21st annual Page 73 Playwriting Night made Oprah Daily's Top Ten Novels of 2023. Fellowship. (Photo Credit: Page 73)



(Photo Credit: Oprah Daily)



The Flea Theater has appointed Dr. Lauren Britt-Elmore '02 as its Executive Director. (Photo Credit: Playbill)



Melis Aker '18 has been selected as a Theatre503 503Five Resident Writer. (Photo Credit: Broadway World)





Jeffrey Meris '19 takes part in the group Fadl Fakhouri '22 debuts their photo work as Credit: Kris Graves, MoMA PS1)

exhibition And Ever an Edge as a Studio Museum part of the group show Eyes, Divided: A Photo-Artist in Residence at the MoMA PS1. Meris' work Surrealism Exhibition, on view through December will be on view through April 8th, 2024. (Photo 18, 2023 at Mi Casa & Photodom in New York. (Photo Credit: Fadl Fakhouri)

#### **ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT**



Photo by Beowulf Sheehan

**Terese Svoboda '78,** author of 22 books of poetry, fiction, memoir, biography, and translations from the Nuer, has received the Guggenheim, Bobst Prize in fiction, Iowa Poetry Prize, NEH translation grant, Graywolf Nonfiction Prize, Jerome Foundation Prize in Video, the Appleman for a libretto, NEA media grants, the O. Henry Award, and Pushcart Prize for the essay. Three-time winner of the New York Foundation for the Arts fellowship, she has been awarded Headlands, James Merrill, Yaddo, MacDowell, Bogliasco, Hermitage, Hawthorden, and Bellagio residencies. Her opera *WET* premiered at RedCat Theater in L.A.'s Disney Hall, and this year she was invited to the Sorbonne to discuss her work. *Dog on Fire*, her eighth novel, has just been published. Her eighth book of fiction, the novel *Roxy and Coco*, and *The Long Swim*, her third collection and winner of the Juniper Prize, will be published in 2024.

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

Fanny Howe was an adjunct when she so tenderly surrounded my poems with her astute commentary. Not that much older than myself, she struck me as having such a strong sense of vocation despite the clamor of the world—okay, sex and the city—that to dedicate oneself to anything else was a waste of time.

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

I came with a BFA in both studio art and creative writing from the University of British Columbia and was lucky my first year to continue work in ceramics while attending classes in poetry barefoot with my little dog. The School allowed me to take a year's leave of absence to make films and translate in the Cook Islands and Sudan. On my return, I met Grace Paley in the office who, seeing the baby strapped to my chest, gave me the best advice of my career: "Low rent."

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

The brilliant poet David Shapiro smoked a cigar in the president's office amidst the Vietnam protests a few years earlier—and whatever he had to say as an instructor about nearly any area of literature was riveting. But by then, the women's movement was ascendant, and I became a member of a women's poetry group that was very strict about appropriate subjects.

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

Dan Halpern taught a class reviewing the most current books of poetry and would sometimes gather us in his spacious apartment in the 30s, headquarters of his Antaeus press. I lived a block away in an old office building not really converted into living space. We snuck into the hotel across the street for showers and scrounged through the garbage for chairs. Poetry could pay was the lesson I absorbed, but one that I had to quickly rethink.

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

Since I'd returned that second year with a film project on Sudanese people, I'd had some experience raising money for media. I took a job at the Columbia Translation Center to develop a film series they were proposing about oral traditions around the world.

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

Everyone expects to be published a minute after graduation, preferably before. After years of teaching at many institutions—including SOA—I observed that most graduates take ten years to publish. So relax. Don't measure your progress against anybody else's. Make your story or collection of poems yours, not your peers or instructors.

#### IN MEMORIAM



#### **David Burr Gerrard '07**

We are saddened to announce the death of <u>David Burr Gerrard '07</u>, beloved Fiction alumnus. He was the author of two acclaimed novels – *Short Century* and *The Epiphany Machine*. The latter novel was called "a wildly charming, morally serious bildungsroman with the rare potential to change the way readers think." A beloved writing instructor, he taught courses on writing at the New School, Manhattanville College, and other venues, where he imparted his craft and love of literature to hundreds of emerging authors. He was a devoted husband and father, heavily involved in his daughter's extracurricular activities and education, and a constant source of love and inspiration to his brother.

# ARTISTS' RESOURCE CENTER

#### CAREER DEVELOPMENT TIPS FROM THE ARTISTS' RESOURCE CENTER

#### **Quick Tips: Cover Letter 101**

Have you ever wondered- what is a cover letter? What's the difference between a cover letter and those short self-introductory paragraphs you write when you send out an application email? How's it different from your resume? Do you even need a cover letter? The Artists' Resource Center is here to help you write a compelling cover letter that distinguishes you from other applicants and gets the attention of recruiters.

A cover Letter is a one-page business letter that you submit when applying for a job, along with your resume. Here is all you need to know about a writing a standout cover letter:

**Format:** As a business letter, the structure usually includes a heading in the same format of your resume, 3-4 body paragraphs, and your signature including a closing and your name.

**Objective:** The goal of writing a cover letter is to showcase to the employer how your experiences and skillsets match the position, highlighting your strengths and your enthusiasm for the position.

**Consider a cover letter as a complement to your resume.** While your resume might focus on results and achievements, a cover letter highlights how you successfully accomplished those duties and made an impact. If a resume is like a quantitative survey where you demonstrate your results in numbers, a cover letter is the qualitative component where you provide in-depth information of your compatibility with the position.

**Writing Tips:** Tailor each cover letter to one specific position. Identify the employer's key words and use them. For example, if the employer is looking for someone with leadership skills, write about an experience where you took the lead on a team and how you led the team to achieve the best outcome. Also keep in mind to always make positive statements.

Not sure where to begin? Check out this article with more tips and examples!

#### **ALUMNI BENEFITS**

Artists' Resource Center (ARC)
Update Your Contact Information
Email Forwarding & CU Address
Online Alumni Community
CAA Arts Access
Complete List of Benefits

#### **Office of Alumni Affairs**

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#### **Keep in Touch**







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