

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

NOVEMBER 2016

Dear School of the Arts Alumni:

Happy Election Day! We hope you're all holding up. In moments like these, people often look to artists to help interpret current events. Artists can provide a lens through which we can view and understand history with insight and hope for the present. With this in mind, we are honored to share examples of the submissions we received in response to our call for work that is motivated or influenced by social movements. Our gratitude to all who responded.

If you're curious about what Columbia University faculty have to say about this year's election, [click here](#).

In addition to our incredible submissions, this month, we spotlight recent Film alumnus **Jimmy Keyrouz '16**. Jimmy's thesis film, *Nocturne in Black*, won a 2016 Student Academy Award®. As you read the Spotlight, you'll understand why Jimmy's film was perfect for this edition of the newsletter.

To learn more about Columbia's new Manhattanville campus, which includes the opening of the Lenfest Center for the Arts, located across from Prentis Hall on 125th street, [watch this video](#).

Finally, stay tuned for our next CAA Arts Access event on December 14. We will be heading to the Atlantic Theatre for the world premiere of [The Band's Visit](#), a musical adaptation of the 2007 award winning film. It is produced by alumnus and Head of Theatre Management and Producing, **Steven Chaikelson '89CC '93SOA '93LAW**. We will send an announcement when tickets will go on sale.

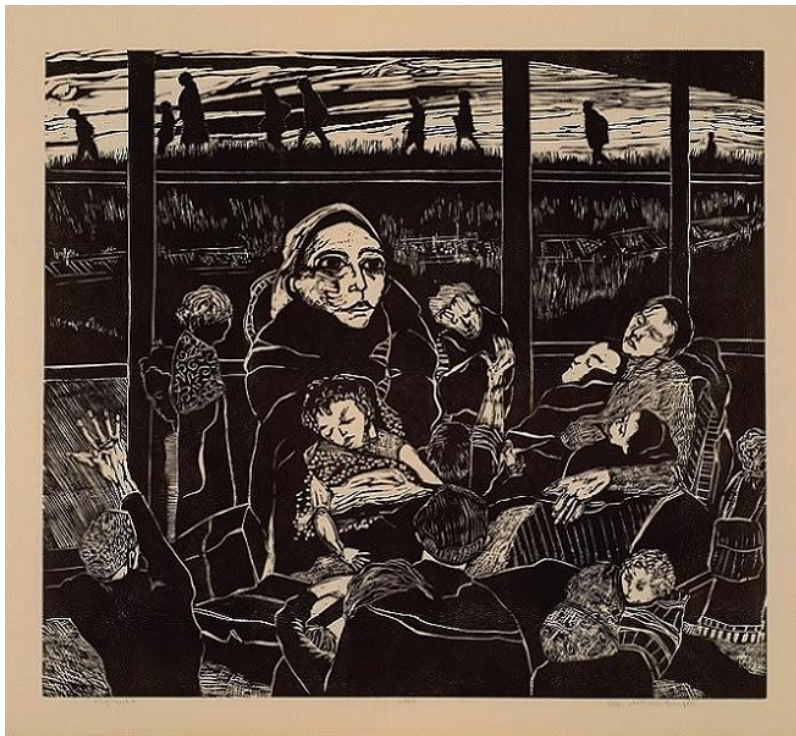
To keep receiving news and updates from the School of the Arts, please [update your contact information](#). If you know a fellow alum who is not receiving emails from us, but would like to, please direct them [here](#).

As always, please continue sharing your news and achievements with us via artsalum@columbia.edu.

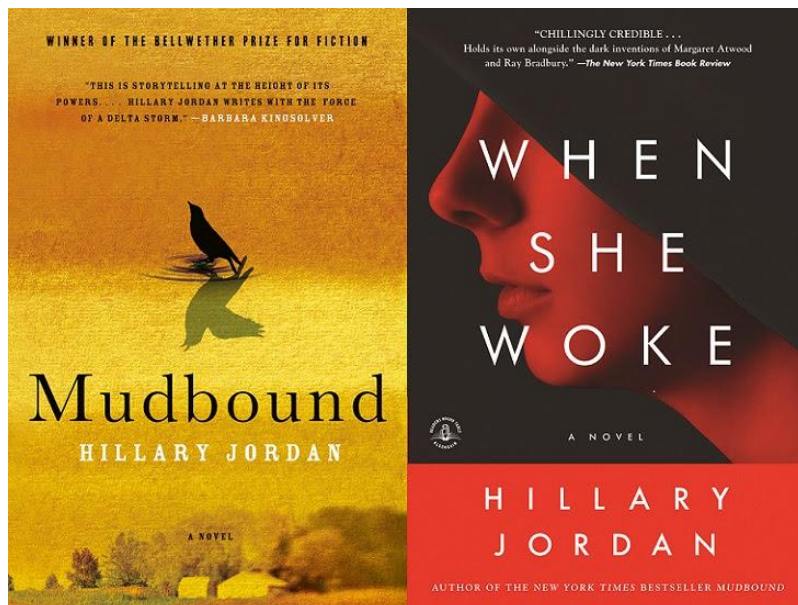
Best,

Laila Maher
Associate Dean, Student and Alumni Affairs

"*Democracy Soup* is an artist's book by New York based artist **Guy Ben-Ari** '11, published earlier this year by Meta Meta Meta, LLC. This book, which includes 51 drawings in ink on vellum, responds to the aesthetics of the presidential elections, and the role of the media in this process. A preface by Eric Sutphin accompanies the reproductions, as well as a conversation between Ben-Ari and Sutphin about this body of work." www.guybenari.com/democracy-soup-book/



Migrants (2015) - Woodblock Print by **Ellen Singer** '57, Graduate of School of Dramatic Arts. www.ellennathansinger.com



Hillary Jordan's '04 "first novel, *Mudbound*, won the 2006 Bellwether Prize for socially engaged fiction. It's set in the Jim Crow South in the 1940s and is being made into a major motion picture directed by Dee Rees and starring Carey Mulligan, with an expected release date of fall 2017." "*When She Woke*, also addresses discrimination as well as feminism, sexuality and government incursions into citizens' privacy." www.hillaryjordan.com

Theatre alumni **Jenny Tibbels** '03 and **Kenard Jackson** '15 performed in Creative Time/Pedro Reyes *Doomocracy* at the Brooklyn Army Terminal: "*Doomocracy*, a major new immersive installation by Reyes, marks the confluence of two events haunting the American cultural imagination: Halloween and the presidential election." www.creativetime.org/projects/doomocracy



Theatre Directing alumna **Nadia Foskolou** '08 directed *Address Unknown* a theatrical staging of Kathrine Kressmann Taylor's novella that follows "the decline of a German friendship as Hitler rises to power in the 1930s, captur[ing] humanity as a whole at a historical moment of

transformation, and invit[ing] us to question the role of personal responsibility in times of crisis." Nadia writes that "the performance aims at broadening the story's specific historical context by raising questions like hate, racism, and extreme ideologies, which are now more relevant than ever in the US, and around the globe." It was performed in Athens in 2014, 2015, and 2016. It will go on tour throughout Greece in Spring 2017.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

This edition of the Alumni Spotlight features Film alumnus **Jimmy Keyrouz** '16. If you would like to submit your own stories to be included on our [website](#), you can do so at this [link](#).



Jimmy Keyrouz is a director/writer who recently graduated from Columbia University School of the Arts where his thesis film passed with honors. His latest film *Nocturne In Black* won the Gold Medal in the 43rd Student Academy Awards® and was part of Student Prints in the Telluride Film Festival. It also won Jury Selects at the Columbia University Film Festival the National Board of Review Student Grant, the Caucus Foundation Production Grant, the Marion Carter Green Award and the IFP Audience Award. It premiered at Lincoln Center in May 2016 and screened in many other film festivals around the world.

Jimmy completed his undergraduate studies in Filmmaking in 2009, and went on to direct short films and music

videos for television. In 2012, Jimmy joined the Screenwriting/Directing Master of Fine Arts program at Columbia University, in New York City, where he enrolled in the Film Program's Directing/Screenwriting concentration. While in the program, Jimmy's course of study included directing, screenwriting, TV writing and directing actors classes. During his years at Columbia, Jimmy wrote two feature screenplays, a TV Pilot and directed three short films. He also served as teaching assistant where he taught directing and writing classes.

Jimmy is currently developing a one-hour TV drama and a feature screenplay. He also works as a freelance director in Los Angeles and New York.

Why did you make *Nocturne in Black*?

It all started when I read that in several areas that were controlled by terrorist organizations, daily activities that we take for granted such as smoking tobacco, modern dressing and especially music, have been banned and are punishable by death.

I think this is unconceivable and as a piano player myself, I deeply relate to that topic. Then a friend sent me an article with the title: "In Syria's starving Yarmuk camp, a young pianist conjures hope." And that's how everything started. I got in touch with Aeham Ahmad, the piano

player in the article's picture and he told me about the hell in which he was living. I thanked him for being so inspiring. When the body is trapped, the mind can still go away. Aeham played to take people's minds off the blasts and bombs surrounding them but also to remind them that there are still beautiful things in life and music is one of them. When I told him about my project, he was really excited. That is when I started to write a screenplay inspired - not based on - Aeham's situation. I think art is a mighty tool that helps us fight extremism and terrorism; fighting for art and music especially in these areas of the world is crucial.

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

Among many great teachers and mentors, Eric Mendelsohn will always be among the ones that I'll remember the most. His passion and enthusiasm for films are highly contagious. His method of teaching directing and breaking down films shot by shot is incredibly effective!

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

The M.F.A in Screenwriting/Directing at Columbia University School of the Arts had a huge impact on me as a filmmaker. I never had much experience writing but I always thought that being a better writer makes you a better storyteller and therefore a better filmmaker. And as a director, my approach while reading a screenplay changed since I learned how to write. The directing classes as well as shooting shorts and exercises for practice honed my directing skills. So the impact of the M.F.A program in Screenwriting/Directing at Columbia University School of the Arts was huge. [More](#)

EVENTS



A Tribute to Max Ritvo

Wednesday, November 9, 2016, 7 pm

Grand Gallery

The National Arts Club

15 Gramercy Park

[More](#)



Creative Writing Lecture: Otessa Moshfegh

Series organized by **Ben Marcus**, Writing
Wednesday, November 9, 2016, 7 pm
Dodge Hall, Room 501

[More](#)



Acting Theses: *Late Wedding* and *1001*

Wednesday-Saturday, November 9-
12 and 16-19, 2016

Late Wedding by **Christopher Chen**
Directed by **Mei Ann Teo '14**

1001 by **Jason Grote**
Directed by **Carl Cofield '14**

The Clemente, Teatro LATEA, 107 Suffolk Street [More](#)



William Kentridge: ENOUGH & MORE THAN ENOUGH

performing the drawing

Friday, November 11, 2016, 6:30 pm
International Affairs Building, Altschul
Auditorium

[More](#)



Visual Arts Open Studios

Sunday, November 13, 2016, 3-6 pm
Prentis and Watson Halls

[More](#)



School of the Arts Staff Exhibition

Wednesday, November 16-Friday,
December 2, 2016

Opening: Thursday, November 17, 5 pm
Dodge Hall, The LeRoy Neiman Gallery

[More](#)

Negroland a memoir
Margo Jefferson



Complex Issues: *Negroland: A Memoir*

Margo Jefferson, Writing, and Trey Ellis,
Film

Thursday, November 17, 2016, 1 pm
Dodge Hall, Room 501

[More](#)



Poetry Reading: Thylias Moss

Series organized by Timothy Donnelly,
Writing

Wednesday, November 30, 2016, 7 pm
Dodge Hall, Room 501

[More](#)



Columbia Selects Alumni of the Writing Program

Thursday, December 1, 2016, 7pm
KGB Bar, 85 East 4th Street

[More](#)



Young Writers Present

Creative writing by **Columbia
Artist/Teachers (CA/T)** students
from **Double Discovery Center, Frank
Sinatra School of the Arts and High
School of Fashion Industries**

Saturday, December 3, 2016, 12:30 pm
Dodge Hall, Room 501

[More](#)



Sound Arts MFA and Columbia Composers Presents

Saturday, December 3, 2016, 8 pm
Prentis Hall, Room 315

[More](#)

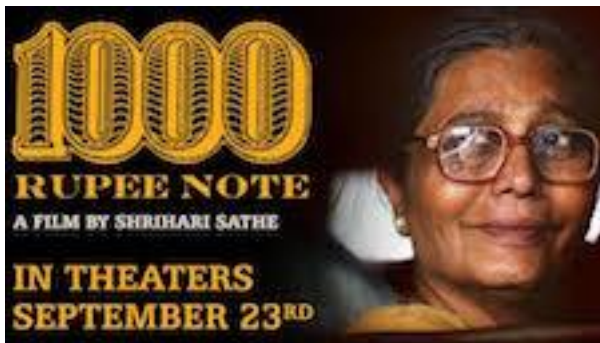


Creative Writing Lecture: Brian Evenson

Series organized by **Ben Marcus**, Writing
Wednesday, December 7, 2016, 7 pm
Dodge Hall, Room 501

[More](#)

NEWS



Film

Shrihari Sathe's '09 Feature 1000
RUPEE NOTE (Ek Hazarachi
Note) Premieres at New York's
Village East Cinema. [More](#)



Film & Theatre

Film alumna **Sarna Lapine** '09
directed Stephen Sondheim and
James Lapine's Pulitzer Prize-
winning *Sunday in the Park with
George* at New York City Center
starring Jake Gyllenhaal and
Annaleigh Ashford. Theatre
alumnus **Nikhil Mehta** '14 was the
assistant director. [More](#)



Theatre

Clarence Coo '10 has been named a 2016-2017 Playwrights Realm Writing Fellow. [More](#)



Visual Arts

2015 Mellon Visiting Artist Joan Jonas '65 and alumna Rachel Rose '13 are participating in Japan's first Okayama Art Summit along with professor Rirkrit Tiravanija. [More](#)



Visual Arts

Professor **Tom Roma** publishes five new books, four by SOA graduates **Stephen Hilger '03**, **Yoav Horesh '05**, **Kai McBride '08** and **Dennis Santella '09**. [More](#)



Writing

Claudia Rankine '93 has announced plans to found what she calls a "Racial Imaginary Institute" using the money from her MacArthur "genius grant," which she received earlier this year. [More](#)



Writing

Affinity Konar '08 has published her second novel, *Mischling*, to strong reviews. [More](#)

ALUMNI BENEFITS

- + [Artists' Resource Center \(ARC\)](#)
- + [Update Your Information](#)
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- + [Online Alumni Community](#)
- + [CAA Arts Access](#)
- + [Complete List of Benefits](#)

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