

# ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

## COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

November 2019

Dear School of the Arts Alumni:

Thank you for continuing to send us news about your work; we love celebrating your accomplishments with you. To help us stay up-to-date, please add [artsalum@columbia.edu](mailto:artsalum@columbia.edu) to your mailing list if you have one. It's a great way for you to keep us in the loop.

I also wanted to let you know that Columbia University IT has informed us that beginning January 7, 2020, you will no longer be able to forward emails from your Columbia email address to non-Columbia addresses. For more information on this, please refer to the [CUIT website](#).

Below are some updates from your fellow alums, followed by this month's Alumni Spotlight: **Kareem Fahmy '07**.

### FILM

In last month's newsletter, we mentioned that *Porno* screened at the Brooklyn Horror Film Festival. In that mention, we failed to include **Chris Cole '15** as lead producer. We're proud of the work that all of you do, and please don't hesitate to let us know if we've missed you. *St. Louis Superman*, co-directed by **Sami Khan '09** and **Smriti Mundhra '09**, was selected for [DOC NYC's Short List of 15](#). *Chi: The Method of Breathing*, written & directed by **Yi Liu '18** and produced by **Meng Xiong '19**, will screen at the [Kaohsiung Film Festival](#) in Taiwan. **Jamund Washington '10** and **Shrihari Sathe '09** were both awarded [Cinereach Producer Awards](#). In December, keep an eye on [Hulu](#) for the release of *Reprisal*, directed by alumnus **Jonathan Van Tulleken '10**. **Camila Zavala '19** was selected for a [2019 Film Independent Producing Lab](#). *Daybreak*, directed by **Eugene Ramos '07**, will premiere on Netflix later this month. *Suk Suk*, written & directed by **Ray Yeung '13**, had its world premiere at the [Busan International Film Festival](#) this month. It was also nominated for the Golden Horse Awards for Best Narrative Feature, Best Original Screenplay, Best Leading Actor and Best Supporting Actress. *Cancion Sin Nombre*, directed and co-written by **Melina Leon '08**, won the [International Critics Prize](#) at the Festival du nouveau cinéma, in Montreal. A number of our alumni had work at the [Austin Film Festival](#): *Chosen*, a pilot directed by **Daniel Pfeffer '18**, written and produced by **Michael Goitanich '18** and produced by **Ewing Luo '18**; *Turtle*, written and directed by **Matt Kenchington '13**; and *Nowhere to Nun*, co-written by **Leticia Akel '18**. **Madeleine Olnek '08**, creator of the feature film *Wild Nights with Emily*, delivered the [keynote address](#) at The Filmshop's Breakthrough Series at Lincoln Center.

## THEATRE

**Carl Cofield '14** directs August Wilson's [Radio Gulf](#) at the Everyman Theatre (October 15 - November 17). **Jason Martin '10** performed in Will Eno's [Wakey, Wakey](#) at Dobama Theatre. **Grayson Powell '11** co-stars in [Modern Love](#) on Amazon Prime. **Jeffrey James Keyes '10** was awarded First Prize in the Creative Technology category at the [2019 NYC Media Lab](#) for the Virtual Reality experience "Digital Arrest". He is also a recipient of the [2019 Artist's Patron Fund's](#) Gold Award for his television pilot *Cream City*. **Saheem Ali '07** directs [Fires in the Mirror](#) at Signature Theatre (October 22 - December 8). **Dawn Clements '19** will perform in [Pride and Prejudice](#) at the Long Wharf (November 27 - December 22).

## VISUAL ARTS

**Steve Sas Schwartz '85** was in a show at [719 DTLA Gallery](#) from October 10 - November 2 titled *In These Woods*. **Sam Ekwurtzel '10's** exhibition [Renderings](#) was at the Simone Subal Gallery. [Mechanisms of Affection](#) with **Maria Antelman '11** is at the University of Texas Visual Arts Center through December 6, 2019. **Dana Lok '15's** solo show, *Dana Lok: Words Without Skin*, was at the [Cima Gallery](#) in Milan, Italy this fall. **N. Dash '10's** work is shown at [Open Ended](#), an ongoing exhibition at SFMOMA. **Nancy Cohen '84** has work in [KIN, part I](#), open through November 22 at Accola Griefen Fine Art in Brooklyn. Don't [miss this article](#) about The Museum of Modern Art's reopening with alumna **Ramona Bronkar Bannayan '86**, the Senior Deputy Director of Exhibitions at the museum. **Alexander Carver '11's** first New York City solo exhibition, titled *External Fixation* is showing at the [Miguel Abreu Gallery](#) through December 22. **David Brooks '09** received the [Rome Prize](#) from the American Academy in Rome.

## WRITING

**Isabella DeSendi '17** was awarded a [Poetry Society of America's](#) 30 & Under Chapbook Fellowship for *Through the New Body*. **Nathan Xavier Osorio '16** was a finalist for his manuscript, *The Last Town Before the Mojave*. **John Reed '94** released his new book [A Drama in Time: The New School Century](#) at a launch party at Printed Matter / St. Marks. Huffington Post [published an essay](#) by **Naheed Patel '16**, titled "I Wish I Had Sesame Street's New Muppet When My Mom Was Struggling With Addiction," as part of their Huffpost Personal series. Alumnae **Christina Chiu '00** and **Milda M. DeVoe '01** moderated *Small Towns USA* at Pen Parentis. For information on upcoming events at Pen Parentis, [click here](#). **Erika Luckert '16** published two poems, "Funeral" and "Scattering Urn", in [The Rupture](#). This year's [Jean Pedrick Chapbook Prize](#), handed out by the New England Poetry Club, goes to alumnus **Jose Reyes '03**.

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](#).

Best,

Laila Maher  
Dean, Student and Alumni Affairs

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## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

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This edition of the Alumni Spotlight features Theatre alumnus **Kareem Fahmy '07**. If you would like to submit your own stories to be included on our website, you can do so at this [link](#).

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[Kareem Fahmy](#) is a Canadian-born director and playwright of Egyptian descent. He has directed a number of world premiere productions including James Scruggs's *3/Fifths* (3LD, *New York Times* Top 5 Must-See Shows), Sevan K. Greene's *This Time* (Sheen Center, *New York Times* Critics' Pick), Bess Welden's *Refuge\*Malja* (Portland Stage), Adam Kraar's *Alternating Currents* (Working Theater), Nikkole Salter's *Indian Head* (Luna Stage), and Victor Lesniewski's *Couriers and Contrabands* (TBG Theatre, also co-creator). Kareem's plays, which include *A Distinct Society*, *The Triumphant*, *Pareidolia*, *The In-Between*, and an adaptation of the acclaimed Egyptian novel *The Yacoubian Building*, have been developed or presented at The Atlantic Theater Company, Target Margin Theater, The Lark, Fault Line Theater, and Noor Theater. He has been a fellow or resident artist at the Sundance Theatre Lab, Oregon Shakespeare Festival (Phil Killian Directing Fellow), Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center (National Directors Fellow), Second Stage (Van Lier Directing Fellow), Soho Rep (Writer/Director Lab), Lincoln Center (Directors Lab), The New Museum (Artist-in-Residence), and New York Theater Workshop (Emerging Artist Fellow & Usual Suspect). He has developed new plays at theaters around the country,

including MCC, Ensemble Studio Theatre, New Dramatists, The Civilians, Geva Theatre, Pioneer Theatre, Silk Road Rising, and Berkeley Rep. Kareem is the co-founder of the Middle Eastern American Writers Lab at The Lark and a co-founder of Maia Directors, a consulting group for organizations and artists engaging with stories from the Middle East and beyond.

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

Anne Bogart is the reason I have a career in the American theatre. I was a theatre geek living in Montreal, directing shows without any real training or knowledge of what I was doing. And then I got accepted into the directing program at Columbia since Anne had identified that I had a vision and ideas, if not necessarily the tools to carry them out. She encouraged me to listen to my instincts, and to explore how my life experience had shaped my view of the world. There's not a

day that goes by when I'm directing when I don't think of something she taught me.

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

To work in the theatre, particularly in New York, it's all about building a community. I believe the key thing is to find people whose work excites you, and create relationships with them. These may be writers, designers, actors, producers — it's these key bonds that sustain you as an artist.

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**ALUMNI BENEFITS**

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