

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

October 2020

Dear School of the Arts Alumni:

I'm excited to share some of the many wonderful things our alums have been doing since I last wrote. Through adversity and an extraordinarily difficult climate, School of the Arts alumni continue to make work that connects, provokes, and inspires.

We will be in touch soon with more information regarding virtual events and opportunities for you to connect and network with each other. For now I want to highlight two events: the [International Play Festival](#), a marquee annual event co-founded by Dean Carol Becker and Professor David Henry Hwang, and the Wallach Gallery's [Uptown Triennial](#). The International Play Festival will run through October 25 and the Uptown Triennial will be up through December 13.

Please continue to send your updates to artsalum@columbia.edu, and follow our alumni [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) pages, as well as the Artists' Resource Center's [LinkedIn](#) page. Opportunities for networking with the Columbia Alumni Association, as well as helpful career resources, [can be found here](#).

My best wishes to you all,
Laila Maher
Dean of Student and Alumni Affairs

Film

Ayad Akhtar '02 will serve as the next president of [PEN America](#). *Homeland Elegies*, his new novel, was published by Little, Brown and Company in September. **Karlee Rodrigues** '20 was [named a finalist](#) for the Humanitas Carol Mendelsohn College Drama Fellowship for the script *Unnatural Selection*. **Sherman Payne** '09 and **Shukree Tilghman** '12 launched a new podcast, [The Diversity Hires](#). *Materna*, the feature film debut by alumnus **David Gutnik** '12, won Best Actress and Best Cinematography and was nominated for Best New Director [at the Tribeca Film Festival](#). *Entre tú y Milagros*, a short film directed by alumna **Mariana Saffon** '19, written by Saffon and alumna **Nathalie Álvarez Mesén** '19, produced by Saffon and current student **Jorge Granados Ross**, associate produced by alumnus **Saim Sadiq** '19 and edited by alumnus **Andrew Stephen Lee** '18 won the [Orizzonti Award for Best Short Film](#) at the 77th Annual Venice International Film Festival.

Don't Dream in Spanish by **Missy Hernandez** '17, *Narrows* by **Lena Rudnick** '14, *Think of Me* by **David Barba** '05, and *Yasmine/Jasmine* by **Yossera Bouchtia** '19 were chosen to participate in [Cine Qua Non Lab's Storylines Lab](#). *The Chair-Maker*, directed by **Esteban García Vernaza** '20, written by **Hanjie Bao** '18 and executive produced by **Jennifer Sciarra** '18, will have its world premiere at the [Screamfest Horror Film Festival](#). *Johnny Ma*, co-written, directed & starring **Johnny Ma** '14, was included in Netflix's international short film series, *Homemade*. *Death of Nintendo*, written & produced by **Valerie Castillo Martinez** '16 and edited by **Cyril Aris** '17, screened virtually at the Sarajevo Film Festival, Calgary International Film Festival, the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival, Urbanworld, the Nashville Film Festival, the New York Asian American Film Festival, Taoyuan Film Festival, Busan International Festival, and the Hawaii International Film Festival.

The following works were nominated for [Emmy Awards](#): *Insecure*, eight nominations, including Best Comedy Series (one episode written by **Grace Edwards** '10); *Little Fires Everywhere*, five nominations, including Best Limited Series (co-written and co-executive produced by **Amy Talkington** '99); *The Mandalorian*, fifteen nominations, including Best Drama Series (two episodes directed by **Deborah Chow** '03); *Unbelievable*, three nominations, including Best Limited Series (three episodes directed by **Lisa Cholodenko** '97). *Becoming*, co-produced by **Maureen Ryan** '92, was nominated for four Emmy Awards, including Best Documentary, Best Directing for Documentary, Best Cinematography and Best Music. **Veronica Nickel** '10 served as production supervisor, **Jamund Washington** '10 as line producer, and **Kevin Contento** '18 was a production assistant. Former Prof. Marilyn Ness was the film's producer, and former Prof. Rick Siegel was the lighting designer. *ReMastered: Massacre at the Stadium*, directed by **Bent-Jorgen Perlmutter** '07, was nominated for Best Historical Documentary.

Theatre

Jeffrey James Keyes '10's short play *Imaginary Friends* kicked off a new podcast [DRAMA: An Aural Experience](#), which will feature several of his short haunted/horror plays, produced by Alvarez Keko Salazar Productions and The Poseidon Theatre Company. Earlier this year, he and **Neil D'Astolfo** '13 were part of The 2020 Pride Plays Festival, a digital presentation of queer works by queer playwrights. Sections of their plays are available on [Playbill](#). Neil also debuted as a series regular on the new CBS show [Tooning Out the News](#), executive produced by Stephen Colbert. He's also appearing as Anthony Fauci on Showtime's [Our Cartoon President](#) on Sundays at 8:30 p.m. **Ashley Tata** '12 directed Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest* with Theatre for a New Audience. It was reviewed in the [The New York Times](#). **Jocelyn Bioh** '08 is set to [write the adaptation](#) of the award-winning musical *Once On This Island* on Disney Plus. **Saheem Ali** '07 was announced as a new [Associate Artistic Director](#) at The Public Theatre. **Johnny G. Lloyd** '20 is the new Director of Artistic Development at [The Tank](#). The Public Theater announced its 2020-2022 [Emerging Writers Group](#) with recent Theatre alum **Julián Mesri** '20 listed among the ten new playwrights to be part of the prestigious program. [The Kilroys](#) recently announced their annual list which features a number of playwriting alumni, as well as a current student and member of the faculty. They are **A.A. Brenner** '21, **Celine Song** '14, **Deborah Brevoort** (Faculty), **Jillian Walker** '17, **Jocelyn**

Bioh '08, **Paola Lázaro** '13, and **Raquel Almazan** '15. **Marc Atkinson Borrull** '16 has joined the [SEE Lighting Foundation](#) a group supporting immigrant artists in the United States.

[Women's Project Theater](#) has selected alumni **Gethsemane Herron-Coward** '19, **Zizi Majid** '20, **Daaimah Mubashshir** '15 and **Katherine Wilkinson** '19 for their two year Lab residency. **Marcina Zaccaria** '06 [participated in a panel](#) discussion titled "Read All About It: What's Happening During COVID?" as part of the TRU Community series. WalkUpArts' [Baby Jessica's Well-Made Play](#), written by **Philip Santos Schaffer** '18, dramaturgy by **Anna Woodruff** '18, with additional voices by **Alinca Hamilton** '18 opened this month. **Kate Mulley** '16's digital play *Damascus. It's in Syria* will be performed on [Instagram](#) for the next month. **Mei Ann Teo** '14, **Celine Song** '14, and **Shayok Misha Chowdhury** '16 were guest speakers at "The Path Forward" Virtual Conference, an event to empower artists to learn new skills that will allow them to adapt to the coming changes and thrive in a post COVID market. Comedian **Blaze Mancillas** '12 launched [a new podcast](#) called *Let's Get Lit with Blaze Mancillas* where each week, Blaze reads a chapter from H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* and guest comedians interject with their jokes and commentary. **Adam Marple** '10 co-hosts [The Theatre of Others](#) found on Apple podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, Stitcher, and all other podcast platforms with recent guest **Steven Gaultney** '10. **Anchuli Felicia King** '18's play [Keene](#) will have a reading with Red Bull Theater & American Shakespeare Center as a part of their Othello 2020 series (October 19-23).

Visual Arts

Hugh Hayden '18 was featured as part of [MoMA's Cooking with Artists](#) series. His recent exhibition, *American Food*, was featured in [Art in America](#). **Cy Gavin** '16 was interviewed for [Artforum's 1000 Words](#) series. Recent New York exhibitions of work by School of the Arts alumni include, **Duy Hoàng** '17, *Art Off-Screen* at [Neumeraki](#); **Julia Philips** '15, *New Album* at [Matthew Marks Gallery](#); **Patricia Treib** '06, *Arm Measures* at [Bureau](#); **Baris Gokturk** '20, *Public Secret* at [Helena Anrather Gallery](#); **Maria Antelman** '11, *Companion Pieces: New Photography 2020* at [MoMA](#).

Other exhibitions in the US are **Noah Breuer** '07, *Heirloom* at [Penn State Altoona](#); **Sue Johnson** '81, *Hall of Portraits from The History of Machines* at VisArts in Rockville, MD and at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, VA; **Kamari Carter** '19 and **Saskia Kraft** '19, *Making A Way* at the [South Bend Museum of Art](#). International exhibitions include: **Bea Parsons** '12, *Peyak* at [McBride Contemporain](#) in Montreal, Canada; **Matthew C. Wilson** '13, *Cinema of Worldmaking* at the [Biennale Gherdëina](#) in Ortisei, Val Gardena, Italy; **Nadja Marcin** '10, *even the rocks reach out to kiss you* at [Transpalette - Contemporary Art Center](#) in Bourges, France; **Korakrit Arunanondchai** '12, *With History in a Room Filled with People with Funny Names 4*. 2017 at the [Yokohama Triennale](#); and **Vesna Pavlović** '07, *Reflections of our time: Acquisitions of the Museum of Contemporary Art 1993-2019* at the [Museum of Contemporary Art](#) in Belgrade, Serbia. Vesna also has an exhibition, *Viral Self-Portraits*, at the [Museum of Modern Art](#) in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Writing

Christopher Wolfe '18 recently participated in a [fireside chat](#) with Kenny Leon, hosted by The Eric H Holder Jr Initiative. *The Change: My Great American, Postindustrial, Midlife Crisis Tour*, a [new memoir](#) by **Lori Soderlind** '97, was released by the University of Wisconsin Press. **Mark Chu** '18 recently co-authored the [scholarly article](#), "Color Associations in Abstract Semantic Domains," in *Cognition Journal*. **Jean Kyoung Frazier** '18, author of *Pizza Girl*, was recently interviewed as part of [PEN America's PEN Ten series](#). *Fatal Flaw*, a quarterly online magazine based in New York City co-founded by **Brenna Amanda McPeek** '18 who also serves as co-editor-in-chief, released [its debut issue](#). **Diane Cook** '12 has been longlisted for the [2020 Booker Prize](#) for her first novel, *The New Wilderness*. **Kate Greene** '20 published her essay collection [Once upon a Time I Lived on Mars](#). **Joseph Fasano** '08's new novel *The Dark Heart of Every Wild Thing* was released and [received a starred review](#) by *Publisher's Weekly*. *Outside from the Inside*, a new book of poems from **Anne Whitehouse** '79 by Dos Madres Press. She was recently [interviewed](#) about the writing process by Flying Ketchup Press.

[The National Book Foundation](#) has named **Mei-mei Berssenbrugge** '73 as a finalist in Poetry for *A Treatise on Stars* and **Frank B. Wilderson III** '91 to the longlist in Nonfiction for *Afropessimism* for the 2020 National Book Awards; **Naima Coster** '15 was named one of the 5-under-35 Honorees. **Hilary Leichter** '11, **Afia Atakora** '16 and **Clare Beams** '06 have been shortlisted in the Center for Fiction [First Novel Prize](#). **Maggie Pouncey** '08's upcoming picture book *A Fort on the Moon* will be released November 3rd, and [was reviewed](#) in *Publisher's Weekly*.

In Memoriam

Film Studies alumna **Vera Ryzhik** '10 has passed away. She studied explicit content in American Post-War Avant Garde Film and worked for a number of film companies. Her affable spirit will be missed by all who knew her.

Beloved former Acting Professor **Ulla Wolcz** passed away at her home in Germany after a long illness. Professor and Theatre Chair **Brian Kulick** writes, "It seemed to me that Ulla had three great loves: Theatre, her husband Nicky, and her students. She didn't seem to prioritize one over the other, I suspect she loved all three equally, deeply, fearlessly, and without any reservation whatsoever...She had two great lessons to teach us: one was about honing our craft and the other was about living our life. In both instances she was a master teacher."

ALUMNI BENEFITS

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

+[CAA Arts Access](#)

+[Complete List of Benefits](#)

Columbia University School of the Arts
artsalum@columbia.edu

**Office of Alumni Affairs
Columbia University
School of the Arts
305 Dodge Hall, MC 1808
2960 Broadway
New York, NY, 10027
email: artsalum@columbia.edu**