

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

September 2019

Dear School of the Arts Alumni,

I hope you had a great summer. We're back in the swing of things here on campus and are looking forward to the coming year. Some news: Columbia Alumni Association Arts Access has a [new group page](#) in the [Alumni Community](#). This is a great place to post opportunities as well as connect with alums across the university interested in the arts.

Below you will find updates from your fellow alums from the past three months that we're excited to share with you, and this month's Alumni Spotlight, featuring **Annemarie Jacir '02**.

Film

Marcelo Starobinas '14 is the Co-Creator of a new drama series, [Joint Venture](#), which premiered on HBO this summer. **Jessica Shields '18** was one of eight selectees from over 3,000 submissions for an [HBOAccess Writing Fellowship](#). **Katharina Otto-Bernstein '92**, Executive Producer of *The Price of Everything*, was [nominated for an Emmy](#) for Outstanding Arts & Culture Documentary. *Tel Aviv on Fire*, directed and co-written by **Sameh Zoabi '05** and co-written by former faculty member **Dan Kleinman**, has been nominated for four [Ophir Awards](#), including for Best Picture. It is [currently screening](#) at The Landmark at 57 West, and will be at [The Contemporary Arab Cinema Series](#), along with *Yomeddine*, which was produced by **Dina Emam '16**. **Daniel Pfeffer '18** screened his feature *I'll See You Around*, at the Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival this summer, and was also profiled in [Remezcla](#). *Postcards from the End of the World*, written and directed by **Konstantinos Antonopoulos '12**, screened at the [Sarajevo Film Festival](#) in August. Three of our alumni, **Cyril Aris '17**, **Antoneta Kusijanović '17**, and **Lauren Wolkstein '10**, were invited to join the [Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences](#).

Theatre

Ivan Talijancic '98 and **Erika Latta '97** are celebrating 20 years of WaxFactory with the premiere of [LULU XX](#). Their interview with Professor Anne Bogart is in the current issue of the [Brooklyn Rail](#). **Raquel Almazan '15** is kicking off [La Paloma Prisoner Project](#) this Saturday at The People's Forum. She is also performing this month in [La Negra](#), a collaboration with fellow alum **Mei Ann Teo '14**. Details for both of these events are below. Acting alumni **Folami Williams '16** and **Emily Murphy '17** [have been cast](#) in the San

San Francisco production of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*. **Celine Song '14's** *Endlings* will have its New York Premiere as part of the [2019-2020 season](#) at New York Theatre Workshop. **Jamie Forshaw '09** [has been named](#) Executive Director of MWM Live. Alumni **Melis Aker '18**, **Anchuli Felicia King '18**, **Paola Lazaro-Munoz '13**, and **Daaimah Mubashshir '15** were added to [The Kilroys List](#), an honor bestowed upon select un- and under-produced plays by women, transgender, and non-binary authors. **Melis Aker '18** and **Kyoung Park '12** were named [2019-2020 Dramatists Guild Fellows](#). Kyoung was also recently [interviewed](#) by Lambda Literary. *Round Table*, a new play by **Liba Vaynberg '13**, will be at [59E59 Theatres](#) from September 27-October 20. **Jocelyn Bioh '08** has been named to a three-year term as the new [Burnt Umber Playwright-in-Residence](#) at MCC Theater. **Clarence Coo '06** will be making his Off-Broadway debut this fall at [Primary Stages](#) with his play *On That Day in Amsterdam*, directed by **Kareem Fahmy '07**. **Lonnie Firestone '08** interviewed fellow alum **Saheem Ali '07** for her podcast, *Places Everyone*. You can listen to their conversation on citizenship in the arts [here](#). **Marc Atkinson '16** received the [Irish Arts Council Theatre Bursary Award](#) for 2019-2020. He is the Associate Director of [Hamlet](#), starring Ruth Negga.

Visual Arts

Derick Whitson '17 received a 2019 NYSCA/NYFA Artists Fellowship in Photography. **Nancy Cohen '84** had work this summer at Biobat Art Space, Markel Fine Arts, and the Montclair Art Museum. She also contributed to the anthology *The Body In Language*. **Heidi Howard '14** had exhibited work at Continuo, May China at the Xi'an Art Institute, and the Et al Gallery. She was also part of *Zeit-Geist-Zeit*, a group exhibition at the Gaa Gallery that included fellow alumni **Esteban Cabeza de Baca '14** and **Patrice Aphrodite Helmar '15**. **Tanya Rae Merrill '18** and **Pauline Shaw '19** have work in [Domestic Horror](#), a new exhibition at Gagolian Gallery. **Mika Rottenberg '04** had her first New York solo museum presentation at the [New Museum](#). **Jason Murphy '14** is in a group exhibition at the Cranbrook Art Museum titled [Landlord Colors: On Art, Economy, and Materiality](#). **Adama Delphine Fawundu '18** has a [new installation](#) in the lobby of Miller Theatre titled *Tales from the Mano River*.

Writing

On [Friday, September 27](#), alumnus and faculty member **Timothy Donnelly '98** will be celebrating the launch of his new collection of poems, *The Problem of the Many*, with fellow faculty member **Dorothea Lasky**, whose collection of essays, *Animal*, has also just been released. They will both be reading and signing books at Powerhouse Arena. Details for the event are below. **Selena Anderson '10** will receive a [2019 Rona Jaffe Foundation Writer's Award](#). **Karen Havelin '13** was named to the [Not the Booker Shortlist](#) for her debut novel, *Please Read This Leaflet Carefully*. **Julia Guez '11** will publish her collection of poems, *In an Invisible Glass Case Which Is Also a Frame*, this fall. [Be on the look-out](#) for events in LA, San Francisco, Houston, and Boston, as well as in Brooklyn throughout the year. **Rachel Riederer '11** wrote about the viral video of salmon being transported over the Columbia River Dam for *The New Yorker*. **Andrew Lewis '15** will release his first book, *The Drowning of Money Island*, on October 1. **Adam O. Davis '06** was selected as the winner of the [2019 Kathryn A Morton Prize in Poetry](#). His debut, *Index of Haunted Houses*, will be published by Sarabande Books. **Farooq Ahmed '06** will release his [debut](#)

[novel](#), *Kansastan* this fall. He will be reading at the [Why There Are Words](#) reading series on October 6 at Bowery Poetry.

Please continue to send your updates to artsalum@columbia.edu, and like and follow our [Facebook Page](#). You can also keep an eye out for exciting new alumni achievements on our Twitter feed by following [@cusoaalumni](#).

Wishing you a happy and productive fall.

Best,
Laila Maher
Dean, Student and Alumni Affairs

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

This edition of the Alumni Spotlight features Film alumna **Annemarie Jacir '02**. If you would like to submit your own stories to be included on our website, you can do so at this [link](#).



Annemarie Jacir '02 has written, directed and produced over sixteen films. Two of her films have premiered as Official Selections in Cannes, one in Berlin and in Venice, Locarno, and Telluride. All three of her feature films were Palestine's official Oscar entries. With a commitment to teaching, training and hiring locally, Annemarie also curates and mentors, actively promoting independent cinema in the region. Founder of Philistine Films, she collaborates regularly with fellow filmmakers as an editor, screenwriter and producer. In 2018, she was invited to join the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and also served on the jury of the Cannes Film Festival. She is a co-founder of the newly established *Dar Yusuf Nasri Jacir for Art and*

Research in Bethlehem, fulfilling a lifelong family dream of establishing a space for the arts in Bethlehem.

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

Two different faculty members inspired me deeply albeit in very different ways. I was lucky to learn the craft of screenwriting with Lewis Cole who pushed me to understand story, structure and even though he was classic in many ways he never made me feel that the unanswered, inexplicable poetry inherent in writing was wrong. In fact, he encouraged it. His love for the craft of writing and his enthusiasm for collaboration left a deep impression on me.

Richard Pena affected me and influenced me in a whole other way. Richard opened my eyes to films I wasn't familiar with, with ways of thinking and connecting to the larger world, the world around us. Probably the greatest addition to my film education was also that Richard gave me passes to the New York Film Festival and New Directors/New Films and I didn't miss a screening. Those films blew my mind and I found my own direction and my own voice through them.

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

The political atmosphere was tense. There was a strong resistance to our voices being heard as Arabs, and especially as Palestinians. I remember several disturbing incidents on campus – being spit on at a memorial, receiving death threats which ended with campus police walking us to our homes and to the subway, etc. There was an atmosphere of aggression around us. Nonetheless we were organizing all the time – there was a group of us who felt the need for social justice, equality, and end to violence and occupation was (and is) critical. And despite the hostility we felt around us, I can say we also felt things were changing, that more and more people were open to hear about what is happening in Palestine. I remember a lot of solidarity events, Puerto Rican solidarity, African American solidarity, etc. So many marginalized people in the United States who could identify with the struggle for equality and freedom. So there was a great feeling of hope. I remember I organized people to go from Columbia down to DC for a Right of Return march. Initially I booked a van, which then turned into a stagecoach bus and then I had to organize a second one as every seat was booked. Those years at Columbia are full of memories from the many demonstrations, teach-ins, and actions we organized both on and off campus. I was always aware of the university's history of resistance too, and Lewis Cole and many others who were involved in the 1968 protests on campus. I really felt something incredible was happening. And then the tragedy of September 11. An awful moment which also affected our community so much and once again we were thrown back.

ALUMNI BENEFITS

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