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**School of the Arts Alumni Newsletter | September 2023**

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**Columbia School of the Arts** <artsalum@columbia.edu>  
To: artsalum@columbia.edu

Wed, Sep 13, 2023 at 1:17 PM



September 2023

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**GREETINGS FROM YOUR ALUMNI AFFAIRS TEAM**

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Dear School of the Arts Alumni:

We hope you've had a restorative summer. As we celebrated the class of 2023, a new cohort of SOA alumni joined the creative world. Please join us in congratulating them in their achievement.

We invite you to make the world a little smaller for our new graduates by registering as an "[Alumni Contact](#)." By doing so, you are giving us permission to connect you with a recent grad who could benefit from your expertise, or invite you to be a panelist at an SOA event (contact information is never shared without permission). Being an Alumni Contact is a great way to give back and stay connected to your alma mater.

In June, we traveled to Los Angeles to celebrate the Columbia University Film Festival. We joined our alumni on the picket line, who are striking from coast to coast for better working conditions.

We want to hear what you've been working on. If you have an update to share, [let us know](#). Looking to be inspired? Check out the [Class Notes](#) page on our website for a list of alumni accomplishments.

We are planning a robust program of workshops and events this year. Keep an eye on your inbox for invitations to workshops on financial wellness and dealing with rejection, as well as panel discussions on career pathways for artists, working across disciplines, and transitioning into teaching, to name a few.

We hope you enjoy this month's newsletter and our new section on career tips. As a reminder, you can connect with the School of the Arts alumni and share updates about your work on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#). You can also share updates about your work, upcoming events, and be inspired by what your fellow alums have been doing. As always, the [Artists' Resource Center's LinkedIn page](#) is a great place to find grant, fellowship, and residency opportunities

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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**CONGRATULATIONS, CLASS OF 2023!**

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SOA graduates gather in Lerner Hall in May for convocation. The Class of 2023 heard from keynote speaker, writer David Sedaris.

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**CUFF LA**

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CUFF filmmakers celebrate the LA premieres of their thesis films.

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**SOA Alumni Join the Picket Lines from Coast to Coast**

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SOA Alumni join the picket lines in NYC and LA.




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## CAREER DEVELOPMENT TIPS FROM THE ARTISTS' RESOURCE CENTER

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### Quick Tips: Searching for Grants

Got a large project coming up, a research trip, or simply looking for funding to develop your art? The landscape of grants available to artists can be overwhelming and difficult to navigate. To help you kick off your search, the Artists' Resource Center has come up with a few quick tips and things to keep in mind as you get started:

- **Plan ahead:** Start the process of researching grants early! Many organizations will have application deadlines that precede the grant payout by many months, sometimes a full year. Starting your search a couple of weeks before your research trip is likely not going to get you very far.
- **Use online listings:** While there's no central database that lists all artist grants, there are a few websites that round up various funding opportunities:
  - [Bomb Magazine](#): quarterly round-up of multidisciplinary, visual art, writing, and performing arts fellowships and residencies.
  - [Hyperallergic](#): monthly opportunities listing for writing and visual arts.
  - [Poets & Writers](#): database of grants, awards and writing contests
  - School of the Arts' [Artists' Resource Center weekly newsletter](#): opportunities with deadlines in the next 90 days.
  - [The Field](#): searchable database by discipline (including Theatre, Film, Visual Arts, and Writing) for upcoming grants and opportunities
  - [New York Foundation for the Arts Emergency Grants](#): short-term emergency funding sources for artists. NYFA also has a listing of grants and opportunities within a traditional timeline [here!](#)
- **Work the angles:** Some organizations tailor their grants toward specific demographics (i.e., age, geography, career stage, race, gender, sexual orientation, etc...) Consider your own demographics and, on top of applying to general grantmaking institutions, don't forget to look for funding sources that may be specifically tailored to you!

Do you have questions about searching for grants? Feel free to reach out to the Artists' Resource Center and set up an [appointment](#). We'd be happy to brainstorm and share more helpful tips!

### ALUMNI NEWS

#### FILM



*The Last Out*, co-directed by **Sami Khan '09**, was nominated for an Emmy Award for Outstanding Business and Economic Documentary.



**Christina Wood '20** had two films, *Close To You* and *The Dead Don't Hurt*, play at TIFF 2023.

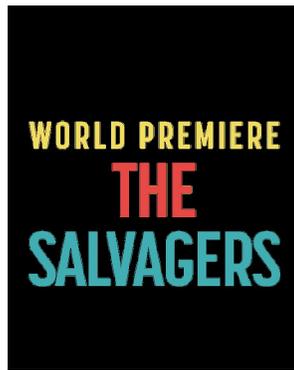


**Kimberly Peirce '96** is the co-producer on *Queer for Fear: The History of Queer Horror*, which was nominated for an Emmy for Outstanding Arts and Culture Documentary.

#### THEATRE



**Colm Summers '22** directs *Every Brilliant Thing* at Geffen Playhouse through October 15.



*The Salvagers*, a play by **Harrison David Rivers '09** will have its world premiere at Yale Rep. from November 24 – December 16, 2023.



**Annie Wang '20**, **Ada Zhang '20**, and current student **Yining Cao '24** are all part of the all-Asian, women-led bilingual play *Salesman* 之死, running at the Connelly Theater from October 10–28.

#### VISUAL ARTS + SOUND ART



**Paula Wilson's '05** solo exhibition *Paula Wilson: Towards The Sky's Back Door* runs at The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore



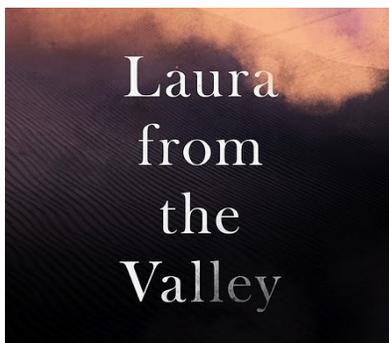
**Kambui Olujimi's '13** work is featured in *Inheritance*, a group exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art.



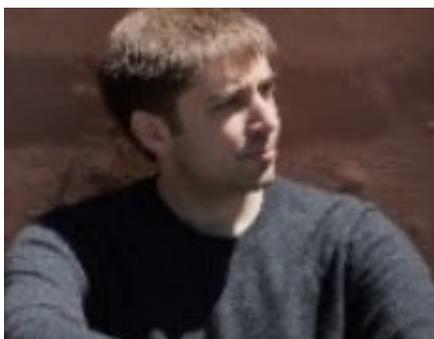
**Fadi Fakhouri's '22** work *Nowhere, Somewhere & In-Between* is on display at the Palestine Museum.

College until the end of the year.

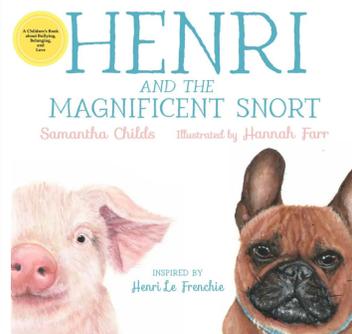
### WRITING



*Laura from the Valley*, the debut novel from **Mark Lopez '20**, is out today from Running Wild Press.



**Francisco González '19** has been awarded a prestigious Steinbeck Fellowship by the Center for Steinbeck Studies at San José State University.



**Samantha Childs '14** published a children's picture book titled *Henri and the Magnificent Snort* with Sea Lavender Publishing.

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### ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

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**Ryan Craver '20 (Film)** is a writer, director, and producer who draws from the deep well of his Southern upbringing to inspire new notions of the American family. His feature, television, and short film projects have received support from Tribeca Film Institute, SFFILM, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and the David Ross Fetzer Foundation for Emerging Artists. His latest film, *Sound to Sea*, recently won audience awards for best narrative short at both the New Orleans and Atlanta film festivals and will continue its festival run throughout the year. In 2021, Ryan was commissioned to develop his first short film, *Truck Slut* (special mention for 'Best Emerging Filmmaker' at the 2019 Palm Springs International Shortfest), as a TV series—which he hopes to jump back into after the strikes. Earlier this year, he was also awarded a prestigious MacDowell Fellowship that will allow him to spend the month of October creating new work. Ryan is passionate about championing new voices that challenge our perceptions of the South and its communities. He has spoken on panels and written for the New Orleans Film Society, and he joined the organization as a narrative features programmer for its 2023 festival, which will be held in early November. Before earning his MFA in film

at Columbia, Ryan completed an MA in English at North Carolina State University and a BA at UNC-Chapel Hill, where he graduated with highest honors for his thesis on queer school stories.

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

I think I owe a sizable amount of my success, drive, focus, and craft to Tom Kalin. When I was a teenager, I discovered his films around the same time that I began to dream of making my own, which seemed so impossible and opaque at the time. Googling 'how to become a filmmaker,' I found that Tom was on the Columbia faculty, and because of him, about a decade later, it was the only film school I applied to. Meeting him was one of those rare fullcircle moments--I truly thought I'd made it. Tom was, of course, a fantastic teacher and an even better thesis advisor. I very much still consider him a role model. The great thing about the program, though, is the diverse and expansive cohort, and to be honest, I think I learned as much about filmmaking from my classmate Nathalie Álvarez Mesén as I did from any professor. She entered the program knowing exactly who she was, what she wanted, and the kind of work she was going to make. I wrote and produced her short film *Molt* after our first year, and to see her work especially in casting and on set with actors was such an education. I am not surprised in the least by her success, and I don't know anyone who worked harder in our MFA years. I would also be remiss not to call out Maureen Ryan, whose practicality toughened me up early in the program. It's easy to dream, but you can dream all day and not have a film. A film truly begins in a spreadsheet, in numbers. I quite literally open Maureen's book every time I start a new project and work through it like a checklist.

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

My career at Columbia began with the incredibly divisive primaries for the 2016 election and ended with a global pandemic. There was a daily, heavy, existential dread which still hasn't quite let up. But although tensions run high when a country is divided to that degree, I think my unique position as a Southerner in New York City, in an art school with many international students, forced me to articulate clearly what kind of stories I want to tell--and why. Although my family might think differently, vote differently, or value different things than I do, I still sit at the dinner table with them. And that image has become central to my mission as an artist. I came out of those years feeling strongly about family--about forgiveness, tolerance, and empathy. I also expanded the net of my audience. I think when I began the program, I was just toying with some ideas and images I liked. Upon leaving, I feel I have a mission to heal--in my own, small way--a cultural divide.

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

Make your own opportunities. I have to remind myself of this almost every day. If you keep waiting for institutions, competitions, grants, festivals, or gatekeepers to allow you to be an artist, you are essentially playing the lottery. You will lose precious years to rejection, and you will never amass a body of work large enough to be competitive for these applications when their time comes. Your other option is: just be an artist. Work on your own terms. Make art. Make cheap art. Film something on your phone by yourself. A successful film festival run will get you maybe a thousand eyes on your storytelling. A successful TikTok will get you millions. So I think it's time we move on from outdated notions of how to achieve this seemingly impossible career. In other words: give yourself the authority to live your life. You truly don't need permission from anyone else.

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**IN MEMORIUM**

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In this section, we remember our alumni, faculty, and staff that have passed.



### David Hammer '02

We are saddened by the loss of Film alum David Hammer, [award-winning filmmaker](#) and Senior Producer at the National Gallery of Art. SOA classmate Evan Camfield '01 remembers, “ *The hallmark of David's presence was that he was both generous and demanding, a rare combination. He gave freely of his time and his wisdom to help out other people and he never stopped aiming high—both in his own work and in his insights into the work of others.*” David's family [welcomes](#) memories from all who knew him and is working with SOA on the creation of a [student award](#) in David's honor.



### Professor Richard Locke

Beloved SOA professor and former Chair of the Writing Department—editor, essayist, and critic [Richard Locke](#)—who taught at Columbia for 38 years, died on August 25th at the age of 81. Professor Locke authored over 180 essays and reviews and the book *Critical Children: The Use of Children in Ten Great Novels*. He made a tremendous impact on the world of American letters, having served as Senior Editor for Simon & Schuster, Deputy Editor of the New York Times Book Review, Editor-in-Chief of Vanity Fair, Director and President of The National Book Critics Circle, and a judge for the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize in Criticism. We invite alumni to share a tribute or memory by completing [this form](#).



**Adam North '21**

Adam North, beloved member of the Playwriting Concentration, passed away in June. Speaking of Adam's character and talent, Professor Lynn Nottage said, *"Warm, funny and inventive, Adam brought a vibrancy and joy to how he approached both life and his writing. He was an artist on the verge of real impact, and it is a tragedy that people won't get to experience his wit, love for his community and the wonderful worlds that he was in the midst of conjuring."*



**Justin Peacock '96**

Our SOA community mourns the loss of Writing alum, Justin Peacock. Justin was a former lawyer who switched careers to become an author and TV writer-producer known for his work on *Suits*, *The Lincoln Lawyer*, and *Alert: Missing Persons Unit*. Justin's family said, *"Justin's brilliant mind, biting wit and passionate convictions will be forever missed by his friends and family."*

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**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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**Keep in Touch**



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