

September 2021

Dear School of the Arts Alumni:

We begin this academic year having done something we've never done before, welcoming two classes to the School of the Arts and to campus. So much has changed and yet some things have remained refreshingly similar. Our students have the same desire to engage with the world and make it new—a similar passion and energy so many of you had when you first arrived.

While we are still on pause for in-person events on campus, there are two upcoming events I'd like to share: Next Wednesday, September 29, our Artists' Resource Center is hosting a webinar titled "Financial Wellness and You: Cultivating Financial Wellness for Today and Tomorrow." The webinar will begin at 12:30pm. [You can register here](#). Later that evening, Arts Access will host **Nora Lawrence**, Senior Curator at Storm King, for a [virtual presentation and discussion](#) on **Sarah Sze's** new outdoor commission, *Fallen Sky*, along with artist and collector advisor, **Althea Viafora Kress '00GS**. The presentation will include images of these epic interpretations of landscape.

Please be sure to check the [Fall 2021 Public Programs schedule](#). The theme this year is *Repair*, an idea that resonates particularly now. Lastly, Columbia Alumni Association has launched a new shared interest group for Art Industry Professionals. Those interested can learn more by [completing this form](#).

With that I will leave you with this month's updates from your peers, as well as our Alumni Spotlight of Visual Arts alum **James McCracken '19**. I hope you will take the time to watch his short film [Do You Know Who I Am?](#), which addresses the challenges, cruelty, and heartbreak caused by the US system of mass incarceration, and the irrevocable consequences for those that are incarcerated and for their loved ones. This topic deserves much more attention than it receives, including the corruption of the private prison system and incarceration for profit in general.

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.

Sincerely,

Laila Maher
Dean of Student and Alumni Affairs

Film

A number of our alumni participated in [Emmy-winning](#) projects this year. *Dick Johnson Is Dead*, co-produced by Associate Professor and Chair of the Creative Producing Concentration, **Maureen A. Ryan '92**, assistant directed by **Michael Toscano '12**, and with **John Wakayama Carey '14** as Director of Photography, was awarded the Creative Arts Emmy Award for Directing for a Documentary/Nonfiction Program. The awards for both Picture Editing for a Nonfiction Program and

Writing for a Nonfiction Program went to *The Social Dilemma*, which was produced by **Larissa Rhodes** '14. **Kevin Lau** '13 served on the writing team for *Lovecraft Country*, which was awarded the Creative Arts Emmy for Guest Actor in a Drama Series.

David Gutnik '12's debut, *Materna*, screened in New York and Los Angeles this August, and is available on [Apple](#) and Amazon Prime. *Leylak*, a short film by **Mustafa Kaymak** '14 (Writer/Producer), **Mark Anthony Castillo** '18 (Associate Producer), **Sola Fasehun** '15 (Executive Producer), premiered at the [Tribeca Film Festival](#), where it won Special Jury Mention. Additionally, two more School of the Arts films screened at Tribeca: *The Last Out*, a feature documentary co-directed and produced by **Sami Khan** '09, and *Berstein's Wall*, directed by Writing alumnus **Douglas Tirola** '92. **Keith Jinsub Kim** '04 has new photos in the Williamsburg Art and Historical Center exhibition, *America the Beautiful: The Real and the Imagined*. **Zack Morrison** '18's script *Canusa Street* [was a Finalist](#) in the Richmond International Film Festival Teleplay Competition and a Finalist in the Big Apple Film Festival Screenplay Competition. The script was also selected by Catalyst Story Institute for its content festival, and was recommended by The Blacklist to its readers. **Hart Perry** '71 will be an Artist In Residence at Southwood Holographics as part of a new NEA funded initiative. *Don't Come Close*, a short film directed and co-written by **Daniel Fermín Pfeffer** '18, screened at the [New York Latino Film Festival](#), presented by HBO & WarnerMedia. **Larin Sullivan** '11's new short film *The Young King* had its LA premiere at [Outfest](#).

Theatre

Talya Chalef '13's immersive project [Assemble](#) returns this fall to Brooklyn. **Christian T. Chan** '10 voices one of the protagonists in *Earth Eclipsed*, a science fiction series that premiered in the Tribeca Podcast selection. **Kim Katzberg** '09 is acting in a new site-specific play *Repulsing the Monkey*. Performances run from September 18-26. **Jeffrey James Keyes** '10 wrote a new monologue *Safe Word* for [Round 32](#) of the 24 Hour Plays. **Yue Liu** '18 and **Salma S. Zohdi** '16 along with Jody Doo are co-hosting an [immigrant artist networking session](#) on September 28 with Global Gab. **Dara Malina** '15 directed *Samuel*, a new audio/visual experience at The Tank. [It was reviewed](#) in *Vulture*. **Rory McGregor** '17 is assisting Academy and Tony Award winner Sam Mendes in his production of [The Lehman Trilogy](#). **Nick Hadikwa Mwaluko** '10, along with current student **Ayla Xuan Chi Sullivan**, were selected as inaugural recipients of the [New Visions Fellowship](#) for Black trans and gender non-conforming playwrights awarded by the Dramatist Guild of America and the National Queer Theater.

Visual Arts + Sound Art

In Response, an ongoing collaboration with the Jewish Museum has a [new website](#) showcasing the work of many School of the Arts students and alumni. Their most recent collaboration, *We Fight to Build a Free World*, went up in April. **Alice Adams** '53 has work on view at the [Whitney Museum of American Art](#) in the exhibit *Making Knowing: Craft in Art 1950-2019*. **Pablo Barba** '16 had a solo show, *Business Casual*, at [Steve Turner](#) in Los Angeles. **Jaqueline Cedar** '09 has new drawings in the exhibition [Shake the Pattern](#) at Shelter. **Nancy Cohen** '14 was featured as part of a [PBS program](#) on Eco Art. *Do You Know Who I Am?*, a short film by **James McCracken** '19, is screening on public television until July. [The film](#) is "a visual diary that confronts dissociation, memory fragmentation, and PTSD

through 8mm and Super 8 home movies." **Asif Mian** '18 had a solo show at the [Queens Museum](#), *RAF: Prosthetic Location* through July 25. **Adam Liam Rose** '17 has a new solo exhibition, *Stages of Fallout*, at [The Java Project](#).

Writing

Baba Badji '15 and **Jakob Guanzon** '17 have been longlisted for the [National Book Award](#) in Poetry and Fiction, respectively. **Christopher Bakken** '92 has received a [Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program](#) award to teach and write in Greece. He will be in residence at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. **Katie Crouch** '05 has just released [a new novel](#), *Embassy Wife*, with FSG. **Rebecca Donner** '01 new book, [All the Frequent Troubles of Our Days](#), was published to rave reviews in August. It follows the story of great-great-aunt Mildred Harnack, an American graduate student from the University of Wisconsin who became a leader of the largest underground resistance group in Berlin. **Daniel Felsenthal** '15 was in conversation with artist **Deborah Bright** at Spantzo Gallery. **Peter Filkins** '83 published his fifth collection of poems, and 16th book to date, [Water / Music](#), with Johns Hopkins UP. **Rivka Galchen** '06's new novel, *Everyone Knows Your Mother Is a Witch*, which is based on a [real witch hunt](#) from the 17th Century, was released this summer by Macmillan. **Harrison Hill** '19 published [a feature story](#) "The Oracle's Daughter" in *The Cut* about a woman who escaped from a cult run by her mother. **Annabelle Larsen** '16 [published an excerpt](#) of her novel, *Urban Guerillas*, in Catapult Magazine. **Ashley Nelson Levy** '12 will publish her debut novel, *Immediate Family*, with FSG in August. **Ravi Shankar** '00's [new memoir](#), *Correctional*, will be released by University of Wisconsin Press on October 26. **Terese Svoboda** '78 published [Theatrix: Poetry Plays](#), a book of hybrid drama/poetry, that is her 19th book and 8th book of poetry, with Anhinga Press.

In Memoriam

It is with sadness that we share that **Andrew Hiss** '07 passed away this summer. Andy's spouse **Lisa Tarchak** '06 is also an alum of the School of the Arts. For over ten years he was an instructor at Interlochen Center for the Arts where he taught Film and New Media. He was beloved by all who knew him and will be missed, and we will keep them in our hearts. More about his life and work can be found [here](#).

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

James McCracken Jr. '19 (b. 1988, Richmond, Virginia) is a photo-based artist, visual storyteller, educator, and collector of things. He is interested in storytelling, memory, and ideas of family. His research based process often engages narratives and histories to examine the psychology of power in relation to identity. James currently lives in Brooklyn and maintains a studio and darkroom in Petersburg, Virginia. He is current resident artist at BRIC and his short film titled "Do you know who I am?" is currently being shown on public television and will be a featured short at the upcoming LA Film Festival. His work has been published and exhibited nationally and internationally, and many of his photographs are held in private and public collections such as Getty Images Gallery, Candela

Gallery, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, and El Museo de Los Sures. James' solo exhibitions include SoHo Photo Gallery, El Museo de Los Sures, and Ildiko Butler Gallery. James holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from Columbia University (Visual Arts), Master of Arts degree (Journalism), and Bachelor of Arts (double majoring in Visual Arts and Communications) from Fordham University.

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

It's hard for me to highlight one faculty member since many of them were important to me. I felt I have a really close relationship with most of them, even after graduating. I was also particularly thankful for the generosity, time, and thoughtfulness that I was given from mentors, and visiting/adjunct faculty. To name a few - Craig Zammiello, Valerie Hammond, Susanna Coffey, Pamela Sneed, Dana DeGiulio, Katie Hubbard, Sara VanDerBeek, David Humphrey, and the late and great Carla Herrera-Prats.

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

For a long time before attending Columbia I was only making photographs and solely working in the darkroom. Now I take a more interdisciplinary approach with my work. Attending the School of the Arts has also definitely opened the doors for numerous job opportunities.

What was your favorite or most memorable class while at the School of the Arts?

Group Critique and Mentor Week with Craig Zamiello and Kiki Smith. I also enjoyed the practicality of Jackie Battenfield's Professional Practice class.

What were the first steps you took after graduating?

I decided to not commit to a studio in NYC and instead moved into an old mattress factory in Petersburg, Virginia. It has been a slow process fixing it up, but the metal and wood shop are up and running and the darkroom should be complete soon. I also focused immediately on teaching positions and local residencies that had facilities I could utilize - since my primary work space was 6 hours away. I was faculty at CUNY - Queensborough for a year and now work at Columbia's School of the Arts. Full circle.

What advice would you give to recent graduates?

Maintain the relationships you forged while at the School of the Arts and find a community of artists that want to support you and your work. I am always inspired by alums that create their own communities and continue to show work and support each other outside the mainstream art scene.

ALUMNI BENEFITS

- +[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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