

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

December 2024

Happy Holidays!

As we wrap up 2024, we [celebrate](#) our alumni’s incredible achievements. We are incredibly grateful for those who have returned to the School of the Arts this year to give their time; we appreciate their generosity.

We congratulate the Columbia affiliates who presented work at [Art Basel Miami Beach](#), including many School of the Arts alumni. As for events at the School of the Arts , we are thrilled to continue the Artists’ Resource Center’s **Lunch with Alumni Series** with Columbia College alum, **Eli Lehrer '99CC**, who spoke about his television career with current students.

’Tis the season for teaching applications, and the Artists’ Resource Center has got you covered! Scroll down for quick tips on writing a teaching philosophy statement. Then follow that up by watching the recording of the ARC/CTL workshop on writing teaching philosophy statements in the [ARC Video Library](#), housed on our new [SOA Community Platform](#) .

Please keep us [updated on your work](#), and be sure to keep your [contact information](#) current! Follow our [LinkedIn](#) group for updates as well!

We hope you enjoy this month’s newsletter which includes a spotlight on Writing alum, **Dolapo Demuren '17**. Wishing you all a wonderful winter break and holiday season for those who celebrate. The Alumni Newsletter will be back in February 2025. Happy New Year!

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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ALUMNI EVENTS



ART BASEL MIAMI BEACH

Columbia students, alumni, and faculty are made their presence known at this year's Art Basel Miami Beach, one of the world's premiere art fairs. Upwards of twenty Columbia affiliates had their work presented in connection with the fair's wide array of platforms.

Photo: Jeff Koons, Bowl With Eggs, (1994-2009) at Art Basel: Miami 2022.

[READ MORE!](#)



LUNCH WITH ALUMNI

As part of the Artists' Resource Center's Lunch with Alumni series, **Eli Lehrer '99CC** returned to Columbia to discuss his career in TV that spans documentary programming, reality TV, and news.



HOW TO WRITE A TEACHING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The Artists' Resource Center, in collaboration with the Center for Teaching and Learning, held a workshop on how to write a teaching philosophy statement.

[WATCH THE RECORDING](#)



COLUMBIA COLLEGE WOMEN VIRTUAL AUTHOR SERIES

Join **Crystal Hana Kim CC'09, SOA'14** as she discusses *The Stone Home*, her novel that reveals a dark corner of South Korean history through the eyes of a small community living in a reformatory center. Moderated by **Hannah Lillith Assadi CC'08, SOA'13**.

[REGISTER](#)

ALUMNI NEWS



La Gloria, a feature film directed by **J.T. Walker '99** and co-written with **Christopher Carl Young '98**, premiered at the Austin Film Festival.

Sola Fasehun '15 was featured in *Forbes* for founding The Diversity & Inclusion Film Festival (DIFF) at Lincoln Center.



Laura Smyth '89 published her new poetry collection, *Fox Dreams*.

Tanya Paperny '11 received a grant from the Arts and Humanities Fellowship Program by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities.



Kyle Haden '02 received an award for Best Supporting Actor in a Play from the Berkshire Theatre Critics Association for his role in Barrington Stage Company's *Primary Trust* by Eboni Booth.

Kea Trevett '16 was awarded a NYFA grant for her film adaptation of *As You Like It*, featuring **Brynne McManimie '16**, **Peter Romano '15**, **Alice Renier '16**, and **Aaron Morton '16**.



Yuri Yuan '21 was named one of *Forbes' 30 Under 30 in Art & Style*.



The group exhibition *Tone Check: The Skins of Contemporary Korean Painting* features work by **Judy Chung '18** at Eli Klein until January 16.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Dolapo Demuren '17 is a Nigerian-American writer from the Washington D.C. area. He received his B.A. in Writing Seminars from Johns Hopkins University, M.F.A. from Columbia University, and Ed.D from the University of Southern California. His honors include a Pushcart Prize nomination, fellowships from the Cave Canem Foundation and The Academy for Teachers, and scholarships from the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference. His poems and other writings are featured in the *Adroit Journal*, *On the Seawall*, *Frogpond Journal*, *Prelude Magazine*, and *Small Orange Journal*. He teaches creative writing at the University of Maryland College Park, where he is the associate director of the Jiménez-Porter Writers' House and a lecturer for the College of Arts and Humanities.

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 learned from every member of the faculty that I studied with, and I learned most of all from Richard Howard. To me, the learning was more than the acquisition of skill and technique-- it was another kind of learning-- a personal learning. Richard helped me to believe in my own writing. His affirmations and generosity extended beyond the classroom (and even graduation). For years after finishing the MFA, I would bring my poems to Richard and he would patiently go over them with me-- line by line. I miss his

reassuring smile and am grateful for the way he honored me with his time and honesty.

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

My time at the School of the Arts was formative. The school provided a solid pedagogical framework for my teaching practice, adaptable for various audiences, from kindergartners to college students. I loved learning and being challenged, appreciating the diverse courses offered. I picked up something significant from all of my teachers: Lucie Brock Broido, Dorothea Lasky, Timothy Donnelly, Alan Gilbert, Joshua Bennett, Camille Rankine, Anne Dewitt, Alice Quinn, the list goes on. What I learned from them, I've shared with others-- returned to and augmented.

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

My favorite class? I can't choose; I don't think so. Can I cheat a bit here? If you'd let me, then I'd say the entire first year was my favorite. There's nothing like the first. I remember taking the 1 or an express train up to 116th Street and climbing out of the stairwell smack-dab in front of the ever-open Columbia gates. I remember crossing onto campus and edging towards Dodge Hall. I couldn't wait to walk into the building—it didn't matter which class I was entering--I just felt so grateful to be learning alongside classmates I admired. I could name so many of them; I felt so lucky to have Evan Coles, Isabella Desendi, Anne Brink and Alex Bernstein as some of my first classmates. That year set a great foundation for me. I think back on that time fondly. What started then, I am still building on now.

What were the first steps you took after graduating?

My first steps were twofold: continued education and continued teacher training. I sought opportunities to fine-tune my writing at the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference and Cave Canem, while working at schools in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

What advice would you give to recent graduates?

I have been thinking about something that Kazuo Ishiguro shares in his 2017 Nobel Prize for Literature Speech, which he titled "My Twentieth Century Evening – and Other Small Breakthroughs." He writes:

Stories can entertain, sometimes teach or argue a point. But for me the essential thing is that they communicate feelings. That they appeal to what we share as human beings across our borders and divides. There are large glamorous industries around stories; the book industry, the movie industry, the television industry, the theatre industry. But in the end, stories are about one person saying to another: This is the way it feels to me. Can you understand what I'm saying? Does it also feel this way to you?

To my fellow graduates, I am excited to stand with you-- in this great tradition of empowering others to deepen and access the incredible emotional literacy that art cultivates. Let's get to work!

ARTISTS' RESOURCE CENTER

CAREER DEVELOPMENT TIPS FROM THE ARTISTS' RESOURCE CENTER

QUICK TIP: HOW TO WRITE A WINNING TEACHING STATEMENT

Are you interested in applying for professor or teaching positions but need help figuring out how to write a teaching statement that stands out? Here are some tips from Caitlin DeClercq, CTL Senior Assistant Director, on how to identify the goal of this statement, how to approach writing it, and how to identify experiences to pull from to write or re-write your statement!

What is a Teaching Statement?

A Teaching Statement, also known as a “teaching philosophy” or “statement of teaching philosophy”, is a document where you demonstrate two things: 1. what roles you have had as a teacher, including what you have taught, where, who, and when; and 2. How you teach, how you approach teaching in your discipline, what is unique about your approach to teaching, and why you choose to teach this way.

In your teaching statement, give concrete evidence of the breadth and depth of your teaching experience and practice to show the hiring committee how you have taught and how you will continue to teach. You should present a cohesive narrative with concrete, explicit, and vivid presentations of your work. *The more vivid your statement is, the more memorable you will be to the hiring committee.*

Think of a teaching statement as a camera in the classroom shooting you while you teach. What will people see and remember about you? A good teaching statement should convey your abilities as an instructor, fit with their institution, value as a colleague, and overall qualifications.

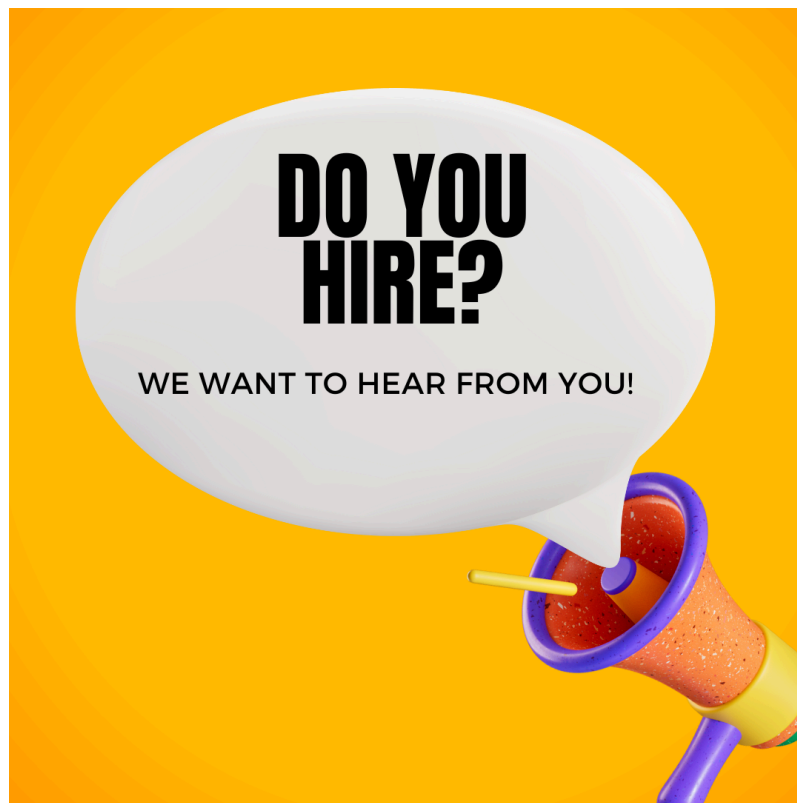
How should you structure this statement?

Introduction: Offer a snapshot of your passion for teaching (think of a hook), summarize your experience as an instructor, and provide readers with a roadmap of the body paragraphs.

3-4 Body Paragraphs: Your teaching goal: challenges you could envision regarding how to achieve this goal; concrete strategies or activities used to achieve your goal; and evidence of a successful outcome (student feedback, course surveys or student reviews, quotes) (Think broadly!)

Conclusion: Reinforce and extend your introductory claims. Answer the bigger “so what” question - what students can take away from your classroom

You can also find more [on-demand](#) modules and other [resources](#) on the Center for Teaching and Learning’s website to help with drafting these materials for the academic job market. Watch our workshop with Caitlin in the [ARC Video Library](#)!



WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE INTERVIEW QUESTION?

The Artists' Resource Center will be facilitating a workshop on best interview practices.

What is your favorite question to ask when interviewing a candidate for a position you are hiring for?

LET US KNOW

ALUMNI BENEFITS

[Artists' Resource Center \(ARC\)](#)
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[Email Forwarding & CU Address](#)
[Online Alumni Community](#)
[CAA Arts Access](#)
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