

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

February 2025

Happy New Year! (we can still say that, right?). We're excited to issue our first newsletter of 2025. We've been up to a lot so far.

We celebrated [SOA filmmakers](#) at Sundance in Park City. We also gathered with alumni leaders at the annual Columbia Alumni Association (CAA) Board Luncheon.

Visual Arts alumni conducted [a workshop](#) led by Professor Shelly Silver on designing successful teaching applications. You can find a blog post on the highlights from this event in the "Career Development Tips" section at the bottom of the newsletter.

The Artists' Resource Center hosted a popular workshop on pitching with four multidisciplinary alumni. [Watch the recording here!](#)

Finally, we've updated our [Class Notes page](#) with the achievements you told us about last semester. Please continue to let us know what you are working on.

And remember to save the date for Speed Networking, a chance to network with fellow SOA alumni and students on April 30th at 7:00 pm in Low Library.

We hope you enjoy this month's newsletter which includes a spotlight on Film alum **Alexandre Ilic '18**.

Be sure to keep your [contact information](#) up to date and follow our [LinkedIn group](#) for updates!

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



CAA BOARD LUNCHEON

The Columbia Alumni Association Board convened in February and invited student and alumni leaders to a luncheon where they were treated to a talk on living your values from Columbia Business School Professor Sheena Iyengar.

*Pictured from left to right: Associate Director of the Artists' Resource Center and Alumni Affairs **Jessica Pierson '18GSAS**, CAA Board Member **Alece Oxendine '11**, Interdisciplinary Arts Council President **Anshool Pradhan** and **Karlee Rodrigues '18GS, '20SOA**.*

ARTISTS' RESOURCE CENTER

PITCH PERFECT: A WORKSHOP TO ELEVATE YOUR PITCH

Wednesday, February 12 | 12:45-1:45 pm
Dodge 605

ANNIE DEWITT '09
Literary Agent
Shipman Agency

LUCY POWIS '18
Theatrical Literary Agent
Michael Moore Agency

VARUN MALIK '21
FILM/TV Development Executive
Paramount Animation

NAYANTARA ROY '17
Senior Vice President of Television
Sandbox Entertainment

Join industry pros for a workshop & get real-time feedback on your pitch!

Moderated by Andrew Scott '25 | Lunch served in Dodge 605

PITCH PERFECT: A WORKSHOP TO ELEVATE YOUR PITCH

The Artists' Resource Center is hosted a workshop on pitching with **Lucy Powis '18**, **Annie Dewitt '09**, **Nayantara Roy '17**, and **Varun Malik '21**. Click the photo to watch the recording!



SOA ALUMNI AT SUNDANCE

SOA alumni gathered in Park City with Dean Sarah Cole and Chair of the Film program Jack Lechner to celebrate SOA filmmakers.

PennNYC Online Enrichment

Working Through Profound Loss & Grief with Colin Campbell

4-1-25
8-9 PM ET
(5-6 PM PT)
on Zoom

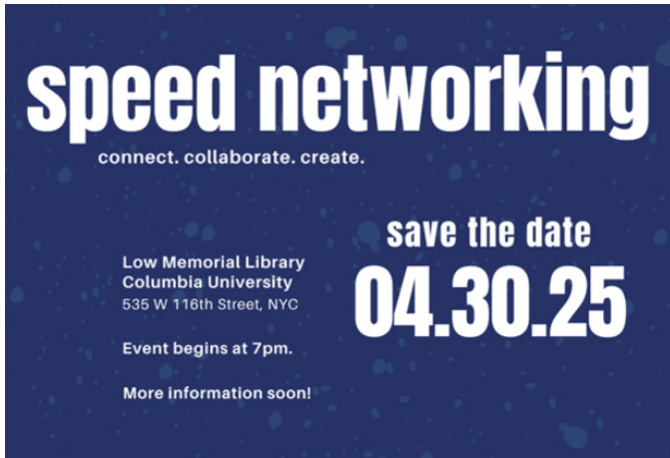
COLIN CAMPBELL
FINDING THE WORDS
Working Through Profound Loss with Hope and Purpose

THE PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE
Colin Campbell Finds the Words

PennNYC | PennClub of DC | PennClub of Los Angeles

WORKING THROUGH PROFOUND LOSS AND GRIEF WITH COLIN CAMPBELL '96

Join PennNYC for a virtual discussion with **Colin Campbell '96** on grief and loss and Colin's book, *Finding the Words: Working Through Profound Loss with Hope and Purpose*. Click the photo to register.



**SAVE THE DATE:
SOA SPEED NETWORKING**

This event is a professional version of 'speed dating' where every 7 minutes you'll meet someone new! This is an exciting opportunity to connect, initiate a dialogue, and expand your professional network with artists from all walks of creativity.

Date & Time: Wednesday, April 30th, 2025 at 7pm
Location: Low Memorial Library at Columbia University



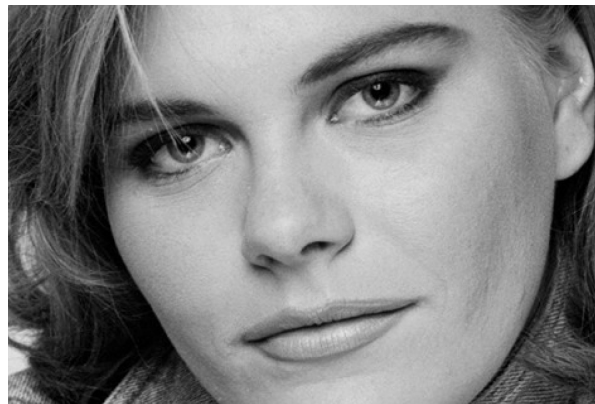
**AFROANIMATION SUMMIT
SOA DISCOUNT CODE**

AfroAnimation Summit is offering a 20% discount code to SOA alumni to join this Diverse Animation Summit in Burbank, CA. Click the photo to access registration and then select "Get Tickets" and enter code: **AAS_Columbia_20**

ALUMNI NEWS



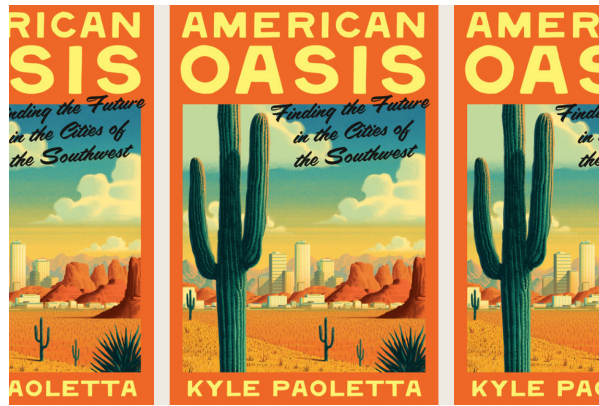
Melina Maraki '23 is a writer on a TV adaptation of John Ajvide Lindqvist's novel *Summer of 1985*, which was greenlit as the first international show by US production studio Media Res.



Katharina Otto-Bernstein '92 is being awarded the John Jay Award on March 5th.



Melissa Larsen '19 published her second novel, *The Lost House*, which has been named an Amazon Editors' Pick, an Indie Next Pick, and an LGBTQ Reads Most Anticipated Adult Fiction of 2025.



Kyle Paoletta '16 published *American Oasis*, a book of nonfiction on the American Southwest.



Andrew Garman '00 is a cast member in Jordan Harrison's *The Antiquities*, which is playing at Playwrights Horizons.



I Saw Your Mama Dancin' in Claremont Lounge, written by **Siting Yang '22** and directed by **Danica Selem '24**, had a work-in-progress presentation at NYTW as part of the 2050 Fellowship on January 23.



Aristotle Forrester '24 is a featured artist at Artists for Humanity in Boston, exhibiting his work in *A Decade of Decisions* until March 23, 2025.

Will you Marry Me?

Kai Oh
February 15 - March 23
2025

Subtitled NYC
113 Franklin Street 2nd floor #11F Brooklyn NY 11222

Kai Oh '24 is showcasing her work in her first solo exhibition, *Will You Marry Me?*, at Subtitled NYC.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Alexandre Ilic '18 is a filmmaker born in Cannes, France and raised in Miami, Florida. He holds a BA in Film from Hunter College and an MFA in Screenwriting from Columbia University School of the Arts, where he graduated with honors. After college, he sold a treatment for a novel to Macmillan Publishers. *Stranded*, published by Tor Books, was later optioned by Warner Horizon Television. At Columbia, Alex's thesis script *Apocalypse, Please* earned Faculty Selects and won the Nickelodeon Best Comedy Teleplay Award.

Currently, Alex is the Director of Film Program Events at Columbia School of the Arts MFA Film Program. He's developing two feature films: his debut, a darkly comedic thriller about a botched attempt to fake a death, and a social thriller co-written by fellow alum **Andrew Stephen Lee '18**.

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

There were so many! I was incredibly nervous when I started the program, but having Dan Kleinman my first semester immediately put me at ease. John Walsh and Michael Weithorn made me think that my writing was actually funny. Frank Pugliese inspired me to better myself as a writer. Maureen Ryan inspired me to better myself as a collaborator. David Klass was my advisor and I will always be grateful that he let me operate in a way that suited me best. Finally, a big shoutout to Ramin Serry. I often felt like he believed in me more than I believed in myself, and that meant a lot. I think he still might!

I would be remiss if I also didn't mention the staff, specifically Hanna Seifu, Sara Mason, Peter Vaughan, Michael Cacioppo Belantara, Jordan Bowen, and Andrew Castillo. They always made me feel like I deserved to be there.

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

It taught me how to collaborate.

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

I had a lot of great classes, but my most unique experience was Frank Pugliese's TV Writing lecture. I was enrolled in the class and somehow also the teaching assistant. I had TV Directing just before at Prentis, so when that would end I'd stop at McDonald's and grab some fries, and then walk over to

Dodge and eat them in Frank's office while he went through the day's agenda. Every class, he'd lecture for the first half, and then an industry guest would come in for the second half. A part of my job entailed escorting the guest onto campus and keeping them company until the class was ready. That was my first experience doing what I now do regularly. Word of advice: don't tell the executive who greenlit *Mad Men* that you've never seen *Mad Men*. (I've seen it since, I swear.) At the end of the semester, we all had to pitch an original TV show to the entire class, which was over fifty students. I still remember my favorites.

What advice would you give to recent graduates?

On a philosophical level, keep creating. Art will always be important.

On a practical level, don't hesitate to diversify your skill set, whether it's as an editor, cinematographer, programmer, location manager, or intimacy coordinator. Whatever it is, being able to pay your rent will never be overrated.

IN MEMORIAM



MICHELLE A. MONTGOMERY '99

The School of the Arts mourns the loss of Nonfiction alum, **Michelle A Montgomery '99**.

During her time at Columbia, Michelle worked at the Columbia University Oral History Research Office on a project documenting the voices and experiences of doctors who cared for patients during the early years of the AIDS crisis. The project culminated in the 2002 book *AIDS Doctors: Voices from the Epidemic*. She was also an editorial board member of *Columbia: A Journal of Literature and Art*.

Read more about Michelle's life [here](#).

ARTISTS' RESOURCE CENTER

CAREER DEVELOPMENT TIPS FROM THE ARTISTS' RESOURCE CENTER

QUICK TIPS : VISUAL ARTISTS AS TEACHERS

Finding a teaching job as a visual artist can be a difficult task, let alone starting a career in academia. With skill sets like oil painting, weaving, or illustration, job searches for visual artists can look very different from individuals who may be searching for jobs in STEM or business. However, it is absolutely possible to thrive as a teacher in the visual arts, while at the same time maintaining a successful studio practice. Here are some essential tips for visual artists interested in becoming teachers!

First, think about what you want out of teaching visual arts, and where it could lead you in the future! Do you want to be an adjunct ceramics professor? A full-time, graduate-level professor of foundations? A research TA in a textiles department? Make a list of what aligns with your goals.

Document all of your visual work, INCLUDING the work of previous students you may have had! It's great to show evidence of your progress, as well as student progress! Even using your phone, you can learn how to take professional, polished photos that showcase your art in the best way possible. Include any awards or recognitions/gallery shows you may have had. Make sure that you also have a website or social media page where you can regularly update your portfolio!

Keep a running list of potential professional and personal artist references! These can include bosses/mentors, coworkers, peers, and even former students that you have had good experiences and relationships with! Gallery owners and curators can also be great references. If you use a reference, CONTACT them beforehand, just to give them a heads up.

Accept networking opportunities/calls. Help out friends with gallery work and accept offers to act as a judge for art contests! Stay in contact with professors and artists that you admire—even if you just grab a coffee every once in a while. This can be extremely helpful down the road. Don't be afraid to reach out!

Think of who you want to be as a teacher and what visual practices you would be willing to teach. What is your specific skill set? Are you great at metal working? Can you teach sculpture and 3D design? Make a list or vision board of qualities that you have enjoyed in your previous visual art's teachers. What helped you learn in a hands-on environment? This can help you narrow down your job search to hone in on the perfect work environment that facilitates your creativity!

Mostly, remember that you are a rare individual! Not many people can weave tapestries or hand-bind artist books. Make a list of work/prior experiences that could help you stand out to employers! Bring the same enthusiasm to interviews that you bring to your art practice! You want to work with people who want YOU.

Want more information? Check out this [virtual workshop on creating a good application for Visual Arts Teaching Jobs](#). You can always [make an appointment](#) with the ARC to review your materials!

ALUMNI BENEFITS

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

Office of Alumni Affairs

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