

# DEMO

ISSUE 20 **SPRING/SUMMER 2014**

The Alumni Magazine of  
Columbia College Chicago

## A “Colossal” Success

How a personal  
blog became a  
professional career

## Aidy Bryant

SNL Superstar

## Lena Waithe

and other millennials  
make their marks

Columbia  
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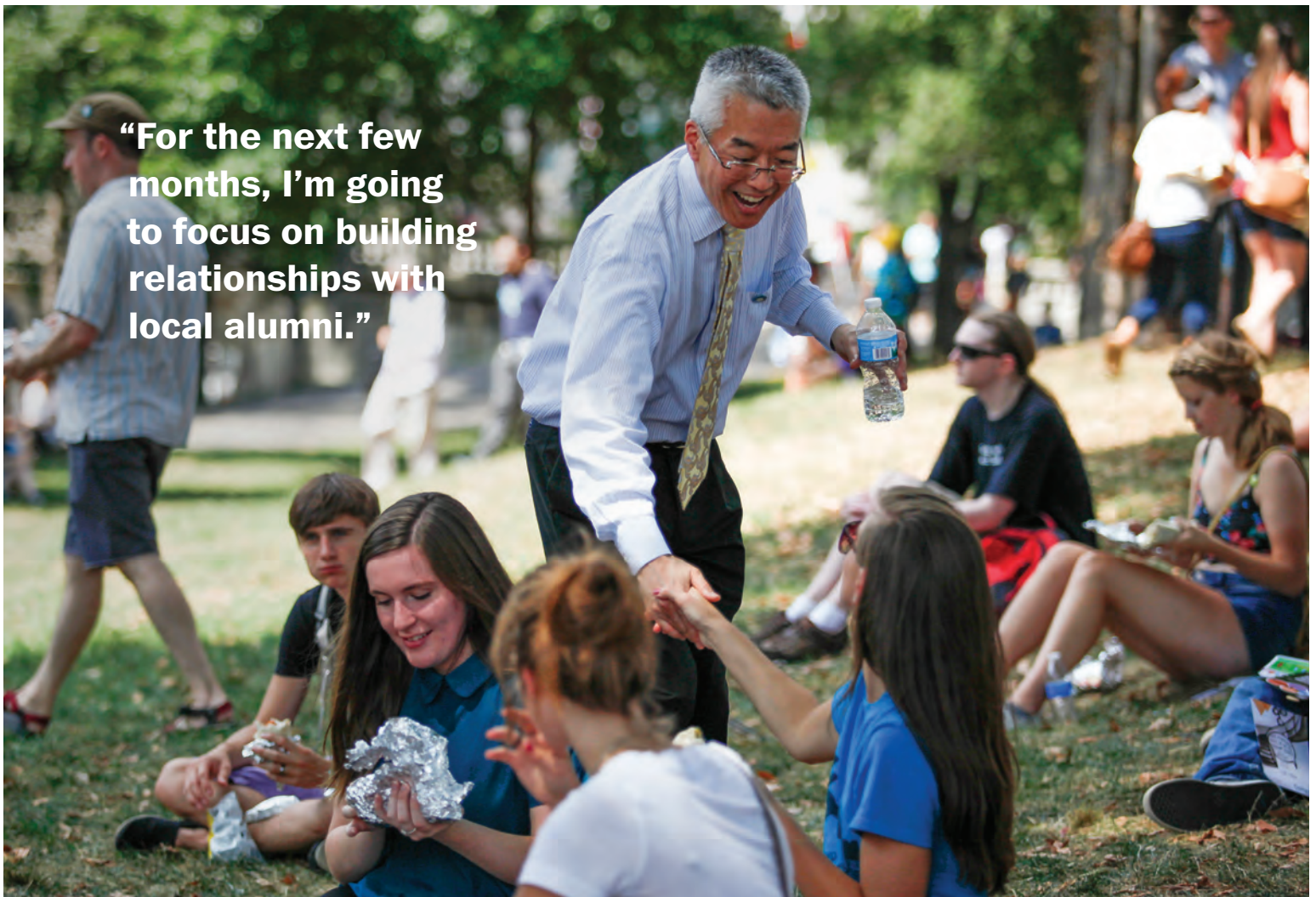
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**“For the next few months, I’m going to focus on building relationships with local alumni.”**

## QUESTIONS FOR PRESIDENT KWANG-WU KIM

**DEMO:** Sharpening Columbia’s focus on employment and professional marketability for graduates is a major goal of your presidency. How will alumni fit into the “Create Your Career” initiative of preparing Columbia students for the professional world?

**DR. KIM:** Alums are going to play a big part in this because in some cases, we’ll have alums who are hiring our students. But equally important is having a really big network of alumni who are interacting with our students as informal mentors and points of professional connection.

Los Angeles is an extraordinary model because we have so many alums in LA in the film and entertainment industry. Not only are they active about helping to place our students in internships and employment—it’s a very robust relationship—but the people I met all expressed huge excitement at the idea of more interaction with our students. They want to come back to campus. They want to see what we’re doing. They just want to share what they’ve done and what they know with our students.

**DEMO:** What are your plans for continuing to build alumni relationships?

**DR. KIM:** For the next few months, I’m going to focus on building the relationships with local alumni because, first of all, the vast majority of our alums are here. I feel like we just haven’t been shining the light at home. Our alums are populating so many different communities, locally. That’s a story I want us to tell more vividly because it’s always great to have stars—and all schools celebrate their stars—but part of the story of this institution is the story of a person who has made a successful life, who is making a difference in the world in part because they were here. That’s the story we’ve got to find and keep telling.





## Former College President John Duff Passes Away

John Duff, Columbia College Chicago's eighth president, passed away on Oct. 1 in Palm Desert, Calif., from complications with Alzheimer's. As Columbia's president from 1992 until 2000, Duff was central to expanding the South Loop campus, even approving Columbia's first residence hall, Plymouth Court. By the end of his presidency, Duff oversaw purchases of 1014-16 S. Michigan Ave., 1306 S. Michigan Ave., 1104 S. Wabash Ave. and 33 E. Congress Parkway. He also oversaw the official change of the school's name from Columbia College to Columbia College Chicago. All of his efforts helped make Columbia College Chicago a nationally recognized name.

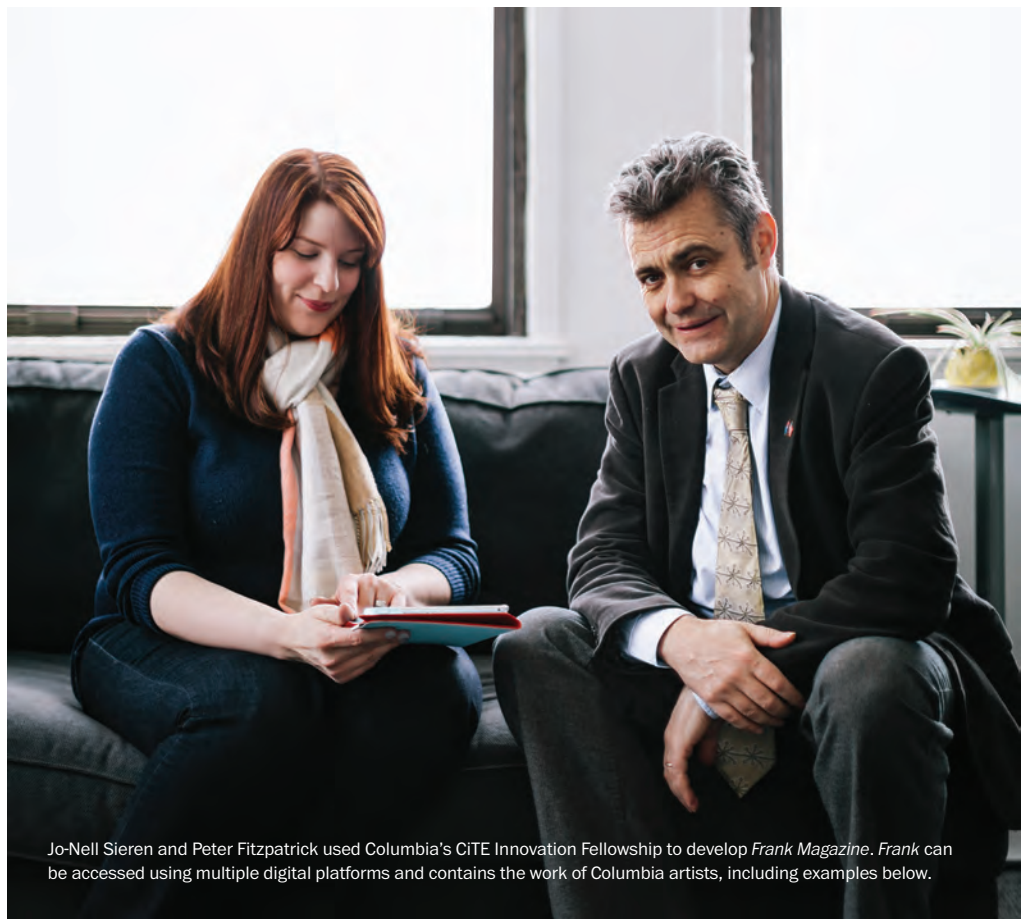


## ALUMNI HIT SUNDANCE

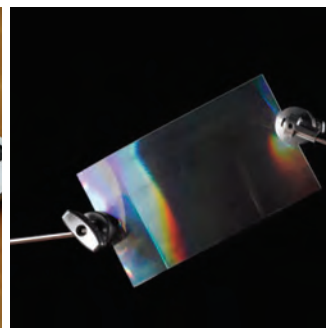
Alumni brought Chicago spirit to Park City, Utah, at the Sundance Film Festival on Jan. 18-19. Columbia screened six alumni short films and one alumni feature film, *The Trouble with the Truth*.

## Magazine App Showcases Photography's Best

The Photography Department launched *Frank Magazine*, a biannual digital publication highlighting the artwork of students, faculty, staff and alumni, in early December. Available in the iTunes App Store, *Frank* blends writing, video and photography to showcase the department's work. The magazine is the brainchild of Photography Department members Peter Fitzpatrick and Jo-Nell Sieren, who received Columbia's CiTE Innovation Fellowship to promote new ways of bringing technology into the classroom.



Jo-Nell Sieren and Peter Fitzpatrick used Columbia's CiTE Innovation Fellowship to develop *Frank Magazine*. *Frank* can be accessed using multiple digital platforms and contains the work of Columbia artists, including examples below.







Stanley Wearden

## New SVP/Provost Announced

Stanley T. Wearden, PhD, will become Columbia College Chicago's senior vice president and provost, the chief academic officer for the institution, on July 1. Now serving as dean of the College of Communication and Information and professor of journalism and mass communication at Kent State University, Wearden will work with President and CEO Kwang-Wu Kim, DMA, to lead Columbia College's academic affairs enterprise. Louise Love, PhD, who has been serving as interim provost and vice president for academic affairs, will continue in that role until July.

During his 30 years at Kent State, Wearden boasted major achievements, such as increasing freshman retention rates, creating multiple online master's programs, increasing undergraduate enrollment and helping to create six online degree programs.

The following is excerpted from a March interview with the *Columbia Chronicle*:

### **What are your plans upon your arrival in July?**

**SW:** My plan is to learn as much as I can as fast as I can. I'll be meeting with as many people as I can to get their sense of what their goals are, obstacles they face, what solutions they're thinking about for those obstacles and a sense of where this college needs to go academically. ... I think that the college needs an academic affairs strategic plan—a five-year plan with achievable goals. I want to have an inclusive process for that, including feedback from students and faculty and staff and administrators.

### **What challenges do you think Columbia faces and how might you address them?**

**SW:** [The mission] needs to be revisited. We need to make sure that we're preparing students for a 21st-century practice in creative disciplines. We really need to look comprehensively at the curriculum. We're still preparing students ... [but we must give] students what they actually need, practice in 21st-century industries. Part of that is taking a look at the core, which is fundamentally strong and inspiring.



## Deborah H. Holdstein Steps Down as LAS Dean

After serving as dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences for seven years, Deborah H. Holdstein will step down from her position on July 1. In her time as dean, Holdstein helped establish the college's first Honors Program, the new Art and Materials Conservation major and the college's first degree partnership with an overseas institution (the Lorenzo de' Medici Institute in Florence, Italy). Holdstein will take time off for the 2014–15 academic year and will resume working with Columbia College as a full-time professor in the English Department in 2015. In July, associate professor Suzanne Blum-Malley will step up for a one-year appointment as interim dean.

## Stephen Asma Receives a Fulbright Award

Stephen Asma, philosophy professor in the Humanities, History and Social Sciences Department, received a Fulbright Award to live and teach in China. He is teaching at Beijing Foreign Studies University through Spring 2014, expanding on an academic passion for Buddhism and Asian philosophies.

## Columbia Chronicle named Best College Newspaper in Illinois

In February, the Illinois College Press Association named the *Columbia Chronicle* the best college newspaper in the state and presented the paper with 18 other awards for various work in photographic, graphic, editorial and advertising content. The *Chronicle* also won first place for its 2013 Sex Issue in the Special Supplement category. The newspaper picked up five first-place awards and overall had 12 current or former staff members individually recognized for their work.



## GIVE &amp; TAKE



Laura Hool

## Alumna Supports Family's ASL Scholarship

For Laura Hool (BA '06), philanthropy runs in the family. Hool's grandmother, Alice Fryzlewicz, founded the Michael Fryzlewicz scholarship for American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation in honor of her son. Michael Fryzlewicz, a Chicago-area ASL interpreter, worked with then-English Department Chair Phil Klukoff to start Columbia's ASL program in the '90s, but sadly, he died in his 30s before the program got off the ground.

"[Uncle Michael wanted] to make sure that there were training opportunities in this area for people who wanted to become interpreters and to learn about the Deaf community," Hool says.

Columbia College Chicago's ASL program is the only nationally accredited, BA-granting ASL-English Interpretation program in the Chicago Metropolitan area.

Today, Hool, assistant director for Outreach, Medicine and Biological Sciences Development at the University of Chicago, continues her family's generosity by contributing to the scholarship fund her grandmother began.

"I think it says a lot about her that she could take this tragedy of losing her child when he was at such a young age and transform that into something that was really positive," Hool says. "[The scholarship is] a way of really personally and permanently remembering my uncle and his legacy in Chicago. And as an alum, it's about giving back to the institution that I feel like I gained so much from."

For more information on the Michael Fryzlewicz scholarship for ASL interpretation, visit [colum.edu](http://colum.edu). —Hannah Lorenz ('16)



## New Image Campaign Launched in September

In the fall, Columbia unveiled a new image campaign centered on the philosophies "Live What You Love" and "Create Your Career." The multiyear, multiplatform campaign kicked off with billboard, bus shelter and magazine ads featuring students engaging in film, music, dance and more—offering a sampling of Columbia's vibrant and diverse arts community.

The research-based campaign went through an extensive brand review with global public relations and communications firm Burson-Marsteller to focus appeal to key audience groups including prospective students, parents and high school guidance counselors.



Horatio Sanz

## SANZ AND RIVERS CRACK UP CAMPUS

The 2013-14 Conversations in the Arts series spotlighted comedy, with renowned comedians Horatio Sanz ('89) and Joan Rivers cracking everyone up in the South Loop. *Saturday Night Live* alum Sanz returned to his home turf on Oct. 23 to talk about his time on The Second City stage, with comedy group Upright Citizens Brigade and as the first Latino member of *SNL*.

Comic legend Rivers hit campus Feb. 25, regaling a packed house with stories about her rise from Chicago's Second City to *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*, and subsequent years of struggling to stay relevant on the climb back to the top of the ratings heap on *E!*'s juggernaut *Fashion Police*.



## Manifest 2014 Creative Director: Matt Dunne

Matt Dunne ('14) looked to paper airplanes and star lanterns as inspiration for Manifest 2014, Columbia College Chicago's annual urban arts festival on May 16. As creative director elected by the Columbia community, Dunne will design all the event's promotional materials. For the first time, Manifest has a theme—flight—and Dunne plans to reach for the sky in his designs.

"I like to do really simplistic stuff," Dunne says of his winning looks, which consist of paper textures, dotted lines and stars inspired by the geometric lanterns at Chicago's annual holiday Christkindlmarket. He hopes the paper airplane motif will bring a crafty, DIY edge to the events. "I'm hoping everything can be really customizable, so people can make their own paper planes or their own stars, stuff like that."

The all-day fest will bustle with art, music and performances showcasing Columbia's distinct talents and creativity. Manifest events will include old favorites like a zipline through the South Loop, and some new additions like an art installation from Jones College Prep and a Masters of Flight evening to highlight graduate student work. There's been talk of world record ambitions, too: Anyone want to build the world's largest paper airplane or the most paper airplanes?

For more information about Manifest 2014, which is free and open to the public, go to [colum.edu/manifest](http://colum.edu/manifest). ■ —Megan Kirby

Photos: David Becker



### COLUMBIA SPONSORS FILM FEST

The 49th Chicago International Film Festival took place in October at the lavish Chicago Theatre, with Columbia College serving as a sponsor for the fifth year running. The festival highlights the voices of innovative new filmmakers in Chicago and the world.



### GALA FUNDS SCHOLARSHIPS

On Nov. 9, 220 guests gathered for a black-tie event celebrating Columbia's diverse talents, raising Open Doors Scholarship funds to help Chicago Public School students attend Columbia College. More than 70 scholarships were funded by the event.





**Lena Waithe**

BA '06, Television  
Writer/Producer/Creator  
Age: 29, Los Angeles

How young  
alumni are blazing  
hot career paths

# Millennial Hustle

By Audrey Michelle Mast (BA '00)  
Photography by Anthony Chiappetta (BA '95)  
and Drew Reynolds (BA '97)

As students at **Columbia College Chicago**, Lena Waithe, Tony Merevick and Roma Shah all jump-started their careers with hands-on experience, prestigious internships and boundless ambition—and today, they continue to build on the creative momentum that originated in the South Loop. As the rising stars of television, journalism and fashion business, respectively, each of these young graduates has made a major impact in their fields—all before their 30th birthdays. And they're only getting started.





Lena Waithe produced the Sundance winner *Dear White People*, and her TV-show-in-progress *Twenties* has drawn comparisons to HBO's *Girls*. As of press time, Waithe had scored a staff writing job on the Fox series *Bones*.

### LENA WAITHE: HOLLYWOOD HOTSHOT

If you haven't heard of Lena Waithe (BA '06) yet, you will soon. At 29, she's poised to be the next big Hollywood voice. She's an accomplished screenwriter; the producer of a hot new feature film, *Dear White People*; and the creator of a stylish new comedy, *Twenties* (already drawing comparisons to HBO's millennial-centric *Girls*).

When Chicago-born Waithe came to Columbia, she knew she wanted to be a TV writer. She threw herself into her studies, particularly writing courses. She calls the writing class she took with associate professor Michael Fry "life changing."

"He gave me the fundamentals," Waithe says of Fry. "He doesn't hand out A's a lot—an A means you really have something." Her final project was a script for the UPN/CW comedy series *Girlfriends*. After receiving a hard-won A, she approached Fry for advice. "I asked him whether I really did have something, and he said, 'You do. You have it. Go to L.A.,'" she says.

So she did. At the end of her senior year, Waithe completed Columbia's Semester in LA

program, a five-week immersive experience with industry professionals—and never left.

Waithe racked up a wide array of credits: She was an editorial assistant on MTV's reality juggernaut *The Real World* and—quite serendipitously—worked on the set of *Girlfriends* as the assistant to the executive producer. That led to a job as an assistant to writer/director Gina Prince-Blythwood (who became a mentor and close friend) on the movie *The Secret Life of Bees*. She was also a writing assistant on George Tillman's (BA '91) Notorious B.I.G. biopic, *Notorious*.

All the while, Waithe worked on her own project: a pilot script that she submitted to the selective Fox Writers' Intensive program, an invitation-only series of seminars and workshops for emerging TV and film writers. The script, *My Mother, Myself*, explored the relationship between a washed-up diva matriarch and a daughter ready for her own spotlight. It wasn't produced, but it caught the eye of other industry writers, and things began falling into place. Waithe secured an agent, won more fellowships and met more people. In 2012,

**"I pretty much pulled pages from my diary and turned it into a pilot. I told my truth. Ultimately, as a writer, that's my job."**

Nickelodeon hired her as a staff writer on its musical comedy series *How to Rock*. She became a member of the Writers Guild of America (the official union of the industry), where she founded the Table Read Initiative as a way to highlight the work of African Americans in Hollywood.

At the same time, she increased focus on her own projects. Waithe wrote a viral video (*Shit Black Girls Say*) and webisodes about online dating (*Hello Cupid*), and wrote and directed a short film (*Save Me*) that appeared at several indie film festivals. She also produced the feature film *Dear White People*, written and directed by her best friend, Justin Simien. A satire about "being a black face in a very white place" (a fictional Ivy League college), the film premiered at Sundance in January, earning the festival's Special Jury Prize for Breakthrough Talent. The filmmakers' gutsy path to Sundance, begun years earlier,

### ▶ WEB EXCLUSIVE

To watch the trailer for *Dear White People* and scenes from *Twenties*, go to [colum.edu/demo](http://colum.edu/demo).



## FEATURE

involved producing a “concept trailer” to promote the movie, which hadn’t yet been filmed. Through YouTube, social media and the crowdfunding site Indiegogo, the team raised more than \$41,000 in summer 2012 and completed the movie’s filming in 2013.

*Dear White People*’s approach is both stylish and compelling—as much inspired by the meticulous, neo-preppy style of Wes Anderson and the deadpan wit of Alexander Payne’s *Election* as the “black art house” sensibilities of Spike Lee. Its theme focusing on racial identity in “post-racial” America is erudite, funny, and—as Waithe notes—a refreshing departure from the “easily digestible images of black folks” she usually sees.

Waithe’s other big project, *Twenties*, which she created and wrote, is even more personal. The TV dramedy—backed by Queen Latifah’s production company, Flavor Unit Entertainment—is about a group of (mostly) black 20-somethings; it centers on a woman named Hattie who video-blogs and just happens to be a lesbian. Hattie is an imperfect, loveable, complex character: She listens to vinyl records, prefers *The Wizard of Oz* to *The Wiz*, is broke because she “eats out too much” and is learning to express herself more honestly.

Like *Dear White People*, *Twenties* is being promoted with a series of four short scenes from a yet-to-be-filmed episode—and owes its chic look to director Simien, who will also direct the pilot when (not if) it’s produced. One thing is certain: *Twenties* will put Waithe in a new league.

“I pretty much pulled pages from my diary and turned it into a pilot,” says Waithe. “I wrote about what was going on in my life. I told my truth. Ultimately, as a writer, that’s my job.”



### Tony Merevick

BA '12, Journalism  
Reporter, BuzzFeed  
Age: 24, New York City

#### TONY MEREVICK: MEDIA MAVERICK

Lake in the Hills, Ill., native Tony Merevick (BA '12) ignited his career while still a student at Columbia. While juggling a full course load, he also reported for two local publications, founded a new one and interned in New York City. Last fall, New York-based social news and entertainment company BuzzFeed hired Merevick as an LGBT breaking news reporter.

“All the journalism teachers I studied under were instrumental in helping me succeed,” says Merevick. He specifically cites his Reporting and Writing II professor Nancy Traver, who “really empowered me to look at her six-hour course and think of it more as a job,” he says. “I was really hungry to do that.”

In the spring semester following Traver’s class, Merevick began working as a professional journalist. “It was a pivotal semester for me,” he says. “That was also around the time I became interested in covering the LGBT community.” He went to work as an online editor for Chicago Free Press, then as an opinions columnist and news reporter for *Gay Chicago Magazine*. When both publications folded within the span of two years, Merevick saw a huge open market for queer media in Chicago. So he and friend Dane Tidwell cofounded online news publication Chicago Phoenix “out of the ashes” in January 2012—while Merevick was still a college senior.

“I think that Chicago’s community deserves a publication that looks out for them, speaks to them, for them,” says Merevick, who served as the Phoenix’s editor-in-chief from January 2012 to September 2013. Today, Chicago Phoenix is one of the most-read digital LGBT publications in the Midwest.

## On the eve of Illinois' historic Marriage Equality Bill, Merevick scored an exclusive interview with Gov. Pat Quinn.

Helming a Web startup during his senior year was a challenge Merevick took in stride: "Columbia gave me the tools and provided me with the opportunity to build a really good network of people ... who I could turn to for support," he says. Describing the agility of the Phoenix's platform and the need for up-to-the-second coverage in the Twitter age, he says, "I learned these things at Columbia, but put them to use at the Phoenix."

By the time Merevick launched Chicago Phoenix, he had a resume any journalism student would envy. In addition to working at Chicago Free Press and *Gay Chicago Magazine*, he scored a highly-sought-after, paid summer internship at *O, the Oprah Magazine* in New York City through the American Society of Magazine Editors internship program. He worked on a team that developed the magazine's iPad edition. "At the time, magazines were still

experimenting with how they could adapt and take advantage of this revolutionary platform," he says. "I wanted to be part of that."

When BuzzFeed announced it was hiring journalists to bolster its LGBT coverage, Merevick jumped at the unexpected opportunity to move back to New York City. "I was hesitant to leave Phoenix and Chicago, but [BuzzFeed is] such an incredible, innovative platform," he says. "I couldn't turn that down."

With more than 100 million monthly unique visitors, BuzzFeed is a hub for viral media and an outlet for original reporting and breaking news. Merevick covers gay rights issues in the U.S. and abroad, reporting on everything from marriage equality to Russia's anti-gay policies. On the eve of the signing of Illinois' historic marriage equality legislation, he scored an exclusive interview with Gov. Pat Quinn. As a reporter for BuzzFeed, he flew back to Chicago to interview Quinn in person and stayed for the signing ceremony at UIC Pavilion—a full-circle moment for Merevick, having covered the bill since it was introduced.

At BuzzFeed less than a year, Merevick is just getting started. "It's full of amazing and talented people I consider myself very lucky to work alongside every day, and it's a place where journalistic integrity and storytelling are taken very seriously," says Merevick. "It's exactly where I'm supposed to be."



Before landing at BuzzFeed, Tony Merevick launched his own digital LGBT publication, Chicago Phoenix, while still a student at Columbia.

# Top 20s

## Young alumni make their marks in careers they love



**Derek Bahr**  
Professional guitarist  
Age: 26, Nashville, Tenn.

Since moving to Nashville shortly after graduating, Derek Bahr (BM '10, Music) has become an in-demand guitarist for country music stars including Miranda Lambert, Brad Paisley and Dierks Bentley. He also released a solo EP, *Sober Years*, in 2011.



**Andrew Coate**  
Community & Content Manager at Kapost  
Age: 27, Boulder, Colo.

The founder of startup online marketing company Kapost specifically sought Andrew Coate (BA '09, AEMM) as a member of his marketing "dream team." Coate's data-driven approach and ability to succeed with limited resources brought him to the attention of the fledgling company, which has marketed for well-known brands like Allstate, AT&T and Yellow Pages.



**Brittany Davis**  
Rapper  
Age: 25, Chicago

Brittany Davis ('13, Graphic Design), under the stage name Bebe O'Hare, made a splash in Chicago's rap scene with the release of her first mixtape, *Fashionably Late*, last October. The South Side native studied graphic design at Columbia but found her calling when she started rapping for fun one winter break. Her mixtape's big-name cameos from BJ the Chicago Kid and Wiz Khalifa, as well as stellar press from Chicago's top hip-hop blog, Fake Shore Drive, position her to make it big.

(continued on page 12)



## FEATURE



### Ross Feighery Photographer at Ross Feighery Photography

Age: 27, Chicago &  
Los Angeles

Ross Feighery (BA '09, Photography) has snapped photographs for the Field Museum, Lens Crafters and Kraft. Chicago commuters will remember his "Working Dead" ads for the Solixir energy drink that were plastered all over train platforms last spring.



### Whitney Fox Junior animation writer at Nickelodeon

Age: 24, Burbank, Calif.

Whitney Fox (BA '11, Television) landed a Nickelodeon internship after meeting an executive at a Columbia event. During the internship, a script coordinator was promoted and chose Fox to replace her. In her running gig at Nickelodeon, Fox has served as the script coordinator for *Robot & Monster* and *T.U.F.F. Puppy*.



### Ryan Lowry Photographer

Age: 24, Chicago

Ryan Lowry's (BFA '11, Photography) bright, engaging and dynamic photo essays explore subjects ranging from Chicago's rap scene, Detroit residents and the inner workings and life of Costco. Lowry's compelling work earns him consistent gigs for *The Chicago Reader*, *Nylon*, Topshop and *The Wall Street Journal*.



### Mike Marsoupiian Production assistant on set of *The Mentalist*

Age: 26, Los Angeles

As an assistant to the executive producer of CBS drama *The Mentalist*, Mike Marsoupiian (BA '11, Television) constantly buzzes around the Warner Brothers set, handling everything from call sheets to VIP tours. He says the amount of work that goes into one episode is "mind-boggling," but he loves the fast-paced environment.

(continued on page 14)

### ROMA SHAH: FASHION FANCIER

Roma Shah's infectious energy and intensity have taken her to one of the most iconic fashion houses in the world. At 28, Shah (BA '08) is a sales manager for Saint Laurent (formerly Yves Saint Laurent), where she oversees the wholesale of the brand's shoes and accessories for all of North and South America. "I want to always show that I love what I do," says the rising fashion star, whose boundless enthusiasm for the industry was cultivated at Columbia. "It's what I carry from my college career into my life now."

Shah grew up in Chicago and chose Columbia for its stellar fashion department and reputation for hands-on training. "You could be an entrepreneur and be in school," says Shah. "It was the best choice I could have made."

At Columbia, Shah built on her fashion skills and experience. Her favorite professor, Barbara Samuels, taught a class that teamed photography, fashion design and fashion business students to produce photo shoots. "It was really cool because you worked with people from different departments," Shah says. "Collaboration is key. That's what it's like in the real world." ▶



After graduating in 2008, Roma Shah moved to New York City to join the corporate accessories team at Valentino. Now as sales manager at Saint Laurent, she works with buyers from upscale department stores.



**Roma Shah**

BA '08, AEMM

Sales Manager, Saint Laurent

Age: 28, New York City



## FEATURE



**Meghan Mathes**  
Manager of  
Development for TV  
at Evolution  
Entertainment

Age: 27, Los Angeles

At Evolution, Meghan Mathes (BA '09, Television) scours books, articles, blogs and more with an eye for potential TV series, then monitors the development of scripts and pitches the ideas to studios. Because Evolution Television is a new venture, its ongoing projects are under wraps, but Mathes says that A-list stars have been recruited for some of her developing shows. Today, Evolution's TV division partners with Lionsgate and other major studios.



**Kate Riegler-van West**  
Designer,  
Performer, Inventor

Age: 27, Somerville, Mass.

Kate Riegler-van West (MFA '11, Interdisciplinary Arts) created a new way to amp up her performances of poi, the Maori art of spinning tethered weights. For an assignment in her Space and Place class, Riegler-van West invented the Orbiter, a poi tool that allows artists to manipulate light and sound as they spin the weights. The invention earned her an Albert P. Weisman Award in 2011, and she gave a successful TED talk about it in October 2013. The Orbiter is still in prototype mode, but Riegler-van West is meeting with potential investors to sell her creation.



**Angela Snow**  
Director/producer  
at To the Moon  
Productions

Age: 29, New York City

Angela Snow (BA '06, Film + Video) and Josh Gibson (BA '06, Film + Video) wanted to make movies and travel the world. So they created their own company, To the Moon Productions. Today, To the Moon has filmed videos for travel companies in Peru, Greece and throughout Europe, and also produced a video for Habitat for Humanity. The pair's latest documentary, *World Circus*, follows five acts to the international Monte Carlo Circus Festival.

—Hannah Lorenz ('16)



**“I fell in love with the wholesale business the minute I walked into [Valentino’s] office.”**

During her junior year, Shah interned at the corporate headquarters of Valentino in New York, working with the accessories team. “I fell in love with the wholesale business the minute I walked into that office,” she says. “I felt really lucky to be working with such amazing people who were making such beautiful things.” A highlight of her intern experience: seeing Mr. Valentino’s last ready-to-wear runway show in Paris before he retired. “It was a really exciting time in fashion for me, at a really early age,” she says.

After graduating in 2008, Shah moved to New York City to join the corporate accessories team at Valentino. Two years later, she moved to Mumbai to work at *Vogue India* on the editorial team for fashion features and the beauty team. She began freelancing for the legendary brand Yves Saint Laurent, now called simply Saint Laurent Paris, in 2011, and moved to New York for her current job later that year.

As a wholesaler, Shah works with buyers from department stores including Bergdorf Goodman, Barneys New York and Neiman Marcus, as well as boutiques like A’ Maree’s in Newport Beach, Calif., and Chicago’s Blake. Every store’s needs and expectations are different. One day, Shah might work on styling Barneys’ online presence. The next, she might travel to Paris with her team for a runway show followed by briefings and market campaign development. “My day is always changing. No job is too little for me,” she says. “What keeps me motivated is how often fashion changes.”

Shah’s newest personal side projects are soon-to-be-launched blogs LeProfiles.com and YvesDropping.com, with photography by friend Perrie Schad (BFA '07). They will celebrate the often-unsung creativity of people working on the business side of fashion. “I want to highlight the people who inspire me every day,” Shah says.

In 2012, Yves Saint Laurent rebranded itself under a new creative director, Hedi Slimane, who wanted to nod to the brand’s classic designs while looking toward the future—with Shah following every step of the way. “It is like working for a new company. It’s modern, fresh and exciting,” says Shah. “We are making fashion history.” ■





# CHANGING COURSE

What happens when your life's work no longer seems the right work? For these alumni artists, it's all about following the heart

By William Meiners (MFA '96)

**In the arts, timing is everything: the musician's backbeat, the actor's delivered line, the dancer's choreographed leap.** For many artists, knowing when to transition from center stage to a supporting role can make all the difference in their lives—and in the lives of others.

Three Columbia College Chicago alumni spent much of their time practicing toward artistic perfection before even starting kindergarten.

Caitlin Strokosch (BA '98) would have been dwarfed by the cello she first played as a 3-year-old in her Oak Park home. Rachael Albers (BA '06) recalls always performing, acting and singing in Chicago's western suburbs. And Shawn Lent (MAM '06) may have only dreamed of the places the arts would take her when she danced as a child in Saginaw, Mich.

These three women are linked beyond the intense training they followed through their college years. Each has parlayed artistic backgrounds into successful work in nonprofit fields. Strokosch is the executive director of Alliance of Artists Communities, an organization in Providence, R.I., that has helped lift artists' voices worldwide. Albers has set up a nonprofit shop in Chiapas, Mexico, working with indigenous women to use theatre as a tool of popular resistance. And Lent has traveled the globe, creating dialogue through dance, raising money for children's cancer hospitals and recently inspiring thousands through her writing about what it means to be an artist.





**Caitlin Strokosch**

CLASSICAL CELLIST

PROFESSIONAL PERFORMER

ARTS ADMINISTRATOR

**A CELLO'S IMPRINT**

As much as she enjoyed playing cello, Caitlin Strokosch had a bit of a rebellious streak when it came to the instrument she played almost daily for 25 years. “I wanted to be in a setting that wasn’t a traditional, conservatory style,” she says.

Strokosch majored in classical cello at Augustana College in Rock Island, Ill., but transferred to Loyola University in Chicago and started playing with rock bands. One night, an emergency put her music in perspective. When Strokosch’s apartment building caught on fire, she risked her life dashing back to retrieve her beloved instrument from the flames. She says, “I remember thinking: ‘Why am I studying English at Loyola when all I really want to do is play the cello?’”

Strokosch spent her senior year taking classes in Columbia’s music department. The lone cellist in the program, she earned performance credit in theatre productions and fostered collaborations that offered career possibilities outside of an orchestra pit.

“Columbia was so different from the strict, classical training I had,” says Strokosch, who loved being taught by professional musicians like Gustavo Leone, Athanasios Zervas and Joe Cerqua.

Cerqua hired her to play the cello on a couple recording gigs while offering a bit of a backhanded compliment: “You’re not the best cello player I know, but you’ll show up on time and be prepared,” he said.

Strokosch knew he was right. She was a good cello player and could probably make some sort of living with it. But her professionalism also prepared her for other fields.

**“I’m very comfortable [facilitating] other artists’ dreams.”**

Encouraged by professors, Strokosch learned the logistics of putting on a concert: creating a flier, paying the accompaniment and so forth. “It never occurred to me that there was a whole field of administrators out there supporting artists,” she says.

Strokosch’s first foray into the nonprofit arts world came with managing Chicago music ensembles such as Bella Voce and CUBE. She began her work at the Alliance of Artists Communities in 2002, learning the ins and outs of artistic administration. “I liked the idea of being part of a team that brings new work into the world,” she says. “And I’m very comfortable [facilitating] other artists’ dreams.”

As executive director since 2008, she’s furthered those dreams in spades, launching several major initiatives, helping to grow Alliance membership by 40 percent and leading an organization that has granted more than \$2 million in funds to artists and residency programs.

One recent project, New Voices of Modern Arab Literature, found safe residential havens for emerging writers from 10 different countries in the Arab world. “In a three-year project, we found 30 residences at 18 different sites around the world,” Strokosch says. “Some writers were literally running [from] countries that were falling apart.” The vast logistical concerns, such as obtaining visas and securing translators, paid off. “On a small scale, we were able to offer real, intimate interactions for cultural understanding,” Strokosch says. That good work she’s able to share makes her journey worthwhile.

“I struggled for a long time with not having the cello as strongly in my life. But I started playing the electric guitar in bands and still have music in my life in a way that’s incredibly exciting,” says Strokosch, who now sports a tattoo of the cello’s f-holes. “So it seems okay now. My cello is always with me.”



## A TALE OF TWO COLUMBIAS



**From Columbia, Mo., to Columbia College, Louise Packard found her footing as a nonprofit fundraiser**

**Louise Packard** (BA '10) enjoyed two very different college experiences—the first at a traditional state school in the Midwest and the second in the City of Big Shoulders. But when she left Columbia, Mo., (and the University of Missouri) for Columbia College Chicago, she quickly discovered the possibilities of a career in the nonprofit world.

Looking to become more marketable, the former double major (journalism and art history) studied arts, entertainment and media management, and took enthusiastically to Columbia's exhibition management courses.

**“I help donors and volunteers find the most meaningful way in which they can give back.”**

“Professor Robert Blandford helped me understand that even as an artist, you should learn to be self-sufficient,” says Packard. “In the very least, if you can't practice your own art, you can help other projects come to life through fundraising.”

While still at Columbia, Packard first interned at Marwen, a nonprofit providing free visual arts classes to Chicago youth, which introduced her to grant writing, a responsibility she not only enjoyed, but mastered. That experience led to an internship at the Museum of Contemporary Art, which turned into a post-graduation job.

Today, the 25-year-old is the associate director of mission advancement for the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago, where she oversees a board of managers and trustees and cultivates major gifts for capital campaigns and new programs, including those centered on the arts.

“People my age are making charitable contributions at higher rates every year,” she says. “[And] we're very generous with our time. In my role, I help donors and volunteers find the most meaningful way in which they can give back.”

Like many Midwest dreamers, Packard found her calling in the bustle of the city. She says she received a strong general education in Columbia, Mo., but Columbia College gave her the practicality and marketability to be a lifelong fundraiser.



### Rachael Albers

ASPIRING ACTRESS

LAWYER

FREELANCE DESIGNER / RADICAL THEATRE ORGANIZER / ARTS ACTIVIST

#### AN ACTING ACTIVIST

Rachael Albers was destined to be a star. She says she chose Broadway over the Backstreet Boys as a kid, memorizing entire musicals, such as *A Chorus Line*, for bedroom performances. Columbia's theatre program seemed the perfect fit for the driven actress.

Her transition away from performance started as she neared graduation. “I became very frustrated with the arts as I had experienced them at that point,” says Albers, who was tired of what felt like a self-centered focus and didn't want to play the real-life part of a struggling actress.

She settled on law school, at least for a time, enrolling at DePaul University and dedicating herself to learning legalese. After completing her first year in 2008, she landed a summer internship in Mexico to work at a nonprofit for an indigenous women's rights group. The project fell through, however, and to salvage her summer, Albers volunteered with a Mayan women's collective called FOMMA that used theatre as a tool for education, empowerment and popular resistance in lives marked by poverty and lack of opportunity.

“For the first time, I saw theatre and art being used for social change,” Albers says.

“It was amazing to me to see how powerful it was in the lives of these women and in these communities.”

Law school didn't stand much of a chance after that. Albers says all she wanted to do was research the theatre of the oppressed, a concept (coincidentally introduced to her at Columbia by Jeff Ginsberg, associate professor of theatre) that asks the audience to become participants, or “spect-actors,” in attempts to transform the realities of their own lives. “I knew I wasn't doing what I call my heart work [in law school],” she says. “I had to go back to Mexico.”

Fluent in Spanish, Albers volunteers with





**“This work is about empowering people to find the artist within themselves.”**

established schools and community-based organizations to help them prepare and stage theatre shows in the Mayan heartland. In one city, a production drew in a crowd of nearly 400 people—“all hungry” for the message of resistance. Sometimes the groups share cautionary tales, true accounts of their experiences of discrimination and violence.

In addition, Albers runs her own freelance web design business, RKA Ink, using the marketing skills she picked up at Columbia. She has since worked with several repeating clients to enhance their online presence, which has helped further her humanitarian work.

As for the meandering path to her current position, Albers wouldn't change a thing. “Columbia gave me this solid artistic foundation,” she says. “Law school helped to inform and amplify my radicalism. Through the process of learning the legal language our country and world speaks, I'm able to use that knowledge to help people who are fighting the system.”

Albers wants to take that fight further. Last year, she traveled to Kenya to work with the nonprofit Girls Shift Africa. Through an art and theatre workshop, Albers helped the organization establish a group that could continue in her absence.

“I believe everyone's an artist,” Albers says. “This work is about empowering people to find the artist within themselves.”



## Shawn Lent

PROFESSIONAL DANCER

FUNDRAISER / BLOGGING SENSATION /  
ARTS EDUCATOR

### A DANCER DEFINED

Shawn Lent started stepping away from the idea of being a “professional” dancer not long after she graduated from Millikin University in Decatur, Ill. She says she knew she was very good, but maybe not great in a business that's quick to pick up on faults. The demands on a body and the long odds of finding steady work played into her decision to find a practical alternative.

Days after 9/11, Lent was in a predominately Muslim neighborhood in East London as a youth worker and dance critic. She then began pondering the role of dance in divided communities, forever altering her own professional path.

At Columbia, Lent enrolled in the Arts, Entertainment and Media Management master's degree program and joined a small cohort of students who embraced financial planning, applied marketing and fundraising. She began exploring arts in education and youth development. She volunteered to teach children with cancer how to dance and began applying some of her newfound business skills to help raise money in hopes of bettering their lives.

“Once I got involved with the Children's Hospital of Chicago, I got much more comfortable asking for money,” Lent says.

As advised by faculty and peers, she applied for “everything,” writing proposals for fellowships and applying to attend conferences about integrating arts into various aspects of life. Passionate about her own global education, she has since traveled from Belfast to Bosnia, Palestine to Uganda—often embedded in war-torn communities—both teaching and engaging in dialogue through dance.

In 2010, Lent returned to Millikin University to talk to students about her evolving role in arts education. During the question-and-

## DREAM CHIEF



**Lifelong go-getter  
helps others pursue  
their passions**

For as long as he can remember, **Cesar Lerma** (BA '11), a Chicago native, wanted to live in New York City and work in the music business. He networked and paid his dues through unpaid internships, always focused on his future. He's in Manhattan today, but now helping college students find their dream jobs as a program director at a company called Dream Careers.

Music boiled in Lerma's blood. He watched family members gig all over Chicago, but wanted to shine the light on that scene, working for a record label and promoting the talent.

Barely out of high school, Lerma called record companies in New York City, hoping a live voice could point him to a Chicago internship. "My opportunities came from networking and being resourceful," Lerma says. "A lot of people shot me down, but one guy at Atlantic Records hooked me up with my first internship at Jaguar Entertainment, a marketing and promotions company in Chicago."

Before, during and after Columbia, Lerma landed 10 music internships, including stints at Universal Motown, Island Def Jam and 107.5 WGCI. He worked with Vickie Charles, the Cash Money publicist who handles Drake, Nicki Minaj and Lil Wayne.

Between internships, work and school, Lerma barely had time to sleep. He worked at Whole Foods and picked up seasonal music industry jobs. "If you're in the music business, you're going to work for free for a while," says Lerma.

He found cheap housing at New York University in the summers, offsetting the expense of free labor. In all, Lerma spent six consecutive summers in New York, learning public relations, even working a few events at the Grammys.

That single-focused pursuit changed last fall when Lerma was selected, from more than 200 applicants, for the position of Dream Careers' program director for its NYC programs. It's a chance to show students the professional ropes on the business path he took to so aggressively 10 years ago. Over the fall and winter, Lerma worked and lived with 20 "dreamers" in dorms, providing guidance and motivational support.

"I may have missed out by being too focused on the music industry," says Lerma. "I'm content where my life is right now, taking it day by day."

# FIND A WAY HOME

**"I decided to be an artist in this world. I teach dance, I lead dance experiences ... . And it certainly feels like fulfilling a dream, rather than giving up on one."**

answer period, a student nearly stopped her in her tracks by asking, "Did you have any sort of breakdown when you gave up on your dreams [of being a professional dancer]?"

Lent calmly explained that she had not given up on her dreams; they had, in fact, gotten bigger. But the question nagged at her.

A full-time arts integration dance specialist at Columbia for six years after earning her master's degree, Lent obtained a Fulbright scholarship that took her to Egypt in 2012 to explore a project called "The Artist as Catalyst." The Fulbright required her to write a blog about her experiences. For one post, she revisited the Millikin student's question in the reflection, "Am I a Dancer Who Gave Up?"

"I am dancing, with and for others. I am and will always be a dancer. I take that with me, in the ways I think, develop ideas, move," she wrote. "I haven't been on a professional or semi-professional stage in six years, but I am a dancer. ... I am an artist who had decided to join tables off the professional stage."

Almost overnight, the blog went viral. It was "liked," forwarded and eventually reposted as a feature in Huffington Post Arts, receiving more than 140,000 hits. Clearly, Lent's experience had struck a chord with artists who also had found professional fulfillment away from the spotlight.

In the hectic aftermath, Lent has tried to maintain running dialogues with many people to somehow "mobilize the energy." In her current Egyptian setting, she's seen firsthand the revolutionary reactions that social media can help stir.

Today, Lent advocates the need for artists to be "at the table"—from school boards to community development organizations. Their perspectives, centered in creativity, can help shed light on any problem. And she doesn't feel diverted from her art at all.

"I decided to be an artist in this world. I teach dance, I lead dance experiences, I choreograph, I manage and evaluate programs, consult, share, think, write ...," she blogged. "And it certainly feels like fulfilling a dream, rather than giving up on one." ▣

## WEB EXCLUSIVE

Read Shawn Lent's blog post that rocked the arts world, "Am I a Dancer Who Gave Up?," at [colum.edu/demo](http://colum.edu/demo).



IP

# “COLOSSAL”

SUCCESS

How **Christopher Jobson** (BA '04) turned his humble passion project—an art and visual culture blog—into a full-time, professional career



By Sean McEntee ('14) / Photography by Jacob Boll (BA '12)



### On the morning of March 9, 2011,

Christopher Jobson (BA '04) posted Sagaki Keita's surreal, intricately detailed ink drawings to his arts and visual culture blog, Colossal. By 5 p.m. that day, so many visitors flooded the site that his server crashed.

Before promoting the Keita doodles, the months-old Colossal ([thisiscolossal.com](http://thisiscolossal.com)) had a few hundred visitors. As that post went viral, more than 1 million visitors flocked to the blog over a few hours. Today, Colossal attracts around 3 million visitors a month, an almost unheard-of number of fans in the blog world—and Jobson curates, writes, develops and designs all blog content himself. He has become one of the dedicated few able to support himself (and his family) by professionally blogging.

That the self-proclaimed “terrible” artist has become a bonafide tastemaker in the international arts and media scene has surprised just about everyone—especially Jobson himself. Up until that fateful day in 2011, after all, he was just a guy who started a blog.

### PRE-COLOSSAL PERIOD

Jobson grew up dually in rural Kyle, Texas, and Chicago—his mother lived in Texas and his father, Columbia College Art + Design associate professor Craig Jobson, lived in Evanston.

He discovered his creative and entrepreneurial outlet during his freshman year of high school in 1996. After his father sent him a modem, Jobson learned how to build his own websites and earn money with online advertising.

“I was very, very fascinated with the Internet very early on,” he says. “By my senior year in high school, checks were showing up in the mail because I had started [featuring] advertisements on websites.”

Jobson was receiving monthly checks for as much as \$500 from advertisements on his website, [animalhumor.com](http://animalhumor.com). Before graduating, he sold the site for \$7,000—which he used to buy his first car and drive to Burning Man, the notoriously radical arts and culture festival in the Nevada desert.

In 2000, Jobson began attending Columbia College to study interactive multimedia design, which combined Web development—HTML, Javascript—with design classes emphasizing typography, drawing and art history.

He specifically remembers the impact of professor Janell Baxter, who still teaches in what is now the Interactive Arts + Media Department. Baxter, says Jobson, repeated the advice, “Stay relevant even after what you’ve learned is obsolete.”

During sophomore year, Jobson had the sudden urge to “just get a job.” He approached a dozen advertising agencies in Chicago, and boutique Fathead Design hired him to work full time designing and developing for clients. The real-world job experience inspired him to branch out creatively and do something “that was just fun.” Engaged in his creative writing classes, he decided to finish his last two years of college studying in the Fiction Writing Department.

By the time Jobson graduated with a fiction writing degree, he had left his job at the ad agency to study abroad twice in Prague, and he knew he needed to get a job—any job—to pay the bills. He found work as a Web designer and developer for a downtown financial firm, but after a few years of being the only “creative” member of the team, he craved alternative outlets to feed his creative fire.

“THE BEST PART OF [COLUMBIA] WAS BEING AROUND OTHER PEOPLE WHILE THEY WERE MAKING ART. AND I WAS TERRIBLE AT IT.”

## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Since launching art and visual culture blog Colossal ([thisiscolossal.com](http://thisiscolossal.com)) in 2010, Christopher Jobson has become a bonafide arts and media tastemaker. He's contributed to *Slate*, *Wired*, *Designboom.com* and *Mental\_Floss*. The National Endowment for the Arts interviewed him, and a seventh-grade class in central Uganda picked his brain via Skype about art culture. Colossal has received the following recognition:

**2013 Utne Media Award for Arts Coverage**

**Named in the Top 100 Websites of 2013 by PC Magazine**

**Ranked at No. 40 in Technorati's list of the top 50 blogs**

**Featured in “100 Websites You Should Know and Use” by TED, 2013**

**Nominated for a 2012 Webby Award in the Art category**



## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A PROFESSIONAL BLOGGER

Christopher Jobson wakes up around 8 a.m. Coffee in hand, he works in his Rogers Park apartment or at any number of coffee shops throughout the North Side and Evanston. The Colossal blogger starts his day's work with his own version of reading the morning paper.

**"I read probably about 300 or 400 blogs a day," he says. "I have a Google Chrome extension that pings about 200 artists' websites, so it tells me the second they update their portfolio."**

Jobson's daily routine involves a lot of browsing and email correspondence—he receives up to 50 requests per day from artists pitching their work. His email inbox contains 33 gigabytes of used storage—thousands upon thousands of emails—and his browser toolbar bursts with bookmarks and folders leading to other art blogs, artists' portfolios and top social networking sites like Reddit, Tumblr, Behance and Flickr. For each post—about four or five a day—Jobson gathers visuals and links as well as proper credits and attribution.

After posts are finalized, published, Tweeted and Facebooked—totaling roughly a seven-hour work day—Jobson closes his laptop and picks up his son, Caleb, from school.



The shove he needed came during a mundane day while on jury duty. Required to remain in a courthouse room with no WiFi or entertainment, Jobson experienced a sort of existential panic. Overcome with anxiety, he broke out his laptop and typed a list of 100 things he wanted to accomplish in 2009—everything from reading a book to taking cooking and ceramics classes. Somewhere near the bottom, maybe number 76, Jobson wrote, "start a blog."

"That was it," Jobson says. "That changed my life."

### HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Jobson created Colossal as a humble passion project in summer 2010. He didn't want to rehash the mainstream art already being discussed. He wanted to find obscure, underground art and artists. This led to endless hours scrolling through Tumblr accounts run by college students, reading hundreds of blogs and trying to navigate a Korean art gallery's website. If Jobson conducted a search and couldn't find anything written about a particular artist or piece, he'd share it on Colossal. Since the beginning,

Jobson's desire to share never-before-seen content has set Colossal apart from the rest of the blogosphere.

And this passion for curating rather than creating aligns with Jobson's sensibilities: He has always considered himself an appreciator of the arts rather than an artist himself.

"The best part of [Columbia] was being around other people while they were making art," he says. "And I was terrible at it. I did not enjoy making art, and it was awful, and it was frustrating."

Treating Colossal as a sort of virtual gallery, Jobson strives to appeal to the most prestigious of readers and critics. "I think about these fictional 30 or 40 people who are completely plugged into the art world who have seen absolutely everything, and I'm like, 'I'm going to make them my audience,'" Jobson says.

### FROM SIDE PROJECT TO CAREER

After Keita's doodles went viral, Jobson was hooked. How many unknown artists could he find and share? ►

MOST VISITORS IN ONE MONTH: 3.8 MILLION NOV 2013

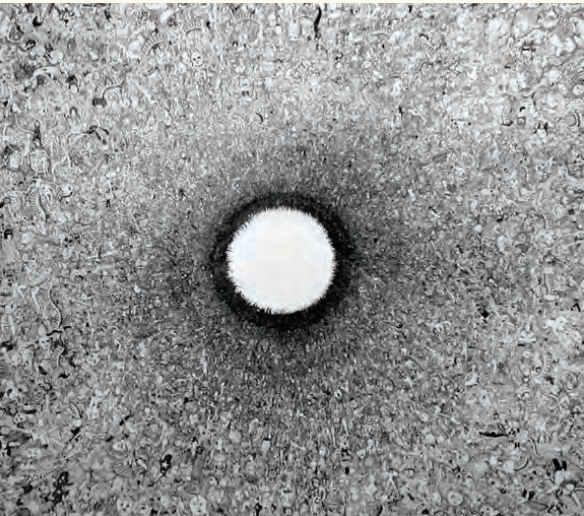
1,937,704 # GOOGLE+ FANS

FACEBOOK FANS: 400,260 #

TWITTER FOLLOWERS: 83,900 #

# THE BEST OF COLOSSAL

Since 2010, Colossal has showcased thousands of the world's quirkiest, weirdest and most beautiful artworks. Here are three of the blog's most popular attractions.



## “Manic Doodle Drawings”

### SAGAKI KEITA

MARCH 9, 2011

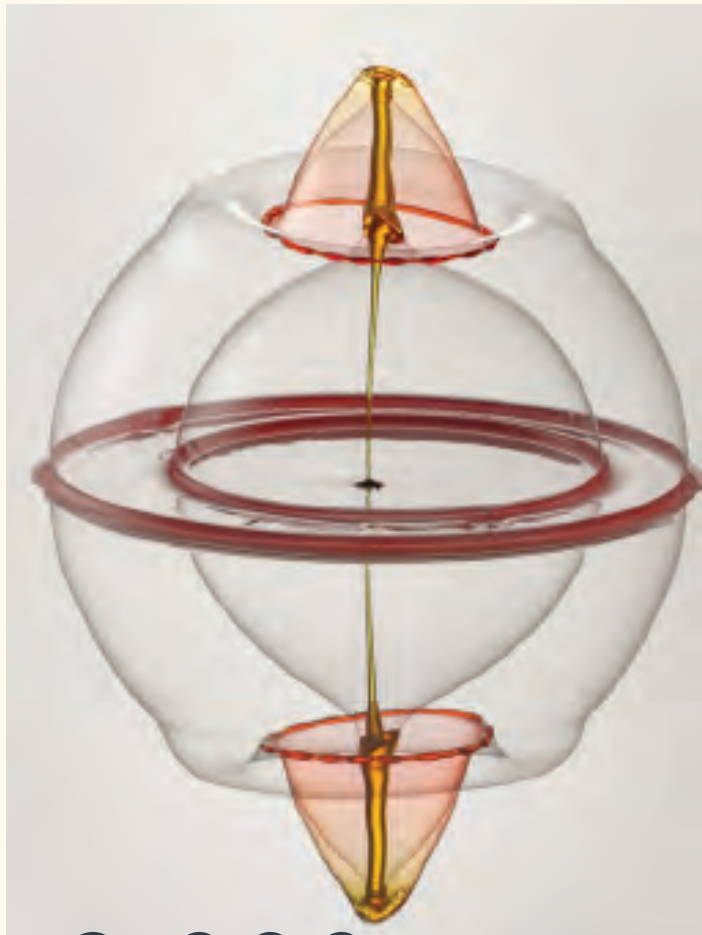
*In the post that made Colossal famous, Jobson marvels at the Japanese artist's recreation of fine art pieces composed of doodles. “His densely composited pen and ink illustrations contain thousands of whimsical characters that are drawn almost completely improvised. I am dumbstruck looking at these,” Jobson writes.*

## “This is What Happens When You Give Thousands of Stickers to Thousands of Kids”

### YAYOI KUSAMA

JANUARY 1, 2012

*At the Queensland Gallery of Modern Art, the Japanese artist constructed a completely white environment, complete with furniture and decorations, “effectively serving as a giant white canvas,” writes Jobson. Over the course of two weeks, the museum gave children thousands of colored dot stickers and asked them to “collaborate in the transformation of the space, turning the house into a vibrantly mottled explosion of color. How great is this?”*



## “High-Speed Liquid and Bubble Photographs”

### HEINZ MAIER

OCTOBER 27, 2011

*Jobson praises the German photographer's sophisticated shots of water droplets, writing, “Simply outstanding: the lighting, the colors, the occasional use of symmetry in the reflection of water, let alone the skill of knowing how to use the camera itself. It's hard to believe these aren't digital.”*

NUMBER OF POSTS: 3,000 AND COUNTING

PAGE VISITS IN 2013: 20 MILLION

3 MILLION MONTHLY VISITORS ON AVERAGE



Jobson began receiving submissions from artists all over the world. He spent endless hours scavenging for the “one obscure, weird thing” that nobody had seen. He blogged about five hours every night after work as well as on his lunch breaks at the financial firm.

As agonizing and exhausting as the process could be, Jobson’s labor started to pay off—literally.

In 2012, Colossal was nominated for a Webby Award in the Art category. Actor Neil Patrick Harris even tweeted about the blog, endorsing Colossal as “artistic, smart and inspiring.”

Then a Google advertisement featured Colossal as an example of how to add a publication to a Google Currents account, showing a few pages of the site being swiped across a screen. In 2012, Colossal showed up in an Apple iPad commercial. (For a few seconds, the audience can see Colossal bookmarked in the browser window.) People began approaching Jobson, saying, “I had never heard of Colossal before I saw it in that iPad commercial.”

The blog’s audience continued to grow, attracting nearly 2.5 million viewers a month. Jobson made repeated attempts to sell advertisements, but his site traffic was too large for smaller agencies, and better-known agencies were hesitant to work with a site they didn’t know.

Finally, New York-based advertising agency Nectar Ads asked Colossal to be a part of an “art ad network” with site-specific content that catered to the art world. Jobson says the ads displayed on Colossal are “almost an enhancement,” adding that many of the site’s sponsored posts and advertising efforts have gone viral themselves.

**▶ WEB EXTRA**

Which bloggers inspire Christopher Jobson?  
How has Colossal boosted artists’ popularity?  
Find out at [colum.edu/demo](http://colum.edu/demo).

Knowing he, his wife, Megan Stielstra (associate director of Columbia’s Center for Innovation in Teaching Excellence), and their son, Caleb, could live a comfortable, sustainable life with the revenue from Colossal’s ads, Jobson decided to blog full time. He left his job at the financial firm in early 2013—nearly two years after the Keita doodles went viral—but it wasn’t necessarily an easy transition.

“Those first four weeks ... I was just a nutcase,” Jobson says. “It was like flapping my wings—like I don’t even know if I’m flying. It was one of the greatest things I’ve done as a person—to create this thing that I can live

off of—but it was terrifying.”

Last year, Colossal added a store—an additional small revenue stream—where featured artists can sell merchandise from a “stock room” conveniently run from Jobson’s Rogers Park apartment.

“I hope that whatever comes out of [Colossal]—if I end up creating actual art shows or maybe even open a gallery or store—that I’m still waking up at 8 in the morning so I can put something up on the blog,” Jobson says. “That’s the core of all of it; it’s the most important thing.” ▣

**“IT WAS ONE OF THE  
GREATEST THINGS I’VE DONE  
AS A PERSON—TO CREATE  
THIS THING THAT I CAN  
LIVE OFF OF—BUT IT WAS  
TERRIFYING.”**



# DREAM WEAVER

Newspaper photographer by day, Lenny Gilmore (BFA '10) explores otherworldly themes in meticulously constructed and personal collages

**Take a walk in the city, and chances are** you'll encounter the work of photographer Lenny Gilmore (BFA '10). As photo editor of *RedEye*, the *Chicago Tribune's* free daily news and pop culture publication, Gilmore captures striking cover images that draw passersby to newspaper boxes stationed on hundreds of street corners.

Gilmore, who went from *RedEye* intern to photo editor in three short years, attended high school in the western suburb of Batavia, Ill., and transferred to Columbia after spending two years at Northern Illinois University. He immediately immersed himself on campus, both in the Photography Department and as a photo editor at the *Columbia Chronicle*.

"Columbia is really good at presenting all these different opportunities to you, and you just have to be aware and know what each person is offering and make the most of it," says Gilmore, who ties his initial interest in photography to a father-son road trip when he was 14 that left him "obsessed with and inspired by the evolving landscape."

One of Gilmore's earliest champions at Columbia was adjunct faculty member Rachel Herman, who let him assist her with work on a children's book. "She really treated me like a peer rather than a student, which I appreciated," Gilmore says. "And she's continued to meet with me and mentor me as I've hit little roadblocks in my life."

Gilmore continues to develop his skills both as a photojournalist and as a conceptual artist. His personal creative spark resulted in *Year One*, a haunting group of photo collages that ruminates on the connection between dreams and memories while poetically depicting the coming of age of its protagonist, played by Gilmore himself.

"The World That Never Sleeps," *Space Dreams Us Dangerous* series, 2014. This image will be the last in the series' narrative. "I was told once that if you know how a story ends, it's much easier to get it there, so that's why I made it first," says Gilmore. "You see my characters [played by Gilmore and girlfriend Petya Shalamanova] have returned to Earth and are sort of being embraced by the natural world as they embrace each other."





## PORTFOLIO

The series attracted the attention of the prestigious Catherine Edelman Gallery, which featured it as part of its Chicago Project, an online showcase of local talent. Gilmore followed up with *First Flights*, a second collage series exploring the mythology of superheroes.

“Journalism keeps me connected to my community and in touch with reality, but collage lets me tell the story of what’s happening in my head and heart,” says Gilmore of his desire to create more conceptual work. “It allows me to approach a photograph like a painter would a canvas. I can be meditative, methodical or OCD, and express whatever I dream and not just what I see.”

**“Journalism keeps me connected to my community and in touch with reality, but collage lets me tell the story of what’s happening in my head and heart.”**

Gilmore’s latest project, *Space Dreams Us Dangerous*, is the creative summation of his previous series and is, in essence, a photographic narrative. Starting from intricately detailed sketches, Gilmore transformed his Humboldt Park studio into an ambitious production site—complete with miniature and life-sized sets, costumes and taxidermic animals—to tell the story of a cosmonaut, played by Petya Shalamanova (BFA ’10), Gilmore’s partner and a fellow photographer, who is being pursued by her former lover, played by Gilmore. Each of these elements, which number in the hundreds, was photographed individually and then digitally manipulated and composited into a single image using Photoshop CS6. ▶

“How Time Flies,” *First Flights* series, 2013. In his *First Flights* series of photographic collages, Gilmore plays off the theme of superheroes and how “fantastic strengths and effortless flight are used to thinly veil our own almost inescapable sense of fragility and restriction. A superhero’s strengths are our weaknesses and, conversely, their weaknesses are our fears.” In this piece, Gilmore “tried to give the collage the tension one can feel when watching hands move around a clock. To accomplish this, I tried to give my image a spiraling /twisting feel, to cause the eyes to observe it in a circular motion.” The collage is composed entirely of Gilmore’s own photography.











1

“I’m retooling all these disparate ideas I had while working on *Believed Imaginings* and *First Flights* and making a narrative that could work like a comic book, but also prints on a wall,” Gilmore says. Later this fall, Gilmore plans to release a hardcover volume of the final images printed alongside his earliest notes and sketches, allowing the reader an in-depth look at his creative process.

So, with a thriving professional and artistic career, where does this multitasking lensman see himself in five years? “My path hasn’t changed much in 10 years, so I don’t really see it changing in five,” he says with a laugh. “I see myself making documentaries, running a photography studio with Petya and my friends, and hopefully still [living] in Chicago. I love this city. It’s been good to me.”

—Brian Dukerschein (BA '12)

*Limited-edition prints of Gilmore’s conceptual work are available at ShopColumbia, his website (lennygilmore.com) and the Chicago Project (edelmangallery.com).*

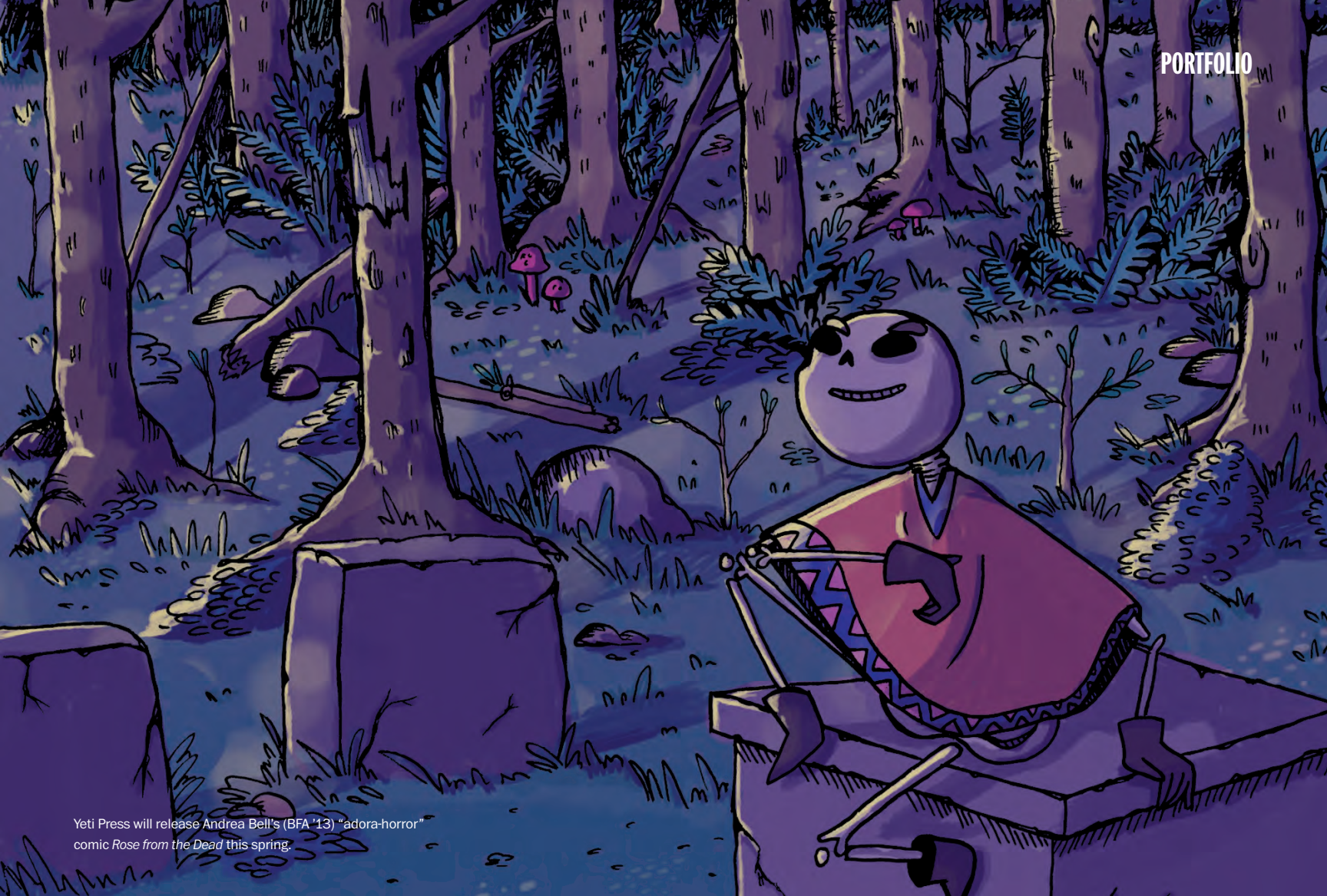


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1. “Past Time,” *Year One* series, 2009. “‘Past Time’ was an image conceptually created from combining three of my memories,” Gilmore says. “I had originally planned the collage to be an aerial view of my memory of my first kiss, when I was in middle school. As I started to construct the image, I started to reminisce and had a realization that the first kiss wasn’t that significant in itself; it was more what the kiss represented to me: a first brush with adulthood and the optimism of youth. 9/11 happened the same week as my first kiss, and I wanted to subtly reference how that distant event started to form my worldview and challenge that bottomless optimism.”

2. “Pale Orange Dots,” *Space Dreams Us Dangerous* series, 2014. “The idea and title of this image comes from the 1990 photograph of Earth taken by the Voyager 1 space probe called ‘Pale Blue Dot,’” says Gilmore. “The thing that is so impactful about that photograph is how insignificant Earth appears, as only a small blue speck on the endless black of space. In ‘Pale Orange Dots,’ I’m trying to do the opposite. ‘Pale Blue Dot’ made the most significant thing in our lives seem totally unimpressive, so I wanted to make an insignificant thing (like orange juice) seem totally impressive and majestic.”





Yeti Press will release Andrea Bell's (BFA '13) "adora-horror" comic *Rose from the Dead* this spring.

## MAKING A MARK

Upstart Yeti Press leaves its big, hairy footprint on Chicago comics

When Eric Roesner (BFA '11) and RJ Casey teamed up to create their tongue-in-cheek cowboy comic, *Pecos*, they wanted to make the final product—and their artistic partnership—official. With just that first title under their belt, they pulled together a logo (a hairy, blue monster foot), and Yeti Press came to life.

Since its 2011 debut, the self-proclaimed “comic books for Bigfoots” publisher keeps getting bigger. The small-but-mighty entity now boasts 15 titles, with six more releases spread across 2014. But don't come to Yeti looking for capes and tights; instead, you'll find alternative comics and graphic novels that veer away from standard superhero fare. Most Yeti contributors are young Chicago artists, a majority culled from Columbia's Illustration program, including David Alvarado (BFA '11), Kevin Budnik (BFA '11), Kat Leyh (BFA '11), Biz Knapp (BFA '11), Andrea Bell (BFA '13) and Sean Mac ('14).

Yeti comics subjects range from human connections, like Kat Leyh's intimate relationship comic *Pancakes*, to surreal adult stories like Casey and Alvarado's *Beginner's Luck*, a tale of a deadbeat fish on an underwater bender. These books sell everywhere from alternative comics conventions to local stores like Quimby's Bookstore and Chicago Comics, though business really booms online.

Kevin Budnik met Roesner in Intro to Graphic Design, and joined Casey in a sandwich-centric collaboration called *Party Sub* under the Yeti Press stamp. Budnik had also been working on *Our Ever Improving Living Room*, a project that grew out of a Columbia class assignment to create a journal comic every day for a year. After Budnik wrapped up all 365 entries, Yeti asked if he'd be interested in publishing the collection.

“I'm not one to ever get excited about things. I'm very low key,” says Budnik. “But when we





1. Yeti's successful Kickstarter campaign funded the printing of Kat Leyh's female-fronted fantasy comic *Bird Witch*.

2. Kevin Budnik began drawing his daily journal comic *Our Ever Improving Living Room* as a Columbia class assignment.

3. One of Yeti's best-sellers, *Pancakes* follows a "strong relationship at a turning point."





*Pecos*, the cowboy comedy “full of action, adventure and mustaches,” was the first comic printed on the Yeti Press label.

## “If you want to be in comics, you have to pave your own path.”

had the release party at Challenger’s Comics [in Logan Square], I was sitting there thinking, ‘Wow, this is real! I have a book!’ I never really pictured that as a possibility.”

A successful 2013 Kickstarter campaign helped Yeti crowdfund this year’s titles. With the financial boost, Yeti welcomed new artists like Andrea Bell, whose cute-with-an-edge “adora-horror” comic *Rose from the Dead* will be released this spring. She first heard of Yeti Press through Columbia College connections, and she reached out to Roesner and Casey through social media to pitch her book.

“If you want to be in comics, you have to pave your own path,” she says. “You have to reach out and talk to people, go to conventions, and spend way too much time on Tumblr and Twitter seeing those artists.”

The tag-team mentorship of Ivan Brunetti and Chris “Elio” Eliopoulos, illustration professors and renowned comics professionals, is partly to thank for the recent outpouring of comics talent from Columbia. In fact, Roesner and Casey originally met through Eliopoulos, who thought they would make a good creative team. (“Everything’s kind of Chris’s fault,” Roesner jokes.) Brunetti, a frequent illustrator for *The New Yorker*, even wrote the introduction for Budnik’s *Our Ever Improving Living Room*.

The Yeti editors are pretty hands-off when it comes to the process behind the comics, but they do have one request for every new artist: to create their own version of the Yeti Press logo for the back of their book. In one version or another, the big, blue footprint should stamp across many more books to come. ■

—Megan Kirby

*Yeti Press will make an appearance at Chicago Alternative Comics Expo (CAKE) May 31–June 1.*





## Lee Bey



### Renaissance Man

**Lee Bey (BA '88) was sweating it out on a** May day in 2001. Less than three weeks into his job as Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley's deputy chief of staff, Bey found himself informing a room full of prized architects and Chicago Bears owners that the boss wanted a new football stadium to be shoehorned into the historic Soldier Field structure—instead of constructing a brand-new field elsewhere. Delivering the decision “nobody was happy about” forced the longtime journalist and architecture critic to improvise some serious diplomacy skills on the spot.

“I understood the gravity of what I was getting myself into,” Bey says, “but the fact that I could find the levers and ask the right questions to get this done—it was Columbia that taught me that.”

Born in 1965 to working-class parents on the South Side, Bey fell in love with the city at an early age. His parents took him “everywhere,” instilling in him an appreciation of Chicago's diverse neighborhoods and architecture. During the Sears Tower's construction in the early 1970s, the young Bey begged his father to drive him into the Loop regularly as the soon-to-be

world's tallest building climbed higher and higher into the sky.

A self-proclaimed “extraordinarily lazy” student, Bey got a wakeup call at age 15 when his 52-year-old father died suddenly. He went to vocational school to become a printing press operator. But when computer-operated presses came along, Bey took the advice of his English teacher and pursued journalism, writing for local newspapers and eventually enrolling in Columbia's journalism program in 1985.

“It was an interesting time because Harold Washington was mayor, and there was this interest in African Americans being represented and [having] voices in the media,” Bey says. “I said, ‘This is where I want to be.’”

Upon graduation in 1988, Bey went to work for the City News Bureau, the notoriously rigorous training ground for cub reporters to cover every tiny, grisly detail of the city's crimes, courts and political machines. From there, he moved to the *Daily Southtown* and then the *Chicago Sun-Times* in 1992, where he covered crime, gangs and government scandals—including the explosive story he and Maureen O'Donnell

broke about U.S. Rep. Mel Reynolds engaging in a sexual relationship with a teenaged campaign volunteer, which turned into a yearlong exposé that ultimately led to the politician's prison sentence.

Burnt out after covering “every story of murder, scam and rape” for three years, Bey jumped at the chance to become the *Sun-Times'* first architecture critic. The new editor selected him even though he'd written only one architecturally-themed piece, much to the shock of the other reporters—and Bey himself.

But Bey found his niche, using his weekly full-page column not only to critique new architecture, but to fight for the preservation of significant city landmarks, including those in Bronzeville, one of the nation's most important centers of African-American urban history—and where Bey's father had grown up.

“The city was moving to demolish [about eight] historic buildings that were the anchors of Bronzeville,” Bey says, so the paper campaigned to save them. “The city landmarked some, [and] they specifically saved the old Eighth Regiment Armory [the first U.S. armory

built for an African-American military regiment] and turned it into a high school, on the strength of what we had written.”

Mayor Daley had taken notice of Bey’s work and handpicked him in spring 2001 to become his senior architectural design adviser. In addition to managing the 18-month Soldier Field project, during his time at City Hall, Bey worked to bring the Joffrey Ballet Co. headquarters to downtown, hammered out a deal that saved the historic Metropolitan Baptist Church from demolition and negotiated the creation of a green roof—one of America’s largest—atop the \$700 million expansion of Chicago’s McCormick Place Convention Center.

## Mayor Daley handpicked Bey to become his senior architectural design adviser.

But after three years of rapid-fire project oversight, he needed a change. “Working at that level in the mayor’s office is like riding a bronco: You can do it, but you can’t do it forever, and you don’t want to get thrown,” he says.

In 2004, Bey moved to the architectural firm Skidmore, Owings and Merrill—designers of his beloved Sears Tower—to serve as the company’s governmental liaison. He then became executive director of the influential civic group Chicago Central Area Committee, all the while pursuing other creative outlets: He hosted and produced programs on WBEZ, launched an architectural photography business and consulted with architectural firms.

Today, Bey is civic engagement and special projects manager at the Arts Incubator with The University of Chicago Arts and Public Life Initiative, where he manages strategic initiatives and partnerships with arts organizations, community groups and civic leaders.

This Renaissance man says he often marvels at the unexpected twists his career has taken, but he says his time at Columbia instilled in him the willingness to try. “Education is not learning a skill, necessarily; it’s opening the doors of your mind so that everything can be considered,” he says. “And that’s what Columbia did for me. To be able to take the strange turns that my career has taken—it takes a mind that’s open.” ■

—Kristi Turnbaugh

Lee Bey takes care of business at University of Chicago’s Logan Center of the Arts.





# Adam & Skye Rust



## Urban Archaeologists

**An inventory of the shelves at Woolly Mammoth Antiques and Oddities on Chicago's North Side sounds like a mad scientist's shopping list. A broken rocking horse, a tray of antique dental tools, a mask shaped like a teddy bear, a human skull under a bell jar, a taxidermic giraffe's head donning a humongous red necktie: This eclectic store is a go-to spot for everything offbeat and macabre.**

Husband-and-wife store owners Adam (MFA '05) and Skye Rust (MA '06) met on an interdisciplinary arts retreat while they were both attending Columbia College Chicago. Skye came into the interdisciplinary arts program focused on photography, but shifted into sculpture and installation art. Adam studied in the Center for Book and Paper Arts, where he often incorporated road kill and taxidermy into his installations. They consider the store itself an art installation piece, inspired in part by Columbia's broad creative approach.

"We have an arts career right now, but this isn't something either of us had thought of before," says Skye. "Our education definitely helped us see that there were other possibilities out there."

Woolly Mammoth's 2010 origins have a tinge of urban legend. On a trip to Transylvania, Romania, hot on the historic trail of Vlad the Impaler (otherwise known as Dracula), the couple wondered how they could bring that excitement home. "How are we going to make our lives an adventure?" Skye asked. Within a month, they found a storefront in their Andersonville neighborhood and brought Woolly Mammoth to life.

**"Our education definitely helped us see that there were other possibilities out there."**





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Both Adam and Skye grew up in the Midwest (Wisconsin and Indiana, respectively) in antiquing families, and they'd been building their own taxidermy collection for years.

When the store first opened, they traveled frantically to flea markets, thrift stores and rummage sales to stock the shelves. As Woolly Mammoth's notoriety grew, collectors and sellers began approaching the store. Today, the couple turns to antique markets, auctions and private collections while still fostering word-of-mouth relationships. (Earlier in the day, a local magician dropped in with a collection to sell.)

"We buy what we want—and we buy things we think are interesting or cool," says Adam. "This is what our house looks like." ("Not quite as intense!" Skye adds—though she admits they have 43 pieces of taxidermy at home.)

Customers might find the taxidermy morbid, but Skye says it's their way of "saving the animals." They name each creature that comes through the store—which can make it hard to say goodbye. Adam particularly misses a zebra named Lightning, whom they sold to a bar in Manhattan.

"I bought him from the lady and man who taxidermied him," says Adam. "They picked him up from the zoo in Clear Lake, Iowa, where he was struck by lightning and killed. To have the backstory about that—and as incredible as that story was—it was sad to see Lightning go."

In addition to helping Adam buy, sell and run the storefront, Skye works full time in international admissions at Columbia, traveling all over the world to recruit students—and squeeze some Woolly Mammoth shopping into her downtime. She returned from a recent South America trip with a suitcase full of butterflies under glass and shrunken heads (creepy but fake).

Adam grew up in a part of Wisconsin where mammoth skeletons were often unearthed, so he feels a certain kinship with the store's name, as well as the woolly mammoth on the storefront's neon sign.

"It's an extinct animal that is resurrected from time to time, so we kind of think of it like we're resurrecting this junk," Adam says.

"We have to dig for it and clean it," Skye adds.

"And bring it back to life," Adam says. ▣

—Megan Kirby

1. This vintage display of taxidermied crustaceans would add an edge to anyone's beach-themed home.

2. Taxidermied animals hold a special place in the Rusts' hearts—and store.

3. Adam turned this old-school gumball machine into a lamp.

4. A hippopotamus skull hangs out under the glow of an X-ray screen.





## Christina Stevens



### Intrepid Interpreter

**When Christina Stevens (BA '10) takes the stage in an elementary school, she does more than delight young audiences with depictions of fables and fairytales. As the actress delivers her lines in English, her hands speak an entirely different language: American Sign Language (ASL). Yet her role doesn't stop there; she pulls double-duty interpreting the lines of her two deaf cast mates, who perform solely in ASL. The simultaneous use of sign language and English lets Stevens and the rest of the Little Theatre of the Deaf entertain both hearing and deaf children at the same time. At every moment during the play, kids hear and see the production in two languages.**

**“I thought ASL was a language on its own. But Deaf culture has its own history, shared experiences and traditions.”**

Stevens' fascination with ASL interpreting came from watching the fluid motions and expressive faces of interpreters at the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre. A 2002 theatre studies graduate from DePaul University, Stevens was ready to earn a second degree. After a local interpreter recommended Columbia College, she enrolled in the program at the age of 27.

The Midland, Mich., native immersed herself in ASL. Because her professors were deaf, she couldn't revert to English in a bind. So she picked up ASL quickly, especially by making mistakes. Stevens accidentally signed completely inappropriate things—translations unsuitable for publication—but mistakes were part of the learning process, she says.

During the first two years of Columbia's ASL program, students learn the language itself. In the latter two years they learn how to interpret, taking what a deaf person signs and translating that into spoken English (and vice versa). But along with language and interpreting, the program also explored Deaf culture—something Stevens didn't know existed.

“I thought ASL was a language on its own,” Stevens says. “But Deaf culture has its own history, shared experiences and traditions.”

Columbia's ASL program requires students to attend Deaf events around Chicago, which led to Stevens' discovery of the Little Theatre, the children's branch the National Theatre of the Deaf (NTD). Established in 1967, the Tony Award-winning NTD has performed in every state and on all seven continents. Now based in West Hartford, Conn., Stevens tours the nation's schools with the Little Theatre.

Ultimately, exposing students to ASL makes NTD the most rewarding experience of her career, Stevens says. Besides freelance interpreting for students in spoken English classes, Stevens continues to stay focused on the Little Theatre's performances. No matter where she goes, her nimble fingers will do the talking. ▣

—Amanda Sims (BA '12)

# See what's happening, get involved

## Dear Alumni,

At May's commencement ceremonies, Columbia College Chicago will graduate more than 2,400 students, one of the largest contingents ever. These grads will join the tens of thousands of distinguished Columbia alumni who are creating, making and doing throughout the Midwest, the U.S. and beyond.

With new leadership under Dr. Kwang-Wu Kim, the college and the Office of Alumni Relations are ramping up efforts to better serve our incredible expanding cadre of alums. We want to develop strong, lasting ties with you, and the upcoming hire of a new national alumni director will take us further in the right direction.

In the coming months, look out for more professional services—webinars, workshops, symposia—to help you as you pursue your career. We will develop a set of programs that supports all levels of alumni. In addition, we will create more opportunities to get involved in mentoring current students on campus.

Consider getting more involved with alumni where you live. Contact your local CAAN chapter leader (see "CAAN Updates") to learn how you can help fellow alums and yourself. Please stay in touch with us. Follow us on Facebook, join the Columbia College Chicago Alumni group on LinkedIn and send us a class note. We want to hear about your challenges and accomplishments.

Kind regards,

**Warren K. Chapman**

Senior Vice President/Interim Vice President for Development

### CONTACT THE OFFICE OF ALUMNI RELATIONS

**Sarah Schroeder** (BA '00)

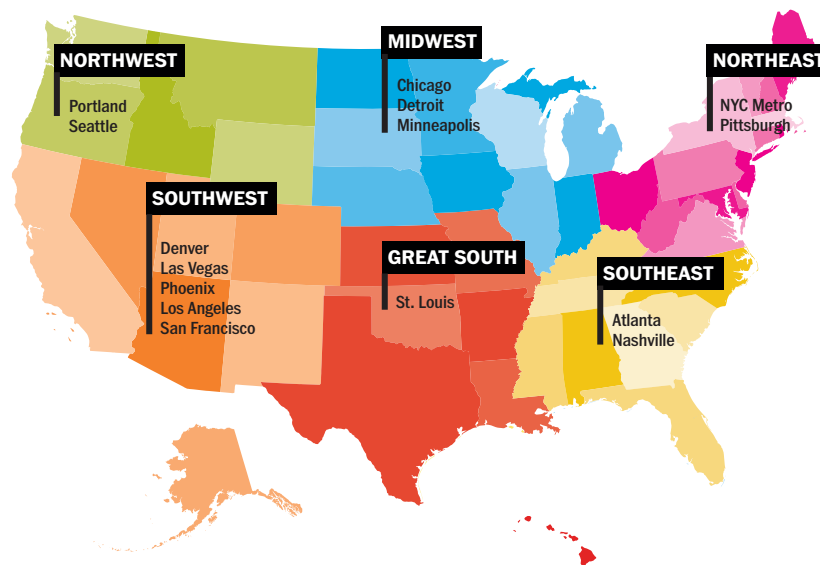
Director of Alumni Relations, West Coast  
323.469.0443 | ssschroeder@colum.edu

**Cynthia Vargas** (MFA '13)

Associate Director of Alumni Events & Programs  
312.369.8640 | cvargas@colum.edu

## CAAN UPDATES

See what's happening in your city, and get involved with the Columbia Alumni Association & Network!



### Atlanta

Atlanta seeks a chapter leader. As chapter leader, you will be responsible for planning and executing two to three yearly alumni events, as well as staying connected with your local alumni via social media. If you are interested in this position, please contact Sarah Schroeder at ssschroeder@colum.edu. If you're a new arrival in Atlanta, please contact Brad Sanders (BA '76) at onthephonewithti@yahoo.com.

### Chicago

Margi Cole (BA '90) is the new chapter leader of CAAN Chicago. If you'd like to volunteer, the chapter would love to have you. Whether it's the special events committee, benefits committee, Alumni Scholarship Fund committee or Young Alumni, there is a place for everyone. Contact Margi at caanichicagoprez@gmail.com. CAAN Chicago also hosted its second annual holiday party in December and donated food to the Chicago Food Depository.

### Denver

CAAN Denver eagerly awaits the release of *Teddy Boy*, Sean J.S. Jourdan's (MFA '09) debut feature film. Denver alumni will be treated to a screening of this highly anticipated film that explores what happens when betrayal becomes its own redemption. (For more about Jourdan's film, see *DEMO 18*.) Contact Pat Blum (BA '84) at pbcaanden@aol.com or Jodi Hardee (MA '04) at jhardeecaan@gmail.com.

### Detroit

The CAAN Detroit chapter strives to provide a regular source of networking and support to alumni through events and other means. Get involved! Contact Julie Atty (BA '10) at julie.atty@gmail.com.

### Las Vegas

We are on the lookout for a chapter leader for Las Vegas. Responsibilities include organizing alumni events, staying in contact with chapter members and promoting fundraising opportunities and scholarships like the Alumni Scholarship Fund. All chapter leaders are required to stay connected to local alumni using social media. If you are interested in this position, please contact Sarah Schroeder at ssschroeder@colum.edu.

### Los Angeles

More than 100 Los Angeles alumni were on hand to give a warm welcome to Columbia President Kwang-Wu Kim on Nov. 16 at the Peninsula in Beverly Hills. Upcoming events for CAAN LA are a one-time revival of our networking meeting at the Formosa Café, an alumni comedy show and the annual CAAN Connect. Contact CAAN National Board members Jonathan Weber (BA '03) at jonathanmarkweber@gmail.com and Kim Chavarria ('90) at chavarria.kim@gmail.com. Please also contact Sarah Schroeder (BA '00) at ssschroeder@colum.edu.



## ALUMNI NEWS & NOTES



Taking in CAAN LA's annual Cubs vs. Dodgers game at Dodgers Stadium on Aug. 27 were **Sheila Chalakee** (BA '05) and **Jillian Adams** (BA '11). On Nov. 16 in Los Angeles, musician **Dan Wessels** (BA '08) and **Paul Broucek** (BA '74), president of music at Warner Bros., were among the alumni meeting President Kwang-Wu Kim. Photo: Alex Kinnan (BA '95)

### Minneapolis–St. Paul

Look forward to an event for Twin Cities alumni. Want to get involved? Contact Marie Chaiart (BA '05) at [mariechaiart@gmail.com](mailto:mariechaiart@gmail.com) and Kelsi Moffitt (BA '03) at [kemoffitt@gmail.com](mailto:kemoffitt@gmail.com).

### Nashville

Alumni in Nashville got together on Jan. 28 at Urban Grub. This chapter of CAAN is small but mighty! Get involved by contacting Joseph Porter (BA '92) at [musicgr8@yahoo.com](mailto:musicgr8@yahoo.com) and Anthony Schneider (BA '11) at [anthony.schneider111@gmail.com](mailto:anthony.schneider111@gmail.com).

### New York

In spite of the crazy winter weather, CAAN New York continued to hold regular networking events. Many NYC alums gathered at Puck Fair on Lafayette in October and January. With alumni consistently moving to NYC, these networking events provide a great way for newcomers to connect with those rooted in the city. Contact Eric Wallace (BA '09) at [ericwallace@gmail.com](mailto:ericwallace@gmail.com) or James "Woody" Woodward (MA '03) at [CAANNYC@gmail.com](mailto:CAANNYC@gmail.com).

### Phoenix

In March, CAAN Phoenix attended a spring training game for the Chicago Cubs in the new Cubs Park. We are looking for a new chapter leader. Responsibilities include organizing two to three alumni events per year, staying in contact with local alumni and promoting scholarships like the Alumni Scholarship Fund. All chapter leaders are required to stay connected to local alumni using social media. If you are interested in volunteering for this position, please contact Sarah Schroeder at [sschroeder@colum.edu](mailto:sschroeder@colum.edu).

### Pittsburgh

CAAN Pittsburgh's chapter leader, Mike Moscato (BA '94), produces the High School Rock Challenge every spring, and all alumni are invited to attend. For more information, contact Mike at [maguitar.mike@gmail.com](mailto:maguitar.mike@gmail.com).

### Portland

We have great alumni in the Pacific Northwest, so get involved. Contact Howard Shapiro (BA '53) at [pmahoward@aol.com](mailto:pmahoward@aol.com).

### San Francisco Bay Area

Bay Area alumni welcomed Columbia President Kwang-Wu Kim to the Columbia community on Nov. 17. Hilmar Koch (BA '93) and Bob Stock (BA '79) hosted the gathering for Northern California alumni. Are you interested in organizing events and conducting alumni outreach in the Bay Area? All chapter leaders are required to stay connected to local alumni using social media. Contact Sarah Schroeder at [sschroeder@colum.edu](mailto:sschroeder@colum.edu).

### Seattle

The Seattle chapter of CAAN has been revived! Thanks to the efforts of Sharon Zweiback (BA '91), alumni in Seattle have been busy. In September, local alumni met at Liberty in Capitol Hill. In November, Jane Richlovsky (BA '91) hosted alumni at her gallery, '57 Biscayne, prior to enjoying the Seattle Art Walk. In February, alumni enjoyed a tour of the Seattle Art Museum led by comedian Chuck Armstrong. To get involved, contact Sharon at [szsandflow@gmail.com](mailto:szsandflow@gmail.com).

## EVENTS

Check out these upcoming alumni events across the country. For the full calendar, go to [colum.edu/alumni](http://colum.edu/alumni).

### Los Angeles, Chicago, New York / April & May MENTOR OF THE MONTH

Visit [colum.edu/mentorofthemoth](http://colum.edu/mentorofthemoth)

### Chicago / May 9 ALUMNI ON 5 SPRING EXHIBITION & RECEPTION

Contact Cynthia Vargas (MFA '13) at [cvargas@colum.edu](mailto:cvargas@colum.edu)

### Chicago / May 16 ALUMNI AT MANIFEST

Visit [colum.edu/alumnimanifest](http://colum.edu/alumnimanifest)

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### Los Angeles / June 17 CAAN CONNECT

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### Nationwide / June 27 DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS AND ELECTIONS FOR THE CAAN NATIONAL BOARD

Contact Sarah Schroeder (BA '00) at [sschroeder@colum.edu](mailto:sschroeder@colum.edu)

### Portland / July TOUR OF WILLAMETTE VALLEY VINEYARDS

Contact Howard Shapiro (BA '53) at [pmahoward@aol.com](mailto:pmahoward@aol.com)

### Los Angeles / July 10 FORMOSA CAFÉ NETWORKING EVENTS REUNION

Contact Cupid Hayes (BA '97) at [chayes@colum.edu](mailto:chayes@colum.edu)

### Detroit / July & November NETWORKING EVENT

Contact Julie Atty (BA '10) at [julie.atty@gmail.com](mailto:julie.atty@gmail.com)

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Contact Sarah Schroeder (BA '00) at [sschroeder@colum.edu](mailto:sschroeder@colum.edu)

### Portland / August PACIFIC OCEAN BEACH HOUSE GET-TOGETHER

Contact Howard Shapiro (BA '53) at [pmahoward@aol.com](mailto:pmahoward@aol.com)

### Denver / August-September SCREENING OF SEAN S. JOURDAN'S (MFA '09) FEATURE DEBUT *TEDDY BOY*

Contact Pat Blum (BA '84) at [pbcaanden@aol.com](mailto:pbcaanden@aol.com)

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## CLASS NOTES

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Class news information will be printed based on availability of space. Announcements that are incomplete or older than one year cannot be considered for publication. Deadline for the Fall/Winter 2014 issue is Aug. 1.

## 1970s

**Hank Grover** (BA '79) produced the documentary film *The Power of Photography: Beyond the Image*, about several renowned *National Geographic* photographers. Grover also produced *Provocateur*, a documentary about photographer Helmut Newton, featuring producer Robert Evans and actress Darryl Hannah.

**Margaret Jamison** (BA '73) was named by Black Press Radio as second among 14 Women to Watch in 2014. She is the publicist to D. Channsin Berry, director/producer of 2014 NAACP Image Award nominee *Dark Girls*.

**Nancy Stone** (BA '79) is the executive producer of the film *Words and Pictures*, starring Clive Owen and Juliette Binoche. The film premiered at the Toronto Film Festival and was picked up for U.S. distribution by Roadside Attractions.

## 1980s

**Patricia Blum** (BA '84) was promoted to vice president of the American Growth Fund. She is the Columbia Alumni Association & Network (CAAN) chapter leader for Denver as well as the Southwest regional representative on the CAAN National Board.

**Jens Boegehn** (BA '88), one of the founders of Zacuto camera accessories, was a producer of the documentary *Light & Shadow*, in which cinematographers share their personal perspectives on what they do and what it means to them.

**Rick Cruz** (BA '89) designs and mass produces guitar amplifiers under Cruz Amplification. His ampli-

**Maximilian Timm (BA '02)****Author takes broken wings, learns to fly**

After raising \$7,000 on crowdfunding site Kickstarter, Maximilian Timm (BA '02), 35, published his fantasy novel, *The WishKeeper*, in November 2013. The story revolves around Shea, a tattooed, punk fairy with broken wings who's determined to make a human's wishes come true despite her handicap.

**You came to Columbia to study film. How did your film background influence your writing?**

My film background helped me understand (and practice) how visuals can tell a story. *The WishKeeper* started as a script—many, many, many drafts of a script. I worked on it for eight years before trying to write the novel. All of the books I am working on now start as screenplays, so you could say my film background had a very direct impact on my novel writing.

**How did you get the idea for *The WishKeeper*?** My sister and I wanted to adapt an old PC game called King's Quest. That project fell flat, but it gave us the motivation to start from scratch and tell our own story. The first five or six drafts had nothing to do with fairies or wishes, but the more I focused on what was truly unique about the story, this little broken-winged fairy kept popping up. Shea was born out of hours of brainstorming that focused on creating a character no one had seen before: a resentful, pissed off, handicapped teenager who just so happened to be a fairy with broken wings.

**Why did you write a youth fantasy novel?** I write for the young adult audience because tweens and teenagers deserve relatable characters who are flawed, disturbed and maybe even make bad choices at times. I feel kids need to know that it's OK and quite normal to make mistakes and get into a little trouble. —Hannah Lorenz ('16)

fiers are used by Cheap Trick, John Fogerty, Jim Peterik and The Ides of March. He also owns and operates a recording studio in Chicago.

**Patrick Egan** ('86) self-published his first novel, *Get Happy*. It is available in paperback and as a digital download for Kindle and Nook.

**Donald Fox** (BA '85) is working as a master control operator at Weigel Broadcasting, the home of Me-TV and Movies! as well as many other channels.

**Laura Good** (BA '89) released her fifth CD with alternative pop band The Twigs. *Jump Right In*, from Whirligig Records, features songs for kids of all ages.

**Corey Hall** (BA '88) published the sixth volume of *Expressions From Englewood*, which features personal essays, poetry, fiction and research from people who live, work or go to school in the Englewood neighborhood of Chicago. Hall was also featured in *NewCity's* "Lit50: Who Really Books in Chicago?" for *Expressions From Englewood*.

**Brian Kalata** (BA '87) completed his seventh season as key assistant location manager for the Showtime series *Californication*. He's turned his attention to his production company, Lucky Coffee Productions, whose first feature project is the documentary *Which Side Are You On?*, a look at the polarizing issue of labor unions focusing on the historic 2007–08 Writer's Guild of America strike. Visit [luckycoffeeprod.com](http://luckycoffeeprod.com).

**Serita Stevens** (BA '81) was a judge for the 3 Gates of the Dead filmmaking competition.



**Mark Protosevich (BA '83)** wrote and co-produced the Spike Lee film *Oldboy*, which opened in theaters in November 2013.

**Marlon West** (BA '85) was the effects supervisor for Disney Pictures' *Frozen*, which received the 2014 Academy Award for Best Animated Feature.

## 1990s

**Caryn Capotosto** (BA '99) was associate producer on the documentary *20 Feet from Stardom*, which received the 2014 Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature. The film focuses on backup singers for legendary acts such as the Rolling Stones, Bette Midler and Bruce Springsteen.

**Laura Cooper** (BA '92) is a DJ and the owner of A Special Day DJ and an actor with SAG-AFTRA.

**Elizabeth Field** (BA '93) was hired as communications manager for the Department of Performing and Media Arts at Cornell University.

**Jeff Gatesman** ('92) was the cinematographer for *No Ordinary Hero*, featuring Oscar winner Marlee Matlin and **Peter Hulne** (BA '91). *No Ordinary Hero* is a family drama about a deaf actor who

plays a superhero on TV, but must look beyond the cape to inspire a deaf boy to believe in himself. The film was chosen for the Heartland Film Festival.

**Dan Gorski** (BA '98) launched his comedy web series *Baby Time!*, shot entirely on location in Chicago using local cast and crew, including several Columbia alumni. The series follows a man as he struggles to get across the city and back to his wife before she gives birth. Watch the series at [babytimeseries.com](http://babytimeseries.com).

**R. Earl Harville** (BA '97) is a member of the Education Board of International Voice Teachers of Mix.

**Sheila House** ('99) was nominated for an Emmy in the 2013 Los Angeles-area Emmy awards for her work producing a PSA for the Santa Monica History Museum. She also received her MS in Entertainment Business from Full Sail University.

**Kevin Leadingham** ('98) is the executive producer of Animal Planet's *Treehouse Masters*. The series, which follows host Pete Nelson and his team as they build custom treehouses, has been picked up for a second season.

**Eric Matthies** (BA '92) completed the documentary feature *Killing the Messenger: The Deadly Cost of News*, available online at [killingthemessengerfilm.com](http://killingthemessengerfilm.com). The trailer was edited at Buddha Jones Trailers with the guidance of **Daniel Asma** (BA '92).

**Chris McKay** (BA '91) was the editor and animation co-director for *The LEGO Movie*, and **David Tuber** (BA '05) was the storyboard artist.

**Nobuko Oyabu** (BA '95) was featured in *Sankei Newspaper*, a financial daily newspaper in Japan. The article considers the importance of having a sexual assault victim support system in Japanese society.

**Stacie Passon** ('93) wrote and directed the film *Concussion*, which is nominated for an Independent Spirit Award in the category of Best First Feature. *Concussion* premiered at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival.



## ALUMNI NEWS & NOTES



On the set of the CBS drama *The Mentalist*, crew members recently discovered they had something special in common: their alma mater. From left to right: **Matt Gossen** (BA '10), **Zach Andrews** (BA '07), cinematographer **Jeffrey Jur** (BA '77), *The Mentalist* star **Simon Baker** and **Bridget Arnet** (BA '12).



**Alumni Weekend 2013:** Dozens of students and alumni came out for the 3rd Annual Alumni 5K Scholarship FUNd Run/Walk, with proceeds benefiting the Alumni Scholarship Fund and the Columbia Cares: Alumni for Students Fund.



In March, **Roland Cailles** (BA '08), **Ashley Lavore** (BA '13), **Liz Dunlop** (BA '09), **Kate Jacobsen** (BA '11) and **Ryan Beshel** ('07) presented at the Public Relations Student Society of America conference.

**Cherie Richardson** (MA '99) was named senior associate director of development for the Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications at Northwestern University. Previously, she served as a director of development at Bradley University.

**Klahr Thorsen** (BA '91) has been selected as an International Acting Fellow at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London. The fellowship brings together 20 professional actors from across the world to learn the artistic methods used at the Globe and experience performing in the historic theatre.

### 2000s

**Steven Berger** (BA '06) produced the film *The Pretty One*, a 2011 Black List Script that premiered at the 2013 Tribeca Film Festival and was bought by Sony Pictures for a theatrical release.

**Beth Caucci** (MFA '08) composed music for the popular comedy *This Is the End*. Her other projects include *The Lorax*, *Free Birds* and *Ice Age: Continental Drift*.

**Jayson Cruthers** (BA '02) was the cinematographer on the film *Coldwater*, which was nominated for Best Cinematography at the Las Vegas Film Festival and won the Grand Jury Prize for Best Film.

**Brant Daugherty** (BA '08) was a contestant on season 17 of ABC's *Dancing with the Stars*. He is known for his roles in *Pretty Little Liars*, *Army Wives* and *Days of Our Lives*.

**Lucas Graham** (BA '06) shot the 2013 Sundance Film Festival movie *Escape From Tomorrow*, which opened in theaters and got a Video-on-Demand launch in October 2013.

**Bryan Grant** (BA '02), owner of Bryan Grant Studios, has been selected by illusionist David Copperfield to brand a new production company, Red Safe, under which Copperfield will develop, create and film television shows. Visit [brygrantstudios.com](http://brygrantstudios.com).

**Michelle Harmon** (MFA '06) was recently accepted into the Art Director's Guild and worked as assistant art director on the Emmy-nominated series *American Horror Story: Coven*.

**Kyle Heller** (BA '08) launched the Beverly Hills-based production company Varient Pictures, produc-

ing five feature films over the past 18 months. The first to be released, *Medeas*, premiered as an official selection at the 70th Venice International Film Festival. The *Hollywood Reporter* called it "an impressive debut that promises greater things to come."

**Angela Hobbs** (BA '04) authored the thriller novel *Isle of Beasts*, available for digital download and in paperback on Amazon. The book received a five-star rating on [goodreads.com](http://goodreads.com).

**Arika Jacobs** ('05) was the designer of the restaurant Sage in Culver City, Calif. The Huffington Post wrote, "Another beautiful feature of Sage is the unique and rustic design elements created by L.A.-based designer Arika Jacobs, who used reclaimed barn wood and vintage garden tools to help create a cozy, stylish and welcoming space."

**Lorris Julianus** (BA '03) premiered her historical musical *Zenobia* in September 2013. She wrote the book and lyrics and starred as the Syrian warrior queen. The theatre production featured computer animation by **Dustin Carroll** (BA '04). Daytime Emmy-winning writer Kay Alden called *Zenobia* "a magnificent and moving tour de force."

**Daniel Kibblesmith** (BA '05) co-authored *How To Win at Everything*, available from Chronicle Books.

**Jessica Kronika** (BFA '09) is a marketing coordinator at Mid-America Tile. Also, in August 2013,

her works in watercolor, ink and pencil en plein air landscape and wildlife subjects were displayed at the "Art in Nature" Exhibit at the Crabtree Nature Center in Barrington, Ill. Visit [flyngyparts.com](http://flyngyparts.com).

**Angela LaRocca** (BA '08) played the lead role in the film *The Right Kind of Wrong*, which premiered in St. Louis in February. Her one-woman comedy show, *Undercover Undergrad*, was accepted into a theatre festival in NYC, and LaRocca will perform it in Chicago this year.

**Frank McGrath** ('04) has worked as an editor and assistant editor on several comedy television shows, including *Childrens Hospital*, *NTSF: SD: SUV*, *Newsreaders* and *Party Down*.

**Marc Morgan** (BA '07) starred in the film *Mordy to the Max*, which screened as an official selection at the East Lansing Film Festival and won a Silver Bulb Award at the Vegas Indie Film Festival.

**Michael Oberholtzer** (BA '05) was cast in the film *Delivery Man*, which opened in November 2013 and starred Vince Vaughn and Chris Pratt.

**Laurel Parker**'s (MFA '00) music video for the Emmy-nominated group Gangstagrass has been accepted into the Bang! Short Film Festival in England.

**Nicholas Pinto**'s (BA '07) photojournalism is featured on the Leica Camera Blog at [blog.leica-camera.com](http://blog.leica-camera.com). Also visit [nicholaspinto.com](http://nicholaspinto.com).

## I JUST...



- Acted in a play
- Published a book
- Performed at Madison Square Garden
- Appeared on *Project Runway*
- Started a business
- Found my calling
- Got married
- Had a baby
- Got a new job
- Retired

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**Sundance fever:** TV and film alumni descended upon Park City, Utah, to participate in the Sundance Film Festival in January. **Top:** Will Johnson (BA '12), Bret Hamilton ('15), Ryan Nanni (BA '12) and Jon Steinhorst (MFA '09) attended the Chicago Luncheon and Alumni Film Screening on Jan. 18. **Bottom:** Lena Waithe (BA '06), at right, with Devon Edwards (BA '11) and Willie Jackson, produced the film *Dear White People*, which took home the Special Jury Prize for Breakthrough Talent (see pages 8–10).

**Christopher Roach** (BA '01) wrote the film *Non-Stop*, starring Julianne Moore, Liam Neeson and Michelle Dockery. The film opened on Feb. 28.

**Hannah Rosner** (BA '09) premiered her directorial debut, *Park City*, at the United Film Festival at the Laugh Factory in Chicago in November 2013.

**Charles Sato** (BA '03) is the post-production supervisor for NBC News Peacock Productions. His work has included long-form specials for *The Rachel Maddow Show*, *Hardball* and *All in With Chris Hayes*, as well as reunion specials for *Breaking Amish* and *Sister Wives*, network specials for *America's Got Talent* and *Christmas at the White House*, and Weather Channel breaking news specials.

**Nicholas Sheptak** (BA '05) won a Bronze Key Art Award in the Copy Writing category for his work on the trailer for *Anchorman 2*.

**Melodie Simond's** (BA '06) short film *A Friend at the End* screened in September 2013 in Long Beach, Calif. Two other Columbia alumni worked on it: **Richard Skrip** (BA '06), editor, and **Daniel Z. Levin** (BA '06), sound.

**Daniel Smukalla** (BA '08) is moving into post production on his documentary *Sedae*, about how various generations in South Korea have been affected by rapid economic growth. Visit [sedaechai.com](http://sedaechai.com).

**Michael Stahl-David** (BA '05) starred opposite Sarah Jessica Parker in the off-Broadway play *The Commons of Pensacola*.

**Deborah Stokes** (MA '00), curator for education at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art, received the Pioneer Award from the Federal Government Distance Learning Association.

**Emily Stroble** (BA '09) served as supervising producer for the series



**In March**, alumni screened their feature film *Animals at the South* by Southwest festival in Austin, Texas. From left to right: **Chris Charles** (BA '07), executive producer; Charles Young, co-producer; **Mary Pat Bentel** (BA '01), producer; **John W. Boshier** (BA '06), executive producer; and Damon L. Marks, co-producer.

*Family Travel* with Colleen Kelly, which premiered on American Public Television in October 2013.

**Daniel Vlasaty** (BA '09) published his novella *The Church of TV as God* through Eraserhead Press.

**Lena Waithe** (BA '06) produced the film *Dear White People*, which was selected to premiere at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival in the U.S. Dramatic Competition category and took home the Special Jury Prize for Breakthrough Talent.

**Yvette Wren** (BA '06) co-wrote an episode of *Love That Girl!* that aired on TVone on Friday nights in fall 2013.

## 2010s

**Michael Bailey** (BA '12) made his theatrical debut in Paramount Theatre's production of *Miss Saigon* as part of the 2013–14 Broadway season. Directed by Jim Corti and choreographed by Columbia College Dance Department staff member Jeff Hancock, the show ran Oct. 30–Nov. 24, 2013.

**Samantha Crowley** (BA '11) was recently a post-production assistant on the show *Lucky 7* for ABC.

**Quiana Edmond** (BA '12) was admitted to the Indiana University Kelley School of Business, where

she will earn her MBA in strategic management.

**Joel Everett** (BM '10) has been nominated for a regional Emmy Award in the area of Music Composer/Arranger for his score to the historical documentary *Merger: Making the Twin City* by WSTV.

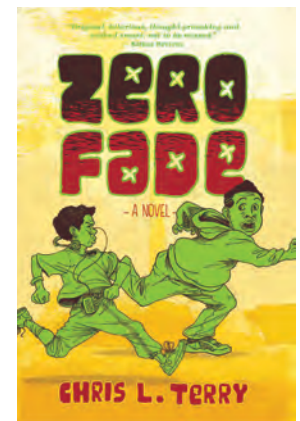
**Agnes Hamerlik** (BA '12) was approached to be part of the FLOR flooring catalog after part-time Photography faculty member Sarah Faust learned about her fashion designs through *DEMO* magazine (Spring/Summer 2013).

**Christina Harper** (BA '12) was featured in the show *The Story of Curtis Mayfield*, which ran through March 30 at the Black Ensemble Theatre in Chicago.

**Sarah Levi** (MAM '10), a board member for Artlink Phoenix, opened art gallery Tabula Rasa Collective, focused on Arizona artists, in the downtown Phoenix arts district. Visit [tabularasacollective.com](http://tabularasacollective.com).

**Diane Mayers-Jones** (BFA '10) was one of the entrepreneurs featured in an exhibit called "Our Work: Modern Jobs, Ancient Origins" at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

**Jacqueline Rezak** (BA '10) is a designer for the clothing brand Rad and Refined. Her garments have been worn by the likes of Miley Cyrus and Tegan and Sara.



**Chris Terry's** (MFA '12) novel *Zero Fade* was a Favorite Book of 2013 for Slate.com, was named one of the Best Teen Books of 2013 by Kirkus Reviews and has been nominated for the Young Adult Library Services Association's 2014 Best Fiction for Young Adults list.



## Notable achievements from the college community

**Michelle Barreras** and **Mary Quest** (Education) presented “Enhancing Storytelling with Technology” in October 2013 at the National Progressive Education Network Conference in Los Angeles. Their presentation showed how storytelling builds developmental skills and provides room for creativity.

**Molly Beestrup**, **Amy Wainwright** (Library) and Kerri Willette won a People’s Choice Award for their presentation, “When Social Media Fails to Inspire: Transforming your Library’s Social Media Presence,” at the Association for College and Research Libraries 2013 Conference in Indianapolis. Awards were selected by conference attendees.

**David W. Berner** (Radio) won the 2013 Chicago Writers Association Book of the Year Award in the category of nontraditional nonfiction for his memoir, *Any Road Will Take You There: A Journey of Fathers and Sons*.

**Kristy Bowen** (MFA '07, Library) released three books in 2013, including a short chapbook of prose, *fragments, beautiful, sinister*; a longer prose collection, *the shared properties of water and stars*; and a full-length book of poems, *girl show*.

**Charles Cannon** (Science + Mathematics) was named a 2013 fellow for the American Chemical Society. He joined a distinguished list of 96 scientists who have demonstrated outstanding contributions to the chemistry field.

**Jessica Cochran** (Book + Paper Center) and **Melissa Potter** (Interdisciplinary Arts) received a 2013 Craft Research Fund grant for Social Paper, an exhibition and catalog charting the evolution of the art of hand papermaking with special attention to craft, labor, community and site specificity.

**Peter Cook** (ASL-English Interpretation) recently taught poetry workshops throughout Eastern Europe and completed a weeklong residency in the Department of Linguistics at Ca’ Foscari University in Venice, Italy.

**Kevin Cooper’s** (Cinema Art + Science) film *The Painter*, which was shot by Columbia faculty members and students in the Media Production Center, won the Illinois Film Office Shortcuts competition.

**Pamela Dittmer McKuen** (Journalism, First-Year Seminar) co-authored a fashion guide for girls, *Expressionista: How to Express Your True Self Through (and Despite) Fashion*, with Jackie Walker (wife of Music chair Richard Dunscomb).

**Laura Downey** (Creative Arts Therapies) won an Outstanding Achievement Award at the 2013 American Dance Therapy Association conference.



**Terri Hemmert** (Radio)—pictured with the Ramones in the 1970s—celebrated 40 years as DJ at WXRT in 2013. Mayor Rahm Emanuel declared Dec. 18 “Terri Hemmert Day in Chicago.”

**David Flatley** (Center for Community Arts Partnerships) was chosen to participate as one of 50 leaders in the National Arts Strategies’ Chief Executive Program.

**Linda Fortunato** (Theatre) received a 2013 Jefferson Award in choreography for the production of *42nd Street* at Theatre at the Center in Munster, Ind.

**Patrick Friel** (Cinema Art + Science) programmed and presented the 25th Onion City Experimental Film and Video Festival Sept. 6–7, 2013.

**Craig Gore** (BA '99, Cinema Art + Science) is a writer for the NBC series *Chicago P.D.*

**Deborah H. Holdstein’s** (School of Liberal Arts + Sciences) book *Who Says? The Writer’s Research* was published in December 2013 by Oxford University Press.

**Darrell Jones** (Dance) won the juried Bessie Award for Choreography for his work “Hoo-Ha (for your eyes only).”

**Megan Kirby** (Institutional Marketing and Communications) won first place in the Luminarts Cultural Foundation’s fiction contest, sponsored by the Union League Club of Chicago. Her short story, “Your Very Flesh,” appeared in 2013’s *Luminarts Review*.

**April Langworthy** (Center for Community Arts Partnerships, Cinema Art + Science) was honored by the Federation for Community Schools in Illinois as a partner agency leader because of her demonstrated effectiveness in spearheading the CCAP’s Community Schools program for 11 years.

**Laurie Lawlor’s** (Creative Writing) biography, *Rachel Carson and Her Book that Changed the World*, was one of 40 titles selected for Macy’s 2013-14 Multicultural Collection of Children’s Literature and will be distributed to thousands of students across the country.

**Elio Leturia** (Journalism) received the 2013 Dee Sarelas Service Award from the Fulbright Association.

**Charles Matlock** (Radio) was featured on “DJ Sessions: The Story Behind Chicago House” on 90.9 WBUR, Boston’s NPR news station, to discuss the evolution of the house music genre and its Chicago roots.

**Vaun Monroe’s** (Cinema Art + Science) production of *Ceremonies in Dark Old Men* won best actor, best supporting actress, best supporting actor, best director and best production at the Black Theater Alliance Awards in October 2013.

**Nami Mun** (Creative Writing) received National Runaway Safeline’s Spirit of Youth Award for her work to keep homeless youth off the streets.

**Betsy Odum’s** (Art + Design) exhibit *Bulldog*, which consists of three-dimensional objects made from a variety of materials using techniques like sewing and woodworking, was the debut exhibit for DEMO Project, a contemporary and experimental art gallery in Springfield, Ill.

**Pan Papacosta** (Science + Mathematics) participated in the World Innovation Summit for Education in October 2013 in Doha, Qatar. The event hosted more than 1,200 international leaders in education, politics and the corporate sphere to discuss growth in education.

**Samuel Park** (Creative Writing, English) was named one of the Best Local Authors in Chicago by CBS Chicago, along with **Audrey Niffenegger** (Creative Writing). Park’s work *This Burns My Heart* was chosen as a Best Book of the Year by Kirkus Reviews, Amazon, NPR.org and BookPage.

**Nancy Rampson** (Institutional Advancement) was elected president of the newly formed South Loop Toastmasters Club. She and Chris Skrundz also won third prize for the film *How Many Stars* in the Traverse City Film Festival Bumper Film Contest.

**Christine Rice** (Creative Writing) won first place in the In Print Professional Writers Organization Fiction Writing Contest for her piece “The Art of Breaking Away.”

**Brendan Riley** (English) was appointed executive director of operations for the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association. Riley will manage financial, communications and administrative efforts.

**Michel Rodriguez** (Dance) received a 3Arts award in October 2013. 3Arts promotes diversity in the arts by awarding \$15,000 to notable female artists, artists of color and artists with disabilities.

**Sheila Solomon** (Journalism) was chosen as a recipient of the 2014 Ida B. Wells Award by the National Association of Black Journalists and the Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications at Northwestern University.

**Cyn Vargas** (MFA '13, Alumni Relations) won the Guild Literary Complex Prose Award in Fiction for her short story “That Girl.” Vargas also was accepted into the Ragdale residency program for the 2014 Winter/Spring session.

**John H. White** (Photography) received the 2013 Lucie Award, one of photography’s highest honors, in an Oct. 27 event at New York’s Carnegie Hall.

**Etta Worthington** (Television) produced the short film *Hatboxes*, which was screened at the We Like ‘Em Short Film Festival in Oregon, and at the Chicago International REEL Shorts Film Festival, where it won an audience award and best director award. *Hatboxes* also screened at the Palm Springs Gay and Lesbian Film Festival.

## IN MEMORIAM

**Jane Ann Ganet-Sigel**, founder of the Dance/Movement Therapy Department at Columbia College Chicago (now the Department of Creative Arts Therapies), passed away at age 87 on Jan. 27. Ganet-Sigel founded the only Midwest graduate program in dance/movement therapy, which began in 1982. She chaired the department until her retirement in 1998.

**Ronn Pitts** (Cinema Art + Science) passed away Sept. 22, 2013. Throughout his career, Pitts challenged and broke color barriers. He documented history with his camera, from the death of gay rights pioneer Harvey Milk to a behind-the-scenes look at Muhammad Ali preparing for a fight. Pitts’ legacy will live on through the Ronn Pitts Scholarship Fund.

**Peter Radke**, former head bursar, passed away on Dec. 20, 2013. Radke graduated from Columbia as class valedictorian in 1981 and started working at the college part time, eventually becoming the head bursar, helping students with their financial accounts.

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In fiscal year 2013, which ended Aug. 31, generous individuals and organizations contributed a total of \$19,714,207 to support the educational mission of Columbia College Chicago. Many of those gifts were designated for Scholarship Columbia, a five-year matching program backed by \$1 million, to address the financial needs of our students.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

# Spring/Summer 2014



THROUGH MAY 24

## My Florence: Photographs by Art Shay

Library, 624 S. Michigan Ave., 2nd floor

This project by renowned Chicago photojournalist Art Shay documents his wife, Florence, and “the story in pictures of our 67 years of marriage.”



THROUGH JULY 13

## Home Truths: Photography and Motherhood

Museum of Contemporary Photography, 600 S. Michigan Ave. [mocp.org](http://mocp.org)

*Home Truths* investigates the complex and demanding experience of motherhood through the lenses of gender roles, domesticity, body and identity.

MAY 1-8

## Predetermined Structures

Averill and Bernard Leviton  
A+D Gallery, 619 S. Wabash Ave.

Predetermined Structures presents the works of 2013 Pougialis Fine Art Award winner Josh Kuffel and runner-up Leota Mea.



MAY 16

## Manifest

Throughout campus  
[colum.edu/manifest](http://colum.edu/manifest)

Manifest is an urban arts festival celebrating the work and creativity of Columbia students. Free and open to the public, Manifest features music, exhibitions, screenings, presentations, performances, an alumni reception and much more.

JUNE 7-8

## Printers Row Lit Fest

Printers Row in the South Loop  
[chicagotribune.com/printersrowlitfest](http://chicagotribune.com/printersrowlitfest)

Enjoy music and literary performances by Columbia's community of artists at the *Chicago Tribune's* annual Printers Row Lit Fest, the largest free outdoor literary event in the Midwest, and shop a selection of artful items from ShopColumbia.



Student work at A+D Gallery

THROUGH JUNE 14

## Manifest Exhibition

Averill and Bernard Leviton  
A+D Gallery, 619 S. Wabash Ave.

Columbia College Chicago's Manifest Exhibition represents students' completion of the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree within the Art + Design Department.

SEPTEMBER 19

## Wabash Arts Corridor (WAC) Crawl

Wabash Avenue in the South Loop  
[colum.edu/waccrawl](http://colum.edu/waccrawl)

Part of EXPO Art Week, the Wabash Arts Corridor Crawl showcases the South Loop's dynamic, creative community and opens up Columbia's on-campus galleries to public viewing.

## Live from Columbia College, it's *Saturday Night!*

How Comedy Studies led me to The Second City stage and on to New York City

By Aidy Bryant (BA '09)



Aidy Bryant, left, and Cecily Strong (pictured with Josh Hutcherson) write for and star in SNL's recurring sketch "Girlfriends Talk Show." "Fifty percent of my job is writing," Bryant says. "Every cast member writes for the show. It's a huge part of the job."

**Growing up in Arizona, Aidy Bryant (BA '09)** "obsessed" over Saturday Night Live cast members like Molly Shannon, Tina Fey and Amy Poehler—and she even dressed up like SNL characters for Halloween. For college, she knew she wanted to come to Chicago, home of *The Second City* (famed launching pad for the SNL players). Hard work with Columbia's Comedy Studies program and the Chicago improv scene paid off: Now in her second year at SNL, Bryant writes sketches and appears weekly as a repertory player.

I always felt wacky or quirky or weird in high school. And then when I got to Columbia, I was surrounded by other weirdos, other creatives, people with all kinds of interests and passions.

When I was a freshman, I would do my normal theatre classes by day. By night, I started taking classes at iO and other Chicago comedy theaters. So it was a lucky thing that the [Comedy Studies] program was just getting started as I was an upperclassman. I had done all these different things in the improv community, but I had never gotten my foot in at Second City.

It was a great way to start there, and really immerse myself in seeing the Mainstage and e.t.c. shows, and taking writing classes—really

writing in a way that I hadn't before. I really got my legs underneath me; ultimately, that led to me writing for Second City.

After working there for about two years, I was writing and performing on the e.t.c. stage, doing a two-hour sketch revue with five other cast members. I was very lucky in that Lorne [Michaels, *Saturday Night Live* creator and executive producer] and the producers came to see my show at Second City. Later that week, I was called to come and audition [for SNL]. So I put together a five-minute showcase of my best material, and then I was flown out to New York and did my five-minute audition. I did one more audition, and then I was hired.

My advice for aspiring comedians? Just get up in front of audiences as much as you can—because the good experiences and the bad experiences, they all will make you a better performer, and you only learn from being in front of a big group of people that you don't know.

That is really where I cut my teeth, doing that. And really, I did it all over Chicago. I went everywhere to be in front of an audience and practice honing my voice so that by the time I got to where I am, I know what I like to write, and I know my strengths, and I know my weaknesses. It really helps when you get into these high-pressure situations to know who you are as a performer. ■ —As told to Kristi Turnbaugh

### ▶ WEB EXTRAS

Learn more about Aidy Bryant's SNL audition, the show's grueling schedule, lessons learned during the first season, her best writing and more at [colum.edu/demo](http://colum.edu/demo).

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



DEMO seeks Backstory essays from Columbia College alumni, students, faculty and staff. If you have a captivating personal story about how Columbia helped you grow, or vice versa (in 300 words or less), please contact us. For more information and submission guidelines, go to [colum.edu/demo](http://colum.edu/demo).



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