

ON THE COVER

Can you match up our cover illustrations with the stories inside? Page through *DEMO*, then see how many story nods you can find on the front. When you're done, check out this handy key.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY
KYLE LETENDRE (BA '12)

Kyle Letendre is a designer, letterer and illustrator in Chicago. After a stint as a Columbia College Chicago designer, he now works with Delicious Design League making good work with good people.

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A IS FOR ANNIVERSARY 10

DEMO is 10 years old, and we're celebrating with a very special issue.



C IS FOR COMEDY 14

Laugh it up with Columbia's funniest alumni. We spotlight 10 alumni currently killin' it in the comedy business, including *Saturday Night Live* darling Aidy Bryant (BA '09) and Amy Schumer collaborator Jeremy Beiler (BA '04).



G IS FOR GAMES 22

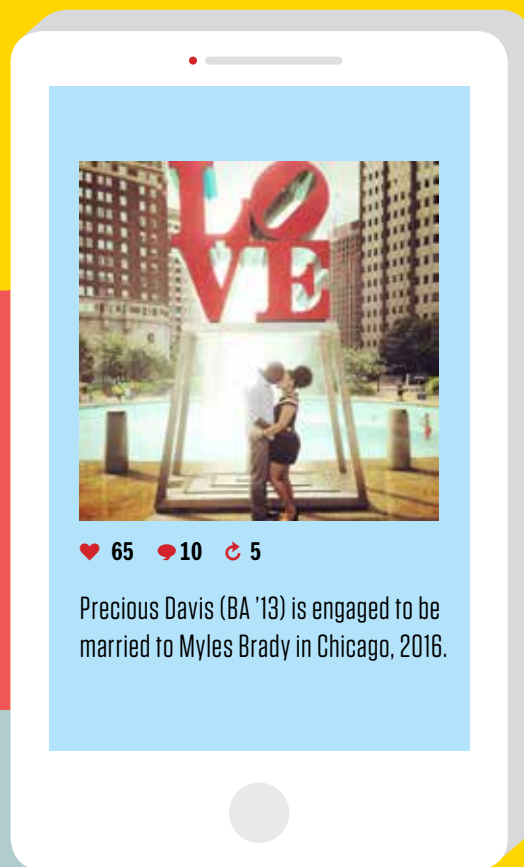
The Game Design program was created eight years ago, and the first generation of graduates is leveling up. Four alumni discuss this booming industry and their jobs at top studios.



M IS FOR MEDIA PRODUCTION CENTER 28

This revolutionary facility has reshaped the way filmmaking is taught at Columbia. Five years after its construction, we visit the MPC to explore the curriculum, the building itself and the filmmakers it's producing.

UPDATE YOUR STATUS, UPDATE YOUR SCHOOL



Columbia
COLLEGE CHICAGO

SUBMIT A CLASS NOTE.

Visit colum.edu/classnotes to join the Columbia Alumni Association & Network and submit your class note.



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DEMO

ISSUE 23 FALL / WINTER 2015

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DEMO (volume 10, number 2) is published by Columbia College Chicago. *DEMO* is mailed free of charge to alumni and friends of the college two times per year. The ideas and opinions expressed are those of the writers alone and do not necessarily reflect those of Columbia College Chicago. ©Columbia College Chicago 2015.

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colum.edu/demo



Questions for President Kwang-Wu Kim

DEMO: What most impresses you about Columbia alumni?

PRESIDENT KIM: There's a consistency to our alumni across the generations, a grittiness—in the best sense of the word—to them. This college seems to know how to produce people who go out into the world with a can-do attitude, a strong work ethic and a willingness to do whatever it takes to get the job done.

DEMO: You firmly believe that a Columbia education prepares graduates to pursue a variety of careers, and that professional success can take many forms. How have you seen this exemplified by alumni?

PRESIDENT KIM: Let me give you one example. Recently I was talking with an alumnus whose career was unrelated to his program of study at Columbia. And I was struck that his tone was almost apologetic, as if he were embarrassed to admit this. So I said to him, "But that's great! You found a way to be successful. That's what Columbia is about." And he became quite emotional when I said that.

If you study film at Columbia and you win an Academy Award, that's spectacular. But if you study film and at some point you decide you want to be in the social service world, and you do something meaningful, that is no less so. Columbia values its graduates' success, whatever form it takes. This is a fundamental message to our alumni that I'm really proud of.

DEMO: What's exciting about alumni coming back to campus?

PRESIDENT KIM: It was a critical gesture that we brought back five alumni as our honorary degree recipients at Commencement this past spring [see page 9]. That was meaningful for the college, and it was transformative for our students. So many of them said to me, "I had no idea someone that important graduated from Columbia." They were beaming with pride because the person giving their Commencement address went to Columbia. Our students don't really understand how many of our alumni are doing truly amazing things in the world. So that's

"We'd like to hear from more alumni."

another focus of mine, to make sure this is communicated in a more robust way. And we'll create other opportunities for alumni to come back.

The key word for alumni is involvement. Our new executive director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving, Miriam Smith, will focus on this [see pages 7 and 50]. We'd like to hear from more alumni. To what elements of their Columbia experience do they attribute their success? What parts of their education made a difference to them? Conversely, what did they not get from their education that they wish they had gotten when they were here? We're thinking a lot more about how we can reimagine alumni engagement and involvement.

WIRE

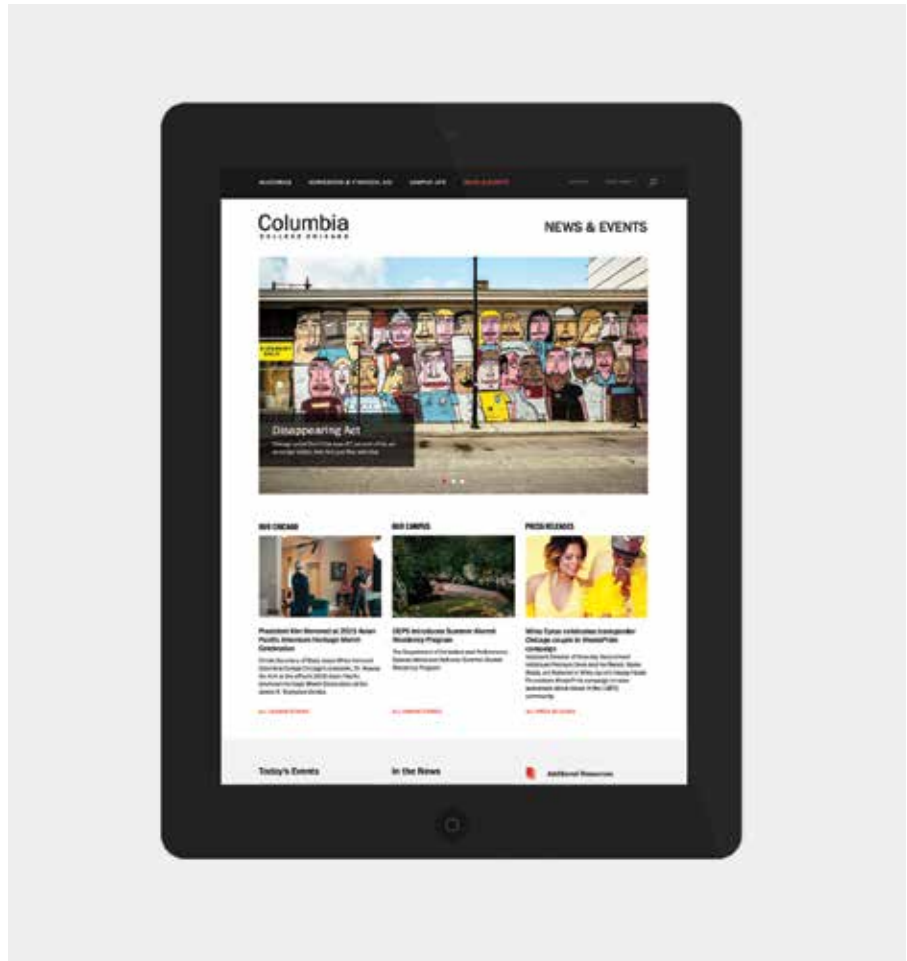
NEWS FROM THE COLUMBIA COMMUNITY



MIRIAM SMITH IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI RELATIONS AND ANNUAL GIVING

In August 2015, Miriam Smith joined Columbia College Chicago as executive director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving in the Office of Development and Alumni Relations. In this role, Smith will increase alumni engagement with the college, including managing communications and working with offices across the college to increase student and parent connectivity. On top of that, she will spearhead the college's annual giving program.

Smith comes to Columbia from the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT), where she implemented the first-ever FIT Class Gift Campaign. She also has alumni and giving campaign experience from Manhattanville College and Sarah Lawrence College. For more alumni news, see page 50.



Stay Connected through the News & Events Site

Now you can keep up on all things Columbia from one convenient spot. The recently launched News & Events site serves as a central hub for news and info from Columbia, Chicago and beyond, including alumni in the news. From press releases to highlighted events, it's the perfect place to see all the latest Columbia stories. Visit colum.edu/news-and-events to see what's up on campus.



STAY ON TRACK WITH EVENTS APP

Planning your social life just got a little bit easier. In addition to checking campus events at events.colum.edu, you can now download the Columbia College Chicago Events iPhone app to stay in touch with campus all the time. The app lets you see daily trending events, add events to your iOS calendar and even check which of your Facebook friends have RSVP'd. To download the app, search "Columbia College Chicago Events" in the app store or visit colum.edu/eventsapp.

Professors Awarded Guggenheim Fellowships

Two Columbia College Chicago professors received prestigious Guggenheim fellowships in 2015. Art & Art History professor Sabina Ott and Creative Writing professor David Lazar joined the list of 175 winners from a pool of more than 3,000 applicants. Ott received a fellowship in Fine Art, allowing her to expand her career as a multimedia artist, educator and founder of exhibition space Terrain (located at her Oak Park home). A prolific author, Lazar received a General Nonfiction fellowship.

David Lazar and Sabina Ott both received Guggenheim fellowships to support their prolific creative work.



WABASH ARTS CORRIDOR WELCOMES NEW MURALS

The WAC is considered Chicago's "living urban canvas," bringing vibrant street art to the South Loop. Murals added within the last year include Ben Eine's circus-inspired *Harmony*, Italian artist Never 2501's self-titled piece and Hebru Brantley's *Chi Boy*. Read more about the Wabash Arts Corridor on pages 40-41.



DEB MAUE JOINS COLUMBIA AS VP OF STRATEGIC MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

In April, Deborah Maue joined Columbia College Chicago as vice president of Strategic Marketing and Communications. At Columbia, Maue works closely with President Kwang-Wu Kim to provide leadership and strategic vision to the college's marketing, branding and communications divisions.



HOLLYWOOD REPORTER NAMES COLUMBIA A TOP FILM SCHOOL

Aspiring filmmakers, take note: Columbia College Chicago once again made *Hollywood Reporter's* annual list of the Top 25 American Film Schools, ranked at No. 16. The magazine specifically called out Columbia's addition of eight new BFA degrees, including screenwriting, directing and cinematography.



Commencement Recognizes Honorary Degree Recipients

Five Columbia College Chicago alumni received honorary degrees in May at Commencement 2015: HBO Films President Len Amato (BA '75); Steppenwolf Theatre artistic director Anna Shapiro (BA '90); Bloodshot Records co-founder Nan Warshaw (MA '93); actor and singer Chester Gregory (BA '95); and playwright, screenwriter and theatre producer Josefina Lopez (BA '93). "These five Columbia College Chicago alumni have had tremendous impact in their respective fields and truly embody the mission of the college by 'authoring the culture of their times,'" said President Kwang-Wu Kim.

Steppenwolf Theatre artistic director
Anna Shapiro (BA '90) and President Kim

GIVE & TAKE

Ron Norinsky (BA '70)

Growing up in Chicago's Albany Park neighborhood, Ron Norinsky (BA '70) obsessed over the radio. At just 11 or 12 years old, he and buddy Bob Sirott (BA '71) hung out at the local radio station petitioning DJs to emcee neighborhood dances. When Sirott headed to Columbia College Chicago, Norinsky followed—but his focus shifted to television. After graduating, he founded video equipment rental and post/duplication company Video Replay, which he ran for 36 years. Today, he gives back to his alma mater through the Norinsky Family Production Grant, which offers financial assistance to freshmen and sophomores in entry-level classes to help fund Television projects.

How did you get interested in television?

I went down to enroll [at Columbia], and unfortunately all the radio courses were filled. This was when Columbia was 300 students on Lake Shore Drive. So I wound up taking some TV courses, and I got hooked. I never did take a radio class at Columbia.

What was the most rewarding part of owning Video Replay?

One of the things I helped introduce to Chicago was something called video walls, which are now the LED giant screens we have in all the stadiums. Back then, it was basically just a bunch of monitors stacked in a matrix with a processor. It added move-



Ron Norinsky

ment and energy to a presentation. Video Replay was one of the first companies to have that technology available.

What motivated you to start the Norinsky Family Production Grant?

I gained a lot of success, way more than I ever dreamed of. It wasn't because I did it on my own. I've had a lot of help along the way, and Columbia was instrumental in getting me there. I always felt like I wanted to give something back. The students have to write a grant [proposal] for the money. In real life, a lot of these kids will be going to work for independent features and not-for-profit agencies. They'll have to write proposals to get money. Hopefully, this will be a learning experience for them. That's why I structured it the way I did.

"I've had a lot of help along the way, and Columbia was instrumental in getting me there."

What's been one of the most exciting student projects you've seen as a result of the fund?

A girl by the name of Kayla Rosenberg [BA '14] did a production [called *The "Z" Word*], and I was pretty impressed with her talent. It's about zombies. I wasn't her target audience—I'm generally not into those kinds of things—but I just saw in the cinematography, the lighting, the direction, that she has a lot of potential. That was pretty gratifying to see. —Megan Kirby



DEMO A TO Z: CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

A

ANNIVERSARY

Writer and comedian **Lena Waithe** (BA '06) grinning in the wake of her big break. **Dino Stamatopoulos** ('87) reigning over his LA animation studio. A comic-book Chicago drawn by **Art Baltazar** (BA '92). A handful of rubber chickens. Over the years, *DEMO* covers have highlighted the enviable and eclectic accomplishments of Columbia College Chicago and its alumni. Today, we're celebrating all things *DEMO* with our 10-year anniversary issue.

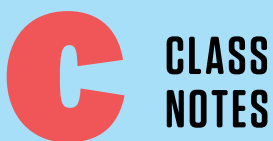
In *DEMO*'s first issue in 2005, inaugural editor Ann Wiens explained the magazine's offbeat name: "It's shorthand for demonstration (a showcase) and democratic (for the benefit of the people at large). It comes from the Greek demos, 'of the people.' And yes, it's also short for demolition (tearing down the obsolete to make room for the new)." Through the last decade, we've stayed true to this promise, remaining a publication for, by and about Columbia's best and brightest—featuring more than 2,000 alumni artists, activists and entrepreneurs through spotlights, portfolios, class notes and more.

We have a fresh A-to-Z format for the special occasion. In the following pages, you'll revisit former *DEMO* subjects, meet new ones and trace Columbia's exciting last decade of history—all alphabetically, of course.

In this issue, you'll revisit former *DEMO* subjects, meet new ones and trace Columbia's exciting last decade of history.

In *DEMO* 8, we looked at plans to build the innovative Media Production Center, the first newly constructed building in the college's history; on page 28, we look at how, five years later, the facility helps transform the way that students learn filmmaking. In *DEMO* 13, we covered the fascinating life story of Olympic gold medalist **Adolph Kiefer** (BA '40); on page 33, we catch up with the legendary swimmer, now 97. We revisit old subjects like animal rights activist **Jenny Brown** (BA '94) (page 38) and book artist **Brian Dettmer** (BA '97) (page 16), and discover new ones like multimedia artist **Sam Kirk** (BA '05) (page 26) and photographer **Misty Keasler** (BA '01) (page 42).

As we celebrate the past and future of Columbia's vibrant community, we also want to pause and recognize the present—which means we're also celebrating you! Thank you for reading, sharing, sending class notes and contributing to a decade (wow!) of this magazine. We couldn't do it without you. (Check out Y-You on pages 47-48 for the proof!)



In each issue, DEMO's Class Notes showcase the cool things alumni do. If you tell us about all the awesome things you're accomplishing, you might see yourself in the next issue.

My name is _____

I graduated Columbia College Chicago in the year _____

Now, I'm a _____

@ _____

I recently... MADE PUBLISHED CURATED WORKED ON PRODUCED

PERFORMED IN WROTE _____

a... GAME BOOK ARTICLE MOVIE PLAY WORK OF ART

SONG/ALBUM FESTIVAL _____

It's called _____

#COLUMBIACLASSTOTES

Three easy ways to submit a class note:

1. Fill out a digital form at colum.edu/classnotes.
2. Take a picture of this completed form and email it to demo@colum.edu.
3. Rip this completed form out and mail it to DEMO magazine, Columbia College Chicago, 600 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 527, Chicago, IL 60605.

First & Last Name: _____

Former Name: _____

Major(s): _____

Home Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Website: _____

C COMEDY

Columbia College Chicago’s new Comedy Writing and Performance degree—an expansion of the Comedy Studies semester at Second City covered in DEMO 10—aims to churn out comedians who can not only perform, but also write, produce and direct material. The unique degree is, without a doubt, a game-changer—but even before it was introduced in 2013, Columbia was producing influential comedic talent.

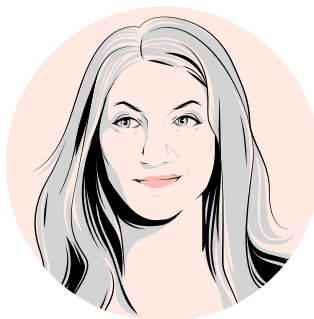


AIDY BRYANT (BA '09)

You know her, you love her: Lil’ Baby Aidy, one of *Saturday Night Live*’s breakout cast members since 2012 (see DEMO 20 for Bryant’s first-person account of landing on the show). In addition to writing and performing in the classic sketch comedy show, she’s made recent guest appearances on *Girls* and *Broad City*.

“The one thing I love about comedy, and the reason why it’s been so addictive, is because of these amazing people you meet.”

—Abbey Londer (BA '08)



ABBEY LONDER (BA '08)

Since 2012, Abbey Londer has singlehandedly produced Riot LA, the city’s hottest comedy festival, where comics both world-famous and unknown congregate in a weekend-long “comedy crawl.” Says stand-up comic Kyle Kinane (BA '02), “It’s one of those festivals [where] you look at your set time and you’re pissed because there are three other shows you want to see at the same time you’re gonna go on.”

In addition to showcasing some of the country’s best comedy, Londer strives to give the festival a sense of community.

“The one thing I love about comedy, and the reason why it’s been so addictive, is because of these amazing people you meet,” she says. By keeping the festival walkable (and turning one of the parking lots into an adult playground with food trucks, photo booths and arcade games), she’s made Riot LA into a sort of block party where everyone, from comedy’s biggest names to its biggest fans, can celebrate the city’s immeasurable talent.



JEREMY BEILER (BA '04)

Working closely with Aidy Bryant, Jeremy Beiler wrote for the 40th season of *SNL*, as well as the quirky mock-game show *Bunk* and the second season of *Inside Amy Schumer*. (From the latter, you may remember his Aaron Sorkin parody, “The Foodroom,” or his appearance as a stylist on the tongue-in-cheek “Say Fine to the Shirt.”) He also plays newscaster Jason Copeland on The Onion News Network.



BRIAN POSEN (BA '90)

If it’s in Chicago, and if it’s comedy, Brian Posen probably has his hands in it. He’s the artistic director of Stage 773, a performer with the Cupid Players, and the founder and organizer of the Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival (the largest festival of its kind in the nation, even though it’s held in the middle of the Chicago winter). He also heads the Second City training program and has taught improv at his alma mater, Columbia College Chicago, for more than 20 years.

Most people would be exhausted simply reading that list of accomplishments, let alone living it, but Posen is brimming with infectious energy that’s inspired genera-

tions of students. (Abbey Londer says her time volunteering at Sketchfest “definitely” influenced the feel of Riot LA.) To Posen, it’s only natural.

“I was so moved by these teachers that have helped me so much. I’m just stupid loyal and stupid sappy and stupid sentimental about that shit,” he says. “What is my role [in Chicago comedy]? Giving back. Creating opportunities for others like others have created opportunities for me.”



ALEX HANPETER (BA '12)
& **JUDE TEDMORI** (BA '13)

After cutting their teeth in Chicago’s sketch scene, Alex Hanpeter and Jude Tedmori moved to LA in June to explore the wider world of comedy. Their now-defunct sketch group, *Two Bunnies Eating Flowers* (formed with Kyle Reinhard, who’s staying in Chicago), focused on experimental, off-the-wall material that won the hearts of comedy veterans like Brian Posen and Second City’s Director of Comedy Studies Anne Libera. Though *Two Bunnies* is no more, Tedmori and Hanpeter plan to continue working together and branch out beyond live performance.



KYLE KINANE (BA '02)

Kyle Kinane, profiled in *DEMO 19*, is a cult hero of standup comedy, known for his ability to turn the most inane moments (like checking the Red Lobster Cheddar Bay Biscuits Facebook page) into ponderous, hilarious stories. When he’s not touring or working on his next comedy album (his third, *I Liked His Old Stuff Better*, was released in early 2015 to rave reviews), he makes appearances on *Workaholics*, *Bob’s Burgers*, and the star-studded, R-rated animated movie *Hell & Back*.



LENA WAITHE (BA '06)

Lena Waithe has kept busy since producing the award-winning 2014 satirical film *Dear White People*. She is co-starring in Aziz Ansari’s Netflix comedy, *Master of None*; working with influential casting director Allison Jones; developing her TV script *Twenties* (highlighted in *DEMO 20*); and shooting a pilot she wrote for Showtime with executive producer Common ('96).

Waithe is quietly enthusiastic about the turns her career has taken. “I’ve been on set as a writer, I’ve been on set as a producer and I’ve been on set as an actor,” she says. “To be able to experience that in those three different ways is an education that you can’t pay for.”



KEVIN GERRITY ('11)
& **ZACH BARTZ** (BA '13)

Zach Bartz and Kevin Gerrity are the creative force behind *The Shithole*, a free Chicago comedy show where nothing, not even the location, is predictable. Seeking a refuge from the insincerity and pressure of the comedy industry, the duo created a space where original work can find its place in an ultra-supportive atmosphere.

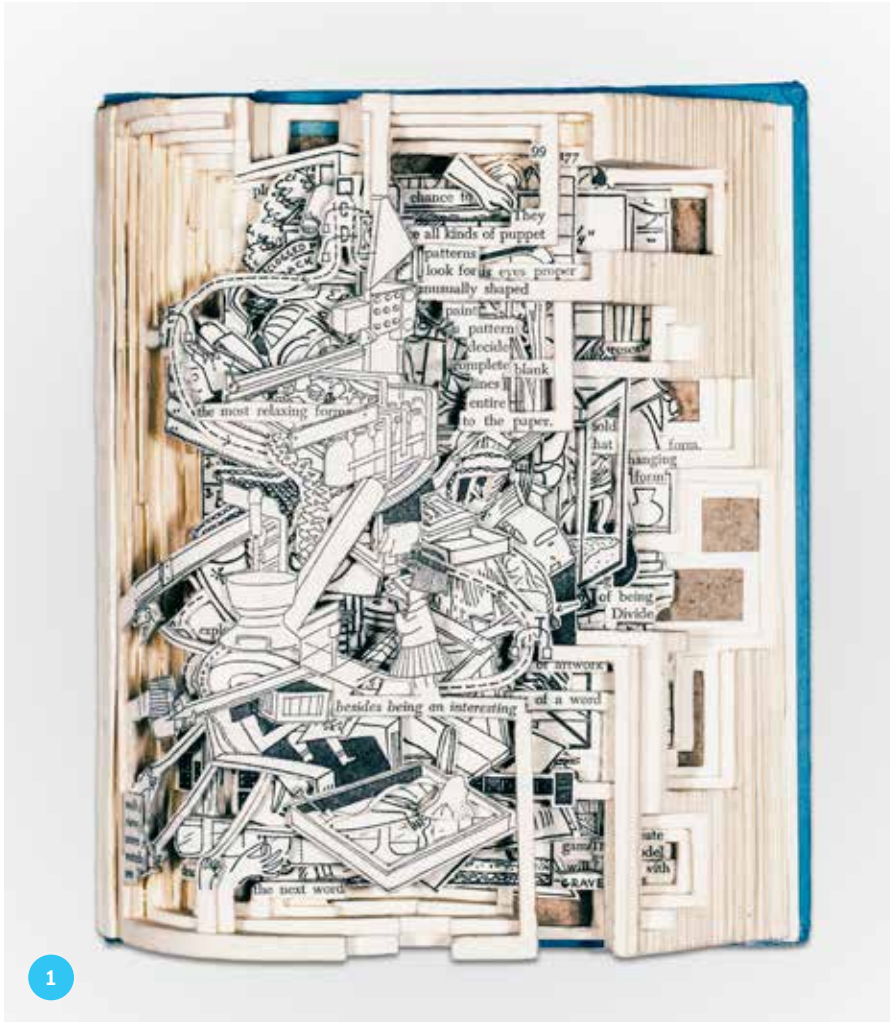
The *Shithole* has grown exponentially while always staying true to its experimental roots. At any given performance, you might see a woman smearing barbecue sauce all over her body, a love song sung to a Michelle Obama calendar or King Kong performing ballet—and, of course, Bartz, Gerrity and musical director Dan Wilcop ('10) performing improv as Gnar Gnar Shredtown.

The *Shithole* roves around the city, taking place in backyards, garages, attics and even, occasionally, actual stages. If you want to find it, you’ll have to follow their motto and “Message for Details.”

—**Hannah Lorenz** ('16)

D

BRIAN
DETTMER



Since appearing in the pages of DEMO 15, multimedia artist **Brian Dettmer** (BA '97) moved his studio from Atlanta to Brooklyn, staged a 10-year retrospective of his work at an Italian gallery and continued carving the intricate book sculptures that made his name in the art world.

Dettmer's painstaking process involves varnishing books and then excavating them layer by layer with tweezers and X-Acto knives. Projects can take anywhere from a handful of days to a span of months.

Dettmer doesn't memorize books before working with them, which makes his

“We’re at this point in history where we need to question how things will work, and what is in danger of being lost by this transition.”

process an act of discovery every time. “There’s a high level of chance because I don’t know what’s coming on the next page,” he says. “It’s really a collaboration between me and the book.”



Sometimes people ask how Dettmer continues to find inspiration after more than a decade of book work. He’s not sweating it. “I think that with books, the context and potential is sort of endless,” he says. “It’s probably the most relevant material to think about, professionally and physically, at this point in history.”

With the rise of the Internet making old-school reference books obsolete, Dettmer uses recycled encyclopedias and dictionaries to consider the evolution of information. “We’re at this point in history where we need to question how things will work, and what is in danger of being lost by this transition,” he says.

1. *The New Family Game Book*, 2013, Hardcover book, acrylic varnish, 8 ½ x 7 ¼ x 1 ¾"
2. *The Way Things Work*, 2014, Hardcover book, acrylic varnish, 10 ½ x 7 ¾ x 6"
3. *Complete Guide*, 2011, Hardcover book, acrylic varnish, 15 x 10 ¾ x 2 ¼"

E ENTREPRENEUR

Detroit is in the midst of a massive revival, and Phillip Cooley (BA '00) isn't afraid to get his hands dirty. See how this entrepreneur continues to bring new life to his hometown.



DEMO A to Z



PHILLIP COOLEY (BA '00)

It might have been enough for aspiring filmmaker and international runway model Phillip Cooley (BA '00) to return home to Detroit and set up shop within the family's development business. Instead, he opened a restaurant in one of the bleakest parts of the Motor City and committed himself to its revitalization effort.

“... a salon and bicycle shop opened up, and a furniture store is opening as well. That's just on our block, and we're starting to see that same growth all over Detroit.”

Since being featured in *DEMO 18* just two years ago, Cooley has expanded his non-profit efforts while still finding the time to get married in 2015. He's been much lauded for feeding the profits of Slows Bar

BQ back into his local nonprofit Ponyride, which gives entrepreneurs and budding artists a lift through inexpensive rental space in a rehabbed building. A pied piper who's coaxed fellow successful millennials to donate their time and services, Cooley could well be the face of an urban return.

TURNING A NONPROFIT

Ponyride has exploded since its inception in 2011. Two years ago, the building had a dozen residents; now it has 100-percent occupancy, helping give rise to ventures ranging from carpentry and concrete

See the businesses Phillip Cooley has brought to a revitalized Detroit.

PONYRIDE 1401 VERMONT ST., DETROIT ponyride.org

This large warehouse serves as ultra-cheap rental space for budding businesses. Ponyride also offers assistance with business development.

1. Detroit Denim Co. is dedicated to creating long-lasting, quality jeans through traditional craftsmanship.
2. Serious coffee lovers go to Anthology Coffee to get the best brews in town.
3. The modern metalworkers at Smith Shop create hand-crafted metal products of all kinds and offer classes and workshops.
4. Furniture company Floyd designs versatile furniture intended for city living. Their signature Floyd Leg lets you turn nearly any flat surface into a table.





GOLD CASH GOLD
2100 MICHIGAN AVE., DETROIT
goldcashgolddetroit.com

Gold Cash Gold serves down-home cuisine in a retired pawn shop. (The name comes from the text emblazoned on the shop's exterior.) The restaurant sits down the street from Slows Bar BQ, which was surrounded by abandoned buildings when it opened. Gold Cash Gold fills the space of the last empty building on the block.

SLOWS BAR BQ
2138 MICHIGAN AVE., DETROIT
slowsbarbq.com

Cooley's first restaurant celebrated its 10-year anniversary in August. It now has locations in Detroit and Grand Rapids, Michigan.

services, to clothing stores, to dance and recording studios. Nearly 200 more hopeful tenants sit on a waiting list.

While benefitting from the success of Slows Bar BQ, Ponyride still lost about \$50,000 a year in its first three years of existence. "We think we're going to be pretty close to breaking even this year," says Cooley.

Aside from cheap rental space, Ponyride now helps with business development for its tenants. "We have an advisory board of professionals that includes lawyers, marketers, accountants and more that meet with the businesses," Cooley says.

CORKTOWN REVIVAL

Opening a restaurant on a block surrounded by 10 abandoned buildings was a gamble, but it paid off for both Cooley and Corktown, the historic Irish neighborhood Slows inhabits. In August, Slows celebrated its 10-year anniversary by opening a second restaurant in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Cooley also opened another restaurant, Gold Cash Gold, on the same block in December 2014.

Cooley believes a youthful movement can help restore Detroit to its former cultural significance. "We now have multiple restaurants opening up every month in the

neighborhood," he says. "There's also the retail component: a salon and bicycle shop opened up, and a furniture store is opening as well. That's just on our block, and we're starting to see that same growth all over Detroit." —**William Meiners** (MFA '96)



F

FLOSSTRADAMUS

Originally a side project between Curt “Autobot” Cameruci (BA ’05) and Josh “J2K” Young (’03) in the height of the Myspace days, Flosstradamus is becoming one of the biggest names in the EDM (electronic dance music) scene. The duo, featured in *DEMO 10*, offers a mix of edgy electronic beats and the intensity of today’s hip-hop scene; every track is exciting enough for the club or a major music festival.



CURT “AUTOBOT” CAMERUCI (BA ’05)



JOSH “J2K” YOUNG (’03)

IN NINE YEARS, THE DUO HAS:

- **Played 28 festivals including Coachella, Spring Awakening Music Festival and Lollapalooza**
- **Performed in 12 countries**
- **Collaborated with Lil’ Jon, Iggy Azalea and Run The Jewels**
- **Reached 5.8 million followers on SoundCloud**
- **Been featured in *Spin*, *Paper*, *Billboard* and *Rolling Stone***

Flosstradamus will kick off 2016 in the Bahamas performing on the Holy Ship! cruise.

F FOOD

“The combination of everything together is what really makes it. You have a sum of all the parts.”



DON HEIN (’96)
LITTLE CAKES

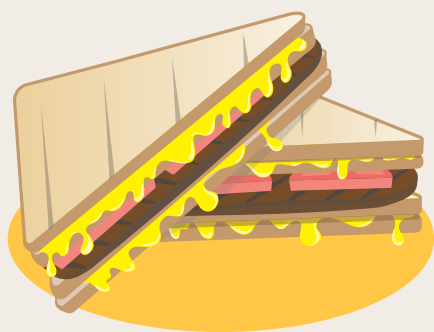
Where: Little Cakes, a San Diego-based cupcake shop made famous by Hein’s multiple wins on Food Network’s *Cupcake Wars*.

What: The Norman, a chocolate-coconut cupcake with caramel buttercream and toasted coconut.

Why: Hein thinks Little Cakes’ success lies in his Italian buttercream, an understated frosting that unites flavors instead of overpowering them. “The combination of everything together is what really makes it,” says Hein. “You have a sum of all the parts.” The Norman is named in honor of his brindle-colored rescue dog (whose coat matches the cake’s marbled interior).

Columbia doesn't offer a culinary arts degree—but that didn't stop these four alumni-turned-restaurateurs. From cupcakes to BBQ to some serious grilled cheese sandwiches, these entrepreneurs serve up a smorgasbord of innovative and quirky dishes across the country. DEMO asked four restaurant owners to recommend their favorite bites. Go ahead, have a taste.

“You come for half an hour, it puts a smile on your face and you leave happy.”



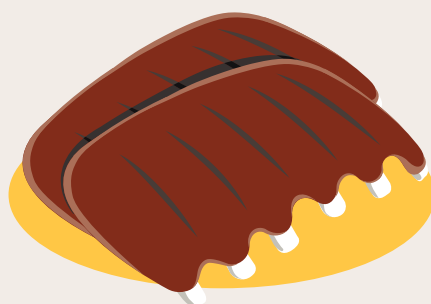
MATT BRESLOW (BA '04)
GRILLED CHEESE GRILL

Where: Grilled Cheese Grill, which started as a Portland-based food cart and grew to include two reclaimed vehicles-turned-restaurants: a double decker bus and a school bus.

What: The Cheesus, a burger stuffed between two grilled cheese sandwiches. The top sandwich: pickles and American cheese. The bottom: grilled onions and Colby Jack. The middle: a one-third pound burger with all the fixings.

Why: As a film student, Breslow wanted to create comfort films you could turn on while folding laundry (and quote every line). That feel-good nostalgic philosophy expands to grilled cheese. “You come for half an hour, it puts a smile on your face and you leave happy,” he says.

“We believe that BBQ sauce should be a complement, not the main event.”



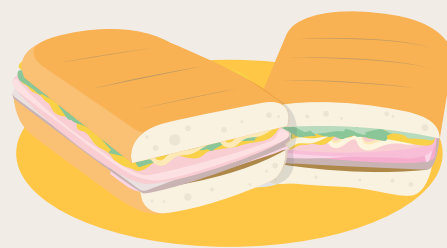
BARRY SORKIN (BA '96)
SMOQUE BBQ

Where: Smoque BBQ, regarded by many to be Chicago's best BBQ spot.

What: Ribs—both the classic baby back ribs and the meatier, smokier St. Louis spare ribs.

Why: After a heavy coating of spice rub, the ribs are smoked over apple and oak wood for three to four hours. Then they're brushed with a very thin layer of BBQ sauce right before being served, which turns into a caramelized crust without overpowering the meat. “We believe that BBQ sauce should be a complement, not the main event,” says Sorkin.

“Something as simple as pickle and mustard. Everything is a contributing factor.”



PHIL GHANTOUS (BA '00)
CAFECITO

Where: Cafecito, a pair of Cuban restaurants specializing in coffee and pressed sandwiches located in the Chicago Loop (covered in DEMO 9).

What: The Cubano, a sandwich featuring pork, ham, Swiss cheese, pickles and mustard, all grilled to perfection. Plus, Cafecito marinates all meats in its homemade mojo sauce.

Why: Ghantous found inspiration in Miami's Cuban sandwich shops and perfected his Cubano at home, working to find the perfect ratio of ingredients. “A balance of the flavors from the pork, the ham, the mojo that's used in the marinade,” he says. “Something as simple as pickle and mustard. Everything is a contributing factor.”

G

GAMES

The booming game design industry, worth more than \$20 billion in the U.S., is rapidly evolving. And it looks completely different from when Columbia College Chicago introduced majors in game design/development in 2007 (covered in *DEMO 11*). But Columbia grads are prepared to weather the fluctuations.

“We are constantly thinking about our objectives—about what kind of game developer walks out of our program and what kind of industry they’re going to be walking into,” says Tom Dowd, associate chair of the Interactive Arts & Media Department. “We create very broadly skilled students. They have the technical and creative flexibility to slide themselves in a number of directions depending on what opportunities arise.”



Characters from alumni-created, Kickstarter-backed videogame *Moon Intern*, featured in *DEMO 18*.

HERE, FOUR OF COLUMBIA'S FIRST-GENERATION GAME ALUMNI SOUND OFF ON THEIR CAREERS.



NOAH JOHNSON (BA '11)
INCONTEXT SOLUTIONS

Johnson, one of the very first Game Design grads (who now teaches in the college's Interactive Arts & Media Department), leads a collaborative technical art team at InContext, a Chicago-based 3D simulation/visualization company. There, he creates digital simulations of real retail environments, which are then used for market research. "It's what we call 'serious games,'" he says. "For Kraft, we might be building a shelf full of Kraft macaroni and cheese along with products from their competitors. We have [consumers] move through [the space], and we gather data the whole time. It's more interactive than giving people static surveys."



JOHN FAVARO (BA '11)
BUNGIE

Favaro is an investment systems designer at the major game studio Bungie (creator of *Halo*), developing the awards and achievements that keep people playing. "I spend eight hours a day making games, and then I come home and I play games for fun," he says. "Even a game you don't like can teach you something. You won't always be able to

make the game you want to make. You may wind up getting a job making *Barbie's Horse Adventures* when you really want to make an action [role-playing game], but you have to love your job to eventually succeed in it."



John Favaro keeps busy helping to expand and maintain the multiplayer game *Destiny*.



EMILY SALIBA (BS '15)
GIRLS WHO CODE

Recent graduate Saliba is a teacher for New York-based nonprofit Girls Who Code, an organization that teaches computer science skills to high school girls. "I thought I was getting a pretty good education, but then as soon as I left [school], I was like, 'Okay—it was really good,'" says Saliba. "I was at my job training with tons of other women (and a couple of men) who were going to be teachers for the summer with me. I was really intimidated because some of them were in grad school or had PhDs." But as they began to work together, she realized she was keeping up with them.

Even though her newly minted degree

was in "hard" science, Saliba describes the "soft" skills, such as emotional intelligence and team dynamics, she learned at Columbia as invaluable. "That's something you can't get out of a textbook or by learning online yourself."



ROEL SANCHEZ (BA '12)
BIOWARE

Austin, Texas-based Sanchez, who concentrated in Game Sound Design, is now a senior audio artist for BioWare, a division of leading game company Electronic Arts. BioWare's titles include the hugely popular—and critically acclaimed—*Mass Effect* series, as well as *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* and *Dragon Age*. He says Columbia was the ideal training ground for his work, which depends heavily on collaboration with others. "The progression of the courses and especially the large team project really prepare you for the environment and the scenarios you're going to encounter in game production," he says. "It's chaos, but it really gets you in the right mindset. I'm still applying the same things I learned there every day at my job."

—Audrey Michelle Mast (BA '00)



Roel Sanchez is working on the upcoming game *Mass Effect: Andromeda*, which is expected to be released in the holiday season of 2016.

"We are constantly thinking about ... what kind of game developer walks out of our program and what kind of industry they're going to be walking into."

—Tom Dowd, Associate Chair of the Interactive Arts & Media Department

H AGNES HAMERLIK

The aesthetic of fashion designer Agnes Hamerlik (BFA '12) follows the Japanese concept of wabisabi: finding beauty in things that are imperfect or incomplete. Since appearing on *DEMO 18*'s cover, she's showcased collections at Chicago and New York Fashion Weeks. Here, she walks us through her design for The Red Dress, the opening piece in her mini semi-couture collection Botanical Fragmentation.

1. Bursts of hand-manipulated French lace and intricate embroidery flow down the dress and embellish the sleeves.
2. Pure silk gazar is interfaced with silk organza to add rigidity to the fabric.
3. Dramatic draping makes The Red Dress a showstopper.



ILLUSTRATED PRESS

Jamie Hibdon, Erik Rodriguez and Darryl Holliday

Illustrated Press explores Chicago with its unique brand of comic book journalism.



“It’s been interesting to see [the story] come together in ways we could not have possibly made up.”

—Darryl Holliday (BA '12)

How do you define a city like Chicago? For Darryl Holliday (BA '12) and Erik Rodriguez ('11), the answer lies in the stories of people you pass every day, from the surprising to the mundane.

The duo behind Illustrated Press, which presents journalistic reporting in an innovative comic book format, is compiling some of those stories in the upcoming book *Kedzie Avenue*, a follow-up to 2012's *The Illustrated Press: Chicago*. (Since being featured in *DEMO 18*, they've also added a third member, illustrator Jamie Hibdon, and have produced nonfiction comics for local news outlets, including *The Chicago Reader* and WBEZ.)

Photo: Eric Vogel



Kedzie Avenue examines its namesake street from top to bottom, exploring histories, characters and communities that Holliday calls “microcosms of the city itself.”

“[There’s] such a diverse range of people and places and stories on that route,” he says. “It’s been a really interesting adventure, learning about the city through tracking down this one street.”



J

RASHID JOHNSON

Rashid Johnson (BA '00) is an internationally acclaimed fine artist focusing on black identity through a wide variety of media and unexpected materials.

His exhibit *Anxious Men* opened Oct. 2 at The Drawing Center in New York City to critical acclaim. The highlight of the exhibit is a series of abstract portraits drawn in black soap and wax on white tile. Their agitated faces are violently scribbled into the materials, emphasizing the fear that comes with being a black man in America today.

Said Johnson in *DEMO 8*: “There’s a generation of black artists before me who made work specifically about the black experience. But I think for my generation ... there’s less of a need to define the black experience so aggressively to a white audience. I think it gives us a different type of opportunity to have a more complex conversation around race and identity.”

K SAM KIRK



The work of Sam Kirk (BA '05) ranges from fine art to interior design to custom installations, but it's also multifaceted in the way it explores intersections between race, sexual identity and social justice.

The artist's series of illustrations about sex trafficking, drawn on actual trafficking tickets, was inspired by exploring what happens to LGBT youth from traditional or conservative cultures. "A lot of times, there is unacceptance, and it leads to rejection, which leads to homelessness, which often leads to sex trafficking," Kirk says.

She also connects with commercial clients to design restaurants or events. Since 2013, she's art directed the Guinness Live It Up cultural celebration in Brooklyn, where she creates the visual elements of the fest, from speaker walls to modern versions of West Indian masks.

Through her organization Provoke Culture, Kirk collaborates with nonprofits like Project Fierce and the Center on Halsted to raise money through the sale of custom-made, socially conscious art. See more of her work at iamsamkirk.com.



SAM KIRK (BA '05)

“My mom stressed the importance of helping other people ... and giving time to help others who were less fortunate.”

1. “Hoping & Praying You See Me” calls attention to homeless LGBT youth who are, for all intents and purposes, invisible as they walk the streets. Says Kirk of the boy in the image, “He must create his own path and [have] faith that life will work itself out.”
2. Even while America celebrated the legalization of gay marriage in 2015, homeless LGBT youth still face the harsh reality of living in a shelter or on the street, with no family to share in the victory. “Looking for Love in the Midst of Homelessness” highlights this juxtaposition.



MEDIA PRODUCTION CENTER

The first newly constructed building in the college's history, opened in 2010, has transformed the way students learn filmmaking.



FAST FACTS ON THE MEDIA PRODUCTION CENTER

Opened in January 2010 as Columbia's first newly constructed building

35,500 square feet; includes two film production sound stages, a motion-capture studio, digital labs, animating suites, a fabrication shop and state-of-the-art classrooms

Designed by Studio Gang Architects, headed by award-winning architect Jeanne Gang

Certified LEED Gold by the U.S. Green Building Council

Received a 2010 Citation of Merit, Distinguished Building, American Institute of Architects (AIA) Chicago

In 2009, Columbia College Chicago broke ground on the Media Production Center (MPC), the first newly constructed building in the college's history (covered in DEMO 8). A year later, the MPC opened, offering two film production sound stages, a motion-capture studio, digital labs, animating suites, a fabrication shop and state-of-the-art classrooms that give students real movie production experience. Five years after the MPC's opening, we examine how it is changing the way filmmaking is taught at Columbia.

THE BIRTH OF A PRACTICUM

An industrious hum fills the airy, modern-industrial halls of the MPC, at the corner of 16th and State streets. Hammers clatter in the workshop, furniture is shuffled into set dressing rooms, and students in the prop closet debate the artistic merits of a particular office chair. Outside the soundstages, you can sometimes find a bubble of quiet: When the red light is on, filming is in progress, and students know to tread lightly.

"It's an environment where you can take risks, experiment and play with things," says

Cinema Art + Science Chair Bruce Sheridan, who was integral to the MPC's development. The 35,500-square-foot-space is, in many ways, a physical manifestation of Columbia's cross-disciplinary, hands-on spirit.

When Sheridan came to the department in 2001 (with 20 years of experience as a director, producer and educator), he focused on how to take the college's thriving film program to the next level. "How do we create the future without cutting away this incredibly successful past?" he asked.



Professional-quality soundstages allow students to experience the protocol and culture of high-end studio film production.

“It’s an environment where you can take risks, experiment and play with things.”

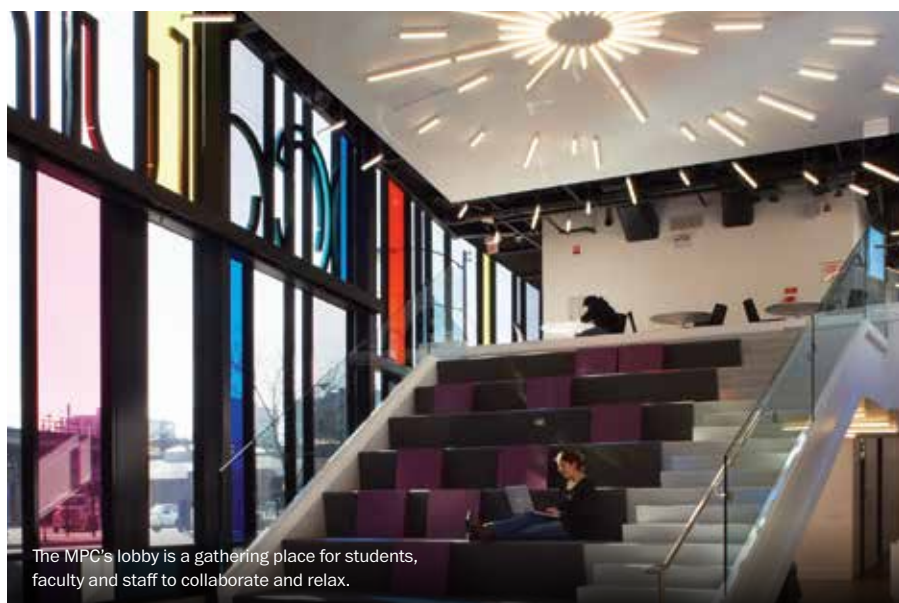
The answer came in two phases: a new curriculum and a new building in which it could flourish.

The linchpin of this new curriculum was adding advanced practicum courses that mirror the film industry. In a practicum, more than 200 students collaborate with faculty and staff to develop, produce and screen short, distribution-ready films within the semester.

“[Practicum] projects forced us to work within a budget and schedule, which is essential in this business,” says Chris Charles (BA ’07), a Chicago-based independent producer who founded two production companies with his former classmate John Boshier (BA ’06). “They also taught us to collaborate with others who were not necessarily our friends or people we would have recruited if given the choice. This was an important lesson, as every project I’ve ever worked on has required collaborating with new people.”

The practicum films function as specialized capstone experiences for upper-classmen. Crucially, they also offer internship-style opportunities to undergrads, who can build their all-important networks from day one. While advanced students hone their highly specialized skills, freshmen and sophomores work as production assistants and get a taste of what they’d like to study further.

Leah Kilpatrick (BA ’09), now an actress and comedian in Los Angeles, assisted on a practicum project in her first year. “Coming from Minnesota, not knowing what it was really like on a film set, [I now know] that the practicum environment was mirroring what it would be like in Hollywood,” she says. “I was able to talk to all the departments and see what it was to be a part of this team.” A year later, she worked on another practicum as a line producer. That student experience has translated to real-world success: She’s since line produced several independent films, including 2014’s *Free the Nipple*.

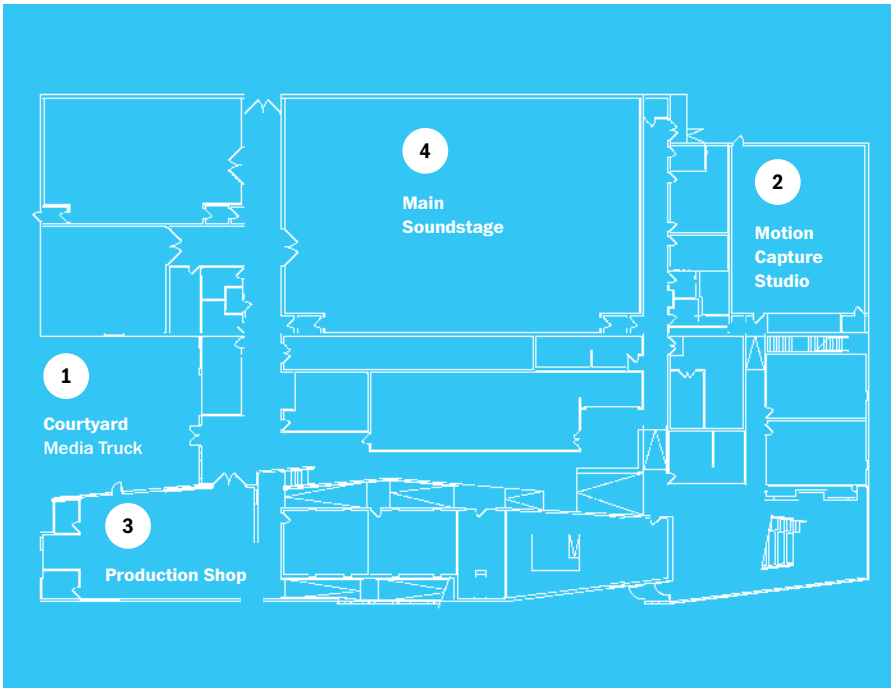


The MPC’s lobby is a gathering place for students, faculty and staff to collaborate and relax.



Students receive hands-on instruction in directing at the MPC.

DEMO A to Z



THE WAY WE WERE

Prior to the MPC's opening in January 2010, Columbia's film equipment and supplies were housed in buildings all over the South Loop. As Boshier recalls, "You had to go to 1104 South Wabash to pick up camera gear, 72 East 11th to pick up lighting and grip equipment, and 1401 South Wabash for props/set dressing and stages." (The college maintained a small soundstage at 14th Street, which was shared with the Theatre Department and was a fraction of the size of the MPC stage.) "It could be a real nightmare, especially if you didn't have access to a truck or van," he says.

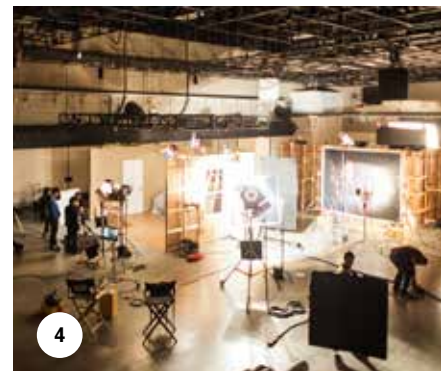
Even everyday exercises could be a challenge. Says Boshier: "In directing classes, we would partition the [14th Street] stage in two with just a thin wall separating two crews. Just before one side would do a take, the assistant director would bang on the wall and shout, 'We're shooting!' The other side would have to remain quiet until hearing 'cut,' at which point they'd scramble to get their next shot. It was quite chaotic, but we worked with what we had and figured out how to get it all done in time."

The curriculum carried out in the MPC offers opportunities to foster creative collaboration—plus a way to iron out the complicated logistics of any film production. Independent producer Dimitri Moore (BA '11) was a student both before and after the

MPC opened, and was hired to coordinate the practicum film program after he graduated. His own practicum project was shot off campus. "We had to rent a stage space on Grand Avenue and build a pirate ship there. It was logistically difficult," he says. "We made it work, but we didn't have the freedom to really experiment, because the logistics always won out." That all changed when the new building opened in 2010. "The MPC allowed us to make the location fit our idea," says Moore. "[It] made a lot of things seem more possible."

Tanya Savard (BA '10), a unit production manager assistant on NBC's *Chicago P.D.*, agrees. "Having the opportunity to shoot part of my short film on the MPC stages was a great way to learn how to film the way real shows film. It gave us creative freedom to make the set we had always envisioned from scratch and be able to tell the story the way we wanted to tell it."

1. The courtyard can accommodate a high-definition media production truck, a mobile lab for live remote broadcasts and onsite video projects.
2. The motion capture studio integrates state-of-the-art learning technologies with the study of 3D computer animation, digital filmmaking and game arts.
3. The production workshop allows students to build their own sets.
4. The industry-standard soundstages allow students to create a professional body of work by the time they graduate.





“The MPC allowed us to make the location fit our idea. [It] made a lot of things seem more possible.”

Architect Jeanne Gang incorporated cinematic references into the MPC's architecture. Classroom interiors are seen through windows edged in black, like peering through a lens or watching action onscreen.

THE GRADUATES

Before the curriculum revamp in the mid-2000s, film students worked independently or in small teams and—largely due to the nature of an ever-expanding urban campus—rarely interacted outside of their specialized concentrations. And even though most students graduate with a specific focus, like directing or cinematography, they must understand every cog in the machine. Working together on a practicum film allows students to see beyond their individual role, and the MPC easily facilitates those interdisciplinary interactions.

Students can now experiment with cameras and equipment, test various film stocks and lighting styles, and work in a variety of roles in a much more organic way. “It sticks best when the students feel that they can explore by themselves and then

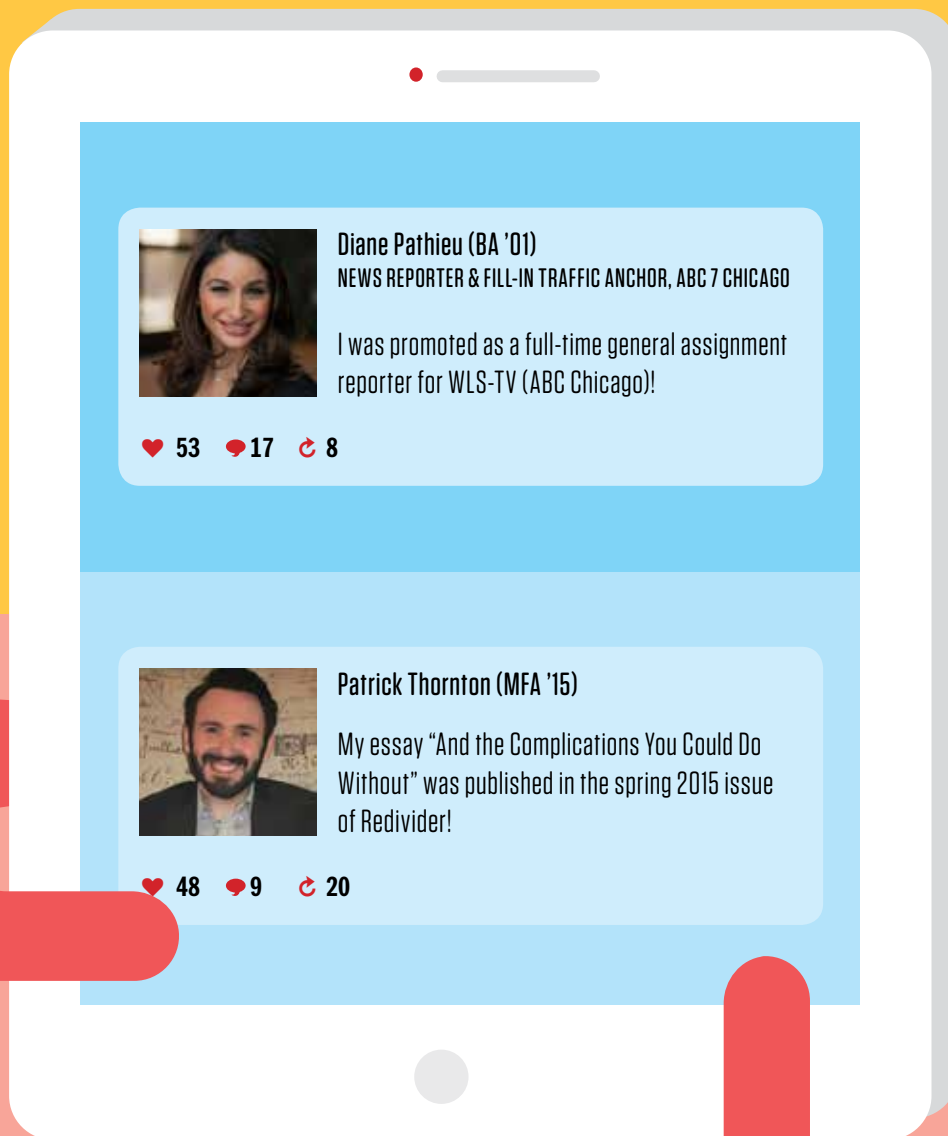
come back and ask questions or make their own decisions,” says Sheridan. “That’s what they’re able to do there that they couldn’t do in any other facilities beforehand.” It’s particularly helpful for freshmen to work in the same space as upperclassmen; they’re encouraged (and expected) to observe or assist the more advanced productions.

Thanks to professional-level experience in a collaborative environment, students actively demonstrate their abilities every day to their professors and peers—the people who might eventually hire them. Moore, who now helms his own San Francisco company, DWM Producing, says, “I could see a lot more in 10 minutes of watching [students] work at the MPC than I could in a week of them telling me [about their work]. And that’s very important for me as a producer—to see how they communicate

together, how they work together.”

Sheridan stresses that he wants the department to educate creative teams, not just creative individuals. With the enhanced curriculum, and the building created to house it, Columbia’s film students leave the college not just knowing how to operate a camera or create a budget, but how to build a filmmaking team. With that invaluable skill, they can begin influencing the film industry faster than ever before. —**Audrey Michelle Mast** (BA '00)

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