

# DEMO

The Alumni Magazine of  
Columbia College Chicago

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Costume designer  
Beth Morgan outfits  
Netflix's *GLOW*

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Alumni level up in  
video game industry

## Earth BOUND

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Vershawn Sanders-Ward brings  
the TransAtlantic Project to the  
Dance Center stage

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# DEMO

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# Questions

## FOR PRESIDENT KWANG-WU KIM

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**DEMO:** You just finished your fifth year as president. What were some of the highlights?

**PRESIDENT KIM:** A lot of positive and encouraging things happened this year. We continued to move forward on a comprehensive curricular revision that is designed to bring our academic programs into the 21st century. We broke ground on our new 110,000-square-foot Student Center and completed our gut renovation of the Getz Theater as a state-of-the-art teaching and performance space. Four alumni won national Emmy awards, and Photography Professor Dawoud Bey received a MacArthur Foundation “genius grant.” And we capped it all off with a typically lively Manifest and commencement weekend. What more could you ask for?

**DEMO:** From the Getz Theater Center renovations to the construction of the Student Center, there’s a lot of activity across campus. What does this mean for the year ahead?

**PRESIDENT KIM:** Both of these projects are about fulfilling promises about the quality and value of this education that we make to our students when they enter Columbia. When it opens next year, the Student Center will become a central hub and home for a student body—especially our sizeable population of commuter students—that has needed one for a long time. It will also facilitate new forms of collaboration and creative practice that will support the college’s updated curriculum. The Getz Theater, in turn, will provide one

of our signature academic programs with a vastly improved teaching and learning space, one that is worthy of the remarkable student and faculty work that has gone on in the Theatre Department for decades. I am very much looking forward to welcoming back our Theatre alumni for a reunion celebration in October.

**DEMO:** The spring semester of 2018 has seen a string of student and alumni successes. What success stories stand out to you? What do they reflect about Columbia?

**PRESIDENT KIM:** I had the same reaction to the newer stories that I did when Lena Waithe ’06 and our other alumni won Emmy awards last September: These achievements reflect not only the talent and dedication of our students and alumni—and of the faculty who shaped their work—but also a campus culture that is intentional in its efforts to develop, promote, and support diverse forms of creative practice. For example, rising junior Patricia Frazier has been named the second National Youth Poet Laureate, and the first from Chicago. In conferring this distinction on her, the judges cited not only her poetic craft but also her commitment to social justice and youth development. Another example: Jessica Lu ’08, who has been cast in *Reverie*, a new NBC summer drama, told the *Chicago Sun-Times* that she never saw anyone who looked like her on television when she was growing up. It is so exciting for me to contemplate that Columbia perhaps has prepared her to be that role model for some of the show’s young viewers.



Sam Kirk '05 traveled to Casablanca, Morocco, as part of a mural art exchange.

## SAM KIRK PARTICIPATES IN INTERNATIONAL MURAL EXCHANGE

Chicago Sister Cities International (CSCI) and Columbia College Chicago's Wabash Arts Corridor (WAC) teamed up to facilitate a mural art exchange between Chicago and Casablanca, Morocco. The mural exchange celebrates the 35th anniversary of Chicago's partnership with Casablanca, which became a sister city in 1982.

The Casablanca Committee of CSCI selected Chicago muralist Sam Kirk '05 and Casablanca artist Abedellatif Farhate (Kalamour) to participate in the exchange. Kirk visited Casablanca in late April as the first woman to participate in the city's annual CasaMouja Festival, during which a *mouja* (wave) of new murals was produced throughout the city.

Kalamour will visit Chicago in September to install a mural. He will be the first artist from North Africa to join the Wabash Arts Corridor and his work will add to the large-scale murals by local and international artists in Chicago's South Loop.

## AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM TURNS 25

Columbia College Chicago is one of just 13 four-year colleges to offer a degree in American Sign Language (ASL) and boasts a faculty entirely made up of Deaf instructors. The department works to empower the Deaf community by creating an immersive experience and offers courses such as Musical Interpretation, Theatre Interpretation, ASL Literature, Deaf Representation in the Media, and Deaf Theatre Production.

Columbia's ASL program celebrated its 25th anniversary with an event highlighting the Deaf community's impact on Chicago, culture, art, and industry. Alumni, students, faculty, staff, and industry leaders from the ASL community enjoyed a day of panel discussions, workshops, and poster sessions, culminating in an evening soiree and keynote speaker presentation.

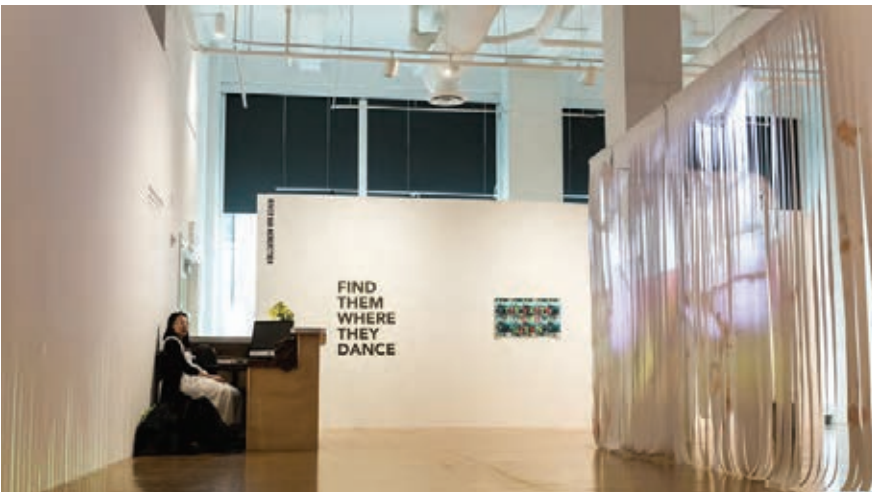
In 1993, the Interpreting Training Program joined Columbia's English Department after a proposal from faculty member and professional interpreter Michael Fryzlewicz. Demand for an ASL program was high, and the Interpreting Training Program evolved into the ASL Department after Deaf Studies became a major in 2014.

"It's important that the ASL Department provides a model of empowerment and visibility to everyone—not just the Deaf community," said Peter Cook, the first Deaf chair to lead the department. "We aren't just talking about it; we are putting it in action."



ASL Chair Peter Cook takes the stage.





The Museum of Contemporary Photography (top) and the Glass Curtain Gallery (bottom) both received Terra Foundation grants.

### CAMPUS EXHIBITION SPACES RECOGNIZED BY TERRA FOUNDATION

The Terra Foundation for American Art awarded grants to Columbia College Chicago's Glass Curtain Gallery and Museum of Contemporary Photography (MoCP) for Art Design Chicago projects. Art Design Chicago features exhibitions at institutions across Chicago and other cities, academic and public programs, and scholarly publications that explore the ongoing cultural influence of Chicago's art and design history.

The Glass Curtain Gallery was awarded \$37,650 to present *Where the Future Came From*, a research project curated by Meg Duguid, director of exhibitions for Columbia's Department of Exhibitions, Performance, and Student Spaces. The project focuses on the role of feminist artist-run activities from the late 19th century to the present and will be on exhibition from November 1, 2018, to February 15, 2019.

The MoCP was awarded \$21,965 to host a multi-tier, months-long project: "*Say It with Pictures*" *Then and Now: Chicago's African American Photographers 1890-1930*, which will launch on October 12, 2018. The project is led by Amy Mooney, associate professor of Art and Art History, and will highlight the under-recognized work and impact of African-American commercial photographers, as well as the 65 studios they owned and operated in Chicago in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

### COLUMBIA DEBUTS BLACK ARTS FESTIVAL

In February, Columbia College Chicago hosted the Black Arts Festival, the first event of its kind to celebrate the academic and artistic excellence of the college's black community. Two alumni—Alivia Blade '17 and Bri Heath '17—organized the festival to bring together black students, alumni, and faculty to discuss, workshop, and showcase their work. Blade and Heath organized the event with Humanities, History, and Social Sciences Assistant Professor Robert Hanserd, with support from Pan African Student Organization, Safe Space Chicago, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion office, Black Student Union, and the Black World Studies minor.

“The weapon that  
... my fellow  
black artists and  
I are using is joy.”

—Bri Heath '17

The three-day festival included more than 50 black Columbia students and alumni who showcased dance, writing, music, visual art, performance, and scholarly work. Blade and Heath wanted a large number of participants to show the diverse range of voices within the black community. “Your black might be different than my black, but we can exist in the same space together,” said Blade.



Bri Heath '17 and Alivia Blade '17 were the co-directors of the 2018 Black Arts Festival.

## PUT ON A SHOW

Take a visual tour of the newly renovated Getz Theater Center.

If you worked on a theatre production at Columbia College Chicago over the past 20 years, you might remember rolling set pieces and costumes half a mile up Wabash Avenue in the middle of the night. Those days are over. This fall, the college will open the newly renovated Getz Theater Center, with all theater facilities under one roof. At the heart of the building is the 181-seat Courtyard Theater, but almost every behind-the-scenes space has been transformed as well.

The first production in the new Courtyard Theater, *Penelopiad* by Margaret Atwood, will be directed by AJ Ware '08. Rounding out the alumni team are scenic designer Grant Sabin '05, costume designer Alaina Moore '13, and lighting designer Jess Krometis '09. Columbia will celebrate the new theater with a special alumni performance and reception in October.

1. The lobby showcases a view into the production shop. Columbia worked with Gensler architects to design the transformation of the 72 E. 11th St. building.
2. An updated makeup studio gives students the space and tools to practice a variety of techniques.
3. The production shop is fully equipped with professional-grade tools and an 18-foot door that allows set pieces to be rolled directly onto the stage.
4. Big windows bring lots of natural light into the new costume shop.
5. The Courtyard Theater design was inspired by Shakespearean stages. A second-story catwalk allows for sophisticated LED lighting capabilities.



1



2





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4



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Dr. Kwang-Wu Kim greets Common and HBO President Len Amato at *The Tale* screening.

## COLUMBIA HOSTS SCREENING OF THE TALE

On May 2, Columbia College Chicago's Film Row Cinema hosted a screening of *The Tale* followed by a discussion between filmmaker Jennifer Fox, former student Common, and HBO President Len Amato '75. An autobiographical film written and directed by Fox, *The Tale* chronicles Fox's struggle to accept that a trusted adult sexually abused her when she was 13.

Pivoting between the past and present, the film shows the protagonist (Laura Dern) coming to terms with teenage sexual abuse with the support of her partner (Common). Fox hopes that her story will offer insight into abuse: "My effort with *The Tale* was to get inside something that the world glosses over because it is too painful."

Columbia hosted the event alongside anti-poverty organization Heartland Alliance and anti-violence organization One Love Foundation.

## STUDENTS ATTEND SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST FOR MUSIC, FILM, AND INTERACTIVE FESTIVALS

In March, more than 100 Columbia College Chicago students studying film, business, music, and more attended South by Southwest (SXSW) festival in Austin, Texas, to network, attend workshops and panels, stage events, and perform. While Business and

Entrepreneurship students have been attending the festival for nine years, this was the first year that Cinema and Television Arts students also attended.

"I started the trip because I saw it as a very real-world opportunity for students to immerse themselves in the media industry and engage with industry professionals converging on Austin from all over the world," said Justin Sinkovich, associate professor of Business and Entrepreneurship.

During the festival, student-run record label AEMMP Records hosted a special hip-hop showcase, *Lil' Taste of the Chi*, at an offsite venue. Several alumni



also made appearances at the festival: Johnny Derango '02 participated in a panel discussion on filmmaking, Kate Begani '08 was a SXSW mentor, and Lakota hip-hop artist Frank Waln '14 performed.

“... I saw it as a very real-world opportunity for students to immerse themselves in the media industry.”

## REACCREDITATION: INVITATION TO COMMENT

Columbia College Chicago is seeking comments from the public about the college in preparation for its periodic evaluation by its regional accrediting agency on November 5–6, 2018. The college will host a visit from a team of peer reviewers representing the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The team will review Columbia's ongoing ability to meet HLC's criteria for accreditation. Columbia maintains its accreditation through HLC's Open Pathways 10-year cycle of review process. Columbia's last comprehensive evaluation was in 2008–09; therefore, Columbia is undergoing our current comprehensive evaluation in the 2018–19 academic year.

Comments must be in writing and must address substantive matters related to the quality of the institution or its academic programs. Please submit comments to HLC at [hlcommission.org/comment](http://hlcommission.org/comment) or mail them to:

Public Comment on  
Columbia College Chicago  
Higher Learning Commission  
230 S. LaSalle St., Suite 7-500  
Chicago, IL 60604-1411

All comments must be received by October 5, 2018.





PHOTO BY JONATHAN CASTILLO

Buzz Ruttenberg, MoCP Director Natasha Egan, and Biff Ruttenberg

### MOCP RECEIVES HISTORIC GIFT

In February of this year, brothers Buzz and Biff Ruttenberg announced the David C. and Sarajeon Impact Fund for Photography through the David C. & Sarajeon Ruttenberg Arts Foundation. The \$1 million donation will go toward significant acquisitions of photographic works from established artists. The Ruttenberg gift is the largest in the Museum of Contemporary Photography's (MoCP) history. Through their gift, visitors to the museum will be exposed to a broader array of contemporary photography, providing a richer experience.

“[Our parents] were an important part of the MoCP then, and we continue to support it as it is today.”

David and Sarajeon Ruttenberg always had an eye for art. David was a founding member of Columbia College Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Photography when it was established in 1976. As collectors and philanthropists, David and Sarajeon worked to shape and support the MoCP's mission and collections for nearly four decades. Now passed, they are remembered by their sons Buzz and Biff through stories, nicknames, and a major contribution to the museum.

“What my brother and I are doing is simply fulfilling what my parents planned years ago,” says Biff. “We wanted future generations to have some notion of who our parents were. They were an important part of the MoCP then, and we continue to support it as it is today.”

### EFROYMSON FAMILY FUND AWARDS \$1 MILLION CHALLENGE GRANT

Columbia College Chicago received a \$1 million challenge grant from the Efroymsen Family Fund in support of the college's initiatives centered around student success.

The grant is a giving challenge for two initiatives: matching dollar for dollar the first \$500,000 in gifts toward the Student Center and the first \$500,000 in gifts from Columbia alumni to the program of their choice.

“The Efroymsen Family Fund exemplifies and inspires philanthropic leadership in support of all that we are seeking to accomplish.”

By issuing a challenge grant, the Efroymsen Family Fund invites Columbia's alumni network, trustees, and friends to match the donation. Jeremy Efroymsen MFA '98, vice president of the Efroymsen Family Fund, recommended the challenge grant to catalyze Columbia's fundraising efforts. Efroymsen, an alum who joined Columbia's Board of Trustees in 2013, serves on the Student Center ad hoc committee, among others. As an artist, philanthropist, art activist, and advocate for numerous causes, Efroymsen has been instrumental in advising and supporting organizations that contribute to arts and culture.

“The Efroymsen Family Fund exemplifies and inspires philanthropic leadership in support of all that we are seeking to accomplish at Columbia College Chicago,” says President Kwang-Wu Kim.



Elissa Hamid Efroymsen, Lori Efroymsen-Aguilera, and Jeremy Efroymsen







# Earth Bound

By Lindsey Romain '11

Red Clay Dance and Keiga Dance Company's collaborative TransAtlantic Project will bridge the gap between Chicago and Kampala, Uganda, hitting the Dance Center stage in November. Red Clay founder Vershawn Sanders-Ward '02 talked with *DEMO* about the origins of this international partnership and what it means to return to Columbia College Chicago for the TransAtlantic Project's debut.





Vershawn Sanders-Ward leaps skyward at Red Clay Dance's rehearsal space in the Fuller Park fieldhouse.

**D**ance, by its very nature, is transformative. Bodies morph, curve, undulate, and writhe in rhythmic motion. But dance at its most primal is more than just meticulous and memorized choreography. It can work as connective tissue between the past and present, move beyond the boundaries of culture, and bring people together on a foundational, primordial level.

This year, it will complete its most exciting endeavor yet: the TransAtlantic Project, a year-long cultural exchange with choreographer Jonas Byaruhanga and the Keiga Dance Company from Kampala, Uganda. Their collaborative performance, *EKILI MUNDA|What Lies Within*, will premiere at the Dance Center at Columbia College Chicago this November 8–10.

It's an incredible evolution for Red Clay Dance, and for Sanders-Ward, whose vision both sharpened and expanded after decades of training, traveling, and education.

“I never thought about making dance a more viable [career] until Columbia, or being an instructor, but being there *gave me the tools.*”

That's the mission behind Red Clay Dance, a Chicago-based dance troupe focused on invoking change on a local and global level through performing and teaching the dances of the African diaspora—or, people of African origin who have dispersed to other off-continent communities but still contribute to its cultural development. Founded in 2008 by movement artist Vershawn Sanders-Ward '02, Red Clay Dance has spent the last 10 years cultivating a unique space in the Chicago dance scene.

#### **A VISIONARY IS BORN**

Sanders-Ward started dancing at a young age, around 6 or 7. She took a break in high school to play sports like softball, but missed the role dance played in her life. She eventually got back into it, and went on to attend Columbia College Chicago as a Gates Millennium Scholar, where she received her BFA in Dance.

“I never thought about making dance a more viable [career] until Columbia, or being an instructor, but being there gave me the tools,” she says.





Destine Young will join the other TransAtlantic Project dancers on the Dance Center stage in November.



## WORLDWIDE DANCE

**Former Dean of the School of Fine and Performing Arts Onye Ozuzu explains how West African dance is incorporated into the Dance Department's core curriculum.**

"The way that the curriculum was originally designed was to treat African dance like a historical foundation, similar to the way ballet training is seen as a root form. The spread of West African culture and people through diaspora all over the world has also spread the aesthetics and the movements of particularly West African dance forms. You can see those roots in styles from salsa to swing dance to the dances of rock and roll, all the way to hip-hop and jazz and what you see in music videos or on any dance floor across the world.

"The TransAtlantic Project coming to the Dance Center is really important because of the kind of training that our students are getting. It's important for them to be networked into a global Afro-diaspora dance world and community, and for that world to be aware of our program and how amazing our students are. These types of transatlantic collaborations and reaches and networks are the future for our graduates."



Sanders-Ward then attended New York University for her MFA, saying that she selected the school because it offered much of the same experience as Columbia but in a new city: "I liked the idea of being in a cultural mecca. Being in a city where dance was actively happening, where there was a dance community outside of the college." She worked on various projects and festivals across the country before going to Senegal for a two-month preprofessional certificate program at Ecole De Sables, a dance center near Dakar.

With Red Clay Dance, Sanders-Ward was able to blend the many styles she'd learned and loved through the years. She describes the work as "Afro-contemporary," a fusion of Africanist movements and traditions that uses bodies to tell a story. The name "Red Clay" is borne of her own past and experiences as an African-American woman. Though she's a native Chicagoan, she has family roots in Mobile, Alabama, where she used to visit her grandparents and play in the rich Southern mud. Connecting to the earth in turn connected her to her culture, and the idea for Red Clay Dance took its hold.

"As kids, when we play, we think, 'What can we mold this earth and water into?'" Sanders-Ward says of Red Clay's modus operandi. "It's a layering of those two things: space and bodies, and history and culture."

That methodology inspired her company members, Marceia Scruggs '17, Chaniece Holmes, Destine Young '13, and Sara Zigler '10.





Dancer Destine Young performs as part of Red Clay Dance's *Body of Evidence* performance.

"I think [Sanders-Ward's] willingness to have open communication with her artists is a strength for the individual and the collective," says Zigler. "To work with Ver-shawn is to work collaboratively, is to test your limits, your vulnerability, face your frailty if you're willing, and find resilience, patience in strength [and] in the process.

"It was an amazing experience in terms of opening my eyes as an American as to how I sit outside of this soil," she says. "Being here in the States, I feel like my gender and my race are always very heightened. But being there, it was this feeling of being American first before those other things. I was grappling with that."

## REHEARSING WITH NEW FRIENDS

The first stages of Sanders-Ward and Byaruhanga's cross-continental collaboration were done via Skype, where they chatted, shared images, and put together other inspirational ideas. The first physical stage of the project happened last October, when

**"Because [Sanders-Ward] aims for her work and the work of the collective to be transformative, we are always the first to be transformed."**

Because she aims for her work and the work of the collective to be transformative, we are always the first to be transformed."

## THE MERGING OF TWO COMPANIES

Transformation is the foundation of Red Clay Dance, and part of what makes the collaboration with the Keiga Dance Company an exciting next step in its evolution. With Byaruhanga, Sanders-Ward has helped merge two cultures that share the same Africanist roots, and is working toward a collective goal of allowing its members to reflect on their past through bodily movement and freedom, while growing and changing the community around them.

The TransAtlantic Project came to life after Sanders-Ward met Byaruhanga in Senegal after she completed her MFA. The experience was profound in a number of ways, outside of just that fateful meeting. There, she says, "all of the big things I was thinking about got their start."

Meeting Byaruhanga, a Ugandan, helped Sanders-Ward feel more comfortable; even though he lived in Africa, he was trained in East African dance, and struggled just as much with the West African style as she did. West African dance requires different kinds of rhythm; a dancer's head and arms might move to a separate beat from their feet. The two forged a friendship that led to more collaboration efforts. Then, in 2010, they decided to merge their companies—Byaruhanga's all male and Sanders-Ward's all female—for one large communal performance, and spent the next seven years attaining funding to make it happen. The TransAtlantic Project was eventually made possible thanks to the MacArthur Foundation's International Connections Fund, and has been in swing since last fall. The companies met twice more this year—in Uganda in May, and in Chicago in July—before their premiere performance in Chicago this November.

Red Clay traveled to Kampala, Uganda; that December, they all met in Chicago. The idea behind merging the groups was finding ways to blur the lines between their cultural and gender differences, and finding ways to control when those differences and similarities mattered. They—the four female performers in Red Clay and the four males in Keiga, all of them black—explored this through trust exercises and socializing over large meals. This community building helped establish a commonality.



“We [were] looking for them to excavate deep stories about their first movements and motions. Some of the stories that came out were really hard,” Sanders-Ward says of those initial meetings, stressing the importance of the trust exercises. “[It was about] getting them to a place where they knew enough about each other to reveal things.”

After that trust was built, she and Byaruhanga worked on teaching the dancers “movement vocabulary.” They focused on improvisation, on the freedom of expression. Some days Byaruhanga led the rehearsals, some days Sanders-Ward did.

“It’s not both of us always in the creative mode,” she says. “We’ve been able to figure

Red Clay company member, teaching artist, and activist Scruggs says she’s been profoundly changed by her experience with the TransAtlantic Project.

“Being graced with the opportunity to work alongside such sensitive-to-the-ear-and-spirit yet powerfully strong men, accompanied with four other gracefully beautiful yet mightily resilient women, is a dream that I believe the audience will not want to be awakened from either,” Scruggs says. “This experience—and just being in the presence of such genuine and welcoming spirits—has definitely welcomed serenity, gratitude, and a renewed acceptance of myself.”

“Hopefully you’ll see inhabited vocabulary that is just human, that is purely genuine, but also deeply rooted in culture.”

out this real collaboration. For me, it’s been great not to always be the producer. The dancers have also been able to give us so much. It’s been amazing to see how willing they’ve been to push each other, to be limitless.”

#### THE NEXT STEPS

The two companies will present the culmination of their work at Columbia this November as part of the Dance Center’s 45th anniversary presenting series. Sanders-Ward was tight-lipped on what the performance will look like, but expressed that the audience will “see liberated and inhabited bodies in space with a suspension of limitation,” adding that the sets will incorporate Ugandan art—like masks and other props—sourced from the country.





“I feel like we’re removing what we assume black and brown bodies do and communicate and express,” she continues. “Hopefully you’ll see inhabited vocabulary that is just human, that is purely genuine, but also deeply rooted in culture. I hope that that’s what people will experience: this connection of culture, and reconnection of culture, that has been separated over time—and see how [those things] talk to each other and continue to influence each other.”

She hopes to continue collaborating with Byaruhanga in the future, and to eventually go on tour with both companies in the States, Europe, and Africa. As for presenting their work at her alma mater, Sanders-Ward says she feels grateful, noting that, as an alum, she talks about Columbia all the time. “It’s very fulfilling to be able to go to the places I have and to bring a project that’s so important to me back to a place that really fed me as an artist,” she says. ▣



From left to right: Marceia Scruggs, Chaniece Holmes, Vershawn Sanders-Ward, Destine Young, and Sara Ziglar rehearse in their Fuller Park space.



PLAY  
to WIN


By Audrey Michelle Mast '00

The business of play has never been bigger. The video game industry is worth \$100 billion globally and is projected to grow by billions more each year. Meanwhile, technical innovations and new platforms regularly disrupt the landscape. It's dynamic, it's competitive—but most of all, it's fun. Here, three Columbia College Chicago alums—**EJ Baker '12**, **Ali Cedroni '16**, and **Blair Kuhlman '13**—talk to *DEMO* about the future of gaming.





PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHANIE ZAKAS



# EJ BAKER

Lights flood the stadium. Jumbo screens loom over center court. Sellout crowds cheer on two elite teams vying for a world title at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. Millions of fans around the world tune in to a live broadcast. But there's not a basketball in sight.

This isn't an NBA playoff—it's the championship for *League of Legends*, one of the world's most popular video games. *League of Legends* draws more than 100 million active players per month, and its 2017 World Championship offered a \$4 million prize for the winning team—just one example of how massive eSports video game competitions have become.

"It's insane just how popular eSports has become," says EJ Baker '12, an associate producer at Riot Games, the creative force behind *League of Legends* and its worldwide competitions. "We have multigenerational families that are Yankees or Cubs fans. I'd love to see multiple generations of eSports fans," they\* say, noting that many schools offer eSports scholarships as a pathway for aspiring professional gamers.

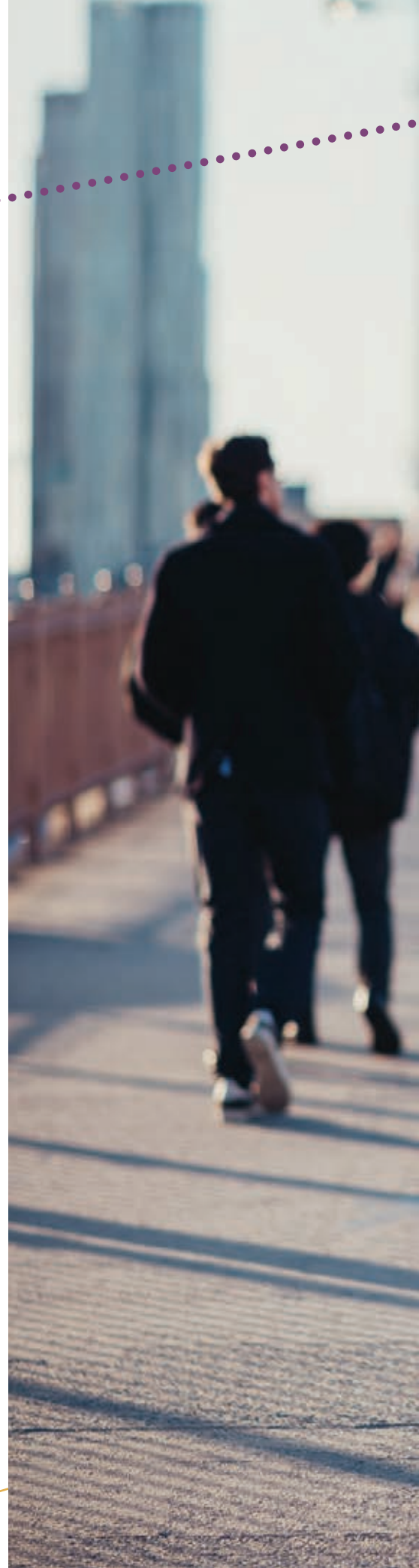
Baker works primarily on the production of set design for Riot Games' large-scale worldwide events, translating online tournaments to venues around the world. (Last year, the world championship was held in China.) They collaborate with event managers and artistic designers to build sets that captivate audiences, both in person and on broadcast platforms like Twitch

and YouTube. "The most challenging part of my job is the sheer amount of moving parts involved with producing an event," says Baker. "That's what I love about it. There are always ways to improve."

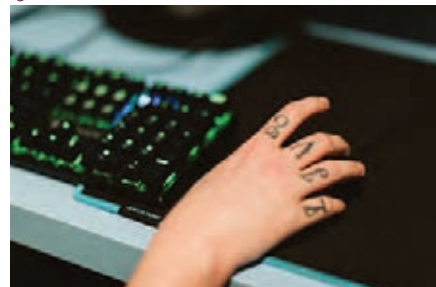
Baker's journey began at Columbia, where they originally studied Musical Theatre. But they realized their dream of performing on Broadway wasn't in the cards, so they pivoted to Animation. Associate Professor Jim Rohn became their mentor. "I cannot thank him enough for being as supportive as he was," Baker says. "It was really easy to get integrated with the Interactive Arts and Media Department's game development program. That's how I got into programming."

After graduation, Baker moved to Seattle to work in software development. Meanwhile, they were increasingly interested in video games. "I went to BlizzCon one year and stumbled into the live *StarCraft* world championship finals," they say. "I had no idea that this world even existed. It was incredible. In that moment, I decided that I wanted to do this." Fast-forward a few years, and they started organizing their own *StarCraft 2* tournament online, just for fun. Eventually, a coworker who previously worked at Riot encouraged Baker to apply for a job as a production coordinator at their New York office. Early this year, they were promoted to associate producer. "I got here because I decided that it was a thing I wanted to do, so I did it," Baker says.

\*Baker identifies as nonbinary with the preferred pronouns of they/their.







Baker observes that there's a dichotomy between their work life and their experience as a gamer. Professionally, they haven't felt discriminated against, though it can feel isolating to be one of the only people in the office who was assigned female at birth. But being a gamer is different. "There's still a lot of sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and racism. If I'm on a game where I can speak, and someone realizes that I'm a girl—or they *think* I'm a girl—oftentimes I get hit on ... or told I don't belong. There's not a whole lot in between."

Baker's solution? "If you have a kid of any gender and you want to teach them to play games, teach them to be empathetic toward whoever is on the other side of that screen. Then we'll become a much more welcoming community for everyone."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHANIE ZAKAS









ALI

CEDRONI



“When I was growing up, I didn’t know any women in any of these fields,” says Ali Cedroni ’16, a junior sound designer for Chicago-based interactive media company Jellyvision. “But for some reason it just didn’t stop me.”

By day, Cedroni edits voice-overs for Jellyvision’s flagship product, Alex, a virtual communication platform that helps companies communicate human resources information like health insurance and financial options. By night, she’s a freelance sound professional for video games, music, and film. She just wrapped editing voice-overs for Trinket Studios’ *Battle Chef Brigade* by Adult Swim Games. Now she’s creating sound effects for the indie game *Codemancer*. “It focuses on teaching kids the concepts of coding without dealing with syntax and things like that. It gets them in a problem-solving mind space before they actually learn a language in code,” she says.

Cedroni’s path began in the Audio Arts and Acoustics Department at Columbia, where she discovered the power of being proactive. “Columbia is what you make of it,” says Cedroni. In her mixing classes, she was the one setting mics and using the console. “You don’t get a feeling for working with a client unless you’re up in the front, figuring out what to do and making decisions. I get that it’s terrifying ... but [college] is the time to make mistakes. The more ‘up in front’ you can get, the better.”

It wasn’t always easy, especially when she was one of the only women in the room. But Cedroni is optimistic about how to change that. “It starts with having more representation. The more women we have in the space, the less likely someone will be the token girl in an office,” she says. “And the easier it will be for younger generations. They won’t have dudes calling them ‘hon’ in the control room and things like that. I’ve had plenty of those,” she says.

Cedroni interned at two music studios before being hired directly out of college by Jellyvision. “I love that my coworkers come from different creative backgrounds,” she says. “We all understand the struggles that each of us go through. It’s easier to get along with artists when you know how art works. A lot of our technical people have sound degrees, so they know what I’m going through, and vice versa.”

Cedroni serves on the board of the local chapter of International Game Developers Association, which promotes Chicago’s status as a growing tech hub. She urges students and recent grads to network by getting involved in the game development community. “I know college is exhausting, but it never stops being exhausting,” says Cedroni. It’s also important to keep learning: “Right now I’m working on getting my coding back up to par, because it’s been a few years since I’ve used it,” she says. “Audio programming, even as a sound designer, is still good to know—what goes on under the hood, how to fix problems. The best way to market yourself is by saying, ‘I’m interested in learning more things.’”



Cedroni has worked on games like *Skate City* (top) and Adult Swim Games’ *Battle Chef Brigade* (bottom).



## POWER UP

Game Design students graduate Columbia College Chicago with industry-level experience thanks to their fourth-year capstone class. All students choose a track—either large team (40 to 50 students) or indie (five to eight students) and create a video game from scratch. (The large team emulates big video game studios like Blizzard or Electronic Arts, while the indie teams approach things from a more grassroots level.) From graphics to plots to music, the following games were created by Columbia students as part of their capstone projects.

### AIKU

Can you save the crew? In *AIKU*, you are responsible for saving the energy reserves of the R.V. Minerva by solving puzzles and entering simulations.

### KISSY GHOST

This multiplayer game follows a team of wizards who must banish a smooching ghost by taking it on the ultimate date.

### CHARLOTTE SEEKER

Inspired by classic 16-bit graphics games, *Charlotte Seeker* lets you play as the title character as she plunders a spaceship—and discovers some secrets on the way.

# BLAIR KUHLMAN



**B**lair Kuhlman '13 can tell when a video game is destined to be a hit. "If I don't hear immense amounts of laughter and yelling coming from the play-test room, that means that we're doing something wrong," she says. "The more rambunctious people get, especially when the game is in its early stages and not necessarily the prettiest thing to look at, but the gameplay is still shining through, then you're definitely on the right track."

Kuhlman, who works as a user experience/user interface (UX/UI) designer for Hi-Rez Studios in Alpharetta, Georgia, has a passion for games with an independent spirit. "I've always been an artist at heart," she says. She started college at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she took a "really weird VR class that taught me about programming and a little bit about game design." She "fell in love with that immediately," she says. "I knew I wanted to switch to a college that really did have a video game career path for me, so I went to Columbia."

At Hi-Rez, Kuhlman helps create the layout and flow for games like *Smite* and its offshoot, *Hand of the Gods*. As she explains, "User interface is pretty much anything you see when you're playing a game: menus, all the stuff that you go through before you drill into the game, like the front-end stuff. It's pretty much everything that's not the game play. User Experience is a little different—it's from a psychology

aspect, dealing with how we present information so it's easy to understand." Kuhlman notes that the four-year-old *Smite* is "ancient" in terms of gaming, so the company releases fresh, engaging limited-time modes of gameplay called "adventures." Sometimes they'll deviate drastically from the game's style. "We had one adventure that turned the game into something like *Mario Kart*, a completely different genre. Working on stuff like that is really fun because it's giving me different challenges and new genres to tackle that I haven't tackled before. It's a wild ride."

The ride isn't without bumps, including gender discrimination. "It's kind of inevitable that you're going to find somebody who is casting doubt on whether you should be in the space. This is sad, but I've gotten so used to it that it doesn't even bother me anymore. I mean, I've kind of learned to let that stuff slide off of you and keep going," she says.

From her perspective, the future of gaming looks bright. "I am very optimistic," she says. "Some games have proven that shooting for more than one demographic is really profitable. *Overwatch* is a really good example of that. Each one of the characters is unique, and they're not representing stereotypes. That goes a long way." She is also enthusiastic about the democratization of technology. "A lot of the tools to make games are now free, so anyone can pretty much pick it up. We're going to start to hear a lot more voices in the industry." ■





PHOTOGRAPH BY EDWARD SAULSBERY





Melissa Albert's *The Hazel Wood* hit the *New York Times* bestseller list.

PHOTOGRAPH BY EVA DEITCH



# Melissa Albert

## AUTHOR ENCHANTED

Melissa Albert '06 grew up loving fairytales.  
So she wrote her own.

**"I LOVED [FAIRYTALES] AS A KID** in a very straightforward way—I loved the magic, I loved the good versus evil, I loved the comforting shapes and rhythms that are so familiar and so satisfying," says Melissa Albert '06. "Clearly there's something in our DNA that responds to these particular narratives."

Albert's love of fairytales inspired her to write her own: 2018's sinister and rollicking *New York Times* bestseller *The Hazel Wood*. At the novel's start, bad luck has followed New York City teenager Alice all her life. When her mom is kidnapped, it seems tied to her grandmother, the famous novelist Althea Proserpine, whose out-of-print book of fairytales has earned a fevered cult following. As Alice embarks on a road trip to find her grandmother's Hazel Wood estate, the lines of fantasy and reality begin to blur, and she makes a startling discovery: Althea's characters seem to be real—and dangerous.

"I thought it could be really cool to write a book that could fall under the genre of fairytale noir," Albert says. "I tried to give Alice kind of a hardboiled voice set in this fantastical fairytale-inspired world."

Albert has been telling stories since before she could hold a pen, dictating tales about evil petting zoos and deep, dark woods for her mother to write down. At Columbia College Chicago, she studied Journalism and covered arts and entertainment for publications like *Time Out Chicago*, *Chicago Journal*, and *Bookslut*.

Four years after graduating, Albert moved to New York City and worked with a development house project. Development houses are like publishing assembly lines: Plots

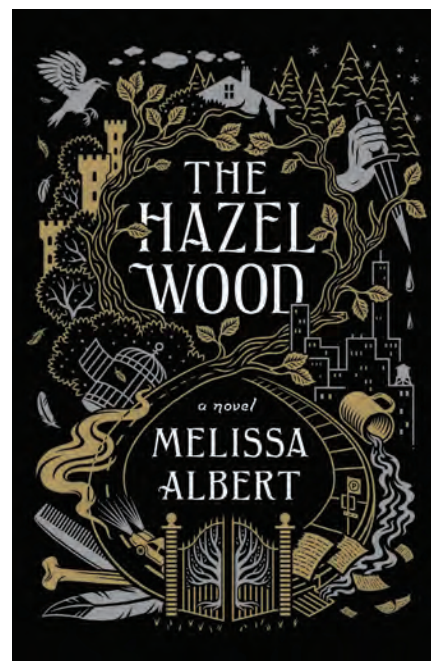
are created in-house, and writers are hired to turn the plots into full novels. Albert freelanced briefly for a development house as a plotter, then freelanced for other development houses as a writer. Sometimes, she wrote pre-plotted novels under pen names: a middle-grade fantasy, a regency-era thriller, and even a novelization of a TV show.

"I thought it could be really cool to write a book that could fall under the genre of fairytale noir. I tried to give Alice kind of a hardboiled voice set in this fantastical fairytale-inspired world."

"I tell people it's like getting paid to do an MFA," she says. "You are getting paid to write a book."

Eventually, Albert wanted to see her own name on the cover. In 2016, she got serious about a manuscript she'd been working on for a couple years. "I was like, 'If I want to finish something, I need to stop writing for development houses. I need to take a chance on one of my own things,'" she says.

Flatiron Books published *The Hazel Wood* in January 2018. Albert got word that it made the *New York Times* bestsellers list while flying to Dallas with her husband and baby on her six-city book tour. "We got to the hotel and put our baby down and had



a drink in the bathroom," she says. "It was great. It was perfect."

Albert hasn't been able to leave the world of *The Hazel Wood* yet. Though she wrote the novel to stand alone, she's working on a sequel and a companion book of fairytales already signed with her publisher.

"As an adult, as I go back and reread fairytales, I love how they have so much room between their lines to play with," she says. "The best, most satisfying narratives are the ones you can tell again and again."

—Megan Kirby



Gina Reyes works as vice president of scripted development for film and television at Mitú.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANTHONY CHIAPPETTA '95



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# Gina Reyes

## SCREEN QUEEN

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Gina Reyes '05 takes the lead on diversity in Hollywood.

**MEDIA EXECUTIVE GINA REYES '05** just returned from attending the Berlin Film Festival for the first time. After an 11-hour flight and a layover in Istanbul, she was immediately thrust into the busy festival, with a packed schedule of films and appointments with directors. “I was so jetlagged,” she says. But she never for a moment forgot that she’s living her dream of finding and promoting new talent. “I was really tired, but so happy that I was there. That this is my job! I’ll sleep when I get back to LA,” says Reyes.

After 13 years in Hollywood, she isn’t slowing down. But for her, a packed schedule isn’t just about getting ahead—it’s about lifting others up.

As the new vice president of scripted development for film and television at Mitú, an English-language digital platform, Chicago native Reyes develops scripted shows for the young American Latinx audience. She recently served as the director of content development at Univision’s Story House Entertainment. (The second season of Story House’s latest show, *El Chapo*, will premiere on Netflix in September.)

“It’s very exciting to be able to find talent not just domestically, but internationally. That’s how we have to think—globally,” she says. Development is the first, and sometimes the most challenging, phase of film production. It can include everything from acquiring stories, pitching concepts, hiring screenwriters, and revising scripts to securing talent, raising funds, and inking contracts.

Reyes’ non-stop hustle began at Columbia College Chicago. As a Broadcast Television Journalism student, she worked full time,

took night classes, and interned at the local NBC affiliate, where she fell in love with producing. She left Chicago for Columbia’s Semester in LA program, and has been in California since 2005.

To break into the field, her Semester in LA teacher suggested she apply at a talent agency. “It set me straight on my path,” she says. She landed at International Creative Management (ICM) as a motion picture production assistant. “It was like a master’s degree in Hollywood,” she says. “It’s a very tough environment. You’re on call all day, every day. But I got to know the business from the inside, and how everything’s connected.”

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**“It’s very exciting to be able to find talent not just domestically, but internationally. That’s how we have to think—globally.”**

She was at ICM for a year when she saw a *Variety* announcement about a deal between Salma Hayek’s newly formed production company and MGM studios. Thanks to her growing network of colleagues, she got an interview. She worked for Hayek for four years, including two as her personal assistant. Then (after a stint traveling across South America with Jennifer Lopez for a reality show), she came into her own, through a series of junior executive positions at 20th Century Fox. She started in film production and quickly

transitioned to television, where she recruited cohort-based classes of emerging talent from underrepresented groups, including women and people of color. She placed writers on shows like *Empire*, *Rosewood*, and *Pitch*. She also helped dozens of burgeoning directors transition from the festival circuit to episodic TV directing on shows like Starz’ *Power* and Showtime’s *Snowfall*.

Paying it forward is a priority for Reyes. She’s involved in a number of organizations that work to pave the way for those coming up behind her. She sits on the board of directors for Young Storytellers, which is “dear to my heart,” she says. “We mentor fifth graders and help them write five-page scripts. Then their scripts are performed by professional actors on a live stage. It helps them to find their voices—and use them to be successful in life.”

This year, Reyes is also participating in 50 Women Can Change The World in Media and Entertainment, a leadership initiative launched by nonprofit organization Take the Lead. Take the Lead’s mission is to support women taking their fair and equal share of leadership by 2025 — accomplished, in part, by examining and redefining their relationship with power, and training them to become “game changers” in the industry while supporting others who do the same. “I’m learning a lot from other women in my cohort, and about the opportunity to keep growing as an executive,” she says. “At the same time, we’re trying to push the agenda of gender equity—to change the landscape of media and culture.” —**Audrey Michelle Mast '00**



Kym Mazelle is known as the First Lady of House music.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROSIE MATHESON



# Kym Mazelle

## AT HOME WITH HOUSE MUSIC

Singer-songwriter Kym Mazelle '86 celebrates 30 years of shaping House music

**GARY, INDIANA, MAY BE KNOWN AS** the birthplace of Michael Jackson, aka the King of Pop, but it's also the birthplace of another member of music royalty: Kym Mazelle '86, the First Lady of House music.

"Back in college, I was a single mother," says Mazelle, who graduated from Columbia College Chicago with a bachelor's in Arts, Entertainment, and Media Management (now Business and Entrepreneurship). "Going down to the clubs, to places like The Warehouse, I had to find time between working and interning and raising my daughter."

Established in 1977, The Warehouse was a Chicago nightclub prominently known as the birthplace of the House music genre, which Mazelle describes as a result of DJs experimenting with dozens of various musical stylings—disco, funk, soul, and jazz—into dance-focused tracks.

Before Columbia, Mazelle studied opera and voice pedagogy at Mundelein College, but soon realized that singing, while her passion, was not what she wanted to study. "I knew I could do the singing. It's the business side of things I wanted to learn: reading contracts, growing a label, pressing a record." After learning how to broker deals and manage herself thanks to Columbia, she began her own small label in New York City with her business partners—two men she met through internships while in school. "The music we made was something new, something of our own. And it ended up becoming House."

In 1987, they pressed 2,000 copies of her first album, which included the hits

"Taste My Love," "Useless (I Don't Need You Now)," and "Wait." These songs hit the United Kingdom club charts in the late '80s, and her career took flight: Mazelle signed with United Kingdom label EMI Records for a million dollars, and later moved to London, England, where she lives today.

"I knew I could do the singing. It's the business side of things I wanted to learn: reading contracts, growing a label, pressing a record."

Since then, Mazelle has lived a life that many budding artists dream of: She's worked with icons like Mick Jagger and Chaka Khan, and went platinum with her cover of "Young Hearts Run Free" for Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*. For any well-rounded artist, Mazelle thinks, it's valuable to know how to navigate the industry on your own terms. Last December, Mazelle visited Columbia to share these experiences with students aiming to find similar success.

Having launched her 30th anniversary tour in 2017, she shows no intention of slowing down. Mazelle's mastery of business and performance brought her widespread success abroad, but she still circles back to her hometown: In 2017, she received the Gary Legends award and a key to the city, joining the likes of the Jackson 5. —**JT Lachausse '18**



Top: An autograph from Mazelle's early days. Bottom: Still a Columbia student at the time, Mazelle poses with Chicago photographer Matt Dinerstien.

# Rhinestone Rumble

The costume designs of Beth Morgan '02 bring hit Netflix show *GLOW* to life.

**GLITTERY RED LEOTARD** studded with military stars and straps, tall red boots, and big hair teased into a mass atop her head. Zoya the Destroya struts around the ring, arms raised in victory. The ultimate villain of the *Gorgeous Ladies of Wrestling (GLOW)* has just snagged the crown in the franchise's first-ever televised match. Over the melee, a hot blonde in the crowd stands up to challenge Zoya—she's a small-town housewife who will do anything to save America from Cold War destruction. And with that, she rips open her blouse to reveal a shimmering white leotard emblazoned with silver, red, and blue stars. Liberty Belle has come to take the crown. As the two women headlock and body-slam their way through Pat Benatar's "Invincible," their spectacularly theatrical costumes light up the screen.

For Beth Morgan '02, costume designer for Netflix's hit show *GLOW*, this scene in the season-one finale was absolute perfection.

"We'd taken all season to establish and refine [the characters]. It looked so great," she says. "To be able to stand back and watch these girls doing badass wrestling moves—it really felt like a culmination of all of our hard work. It was exactly what I wanted."

Fascinated with performance, clothes, and styling since childhood, Morgan took fashion and theatre courses at Bradley University before transferring to Columbia College Chicago.

Through Columbia's Semester in LA program, Morgan met Hollywood costume designer Maggie Morgan (no relation), who hired her for some local theatre shows, which then led to a full-time job as wardrobe supervisor at the Pasadena Playhouse. Soon, a friend connected Morgan to rising-star costume designer Janie Bryant. "I don't want to say I stalked her," Morgan says with a laugh, "but I called her consistently. So I was fresh in her mind when she needed an assistant really quickly." That was for HBO's soon-to-be-a-hit western *Deadwood*, which earned Morgan an Emmy nomination in 2004.

Morgan went on to land gigs on the HBO miniseries *John Adams* (2008) and Hollywood hit *The Help* (2011) before moving into the head costume designer role on sketch comedy show *Key and Peele* (2012-13) and several series, including *Last Man on Earth* (2015-16) and *The Carmichael Show* (2015-17). Then came *GLOW*.





PHOTOGRAPH BY ANTHONY CHIAPPETTA '95



## PORTFOLIO

*GLOW* tells the fictionalized origin story of the wrestling TV show *GLOW* (Gorgeous Ladies of Wrestling), which ran from 1986 to 1989. As costume designer, Morgan defines, executes, and refines every character's look. This means designing and creating clothes and accessories from scratch, hunting down items in stores, assembling and managing the costume team, fitting the actors, and making sure everything works with the vision of the production designer, director, and producers—all within strict budgets and often tight timelines.

“To be able to stand back and watch these girls doing badass wrestling moves—it really felt like a culmination of all of our hard work. It was exactly what I wanted.”

To nail down *GLOW*'s looks, Morgan scoured 1970s and '80s JCPenney catalogs, analyzed '80s TV shows like *Cheers* and *Family Ties*, and pored over the website Awkward Family Photos.

“I had no question of how I wanted the show to look,” says Morgan. Because most of the characters are struggling to make ends meet, for everyday looks “a dusty color palette was so important,” she says. “The story is really grounded and gritty ... then when you get to the fantasy of the wrestling, it really does pop.”

Morgan's next project is *American Princess*, a Lifetime series about a New York socialite who abandons her upcoming wedding to join a Renaissance faire. The project requires Morgan to outfit the entire festival cast, immersing her in yet another new world and time period.

“My goal in life and my goal as a designer is for my brain to always hurt a little bit by challenging it,” Morgan says. “That is what gets me creatively fulfilled.”

*GLOW* Season 2 began airing in June 2018.

—Kristi Turnbaugh



1. As Zoya the Destroya, actress Ruth (Alison Brie) completely embodies her character. According to Morgan, every detail on *GLOW* matters. “I had a 45-minute conversation with Ali Brie about if [Ruth] should have leg warmers on,” she says.
2. Former soap star Debbie (Betty Gilpin) transforms into *GLOW*'s hero, Liberty Belle, in the ring. Her conflict with Ruth/Zoya inside and outside the ring is the central story of the hit Netflix show.
3. Morgan crafted a distinct wardrobe for each of the show's 15 characters. Teen punk Justine (third from left) wears the same rock T-shirts over and over. Sheila the She-Wolf (center) lives her identity inside and outside the ring.
4. Choosing the right fabrics is important, says Morgan: “We all had to be very mindful about stunts and stretching ... and that the [costumes] don't scratch the person they're wrestling. A lot goes into that as far as functionality.”
5. “You really have to think about what design elements work for each different body type,” says Morgan. “We have all different body types on *GLOW* so there's no two fittings that feel alike at all.”







# Rule of Thirds





PORTRAITS BY RAFAEL SOLDI

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How do you define identity? Is it how you look? How you act? Where you come from? Three contemporary photographers—Jess T. Dugan MFA '14, Anahid Ghorbani MFA '17, and Natalie Krick MFA '12—are reinventing and exploring the subjects of bodies and identity. Each photographer deconstructs misconceptions of gender, sexuality, and identity in contemporary culture by creating work that breaks the boundary between the art and the audience. *DEMO* talks with all three about the shape of their careers since Columbia College Chicago, taking photography to the next level, and their unique forms of portraiture.

Three photography alums explore bodies and identity with their cameras.

## PORTFOLIO

**DEMO:** How does your identity influence your work?

**DUGAN:** This is really the core of my work. My work explores issues around identity, specifically sexuality and gender identity. I think a lot about the need we have to be part of a larger community—to be seen by and connected with another person. My work comes from my identity as a queer person in the world, as a gender nonconforming person, and centers around those identities.

**KRICK:** My personal identity influences my work in so many ways. I was thinking, “What ways does it not influence my work?” I use myself—my own body—very often. [The images] are divorced from reality in many ways: [They] are very performative and deceptive. Although they’re not autobiographical by any means, I think all the images are seeped in my own personal inflections. I’m always trying to insert elements of my own experiences and sense of humor.

**GHOORBANI:** That’s the same for me. In *The Color is Black*, which is engaged with the oppression of women and denial of identity, I explore my emotional responses and experiences that embody these themes, particularly in Iran. I believe women are oppressed in contemporary culture and their identities, freedom, and expressions are being controlled. I use poetic visual language to address these issues. My work has a fear of revealing the identity, so the subject is invisible.

**DEMO:** How does gender come into play within your work?

**DUGAN:** *Every Breath We Drew* is very subjective in nature. It’s very much about me, my identity, [and] the connection I make with people I’m photographing. I’m really interested in what I’ve been calling “gentle masculinity” or “more complicated masculinity.” I tend to be drawn to people who are very sure of themselves, but also vulnerable—either male-bodied individuals who are more vulnerable and emotional, or female-bodied individuals who are more on the masculine-presenting side. It gets slippery to try to label the people in the work because it’s so much about fluidity and breaking down barriers of traditional gender expectations. My work is always about gender. Sometimes it’s subtle, subjective, and nuanced; other times it’s direct and has an educational, social justice, and activist mission.



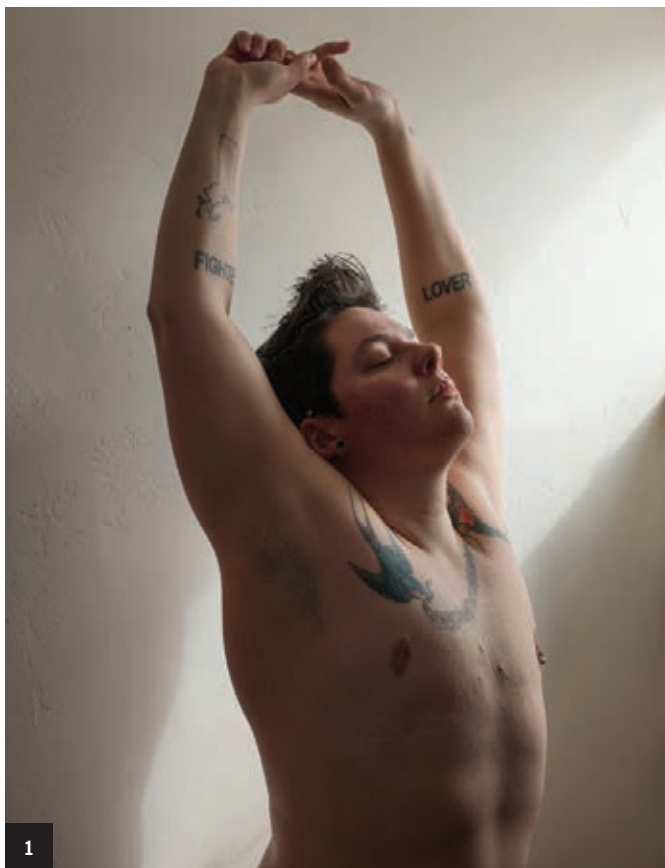
## JESS DUGAN MFA '14

Jess Dugan began taking photography classes in high school. “I immediately started making portraits and work about gender,” says Dugan. “When I look at the very first pictures I made and the pictures I’m making today, they’re conceptually related.”

Dugan’s work combines community, craft, and activism, showcasing the intersectionality of the LGBTQ communities. Her ongoing series, *Every Breath We Drew*, presents intimate portraits of people as their most comfortable selves, exploring the complicated intersections of gender, sexuality, and identity. Dugan’s most recent collection, *To Survive on this Shore*, is a collaboration with her partner. Together, they traveled the United States to interview and photograph transgender and gender nonconforming people over the age of 50. Both collections have been published as books and exhibited nationally, including at the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, the Aperture Foundation, the San Diego Museum of Art, and the Museum of Contemporary Photography.

**SEE MORE OF HER WORK AT [JESSDUGAN.COM](http://JESSDUGAN.COM)**





“I’m really interested in what I’ve been calling ‘gentle masculinity’ or ‘more complicated masculinity.’” —JESS DUGAN



1. “Self-portrait (reaching),” *Every Breath We Drew*, 2014—“It was essential that I prove to myself I could be an artist outside of the school environment,” says Dugan on her decision to take time off before pursuing an MFA in Photography. “I started having exhibitions, showing my work around Boston primarily, [and] giving talks.”
2. “Aidan, 52, Burien, WA,” *To Survive On This Shore*, 2016—“One thing I’ve started doing that I hope will continue is partnering with nonprofit organizations to use *To Survive On This Shore* as a springboard for discussion,” says Dugan. “I hope the work takes a life of its own in terms of advocacy and education.”
3. “Apolo,” *Every Breath We Drew*, 2017—“*Every Breath We Drew* is about gender and my gender in relation to my subjects,” says Dugan. “If I’m photographing a male-identified person in an intimate way and space, I like complicating the photograph by the viewer knowing his gaze is falling upon me.”

**KRICK:** My work focuses on the performance of femininity, specifically the clichés found in mass and popular culture in the United States. When I was making *Natural Deceptions*, the project I worked on with my mom and sister, I was thinking a lot about how I learned to perform as female, how I learned this through my mother, but also mainstream culture and images.

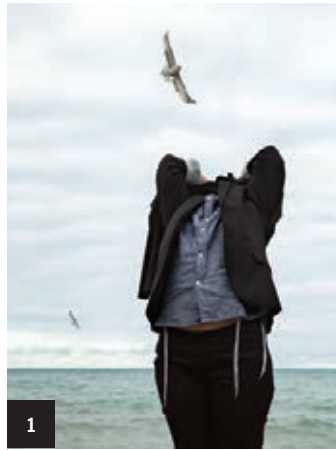
**GHOORBANI:** At Columbia, I had an installation called *No Men Allowed*, so obviously gender was specific in that work. Men were not allowed to go inside the room and see the work. They were just able to read the text on the outside walls. Gender has been really important in my work, but I still want to break stereotypes because the women of Iran are all powerful and successful in different ways, which is different than what you see in media.

**DEMO:** You all create hybrid work. Anahid, you use video installation and build structures. Natalie, you collage photos using physical paper and Photoshop, and Jess, for *To Survive on This Shore*, you paired text narratives with portraiture. What draws you all to other forms?

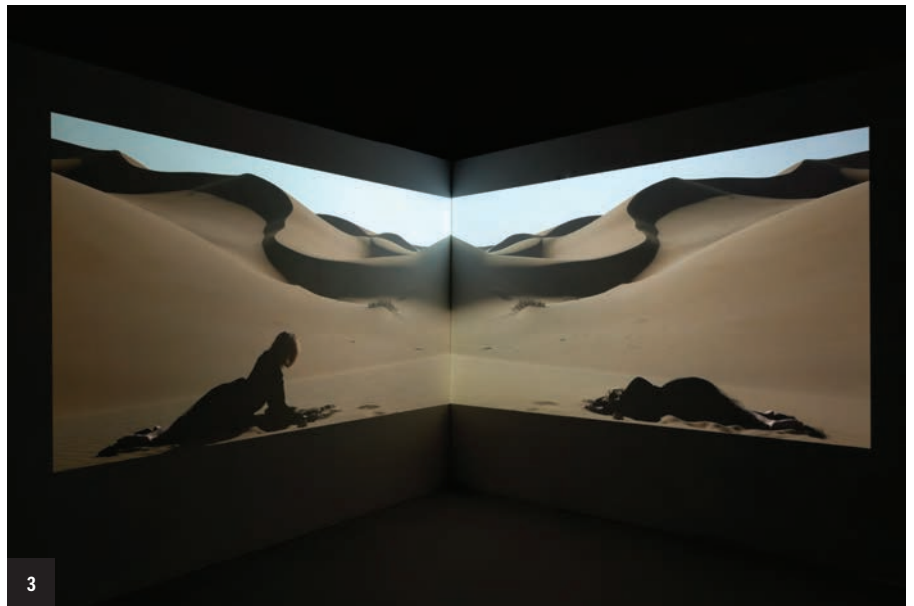
**GHOORBANI:** Personally, I have never been satisfied with having just a photograph on the wall. I require engagement of the viewer with my work and I don't want to give an option to just pass by. Through using the [physical] space, I can make viewers more involved with my work. I engage the viewer more in my work: isolating them from the environment [and] requiring their full attention.

**DUGAN:** I've always had an interest in interviews and oral histories, but I've never figured out how to make the text and photographs have equal weight. When I started *To Survive on This Shore* (an interview series with transgender and gender nonconforming people over 50) with my partner who is a social worker, we decided to do photographs and interviews with each person. We really wanted to capture their histories, especially since some of the people transitioned as early as 1970. I was aware there are certain things that you can't capture in a photograph, and I wanted more of each person's story than I could capture visually.

**KRICK:** Collage was a place to play with visual identities and strategies, a way to sketch. I also started to make collages



“I engage the viewer more in my work: isolating them from the environment [and] requiring their full attention.” —**ANAHID GHOORBANI**



1. *We*, 2016—“I had a great interest in photography because I believed that what makes a strong photograph are depictions of real life and reality,” says Ghorbani.
2. *The Edge of Shadows*, 2018—*The Edge of Shadows* focuses on the oppression of immigrant and refugee women in Chicago. Ghorbani hopes to highlight the struggles her subjects face daily and inspire her audience to become more inclusive.
3. *The Color is Black*, 2 Channel Video, 2017—“I try to see how the individual works can be in dialogue with each other and convey my message stronger,” says Ghorbani. “It’s challenging when you have video, photo, and installation, because the way that you use the space is very important to how your viewers engage with the work.”



because I was frustrated working with only photography. There are limitations, so how can you push beyond those? I started making collages out of magazines, and then I started to take clippings of magazines and put them in front of the camera. The way that I photograph the paper, the flash I use—it becomes this in-camera collage. After that, I started using Photoshop to collage. For me, collage is just another tool to challenge myself and push my work into a new territory.

**DEMO:** Natalie, could you discuss your recent exhibition in Seattle, *Apocalypstick*?

**KRICK:** *Apocalypstick* is made up of photographs from two different bodies of work: a project I'm still working on called *How She Got Her Body Back*, intertwined with images from *Natural Deceptions*. Overall, this show examines the clichés of feminine beauty. I've been thinking more about the inherent trickery of photography and how the body is coded as female—styled, posed, photographed, and retouched to appear beautiful and sexual. I've been thinking about how I can blur the boundaries between in-camera manipulation and digital collage, and redirect the gaze to the artifice of the image.

**DEMO:** Jess, could you further discuss *To Survive on This Shore*?

**DUGAN:** *To Survive on This Shore* really does have an educational component and an activist mission. It's important to me to share the stories of the people I've photographed and raise awareness, not just of transgender issues, but of LGBTQ issues more broadly. I'd heard from several younger trans individuals that they had never seen an older transgender person; they had no way to conceptualize what they might look like as they grew older. I really wanted to provide that visual validation for trans folks. One thing that has pleasantly surprised me is the extent to which people who know nothing about the trans community relate to the aging element in the work. This core question of wanting to live and be seen as your authentic self before you die is universally relatable.

**GHORBANI:** I wanted to ask about using your own identity in your work (i.e. self-portraits). Do you consider that visibility a privilege?

**DUGAN:** I've never explicitly thought about it being a privilege to expose my identity. I thought about it more as wanting to



## ANAHD GHORBANI MFA '17

In her thesis collection, *The Color is Black*, Iranian-born photographer Anahid Ghorbani evoked themes of oppression by literally cloaking her subjects in black. Soon after graduating, she received the 2017 Diane Dammeyer Fellowship in Photography Arts and Social Issues. The year-long fellowship supports an artist to produce a body of work highlighting human rights and social issues with a \$25,000 stipend and a culminating public exhibition.

*The Color is Black* focused on the oppression of women in contemporary cultures and their complicated struggles for power and identity. Ghorbani's Dammeyer project, *The Edge of Shadows*, features narratives of immigrants and refugees from various cultures and collaborations with members of Chicago's Heartland Alliance, one of the world's leading anti-poverty organizations.

**SEE MORE OF HER WORK AT [ANAHIDGHORBANI.COM](http://ANAHIDGHORBANI.COM)**



## NATALIE KRICK MFA '12

For Natalie Krick, photography is all about performance. The Seattle-based photographer has been recognized in *The New Yorker*, *Slate Magazine*, *Huffington Post*, and *New York Magazine's* *The Cut* for her provocative images of herself, her mother, and sister. In Krick's collection *Natural Deceptions*, the three women pose and perform as each other, for each other, and most importantly, for the camera—mocking over-glamorized and hyper-sexualized depictions of women in contemporary and pop culture.

“For a long time, I was only making portraits and then I started to expand,” says Krick, whose work fuses flash photography, bright colors, collage, and digital manipulation. She received the 2017 Aperture Portfolio Prize for *Natural Deceptions* and its exploration of womanhood and sexuality in the 21st century.

**SEE MORE OF HER WORK AT [NATALIEKRICK.COM](http://NATALIEKRICK.COM)**

expose the truth of my identity because it is a less-privileged identity in the United States, and asserting that visibility is really important. I have full control over my work and what I share, and I think that's an important part of it. I'm definitely choosing which pieces to make public. While making *To Survive on This Shore*, I encountered a lot of complicated webs around privilege and identity. I had to think about how important it was that people be willing to be public and ultimately decided it was essential. There are various reasons why people don't have that security or safety, so I try to be mindful of that. But visibility has always been a significant element of my work, whether it's me or it's someone I'm photographing.

**DEMO:** Do you consider your work feminist? Why or why not?

**DUGAN:** I very much view myself as a feminist, and I would never make work that's not feminist. But that doesn't feel like the primary driving force behind my work. I'm interested in redefining and photographing a more complex version of masculinity, although I'm often interested in masculinity in female-bodied people, so in that way the work would be feminist. I guess I would say yes, I do consider my work to be feminist, but it's not something I intentionally foreground.

**GHORBANI:** With my work, I'm hoping to open discussion about the oppression of women around the globe and shed light on the struggle for women's equality everywhere. But I prefer not to label myself as a feminist because the core philosophy of my work is improving people's lives and being committed to human rights. For my fellowship, I wanted to focus on women immigrants and refugees, but in the end I didn't want to talk about only women's issues, but both men and women's. What is important to me is crossing all of the divides.

**KRICK:** I definitely think my work is feminist. I identify as a feminist. But also, I think that feminism and feminist art is so broad and blurry, right? Maybe we need to ask art institutions if they're feminist.

—Negesti Kaudo MFA '18



“I’m always trying to insert elements of my own experiences and sense of humor.”

—NATALIE KRICK



1. “Rose hangover,” *How She Got Her Body Back*, 2018—“At Columbia, I was always printing in the darkroom. Once I switched to digital, I didn’t have that physical aspect of touch,” says Krick. “When I started making collages, I had the physical aspect of paper again.”
2. “Me posing as Mom posing as Marilyn,” *Natural Deceptions*, 2014—“Every image I make is referencing something else: a sunscreen ad from the ’70s, an image from a Kardashian Instagram, a beauty advertisement, a picture of my grandmother, a *Playboy* centerfold of Marilyn Monroe,” says Krick.
3. “Hilary and Mom and our hands,” *Natural Deceptions*, 2014—*Natural Deceptions* features Krick’s mother, her sister Hilary, and herself as subjects of many portraits. “The first time I photographed her,” Krick says about her mother, “I knew there was something magnetic in those pictures, so we kept at it.”

# ALUMNI SHORTS

ALUMNI UPDATES AT A GLANCE

## TRIPLE THREAT

Actress Nadine Velazquez '01 reflects on three of her iconic television roles.



### SOPHIA RUXIN ON *THE LEAGUE*

I never thought that show was going to be as big as it became on FX. I was able to be freer and create something there [with Sophia]. She didn't need an accent. I didn't need to be overly sexy. All I needed to do was to be able to play spontaneously and improvise. That character just kind of got created between me and [co-star Nick Kroll]. It was just about the energy between us and what feels right, right now.

### JACKIE ORTIZ ON *SIX*

Jackie came as a result of me just having this new idea of being strong, and not being afraid of being strong. There's a body language that comes with being a strong woman—a way that you stand on camera.

What does it look like to put somebody in place or to manage a situation and completely be a leader but also be feminine—also have a feminine heart, also care and fight for love rather than for being right or being the strongest? That's Jackie.

### CATALINA ON *MY NAME IS EARL*

I was the very, very last audition. It was between me and Ivana Milicevic, who is a friend. She was going to play a Russian Catalina and I was going to play Latina Catalina.

I love this plot so much that tears are going to happen once I walk away, because who knows, right? We were walking out of the room, and I just fell on the floor. I was like, "I'm not ready to get in the elevator, I just want to stay here a little longer." And I see the show creator and he's clearly beaming. And he says, "So I guess I'll see you soon." I laugh and I'm like, "I hope so." And he says, "It's yours, congratulations."



Nadine Velazquez and co-star Nick Kroll on *The League*.





## CURTAIN CALL

AJ Ware '08 will direct *The Penelopiad* at the newly renovated Getz Theater Center.

Theatre alum and Jackalope Theatre co-founder **AJ Ware** returns to Columbia College Chicago this fall to direct the first student production of the 2018-19 school year: Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad*. The play serves as Penelope's version of *The Odyssey*, depicting Penelope and her 12 maids as they work to thwart the suitors who seek Penelope's hand. The play will show October 18-27 at the newly renovated Getz Theater Center.

### HOW DOES IT FEEL TO RETURN TO COLUMBIA TO DIRECT FOR THE THEATRE DEPARTMENT?

There are a lot of familiar faces and it feels very welcoming. Also, the entire building has been completely remodeled. It's almost unrecognizable from when I went here. The theater that I'm working in had a gut rehab of the entire space; it's gorgeous. Students are going to have the opportunity to do much more: more modern-looking things, more contemporary-feeling things, which will give them a chance to do work that's comparable to the theatre world right now.

### WHY IS *THE PENELOPIAD* AN IMPORTANT PLAY FOR THE SCHOOL TO PUT ON?

The story of Penelope had not been told in this way before Margaret Atwood wrote the book. Telling the story from her point of view is important because we're at a time right now where we have a new language around power, around gender dynamics.



*Penelopiad* will be the first play staged in the new Courtyard Theater.

“Students are going to have the opportunity to do much more ... which will give them a chance to do work that's comparable to the theater world right now.”



The Courtyard Theater can seat 181 audience members.



## SPICE UP YOUR LIFE

Janet Johnston '93 is here to enhance your cooking.

**Janet Johnston** cofounded Savory Spice shop with her husband Mike (who asked her to marry him and start the shop in the same breath). Fourteen years in, the duo have franchised in 15 states, with no signs of slowing down. Here, Johnston presents five spices that will help make any meal exciting:

### SAIGON CINNAMON

"This cinnamon has a higher oil content than normal grocery store cinnamon, which is usually Indonesian," says Johnston. "I use this for *everything*, from baking to on top of my morning oatmeal."

### TOMATO POWDER

"I use this as my tomato paste by adding water," she says. "I no longer have to use one or two tablespoons out of a can of paste and waste the rest. I also like to use it to thicken sauces by adding it as the powder."

### MILD YELLOW CURRY POWDER

"I think you can use curry powder for more than just a traditional curry dish. I've used it in my pumpkin pie which gave it an earthy, exotic flavor," Johnston says. "Or toss a little in your next smoothie, as it has a lot of turmeric, a 'good for you' spice."

## HEY MISS DJ

Maha Gorgi '11 remembers her school days through three choice songs.



Tune in to Chicago's WPWX Power 92.3 FM, and you might hear **Maha Gorgi**. A Columbia College Chicago Radio alum, Gorgi has been a radio personality and DJ for Power 92 since 2014. We asked Gorgi to make a playlist for *DEMO* readers to remember those good old Columbia days.

### COLUMBIA THROWBACK PLAYLIST

- **"Blame It (Feat. T-Pain)" by Jamie Foxx**—Well, some of my college days were a blur, and this song explains why...
- **"Marvin & Chardonnay (Feat. Kanye West and Roscoe Dash)" by Big Sean**—I remember hearing this song in all the clubs during my time at Columbia. It came on either before or after "Blame It!"
- **"No Hands (Feat. Wale and Roscoe Dash)" by Waka Flocka**—No matter what was happening, once this song would drop, all the ladies were on the dance floor. It was the perfect "turn up" record during college.

### DEHYDRATED MINCED GARLIC

"This would be one of my husband Mike's favorite go-to's," she says. "Instead of keeping a garlic bulb on hand, toss this into your sauces and soups, and it will rehydrate just like the fresh!"

### WHISKEY BARREL SMOKED BLACK PEPPER

"We smoke our own black pepper with whiskey barrel wood from a local distillery here in Denver," says Johnston. "This is a new product and we can barely keep up with demand. People use it as they would normal pepper, but it adds a subtle, boozy smokiness to the dish."





# National Alumni Board Members

(AS OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2018)

## New Members at Large



**Chris Broyles MA '98**  
Managing Director,  
FTI Consulting



**April Castro '96**  
Director of  
Development Operations,  
Oglethorpe University



**John Davies '88**  
Director of Operations, CNN



**Braydan Hogue '16**  
Creative Services Producer,  
KOM-8 NBC and  
Mid-Missouri CW



**Mary Mitchell '91, HDR '18**  
Editorial Board Member  
and Columnist,  
*Chicago Sun-Times*



**Ron Norinsky '70**  
President,  
Video Replay Inc.



**Hilary Rainey '09**  
Partnership Director,  
United Way of Salt Lake



**Roz Varon '80**  
Traffic/Transportation  
Anchor, ABC 7 News

## AND YOUR RETURNING BOARD MEMBERS...

**Shani Black**  
Writer/Producer

**Karen Lee Cohen '68**  
President and Founder,  
Crystal Pyramid Productions Inc.

**Marty Kane '06**  
Senior Admissions Counselor,  
Columbia College Chicago

**Jeff Kinney '87**  
National Alumni Board  
Vice President, Director  
of Field Production/Chief  
Photojournalist, CNN

**Jennifer Oliver O'Connell '87**  
National Alumni Board  
Secretary, Writer,  
Reinvention Coach, and  
Yoga Instructor

**Rebecca Ortiz '01**  
On-Air Personality,  
CBS Radio B96

**Jacob Schmidt**  
Student Representative,  
Audio Arts and Acoustics major

**Michael Wojcik '96**  
National Alumni Board  
President, Chief Development  
Officer, American Red Cross  
of Massachusetts

To learn more about the  
National Alumni Board,  
email [alumni@colum.edu](mailto:alumni@colum.edu).

Not pictured: **Bryan Smiley '09**, Vice President of Creative Production, Columbia Pictures

# CAAN Updates

GET INVOLVED WITH THE COLUMBIA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AND NETWORK (CAAN)







- 1. Dinner With 12 Strangers in Los Angeles**—On November 2, Michael Goi '80 hosted a Dinner with 12 Strangers in Los Angeles for our Cinema and Television Arts alumni.
- 2. Dinner With 12 Strangers in Chicago**—On November 8, we hosted another fantastic Dinner with 12 Strangers in Chicago for our Photography alumni. It was a wonderful evening filled with networking and socializing at the Museum of Contemporary Photography. A very special thank you to Natasha Egan MFA '98 and Stephanie Conaway MA '95 for allowing us to host the event in the museum. An additional thank you to Photography Professor Kelli Connell and Assistant Director of Industry Relations Melissa Hennessy for speaking at the dinner on behalf of the Photography Department.
- 3. Faculty and Staff Donor Recognition Reception**—On November 16, Columbia College Chicago honored our faculty and staff donors. We'd like to give a big thank you to the Faculty and Staff Scholarship Initiative (FSSI) Committee for partnering with Development and Alumni Relations to plan this event.
- 4. LA Pregame the Holidays Party**—On December 16, Columbia Alumni in Los Angeles attended a holiday gathering with alumni associations from several other schools. Columbia alumni enjoyed mingling with alums from CalArts, Northwestern, Dartmouth, USC, and more.
- 5. J-Term Students at Warner Music Group**—On January 8, Dick Joseph '14 hosted Columbia College Chicago J-Term students at Warner Music Group, where they learned about life and work in New York City from some of our fantastic alums.
- 6. Roz Varon Book Signing**—On January 19, President Kwang-Wu Kim hosted a reception and conversation with Roz Varon '80, ABC7 Chicago's traffic anchor. Dozens of alumni, faculty, staff, and friends gathered to hear Varon share stories about her life and career. Afterwards, Varon signed copies of her new book, *On the Road with Roz: Adventures in Travel and Life*.
- 7. Black History Month Panel in Los Angeles**—On February 6, this event honored Black History Month in Los Angeles. It was an amazing evening that brought together dozens of alumni, students, and guests to hear how Columbia College Chicago has helped build successful careers.
- 8. Weisman Awards Alumni Reunion**—On February 17, alumni from across the country gathered to celebrate the Weisman Award's milestone of awarding over \$1 million in scholarships. The fund has supported more than 1,000 Columbia students and their creative projects. Our featured guest speakers were former students Jacki Lyden and Peter Teschner, who shared their insights and personal stories.
- 9. Admitted Student Reception—Los Angeles**—On March 11, seven alumni attended a reception for our admitted students and their parents. Our alumni welcomed these students and parents to the Columbia community while answering questions and speaking on their personal Columbia experience.
- 10. Admitted Student Reception—New York**—On March 13, newly admitted students, their families, Columbia College Chicago staff, and alumni volunteers came together to welcome the new members of the Columbia community! Columbia Board of Trustees member Luis de la Parra '95 hosted the group at the Univision New York office. The night included a panel, great conversation, and a cupcake "toast." Special thanks to de la Parra, Michael Wojcik '96, Jeff Kinney '87, Allie Shuman '14, Sofia Bibliowicz '13, and Ruben Cantu '10.

# Class Notes

SUBMIT YOUR CLASS NOTES AT [COLUM.EDU/CLASSNOTES](http://COLUM.EDU/CLASSNOTES)

## 1960s

**JEFFREY STARR MARARIAN'S '67** voice-over library is now available at [TalentJeffreyLLC.com](http://TalentJeffreyLLC.com).

## 1970

**MIKE FELTEN '72** won Rural Roots Music Commission's 2017 Album of the Year for *Diamonds and Televisions*.

## 1980s

**DENNIS ANDERSON '85**, the executive editor of the *Journal Star* of Peoria, Illinois, published an article in *The Guardian* about the *Journal Star's* outreach work with underserved communities.

**CHRIS BODEN '85** was named the radio studio host for the Chicago Blackhawks. Boden handles pre- and post-game duties on WGN Radio for all Blackhawks games and hosts intermission reports.

**JANUSZ KAMINSKI '87** was the cinematographer for *Ready Player One*, the latest Steven Spielberg action film, which stars **LENA WAITHE '06**.



Cinematographer Janusz Kaminski '87 and actor/writer Lena Waithe '06 both worked on the 2018 film *Ready Player One*.

**KYM MAZELLE '86**, a Gary Legends Award winner who is credited as the pioneer of House music in Europe, was profiled on her performance career, which spans continents and decades, in a recent *Gary 411* news article.

## 1990s

**MICHELLE ALEGRIA '97** joined Fox's WFLD-Channel 32 as the new traffic reporter for *Good Day Chicago*.

**CARYN CAPOTOSTO '99** received a 2017 News and Documentary Emmy Award for Best Historical Documentary for her work as coproducer on the feature documentary film *Best of Enemies*, which focuses on the nationally televised 1968 debates between Gore Vidal and William F. Buckley Jr.

**CAROLE CLEMONS CLARK '99** is the pastor for the Praetorium Church of Chicago for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Hearing. Clemons Clark was co-valedictorian for the MA in Biblical Studies at North Carolina College of Theology's satellite college, Dominion College of Theology.

**MICHAEL COSTA '94** won his fifth *FOLIO: Magazine* Eddie Award for a cover story about Marriott's AC Hotels in the March/April 2017 issue of *Hotel F&B Magazine*.

**ILESA DUNCAN '99**, producing artistic director at Pegasus Theatre Chicago, directed the 2017 fall production *Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery*, which was recommended by the Joseph Jefferson Award website.

**AYANNA FLOYD MFA '98** was named showrunner and executive producer for the second season of **LENA WAITHE'S '06** Showtime series *The Chi*.

**CHESTER GREGORY '95, HDR '15** was featured in the film *Revival!*, a gospel retelling of the Christian Passion story.

**TIFFANY S. GRIFFITH '92** received an Emmy for Outstanding Sound Editing for *Stranger Things* and two Hollywood Post Alliance (HPA) awards for Outstanding Sound-Television for *Stranger Things* and *American Gods*. Griffith was also nominated for a 2018 Motion Picture Sound Editors award for Dialogue Editing/ADR for *Stranger Things*.

**ADAM HOLMES '96** is the layout supervisor for the Sony Pictures Imageworks/Warner Bros. animated film *Smallfoot*, coming out in 2018.

**MICHAEL MATTHEWS '99** directed *The Graduate*, starring Melanie Griffith, at the Laguna Playhouse in California.

**BRIAN MURPHY '90** was named Law360 Legal Lion of the Week by Law360, the legal profession's leading news service, for winning a nearly \$50 million class action settlement in a New York federal court with his law firm, Murray, Murphy, Moul + Basil.

**NOBUKO OYABU '95** lives and tours throughout Japan speaking and exhibiting her photography project *STAND: Faces of Rape & Sexual Abuse Survivors*.

**MIKE OWENS '97**, cocreator and executive producer of *Danger & Eggs*, an Amazon Kids original animated series, won an Emmy Award and was nominated for an Annie Award for Outstanding Achievement in Character Design for Television/Broadcast Production and a Critics' Choice Award for Best Animated Series.

**SARDIA ROBINSON '99** presented her award-winning one-woman show *From a Yardie to a Yankee* at the Whitefire Theatre in Sherman Oaks, California.

**GABBY SANALITRO '93** had a guest-starring role on Zach Galifianakis's FX show, *Baskets*.



**RISE SANDERS-WEIR MFA '98** recently started a job as director of production for Kartemquin Films.

**CARL SEATON '94** directed and **GWEN SIGAN '11** wrote a January episode of *Chicago P.D.*

**EVELYN SHELTON '90** was featured on LISC Chicago's website regarding her restaurant, Evelyn's Food Love, which is located in Chicago's Washington Park neighborhood.

**ERICA WATSON '98** was a guest panelist on Chicago's WCIU morning show *The Jam* along with *Wild 'N Out*'s Blair Christian and comedian Bill Bellamy.

## 2000s

**TY ACIERTO '09**, **MARCIN SZOCINSKI '10**, and **JONATHAN GORCZYCA '11** released their first feature film, *The Grave Bandits*, in Asia and Europe. The team also wrapped production on their second film, *Watch Me Kill*, which premiered in Manila, Philippines, before expanding to Asia, Europe, and the U.S.

**JULIE ALTUS '01** was nominated for an Emmy in the category of Sound Editing for a Series for her work on *Gotham*. Altus was also nominated for a 2017 Golden Reel Award for Best Sound Editing—Short Form Dialogue and ADR in Television for *Shooter*, and a 2018 Golden Reel Award for Outstanding Achievement in Sound Editing—Sound Effects, Foley, Music, Dialogue, and ADR for *Ballers*.

**DAVID BAKER MFA '00** codirected and produced two feature documentary films releasing in 2018: *Three Days of Glory* and *Saving Atlantis*.

**JETTA BATES-VASILATOS '02** was named as one of the top black influencers that brands should partner with in 2018 by Huffington Post. Bates-Vasilatos is the founder of *The Jettasetting Travel and Lifestyle Channel* and is an on-air contributor for Bravo TV's *Tour Group*.

**AIDY BRYANT '09** was profiled on *New York Magazine*'s The Cut, where she talked about comedy, body positivity, and planning her own fashion line.

**ALEXANDER BURKE '05** was interviewed in an All Access Music article about his composing work for *Iron Man 3* and *New Girl*.

**BEHZAD DABU '08**, a cast member on *How to Get Away With Murder* and *The Chi*, was interviewed in *The Hedonist Magazine*.

**JEN DAVIS '02** had a photography exhibition, *Eleven Years*, at the Mercer County Community College's James Kerney Campus Gallery. *Eleven Years* "explores body image, identity, and relationships."

**JOHNNY DERANGO '02** was featured on the annual list of 2018 Rising Stars of Cinematography by the American Society of Cinematographers. His latest work, *Small Town Crime*, is available on DVD and Blu-ray.

**JAMES EDWARDS '07** joined Chicago Public Media as a podcast producer for its content development unit. Recently, he has worked as a researcher on two projects: a feature documentary about Tupac Shakur by Oscar-winning filmmaker Steve McQueen and the upcoming HBO drama series *Lovecraft Country*. Edwards has previously worked as a producer and reporter for WGBH and Public Radio International.

**CARLY GROSE '09** was a producer for the 2017 fall pilot of a Morgan Spurlock-produced show on CBS and produced episodes of *Disney's Fairy Tale Weddings* for Freeform. She is a producer for Irwin Entertainment.

**MARCAS HARRIS**, a former student who performs under the stage name Mr. Robotic, had his song "Feel So Alive" air on the season finale of *The Chi*.

**TONIKA JOHNSON '03** was named one of the 2017 Chicagoans of the Year by *Chicago* magazine for her photography of Chicago's Englewood neighborhood.

**DANIEL KIBBLESMITH '05**, staff writer for *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, released the all-ages holiday book *Santa's Husband*, a Christmas tale that introduces us to Mr. and Mr. Claus.



*Santa's Husband*, a Christmas book for all ages, was written by Daniel Kibblesmith '05.

**KYLE KINANE '02** was featured on *The Standups*, a Netflix original show featuring six half-hour comedy specials.

**JESSE KLUG '05** won a 2017 Joseph Jefferson Award for his lighting design for the musical *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* at the Paramount Theatre in Aurora, Illinois.



Jesse Klug '05 won a Joseph Jefferson award for his work for the Paramount Theatre's 2017 production of *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*.

**EMILY KNOWLES-GRUMBLE '03** is the owner and designer for eek! design. Knowles-Grumble is also the head of design and publications for Capricon, a four-day science fiction convention held annually in the Chicagoland area since 1981.

## ALUMNI NEWS & NOTES

**JUSTIN KROHN '02** was an editor for Netflix's *Bloodline* (season 3), Showtime's *Twin Peaks: The Return*, and USA's *Mr. Robot* (season 3). Krohn's upcoming project will be Amazon's *Homecoming*.

**JOSEPH LAPPIE'S MFA '08** exhibition *Personal Mythologies* was showcased in the Figge Art Museum in Davenport, Iowa.



More than a decade of work from the artist Joseph Lappie MFA '08 was exhibited at the Figge Art Museum in Davenport, Iowa.

**JACK C. NEWELL '04** wrote and directed the award-winning film *42 Grams*, which follows how chef Jake Bickelhaupt evolved from running an illegal restaurant out of his home to becoming a culinary celebrity in less than a year.

**MARIAN OLIVER '09**, a senior assistant editor at Cutters Studios, was interviewed by Little Black Book about her editing career, past projects, and her time at Columbia College Chicago.

**BRAD PODOWSKI '03** wrote, produced, and codirected the film *Redemption Way*, which was an official selection at the 2018 Christian Worldview Film Festival.

**KEANNA PRINCE '05** founded Funny After Five Productions, LLC, a production company in Chicago focusing on comedic film, web content, and performing arts.

**SYLVIA RAMOS ALOTTA MFA '03** is the 2017 recipient of the Isaac Anolic Jewish Book Arts Award for her artist book, *The Heart of David*.

**ILIANA REGAN'S '05** restaurant, Elizabeth, is one of 25 restaurants to receive a Michelin star.

**JACOB SAENZ '05** won the American Poetry Review/Honickman First Book Prize in Poetry. His book of poetry, *Throwing the Crown*, will be published in September 2018.

**JOANIE SCHULTZ '00** returned to her hometown of Aspen, Colorado, to direct three student-penned plays at the Theatre Masters' Take Ten Festival.

**TRINA SOTIRA'S '03** poem, "Chicago Newsroom Circa 1999," will be published in the forthcoming *Poeming Pigeon* anthology in August 2018. Additionally, as a professor at the College of DuPage, she advises art and literary journal *The Prairie Light Review*, which won the American Scholastic Press Association First Place Magazine Award for the third consecutive year.

**AMANDA STEIGER'S '05** new young adult novel *When My Heart Joins the Thousand*, published as A.J. Steiger, is now available through HarperCollins. The novel received a starred review from *Kirkus Reviews* and *School Library Journal*.

**STEVEN TEREZ MFA '06** was named a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award Poetry for *Directions for Use*. This translated collection features the "erotic, wry, feminist poems" of Serbian poet Ana Ristović.

**JEFF TOBLER '03** was named senior vice president of television publicity and communications at Warner Bros. Worldwide Television Marketing.

**DANA TUINIER '06** joined Apple as a comedy executive in its worldwide video division.

**MICHAEL VANDERWYST '05** is a writer, producer, and editor in the CW Television Network's marketing department. Vanderwyst creates promos and trailers for various shows such as *The Flash*, *Supergirl*, *The 100*, and *Black Lightning*.

**NADINE VELAZQUEZ '01**, the star of History Channel's drama *Six*, returned to Columbia College Chicago for Open House to speak about her college experience and how it helped her career.

**LENA WAITHE '06** was named *OUT 100's* Artist of the Year. On top of launching her own show, Showtime's *The Chi*, and starring in *Ready Player One*, the Emmy winner was also on the cover of *Vanity Fair*.

**BRYAN WALSH '08** is now a manager at Principato-Young Entertainment. Walsh was previously an agent at Don Buchwald & Associates.

**CHRISTINA WATKINS '09** hosted an exhibition with her company 19art81, showcasing 20 exceptional artists from around Chicago.

**CAYLA WEISBERG '09** discussed her Chicago-based venture capital fund, InvestHER Ventures, in an episode of *Bootstrapping in America*. Since cofounding InvestHER Ventures, Weisberg has partnered with more than a dozen female entrepreneurs and technology company startups.

**LOU YOELIN '02** has over 1,000 original songs on TV shows such as *Criminal Minds*, *How I Met Your Mother*, *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*, *NFL Monday Night Football*, and many more. Yoelin recently signed a publishing deal with Round Hill Music.

### 2010s

**TRINITY DAWN BOBO '16, KEYIERRA COLLINS '16, and KEISHA BENNETT '17** premiered *Lather. Rinse. Repeat / Fall. Climb. Release.*, a program that showcases black female experience through investigating the theme of catharsis from psychological, political, and personal perspectives.

**DEVLYN CAMP '14** has a new podcast, *Mattachine*, which explores the gay rights-centric Mattachine Society and its role in LGBTQ liberation.

**DAVID CROMER HDR '17**, former student and faculty member, won a Tony Award for directing the musical *A Band's Visit*. *The New York Times* praised it as "one of the most ravishing musicals you will ever be seduced by," and it is the winner of four Best Musical awards.



**JESS DEPAUL '16**, **RYAN DUGGAN '05**, and **JEREMY BLAKE '13** were featured artists at the second Chicago Printers Guild Publishers Fair at Elastic Arts in Chicago.

**CODY ESTLE '11** was named the new artistic director of Raven Theatre.

**JULIA FINE MFA '15** released her new novel, *What Should Be Wild*, on May 8. Barnes and Noble included the book on “25 Sci-Fi & Fantasy Debuts to Watch for in 2018.”

**JESSIE ANN FOLEY'S MFA '12** second novel *Neighborhood Girls*, published by HarperTeen, was named a Booklist Best Book of 2017. Foley's third novel is scheduled for publication with Harper in early 2019.

**KELLY FORSYTHE'S MFA '11** debut collection of poetry, *Perennial*, will be published in summer 2018 by Coffee House Press.



Kelly Forsyth's MFA '11 forthcoming book of poetry, *Perennial*, explores “girlhood, selfhood, and the fragility of safety.”

**JOE FLORES '13** is the senior graphic designer for eshots, Inc., in Chicago. Flores also designs clothes and toys that have been sold at Urban Outfitters. Flores' work was also featured in *Wired* magazine.

**JAN-HENRY GRAY MFA '16** won the 17th annual A. Poulin, Jr. Poetry Prize from BOA Editions. His book of poetry, *Documents*, will be published in April 2019.

**NICO GUTIERREZ MFA '17** performed his very own large-scale concert composition at the Centro Fox in Guanajuato, Mexico. The Centro Fox cultural center was founded by former Mexican President Vicente Fox, who was in attendance.

**BRIANA MARSALLA '17** has joined WTVO/WQRF, an ABC and Fox-affiliated station, as an editor, producer, and reporter. Marsalla has also been featured in over 32 musical productions and starred as Pitbull's backup dancer on the TV show *Empire*.

**SARA MASLANKA '13** received a major MacArthur Foundation grant to support international collaboration with Egyptian composers, computer programmers, dancers, and new media artists.

**BRAD MEYER '15** received a 2018 MPSE Golden Reel Award Nomination for Best Sound Editing on Nickelodeon's *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*.

**FAISAL MOHYUDDIN'S MFA '15** book, *The Displaced Children of Displaced Children*, won the 2017 Sexton Prize for Poetry and was a summer 2018 book recommendation by the Poetry Book Society.

**JESI NELSON MFA '15** composed the score of the feature film *Jinn*, which premiered at South by Southwest. **SARA BROSHOFSKE MFA '15**, **FARAZ EMAMDOUST MFA '15**, **LOGAN STAHLEY MFA '15**, and **TYLER DURHAM MFA '17** also worked on the music for the film.

**CESAR RIOS '10** edited the short film *Un Ratito Mas*, which has been accepted by 2018's International Latino Film Festival.

**DYLAN SCHAEFER '12** and **TIFFANY SCHAEFER '12**, of Other World Theatre, hosted the 6th Annual Juggernaut Film Festival at The Music Box Theatre in June. The short film fest was hosted by Gates McFadden from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

**MORGAN SCHREIBER '12** published her first children's book, *Charlie and Bax: and the Market of Uhderr*. Schreiber was also promoted to shared services manager at USA Escape Room.

**JOSHUA SHORT '17** was featured in *DNAinfo* after becoming the Sunday morning news anchor for WNDU-TV in Northern Indiana. Short was also nominated for the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Midwest Emmy Award in 2017 for a student-produced show he hosted during his time at Columbia.

**JOHN TRIERWEILER '11** joined the morning team at ABC15 in Phoenix, Arizona.

**JAMIE P. VELEZ '12** has worked on numerous audio productions including the major motion picture record for *The Hunger Games: The Mockingjay Part 1* and the Grammy-nominated album with Sly & Robbie and Spicy Chocolate. Velez also founded management company 373 Management, signing their third producer to the roster.

### Marriages

**LAUREN JADE ATTAWAY '08** and Rogelio Isaac Thomas Jr.

**SARAH SIMÃO '06** and **RODRIGO ASSAD '05**

### In Memoriam

**CHARLES CASTLE '07**, assistant dean of the School of Media Arts

**LEN ELLIS '52**

**HUEY LEWIS '00**

**LEWIS MANILOW HDR '02**, former trustee

**HOWARD MENDELSON '49**, former trustee

**RALPH PASSMAN '78**

**JOHN "MICK" THOMASSON**, former student and staff member

**JEANNE UZDAWINIS '79**

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# Upcoming Events

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND EVENTS,  
VISIT [EVENTS.COLUM.EDU](http://EVENTS.COLUM.EDU)

**JULY 19–SEPTEMBER 30**

## Lucas Foglia's Human Nature

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

Lucas Foglia's *Human Nature* examines our relationship to the natural world and the human desire for "wild" places—even if they're manmade. The photographs challenge the concept that humans and nature oppose each other, while highlighting the unsettling, sometimes comedic, juxtapositions of human technology and nature.



Lucas Foglia, *Esme Swimming, Parkroyal on Pickering*, Singapore



Ralph Arnold, *Above this Earth Games, Games*, 1968.  
Reproduced with permission from The Pauls Foundation.

**OCTOBER 11–DECEMBER 21**

## The Many Hats of Ralph Arnold: Art, Identity, and Politics

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

Ralph Arnold's photcollages appropriate and comment upon mass media portrayals of gender, sexuality, race, and politics during the 1960s and '70s. The complex multimedia works stem from his own multilayered identity as a black, gay veteran and prominent member of Chicago's art community. The exhibition also includes work by Arnold's contemporaries and colleagues for further context and understanding of his legacy.

**OCTOBER 11–13**

## Odeon

the Dance Center, 1306 S. Michigan Ave.  
[dance.colum.edu](http://dance.colum.edu)

Ephart Asherie Dance makes its debut at the Dance Center with *Odeon*, a new work set to the music of Brazilian composer Ernesto Nazareth. *Odeon* combines breaking, hip-hop, house, and vogue dance styles with Nazareth's musical fusion of Afro-Brazilian rhythms and European classical traditions.





OCTOBER 18–20

**Long Run**

the Dance Center, 1306 S. Michigan Ave.  
[dance.colum.edu](http://dance.colum.edu)

Legendary choreographer Tere O'Connor returns to the Dance Center with his new evening-length work, *Long Run*. The work pits the rigid geometry of the stage against the organic bodies crossing over it in a kinetic exploration, portraying the struggle to find calm in a chaotic universe.



NOVEMBER 8–10

**EKILI MUNDA | What Lies Within**

the Dance Center, 1306 S. Michigan Ave.  
[dance.colum.edu](http://dance.colum.edu)

Chicago choreographer Vershawn Sanders-Ward '02 and Uganda-based choreographer Jonas Byaruhanga present *EKILI MUNDA | What Lies Within* as part of the TransAtlantic Project, a long-term cultural exchange between their respective dance companies. The performance engages with the African diaspora and positions the body as a physical, spiritual, and social archive of cultural history that informs personal identity.

NOVEMBER 16

**Ivan Neville Residency Concert**

Music Center Concert Hall,  
 1014 S. Michigan Ave.  
[colum.edu/music](http://colum.edu/music)

Multi-instrumentalist musician, songwriter, and singer Ivan Neville completes his week-long residency with an on-campus performance.

**Keep in Mind**

Keep your eyes peeled and your calendars open for these upcoming alumni events.

**CAAN Connect Chicago**—Speed networking with top industry professionals.

**Theater Alumni Reunion**—Reconnect with your fellow Theatre alumni as we celebrate in the newly renovated Getz Theater Center.

**45th Anniversary Columbia Chronicle Reunion**—If you ever worked on *The Chronicle*, this is a can't-miss event.

**Black Student Union Reunion**—We are celebrating 30 years of the BSU! Join your fellow alumni and our current students at the 2018 Paint It Black event.

**Latino Alliance Reunion**—Celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Latino Alliance with your fellow alumni and current students.



COMING SOON:

# ALUMNI MENTORING PROGRAM

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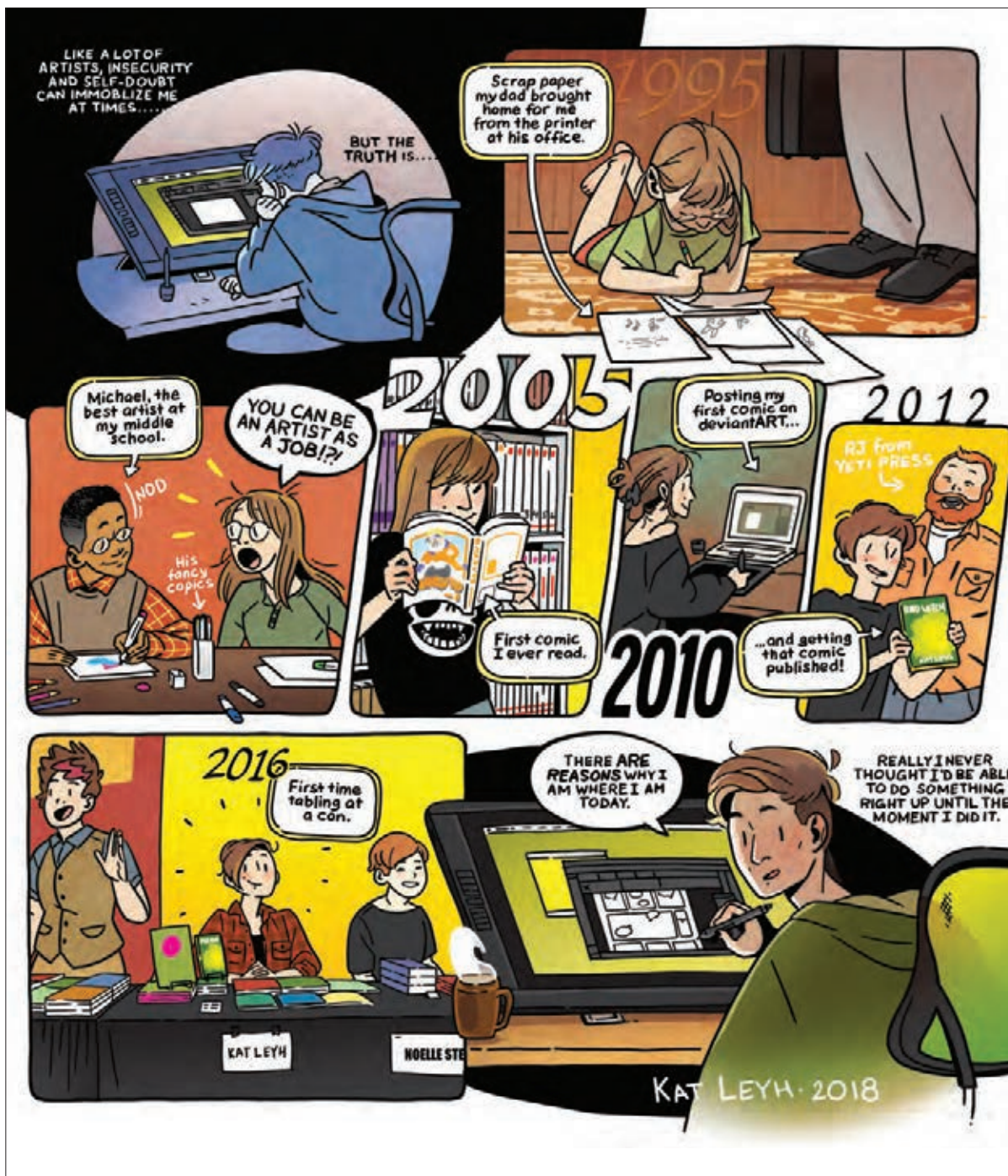
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Interested in becoming a mentor?  
Contact [alumni@colum.edu](mailto:alumni@colum.edu) for  
more information.



# DRAWING ON EXPERIENCE

Since graduating with an Illustration degree, Kat Leyh '11 has worked steadily in comics. Her web comic *SuperCakes*, which follows super-powered girlfriends May and Mo, was published in print by Yeti Press in 2015. She's created backstories and covers for the comics runs of *Adventure Time*, *Steven Universe*, *Bravest Warrior*, and more. Today, she's co-writer and cover artist for *Lumberjanes*, a supernatural summer camp comic published by Boom! Studios. In this *DEMO* exclusive comic, Leyh traces her creative journey.



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