



BENNINGTON

winter
2019

NETWORKS

WINTER 2019

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Bennington Networks



The American dream conjures romantic notions of rugged individualism and the triumph of grit in the face of adversity. But that has never been the complete story of who we are or how we get ahead. Grit matters a lot, but so do intellectual, familial, and cultural networks—the friends and mentors who nurture us. We are all shaped profoundly by the people in our lives.

Our connection to one another is what we sought to explore in this issue, the networks of relationships that are anchored by Bennington College. From the start, these networks have been the source of artistic collaboration, civic debate, and professional opportunity. As Director of the Poetry at Bennington program, Michael Dumanis said about inviting acclaimed poets to campus for the series: “We want our students to imagine what is possible.” Whether we are connecting computer scientists with incarcerated people for work training, or we are leveraging fine art to expand college opportunities through our Art for Access program, Bennington is building networks where they did not previously exist to make the world a more fair and humane place. Our students benefit from the relationships they forge in these efforts and from the process itself. The collaborative muscles they grow here can empower them throughout their lives and in every professional field.

It can be tempting to confuse modern connectivity for community, to mistake social media contacts for friends. As **Devin Gaffney '10** illustrates in his Informing Opinions piece, digital social platforms are not, on their own, a civic good (p. 14). Real connections start with humans standing in earnest with one another, finding common ground across differences, and bearing witness to our varied experiences. The Bennington network is strong because our ties are real, not virtual.

Whether you graduated more than 50 years ago or dropped a loved one off on campus for the first time this past fall, you are a part of this generative community of Bennington artists, creators, change-makers, scientists, and influencers. The benefits of this extended family are myriad. Alumni have been generous in creating Field Work Term opportunities for students, and post-college collaborations are common. Like the critically acclaimed folk trio Mountain Man or the team of current students and alumni about to premier their work, *A Jester's Tale*, at Sundance, more than a few groundbreaking partnerships have been born on our campus. For both professional success and emotional resilience, these friendships have purpose in our lives.

We believe in coming together at Bennington. And we are building networks for a more just, beautiful, and truly connected world. Thank you for being a part of this community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Mariko Silver". The script is fluid and cursive.

Mariko Silver
President

Paul Feeley (1910–1966) • *Untitled*, 1959 (detail) • Paul Feeley Estate, courtesy Garth Greenan Gallery, New York

Bennington museum

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Exciting your imagination

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BENNINGTON MAGAZINE

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Addresses Forced Migration in New Consortium
Natalie Redmond, In Memoriam

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Emma Grilo, Off-Broadway with the Lortell Fellows
Shannon Lee, Expanding the Poetry Network

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Mention.

And now, a word about our sponsors.



This issue has stories as well as two local sponsors: Bennington Museum and Bennington Potters. Both are well connected to Bennington College and its mission. Each understands the power of networks, a power that is especially felt in our small, interconnected town.

At Bennington Museum, the intersections are most evident where visitors will find faculty, staff, and student fingerprints and footprints. They surround collections that go deep into the area's history of innovation and art. These connections between the Museum and the College are probably most apparent in the Bennington Modernism Gallery—featuring the work of the artists who taught, studied, or visited in Bennington during its avant-garde art heyday, when the campus, and the work happening here, were as known to the country as they were to the town.

Then there is Bennington Potters. Just as Bennington College put Bennington on the map of nationally recognized liberal arts colleges, Bennington Potters made Bennington famous (again) for pottery. Founded on the idea that “designer pottery” should be within reach of everyday buyers, the Potters continues today, celebrating its 70th year and serving its many customers far and near. Bennington Potters’ successor CEO, **Sheela Harden '69** sees her business as part goods well designed and part experience mindfully explored. She describes her job as a way of “setting the table” for community, for reflection, for gathering robust ideas, and for generating conversation.

When I reached out to invite organizations and businesses in our local network to sponsor an issue of the magazine, Sheela was the first to respond. And, having said yes, she turned the Potters’ page over to the Bennington Museum. She believes *Bennington* readers will most appreciate a full menu of what Bennington Museum is planning this year. As Sheela has said, “What is best for Bennington College and for Bennington Museum is best for Bennington Potters.”

In this issue, you’ll read about Bennington’s networks, their reach and impact. And I hope you’ll also take a moment to notice and appreciate our local network of sponsors. Including advertising in the issue was a decision we came to with curiosity and care, and with the full recognition that magazines take time and money to create. As the College continues to prioritize scholarships and campus renewal, everyone is coming more mindfully to the task of asking: is there a way I can help that endeavor? When we are able to attract the support of well-fit sponsors to the magazine, that sponsorship supports the broader mission and consciousness around making a Bennington education as affordable and accessible to those students who would most benefit from it.

These sponsors have helped to offset the cost of printing, mailing, and making this issue. I hope other well-fit and well-aligned alumni organizations and businesses consider sponsoring future issues. If interested, email magazine@bennington.edu. I look forward to hearing from you.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brie".

Brie Della Rocca
Editor and Art Director

WINTER 2019

Looking up from the end of the world

BRIEFS

06

BOOKSHELF

Recently released, nationally reviewed books by members of the College's community. Featuring *Small Fry* by Lisa Brennan-Jobs MFA '09

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IN THE GALLERY

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#BENNINGTON

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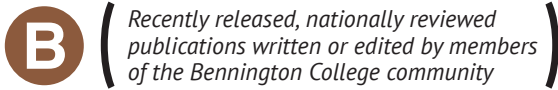
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FICTION



Alice Mattison, Master of Fine Arts in Writing faculty member
Conscience
Pegasus Books (August 7, 2018)

“Alice Mattison’s new novel wrestles with the irreducibly complex demands of having a conscience in an age of political depravity.”

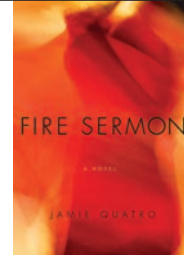
—The Washington Post



Gloria Koster '72
Little Red Ruthie
Albert Whitman & Company
(August 1, 2017)

“A welcome holiday offering.”

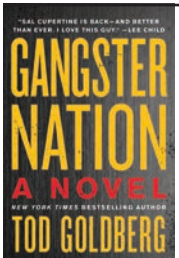
—School Library Journal



Jamie Quatro MFA '09
Fire Sermon
Grove Press
(January 9, 2018)

“...the book is a profound, and profoundly strange, meditation on desire and how it connects us to the ‘eternal’”

—The Atlantic



Todd Goldberg MFA '09
Gangster Nation
Counterpoint
(September 12, 2017)

“100 percent unhinged about the professionally unhinged...torridly funny...the novel swells with a spiritual but jazzy tone.”

—New York Times Book Review



Jonathan Lethem '86
The Feral Detective
Ecco (November 6, 2018)

“A highbrow mystery. . . Fans of *Motherless Brooklyn* take note.”

—The Washington Post



Joanne Proulx MFA '14
We All Love the Beautiful Girls
Viking (August 2017)

“...impressions of the characters will shift and change, a verisimilitude that is the result of careful attention and unflinching honesty.”

—Toronto Star

NONFICTION



Dylan Thuras '04
The Atlas Obscura Explorer's Guide for the World's Most Adventurous Kid
Workman Publishing Company
(September 18, 2018)

“A thrillingly imaginative expedition to 100 weird-but-true places on earth.”

—The New York Times Book Review



Chelsea Hodson MFA '17
Tonight I'm Someone Else: Essays
Holt Paperbacks (June 5, 2018)

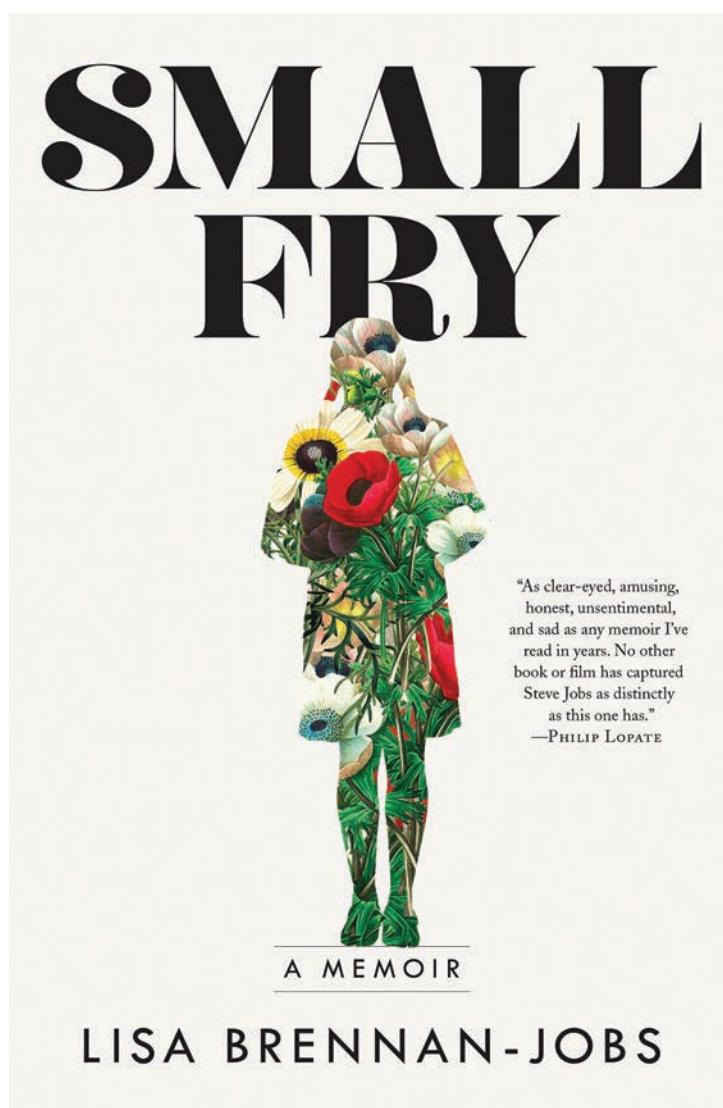
“Read this startlingly honest essay collection and beware: You will emerge utterly changed.”

—Refinery29

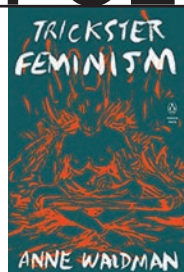
Lisa Brennan-Jobs MFA '09
Small Fry
Grove Press (September 4, 2018)

“Entrancing...
Brennan-Jobs is a
deeply gifted writer...
Her inner landscape
is depicted in such
exquisitely granular
detail that it feels
as if no one else
could have possibly
written it. Indeed,
it has that defining
aspect of a literary
work: the stamp of a
singular sensibility...
Beautiful, literary,
and devastating.”

—*New York Times Book Review*



POETRY



Anne Waldman '66
Trickster Feminism
Penguin Books (July 3, 2018)

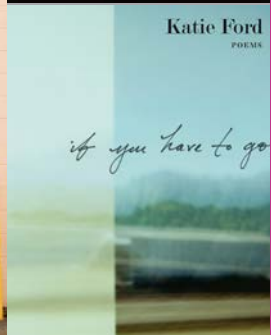
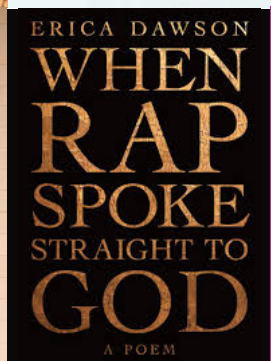
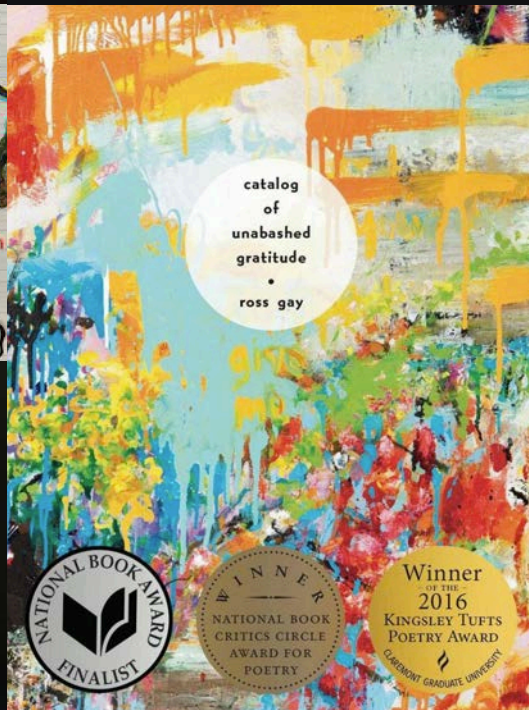
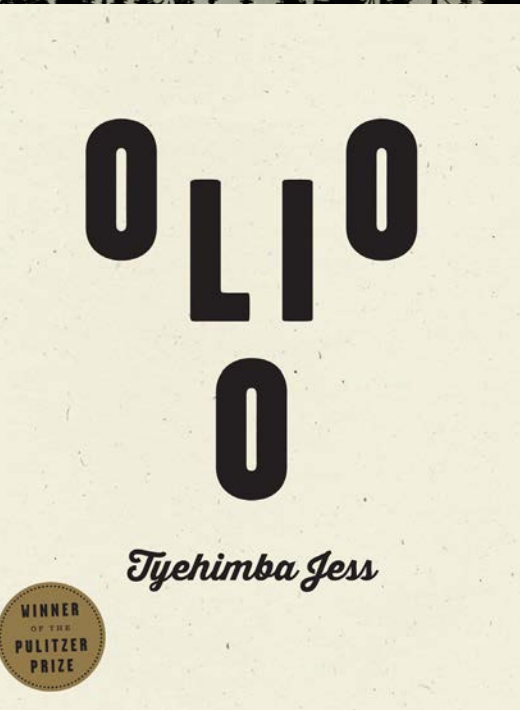
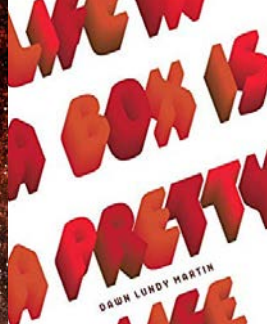
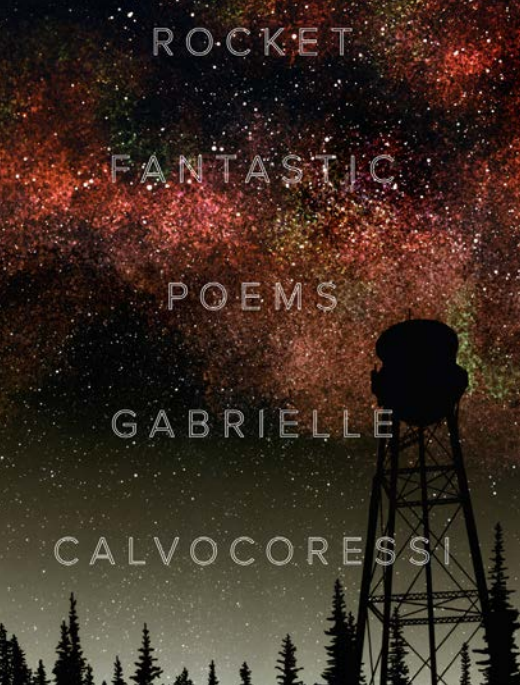
“Waldman presents a
complicated panorama
of places and events ...
in these accomplished,
intertwined pieces.”

—*The Washington Post*

The Bennington Bookshelf includes work that has been published within the calendar year and that has been reviewed by national publications. To submit a book to Bookshelf, email magazine@bennington.edu with your name, class year or affiliation to the College, title of your book, and a link to a national review. You may also mail the books directly to the attention of Briece Della Rocca:

Bennington College
One College Drive
Bennington, Vermont 05201







A generous gift to endow Poetry at Bennington extends the College's literary legacy

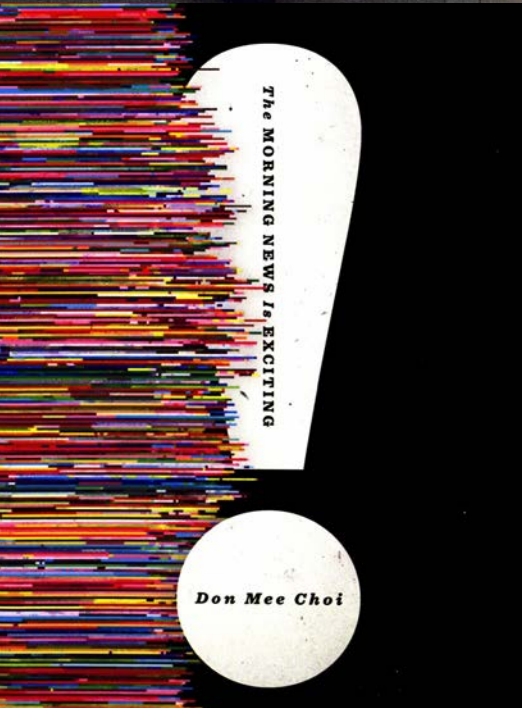
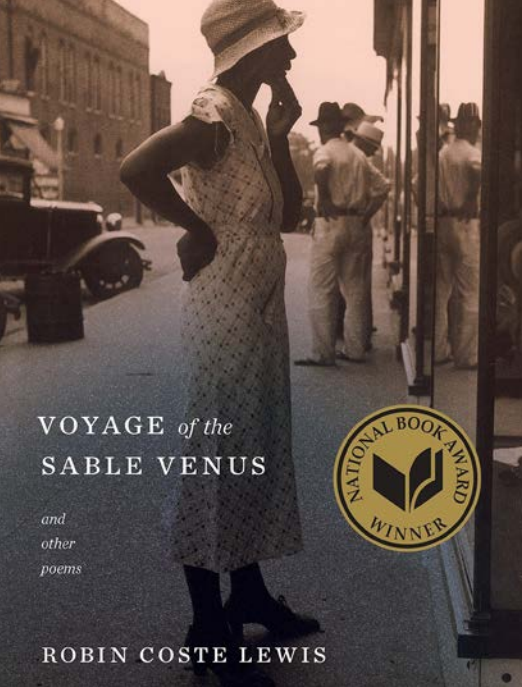
poetry at bennington: expanding the college's literary network

Bennington has, in its 86-year history, been a place for continuous experimentation and creation in the world of arts and letters. In the 1930s, Bennington was where modern dance was born. In the 1940s, Bennington was a laboratory for radical new ideas in the social sciences. In the 1950s and 1960s, the campus was one of the centers for the New American art movement. And from its very first days, Bennington has been a home to some of our nation's most compelling and renowned poets and writers.

It is this literary legacy that drew **Henry Dale Smith, Jr.** and **Deborah Klang Smith**, parents of a 2005 graduate, to make a gift seven years ago to establish a new program called **Poetry at Bennington**. This program has enabled the College to bring new and established poets to campus and deepen Bennington's reputation in the world of letters. In December, the Smiths made another significant gift to fully endow the program. "The Smiths' incredible generosity in first creating—and now endowing—Poetry at Bennington allows us to build on both Bennington's extraordinary literary tradition and its distinctive pedagogy, centered on the relationship between reading and writing," said **Isabel Roche**, provost and dean of the College.

The Smiths were inspired to give, naturally, by poetry. Specifically, the last stanza of a poem by Wisława Szymborska, "Some People Like Poetry,":

"Poetry—
but what is poetry anyway?
More than one rickety answer
has tumbled since that question first was raised.
But I just keep on not knowing, and I cling to that
like a redemptive handrail."



**THE
PERFORMANCE
OF BECOMING
HUMAN
DANIEL
BORZUTZKY**



Said the Smiths: “Wisława Szymborska expresses so well the feeling that led us to make the gift to endow Poetry at Bennington. At Bennington there is recognition and appreciation of the power of ‘not knowing’ to spur continued exploration. We believe firmly that the world needs more Bennington—and we are delighted to make this gift to ensure that generations of students have the opportunity to explore in this way.”

Since 2012, the program has brought more than 65 poets to campus. The guest list is expansive and impressive, drawing to it poet laureates, National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize winners, as well as MacArthur Foundation “Genius Award” fellows. Poets come to campus to participate in a series of intimate, multi-day residencies that have them working closely with students—and many leave with connections to students that live long beyond the visit.

The operative and key phrase, says Director of Poetry at Bennington **Michael Dumanis**, is *working closely*. “The one-on-one meetings and public Q&A sessions humanize our visiting writers, because students can ask them anything,” said Dumanis. “We want our students to imagine what is possible and that includes how they can have an active writing practice.”

These close encounters include meals with poets, many of whom, such as former State Poet Laureate Marie Howe, are known equal parts for their work and the mystique of their internal lives. Understanding this is a felt experience, one that students more deeply grasp with each meeting. One student describes such an encounter for the *Literary Bennington* blog, following her lunch with Howe.

“Later, Howe speaks openly about the sources for her poems, and, perhaps unsurprisingly, she tells us

that she borrows heavily from her own life—a scene with her niece in a Wegman’s parking lot, or her own issues with a plumber. This is the substance that our lives are made of, so why shouldn’t a poem be cut from the same cloth? She disperses bits of advice for the poets in the audience, all still eating their sandwiches.”

The vision for the program initially began with former Poetry at Bennington director, poet, and now Director of the Master of Fine Arts in Writing program, **Mark Wunderlich**. He hoped to use the initial four-year commitment made by the Smiths in 2012 to develop an incubator for new literary talent. Wunderlich aimed to

and what it could be. To get to that place though, readings by prominent poets would not be enough. Students and poets would need to be more closely connected, more profoundly in the conversation than out of it. And that structure has given way to what has become more akin to mentorships. For many students, this contact lives beyond campus. The visiting poets not only maintain contact and have advised students about where to try publishing their work and encouraged them to apply to highly selective graduate programs. Ever since the program began, the number of students applying and gaining entrance into

“At Bennington there is recognition and appreciation of the power of ‘not knowing’ to spur continued exploration. We believe firmly that the world needs more Bennington—and we are delighted to make this gift to ensure that generations of students have the opportunity to explore in this way.”

make this incubator one that would have as its foundation the fact that poetry is not just a craft, but also a career. So while the conversations, readings, and mini-residencies focus a great deal on the text, they are balanced with a view of what the working life of the page looks like

the country’s most selective poetry graduate programs has notably increased. And the impact is evident. Recent literature graduates have gone on to master’s programs at NYU, Brown, Cornell, Warren Wilson—five alone to the University of Iowa Writers’ Workshop. Alumni

are publishing books of poetry as well as being included in journals from *Boston Review* to the *Denver Quarterly*.

Individual successes abound. Two recent graduates have already gone on to teach poetry—one at Columbia and another at School of the Arts in Philadelphia. One had their poetry featured on NPR. Recent graduates have also won public recognition, from serving as the 2018–19 Margins Fellow of the Asian American Writers Workshop to receiving the 2017 Aliko Perroti and Seth Frank Most Promising Young Poet Award.

While the student and alumni successes speak volumes about the program's power, Dumanis is often struck by stories of visiting poets' generosity and willingness to continue mentoring students. "Writing poetry is a lonely practice—you do it alone in your off hours and it is deeply personal. There is a community that forms through these visits," he says.

Because of the intimacy of the program and the urgency in cultivating the most transformative, illuminating experience possible, Dumanis does not invite poets based on their professional stature alone. Instead he looks to bring poets who have written on the themes and issues in the culture; poets who are likely to give new voice or urgency to conversations of our time.

"During the selection process I ask myself, 'who would excite students? Who would shift the paradigm?'" Dumanis reports. "We want writers who write in multi-genres. We want writers who have won accolades and those who have published books without a lot of national attention." Drawing from all sectors of poetry to purposefully create a transformative experience for both the poet and the students has also benefited literature at Bennington broadly. In fact, Poetry at Bennington guests—

Alex Dimitrov, Dorothea Lasky, and Monica Youn—have also come to teach at Bennington for a whole term.

National Book Award for Poetry finalist Monica Youn was one of the early Poetry at Bennington visiting poets to be invited to teach as a visiting faculty member in 2013. Youn, who now teaches at Princeton, still returns to campus for readings. For her, it's about the quality of Bennington's program and the willingness of its students to give themselves to their work in undistracted ways.

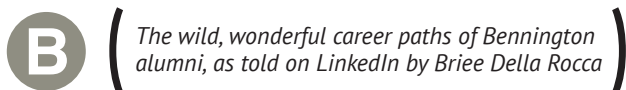
The dedication to studying poetry seriously, coupled with deep work with underrepresented poets and voices, exposes students to a multitude of voices and styles. This, in turn, has made studying poetry at Bennington a highly desirable subject for students from underrepresented backgrounds. A large number of students taking poetry classes are now students of color, students from immigrant backgrounds, and international students.

Because the College is more diverse now than ever before, Dumanis believes the changing campus dynamics inspire an even greater need to recruit unique literary voices. "We aim to bring a culturally varied range of voices," said Dumanis. "Our program is interested in bringing a real cross section of writers that showcase aesthetic breadth."

Dumanis is proud of the work Poetry at Bennington has done to advance literature both on campus and across the region and its history of inclusion. In the future, he visualizes the series incorporating poets from different corners of the globe and more writers who translate. "It feels like the Golden Age of poetry," said Dumanis. "I am interested in making this series feel more global." **B**

A Sampling of Guest Poets 2012-18

KAVEH AKBAR
RAE ARMANTROUT
MARY JO BANG
DANIEL BORZUTZKY
LUCIE BROCK-BROIDO
GABRIELLE CALVOCORESSI
DON MEE CHOI
CYNTHIA CRUZ
MARK DOTY
RACHEL GALVIN
ROSS GAY
JORIE GRAHAM
TERRANCE HAYES
MARIE HOWE
DOROTHEA LASKY
ROBIN COSTE LEWIS
DAWN LUNDY MARTIN
SHANE MCCRAE
CATHY PARK HONG
CLAUDIA RANKINE
MARY RUEFLE
EVIE SHOCKLEY
CHARLES SIMIC
SANDRA SIMONDS
MARK STRAND
NATASHA TRETHEWEY
MAI DER VANG
C.D. WRIGHT
MONICA YOUN
KEVIN YOUNG



You can't major **in** that.

Many years ago I interviewed a candidate for an alumni relations position at the College. I asked them how they would describe Bennington alumni. Without hesitation they said Bennington alumni are “the interested and interesting.” They were right. One need look no further than the member list on Bennington’s LinkedIn Alumni group to confirm that exact assessment. From the cool and quirky to the full-on visionary to completely out-of-the-box paths, alums are designing fascinating careers in all industries. In the great and growing menagerie of directions one can take after Bennington, here are just some of the courses that alumni have charted. For a fuller, richer view, join the College’s alumni group on LinkedIn and check out the member list.

INSIYAH MOHAMMAD BERGERON '12

TITLE: Holyoke Innovation District Manager/
Transformative Development Initiative Fellow

WHAT SHE DOES: Bergeron works with local residents, businesses, community organizations, as well as regional and state institutions on economic development projects in downtown Holyoke to spur and support innovation, entrepreneurship, and equity. She has worked on several projects, including helping to design and pilot a hydroponic food-production training program in downtown Holyoke on a previously vacant site, in partnership with Holyoke Community College, the City of Holyoke, Nuestras Raices, and MassDevelopment.

CHRISTOPHER BISHOP '72

TITLE: Chief Reinvention Officer

WHAT HE DOES: Bishop starts his LinkedIn summary the same way he begins his talks—with a series of jobs most people haven’t yet heard of, but soon will: nanopharmacist, lunar tour guide, virtual lawyer, robotic ethics consultant. A perennial reinventor and career hybridist, his degree in German Literature has led him to multiple, unrelated careers—from a touring rock musician to social media executive at IBM. He brings his insights about the future of work and invention to the borderless workplace as a speaker, writer, and consultant.

MIKE RUGNETTA '06

TITLE: Host of PBS’s Idea Channel

WHAT HE DOES: Rugnetta was host of the PBS web series *Idea Channel*, which last aired in 2017. There he reinvented the critical essay for the web and explored the idea that technology holds the power to make us happier. His videos tackle questions such as, “Does playing Dungeons and Dragons make you a more successful person?” and “What are the similarities between Santa Claus and professional wrestling?” He is currently producing a podcast called Reasonably Sound, hosting for *Crash Course*—a popular YouTube series by the Green brothers, as well as other digital production work including work on a video series for Atlas Obscura, the travel company / publication led by **Dylan Thuras '04**. Rugnetta recently completed a Kickstarter Creator in Residence this summer and was a launch artist on their new crowdfunding platform *drip*.

KATIE JACKSON '08

TITLE: Tiny House Business and Community Development Specialist

WHAT SHE DOES: Jackson champions tiny house legalization and promotes the DIY movement as the northeast regional director of the American Tiny House Association. Working with B&B Tiny Housing, Jackson helps bring modern tiny homes to market. She is also the author of *Hand-Built Furniture: 20 Step-by-Step Projects Anyone Can Build*.

BLAINE GRABOYES '95

TITLE: Co-Founder and CEO

WHAT HE DOES: Graboyes is co-founder and CEO of GameCo, inventor of the Video Game Gambling Machine (VGM™) and creator of the category of The New Casino. He was the co-founder and CEO of The Gamer Agency—a premiere independent e-sports production company. Graboyes's work combines creativity, technology, and business to explore new areas of entertainment.

ERICA HERMAN '91

TITLE: SVP, Director of Brand Planning at Cramer-Krasselt

WHAT SHE DOES: Herman is a strategist solving unruly problems. In her current role she leads brand planning at C-K NY, drawing on the shop's rich strategy practice of data and the qualitative human insight that strategists have drawn on for years. Prior to this work she helped shape a collaboration between Cornell University and Ronald McDonald House New York to explore the nexus of health and hospitality. Herman is credited with helping to launch WNYC's "On the Media"; helping establish NGO Doctors of the World USA during the Ebola outbreak; and strategically reshaping a business question (How does Tampax attract a new generation of girls?) into data-driven, globally adaptable how-to videos for girls who don't yet know their own bodies.

ALLISON SCHERMERHORN '97

TITLE: Showrunner | Post Showrunner | Content Creator

WHAT SHE DOES: Working with Stage 13/ Warner Brothers Digital Network, AT&T/DIRECTV, Animal Planet, CBS, TLC, VH1, Lifetime, MTV, the CW, A&E, Oxygen, e!, NBC, ABC Family (now Freeform), and many other networks, Emmy-nominated Schermerhorn produces, directs, and oversees the edits of unscripted television series and documentaries. Specializing in first season shows, she establishes the tone and look of series, taking them from pre-production to online/mix and final delivery.

JEFF WILLIAMS '91

TITLE: Chief Strategy Officer

WHAT HE DOES: Williams calls the work he is doing "making the Internet a cleaner place." By providing data driven, anti-crime, specialized operational support services, Williams helps software and technology companies understand how their products are used by employing cyber forensics, advanced analytics, big data management and exploration, and investigations.

MICHELLE HOGLE ACCIAVATTI '05

TITLE: Founder and End of Life Specialist at Ending Well / Co-Founder of Green Burial Vermont

WHAT SHE DOES: At times Acciavatti has called herself an end-of-life specialist, which sums the difficult-to-describe work that encompasses improving end-of-life care and planning. Acciavatti works with the dying, as well as the living on advanced care planning, hospice outreach and education, and advocates for patient and family rights, meaningful after death rituals, as well as for home funerals and green burials. Acciavatti is a subject matter expert in two end-of-life doula training programs, including the UVM program—the first medical school to affiliate itself with end-of-life doula training.

SANDY CURTH '16

TITLE: Researcher, Designer, Emerging Objects Fabricator

WHAT HE DOES: Working at The Long Now Foundation, Curth assembles components of the 10,000 Year Clock. He designs and builds the clock's test assembly components and control systems. As a researcher for Ron Rael of Emerging Objects, Curth works on large-scale 3D printing techniques using a wide range of materials. In the 2017 issue of *Bennington*, Curth explained how large-scale, 3D printing might be a way to develop promising space elevator designs. Curth is also pursuing his Masters of Architecture at UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design.

*The Bennington professional network is extensive and well represented on LinkedIn. Be sure to add Bennington College to your profile before requesting to join the LinkedIn Alumni Group. We look forward to seeing you there. **B***

THE DANGEROUS RISE OF ONLINE NETWORKS

Devin Gaffney '10 is an affiliate at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard and has degrees in Network Science and the Social Science of the Internet. He is a data engineer in Boston. His expertise has been featured on WBUR, in The Atlantic, and at conferences throughout the country. You can read more about his study of networks by visiting devingaffney.com.

The mantra during the early days of social media was that the technology would completely upend the relationship between the governed and their governments. During the Iran election protests of 2009, so implicit was the notion that social media was an unambiguous multiplier of civic engagement that the U.S. Department of State sent a request to Twitter that they postpone server maintenance so that dissidents could continue to use the platform to challenge the regime. Although their effect was greatly exaggerated, the Iran election protests solidified this almost universally accepted notion of social media as a civic good. Then the Arab Spring effectively solidified the sense that social media was a civic good. In light of such events, “connecting the world” and “fostering conversations” became the general ideology sold by Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram during their explosive growth.

Collectively the platforms grew to billions of users partly on the basis of the ideology of civic good. From the heady early days of social media through the explosive growth phase, these platforms enjoyed a position in our shared cultural imagination as transformative, intoxicating systems that could topple regimes, reorient communication pathways, and collapse social and geographic distance.

This sense of its possibility was also balanced against the “bad” side of social media networks. Trolling—or the deliberate provocation by Internet users against others—has existed as long as the Internet. 4chan’s user network has long been infamous for their harassment. Before 4chan, Bulletin Board and message board users were known to do the same thing, and before that, angry listserv users were similarly guilty. These maladaptive online behaviors have never gone away.

In this era of mega platforms, however, a new spectrum of maladaptive behaviors have cropped up. Distinct from trolling, phenomena such as fake news, platform toxicity, and internet outrage are generally characterized less by their individual delinquent enactors and more as a problem of the collective

effervescent energy of the system. A recurring common denominator in instances of these phenomena suggest that the excessive growth and social connectedness of the last decade is a necessary condition for these issues to exist in the first place.

An online platform in which you are the sole user is useless. With the growth of behavioral analysis and artificial intelligence baked in as platform features, these social systems have become increasingly capable of accruing new users. Added to the mix are features that maximize their utility from existing users by raising the exit costs. Dialing up the head count and social connectivity as much as possible increases the total screen time, and thus, advertising time.

By designing and pushing for such maximizations, platforms have foisted onto society the external costs of this excessive growth and connectedness. As platforms have grown to nation-state proportions, the value of hijacking them has grown accordingly. With densely connected platforms, the natural ability of social friction to moderate diverse ideologies has collapsed. As the platforms have expanded, they have brought with them conditions ripe for abuse.

“Fake news,” or really bad-faith content advertising, is the most clear growth-oriented issue. When the entire population of the United States is on the platform, even the marginal chance of hijacking the attention space is a worthy prize. Hijacking is exponentially more effective with automated microtargeting campaigns, and the ability to prevent bad-faith actors is hindered when platforms are economically incentivized to look away while the actors themselves are incentivized to take extreme measures at hiding their true aims. The type of bad-faith behavior engaged in by Cambridge Analytica is probably the single most visible exemplar of politically motivated hijacking, but the story of Macedonian teens generating fake news for purely monetary gain in the aftermath of the election applies just as well.

Somewhere between an issue of growth and connectedness is the issue of increasing online

TOO LITTLE CONNECTIVITY AND TOO MUCH CONNECTIVITY RESULT IN SUBOPTIMAL OUTCOMES—FINDING THE RIGHT MIX OF INDEPENDENCE AND CONNECTEDNESS IS KEY.

toxicity and radicalization. Particularly, since the 2014 Gamergate campaign—a coordinated, targeted harassment campaign against women in the videogames industry—it has become relatively commonplace to observe large-scale toxic communities. While radicalization efforts and toxic communities have always existed online, Data & Society’s widely lauded “Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online” report makes clear that many such intersectional movements are in a growth phase. Although the specific nature of their orientation may differ from community to community, it’s now relatively commonplace to find large subcultures within platforms that are centered on racist, misogynistic, and anti-Semitic sentiments and the maintenance and growth of those sentiments. To their credit, platforms have begun to more substantially moderate these communities.

As online networks have grown, the probability for a quorum of like-minded individuals to be already present on a platform has also grown—larger platforms afford larger chances that there’s a community for every interest. Because online networks have reduced points of social friction, the ability to get “connected” to these communities has also rapidly increased. Paired with recommendation systems that anticipate the next likely points of valuable social engagement, researchers such as Becca Lewis have accurately identified the emergence of complex and thorough radicalization pipelines on

platforms such as YouTube. In short, the vast scale of online platforms ensures that large toxic communities can be established and actively maintained within platforms with impunity. The degree to which platforms have optimized for connectedness in turn, ensures that these communities continue to thrive.

Internet outrage is a phenomenon that can mostly be blamed on the extreme connectedness of platforms. Helen Nissenbaum’s research on contextualized privacy made an important point about how individuals may perceive their speech acts online: when offline, we moderate our behavior according to our environment, and account for our context when determining the potential appropriateness of behavior.

With online comments, these latent environmental cues are not present, and thus, individuals may “read” their context incorrectly. Further, as distinct from offline behavior, our online behavior is recorded permanently in the space we inhabited rather than experienced as an ephemerally locked event. As a result, the ability for our words to be taken out of the “imagined” initial context of the author has always existed when talking online.

In an era of global social systems such as Twitter, where the social distance and friction of engagement between two complete strangers is equal to that of kin, the problem of context collapse has become a chronic point of abuse—on any given day it is relatively easy to find one person’s words re-contextualized for a new audience to become enraged over. While in some cases this outrage may be genuinely warranted, the daily cycle of collective shaming around decontextualized comments has become a core feature of Twitter’s culture and is a clear sign of dysfunction.

These three types of behaviors—fake news, radicalization, outrage—are not some set of binary switches that suddenly flipped on in 2014, 2015, or 2016. Instead, as the networks have grown, the incentives for abuse have grown as well. As platforms have optimized for connectedness, they have negligently optimized for the growth of mob-like communities connecting around noxious yet identity-defining goals. As platforms have become overly dense through “People you may know”

features, they have tied people together who may have been better off being mediated through social distance. Combined, we have unwittingly fumbled into a society where the dominant mode of information exchange is prone to misfires of an advertising system that threatens the maintenance of civic life.

In the early days, when online networks were an unambiguous good, it made intuitive sense to extract more civic good out of the platforms by growing our networks online and creating as many opportunities for conversations between people as possible. In the abstract, this platitudinal approach to civic life seems obvious. But bigger is not always better. Research from an old advisor, David Lazer, helps to illustrate why.

In David Lazer and Allen Friedman's 2007 work on networked cooperation, they sought to understand the effect of communication pathways on team effectiveness. In one extreme, team members could work in complete isolation to solve a complex task. In the other extreme, the complex task could be solved by committee, where all individuals are in constant interaction. In the isolated extreme, a high diversity of solutions can be found, but all of them suffer from a lack of being able to brainstorm and workshop their ideas. In the other extreme, groupthink and the myriad latent social pressures may stifle novel approaches. Their research pointed to an argument for a middle ground. In their study, they state that "an inefficient network maintains diversity in the system and is thus better for exploration than an efficient network, supporting a more thorough search for solutions in the long run." In other words, too little connectivity *and* too much connectivity result in suboptimal outcomes—finding the right mix of independence and connectedness is key.

Before the 2009 Iran election protests, it was easy to argue that previously isolated individuals, harnessing their collective energy through social media would be able to achieve more than they would on their own. In our contemporary environment, we've gone to the opposite extreme, where the systems have grown to a point where the incentives for abuse are ever present, and the social maze has become so interwoven as to be more stifling than liberating. As for next steps? Platforms, if they were ever in any realistic position to solve these problems, clearly won't slow down their drive for growth and connectedness until it proves to be even more of an existential threat than it already is. In light of that, maybe we are better served by potentially doing our part ourselves and clicking "unfriend," and knowing when to take a breather. **B**

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B (The College launches a dynamic new program to enrich and expand art on campus—and access to a Bennington education)

ART FOR ACCESS



HELEN FRANKENTHALER (1928–2011); *Red Square*; signed “Frankenthaler” (lower right); oil and crayon on sized, primed canvas; 88 x 126¼-inch., 1959



In 1946, a young **Helen Frankenthaler '49** came to Bennington. During the next several years, she found guidance from faculty member **Paul Feeley** and others and an inspiration that helped fuel her work long after her time on campus. Now, thanks in part to Frankenthaler's legacy in the arts and a newly launched program called Art for Access, more students will be given the opportunity to find inspiration at Bennington.

Art for Access is a philanthropic initiative with two aims. First, the program seeks to further develop and expand the works of art in the College's teaching holdings, ensuring that the art for study and enrichment at Bennington will be regularly refreshed over time. And second, through the sale of selected works at regular intervals, the program is designed to provide scholarship funds for students who otherwise would not be able to afford a Bennington education. Art for Access aims to engage Bennington's remarkable network of collectors, artists, alumni, parents, and friends for the benefit of students both present and future.

"Since the College's beginning, gifts of art have enriched the campus and the broader Bennington community both in the classroom and in the lived experience," said **Paige Bartels**, senior vice president for Strategic Partnerships, who oversees this new initiative. "We are now using these gifts to also advance the College's commitment to access, equity, and diversity."

Increasing access to Bennington was the principal goal for the College in establishing the program. "One of the most important



DIEGO RIVERA (1886–1957); *Communards (Comuna de Paris)*

things about this program is not just creating access to educational opportunity for our students, but also creating access to networks,” Bartels said. Bennington looked to the examples of individual collectors who have sold their art to significantly advance other causes—to Agnes Gund, for example, who sold Roy Lichtenstein’s *Masterpiece* to launch Art for Justice last year. Bennington’s long legacy and commitment to the visual arts make it uniquely positioned as an institution to fundraise in this way. Art for Access acknowledges and celebrates that legacy.

“There are many ways to think about art and the value it brings to the world,” President **Mariko Silver** said. “One powerful way is by using art to support goals, principles, and values that relate to the arts, or that uphold the principles and aims of the collectors—or institutions—themselves.” Five paintings from the College’s holdings—all contributed without restriction years ago—were selected to launch the program and were sold this past fall with Christie’s. The works were *Red Square* by Helen Frankenthaler, *Communards* by Diego Rivera, *La Moisson* by Julien Dupré, *Arondite* by Norman Bluhm, and *Untitled* by Georges Mathieu. The launch was a success: through these sales, the College raised more than \$3.1 million for Art for Access scholarships. “Very few colleges

could undertake such an effort as this, and it is a testament to Bennington’s history of bringing extraordinary art to the world,” said President Silver.

The most notable among the works sold is Helen Frankenthaler’s *Red Square*, a large-scale, 88 x 126¼-inch painting from 1959. She included it in her first retrospective at the Jewish Museum in New York in 1960 and later that year donated it to the College, where until recently it hung in the President’s Office. By all accounts, Frankenthaler’s time at Bennington had an enormous impact on her work. A longtime supporter of the College and former trustee, she made investments in scholarships and the visual arts program through gifts of art and donations; that support continues through the College’s current relationship with the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation. Her giving began almost immediately after graduating, when Frankenthaler organized the exhibition “Bennington College Alumnae Paintings” at the Jacques Seligmann Gallery in Manhattan. “It’s well known that Helen’s career had its beginning at Bennington,” said **Michael Hecht**, who is on the board of the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation and is also a trustee of Bennington College. “Throughout her life

“Very few colleges could undertake such an effort as this, and it is a testament to Bennington’s history of bringing extraordinary art to the world.”

she spoke about Bennington and how important an influence it was on her.” Frankenthaler exemplifies a tradition of alumni artists giving back to current students—paying forward the creative dividend across generations.

An Art for Access Committee of alumni, parents, friends, and faculty members from all backgrounds—artists, collectors,



JULIEN DUPRÉ (1851–1910); *La moisson*; signed and dated “Julien Dupré. 1887”; oil on canvas; 21 x 25 in., 1887

curators, and auction house veterans—will guide the program and seek gifts of art. The committee is co-chaired by two trustees, **Michael Hecht** and **Mary Bucksbaum Scanlan '91** (see sidebar for full committee). The effort is already attracting new gifts of art to the College from donors who are inspired by the dual mission of the effort.

New works, as with other art in the College holdings, will be placed on view throughout campus—in offices and public spaces, as well as in rotating exhibitions—and, of course, used for teaching. The artwork on view will be changing and dynamic, in keeping with the Bennington tradition. When Helen Frankenthaler donated *Red Square* to Bennington in 1960, she intended for it to one day be sold for financial gain. To see that come to fruition, and to see Bennington drawing on its ever-expanding and vibrant network, is something that Frankenthaler would endorse. “I believe Helen would be very much in favor of Art for Access,” Hecht said. “Helen was devoted to education, and students were very important to her. I know that she would be delighted that *Red Square* was going out into the world to launch this effort.” **B**

ART FOR ACCESS COMMITTEE 2018–2019

Michael Hecht (co-chair)
Mary Bucksbaum Scanlan '91 (co-chair)
Josh Blackwell '95
Mark Coleman P '18
Jeanne Collins Elderfield
Barbara Ushkow Deane '51
Liz Deschenes
Andrea Fiuczynski '85
Anna Gaskell '92
Harold Koda
Lise Motherwell '77
Will Ransom '04
Ellen Safir '66
Lincoln Schatz '86
Andy Spence

THE VAST AND GROWING CAPA NETWORK

Since opening in 2013, ushering in a fully interdisciplinary approach to preparing students for effective public action, the Elizabeth Coleman Center for the Advancement of Public Action has not only expanded the scope of study for Bennington students, but it has significantly extended the College's institutional reach and partner networks.

Led by director **Susan Sgorbati**, CAPA has evolved and is now organized by a series of initiatives that frequently engage with federal, state, and local agencies, as well as with nonprofits and citizen organizations. More recently, CAPA has grown its scope to develop several institutional partnerships that address international issues. This year, CAPA, in partnership with UVM, has developed the Transboundary Water In-cooperation Network (TWIN)—a network of grassroots organizations, academic and scientific institutions, and individuals sharing a vision of clean water for all. TWIN works to improve border relations, water use practices, water quality, ecosystem services, and public health on both sides of the border and to build resilience to climate change. Partnering with Bard, Vassar, and Sarah Lawrence College, CAPA is an integral lead partner in the Consortium on Forced Migration and Displacement Education (reported in detail on page 28). The program has additionally engaged in partnerships with the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, the Institute for Environmental Diplomacy and Security at UVM, and the Center for Peacebuilding in Bosnia. These initiatives are often born out of small projects that respond to new challenges identified by students, faculty, and a rotating group of CAPA constituents (from local towns to alumni to staff and concerned citizens).

Most CAPA initiatives began as field-tested proving grounds that have blossomed into more expansive projects or partnerships—a model that flips the traditional partnership paths at institutions. Rather than guiding students into established focuses, CAPA has left plenty of room for faculty and student work to guide institutional collaborations. These, in turn, open a rich and varied network. What follows are just some of the connections that have come as a result.



activating democracy

CAPA's **Legislative Internship Program** provides internship opportunities for Bennington College students with the Vermont legislature. Plans are underway to extend this program to legislatures in other states across the country and to place students in government agencies internationally.



art in the public realm



The U.S. Department of State's **Art in Embassies** program partnered with a CAPA class to design a large-scale outdoor sculpture, surrounding plantings, and a selection of visual complexity graphics for the new U.S. Embassy in Oslo, Norway.

environment and public action

Through the CAPA Food Clinic—a monthly gathering of community members focused on food access and resources in our community—the **Harvest for Kids** project was created to provide food to underserved children in Bennington.

CAPA students and a hydropower expert crafted a feasibility study for the **Paran Creek Watershed Project**. The students presented their study and long-term watershed management plan to the village, which voted to pursue this project.

human rights and peace-building

The **Prison Education Initiative** brings Bennington College faculty members and courses to Great Meadow Correctional Facility in Comstock, New York. In its first three years, faculty members have taught 16 courses in the humanities to more than 30 inmates. This past fall, the National Science Foundation granted Bennington, Bard, and other partner institutions a major grant to support computer science prison education.



Bringing together the leading scholars and agents of prison reform today, **Incarceration in America** conferences have helped initiate long-overdue changes to the prison system in America. Partners include JustLeadershipUSA, the Brooklyn Community Bail Fund, and others.

Bennington Translates has created a unique forum exploring the literary, humanitarian, medical, and legal work of translation today; to date, CAPA has hosted 17 leading practitioners on campus.



progressive education



Bennington College students work with middle and high school students through the Personal Learning Plan Mentoring Program to engage with the implementation of **Vermont Act 77**.

CAPA Legislative Convenings brings together legislators on both sides of the aisle and community activists to carve out a space for dialogue and common ground on important issues. The most recent issues: clean water in Vermont and civic education.

CAPA has held a series of **Public Policy Forums** that invites guest speakers from the public and private sectors to address a range of important topics in the current national dialogue. Topics have included clean water, immigration, foreign relations, and the media.

Future Studio engages business as a creative space for design and social purpose. The collaborative design of new products and training in creative entrepreneurship takes place in the classroom and in locations around the world. See *Bennington's* winter 2015 Curricular Innovation issue for more information.

In conversation with regional food issues, a CAPA/ Visual Arts course joins with members of the Bennington community to make hundreds of ceramic bowls for the **Bennington Empty Bowls Soup Supper**.

With support from the National Science Foundation, **Understanding PFOA** trains students and local residents in the environmental science of the emergent water contaminant PFOA and equips science classrooms to produce independent data on PFOA.

CAPA students created the **Bennington Seed Library**, a public seed-sharing program that seeks to empower community members through education and promotion of local food sovereignty.

Working with the EPA and regional partners, CAPA students in the North Bennington **LED Project** researched, planned, and ultimately convinced the village to switch streetlights in North Bennington to LEDs, reducing energy usage and cost by one-third.

GANAS, a student-led, CAPA-sponsored initiative, works to improve the wellbeing of an often-overlooked demographic of our region: migrant labor. Through volunteer work and collegiate partnerships, GANAS is forging a new model of engagement with the Bennington community.



The student-led **Bennington College Incarceration Taskforce (BCIT)** compiled the latest findings on incarceration reform, testified in the Vermont legislature on relevant bills, and initiated public discussions on the issue.

The **CAPA Leadership Institute**, a 10-day residency for young leaders from conflict zones around the world, provides skills in project management and conflict resolution, and seeks to build a global network of environmental leaders.



Experts from Afghanistan and Pakistan were brought together by CAPA and the Institute of Environmental Diplomacy and Security (IEDS) at the University of Vermont to discuss issues around the contested Kabul River Basin. This week long convening led to the establishment of the **Transboundary Water In-cooperation Network (TWIN)**, a network of networks that connects transboundary partners globally. For more on this visit transboundarywater.org.

Bennington College students piloted and lead **After-School Workshops** for students at Molly Stark Elementary School in Bennington.



Quantum Leap serves high school students through its designated classroom at Mount Anthony Union High School. Several Bennington College students work in the Quantum Leap classroom, including through a joint class called The Sababa Project offered each year between the high school and the College. **B**



Bennington announces a new graduate program that bridges public action and art

ESTABLISHING A NEW MASTERS OF PUBLIC ACTION PROGRAM

This past fall, Bennington established a new, two-year Master of Fine Arts in Public Action degree program. Directed by faculty member **Robert Ransick** in collaboration with Director for the Center for the Advancement of Public Action **Susan Sgorbati**, the program accepts two to three artists with significant professional accomplishments. The candidates work closely with faculty mentors and teach select undergraduate courses—a structure established with success by the College’s Master of Fine Arts in Dance program.

Artists and community activists **Aaron Landsman** and **Caroline Woolard** were the first candidates accepted to the program. Both are based in New York City, where they have developed creative work focusing on building community coalitions and pieces that address gentrification and affordable housing.

For Landsman that takes the form of a 20-year art and activism project titled *Perfect City*. He explains, “The project centers around a paid working group of young adults on the Lower East Side and our research and production on gentrification.” The group’s work spans many mediums, from publishing articles to hosting avoidance mapping workshops, to roundtable performances and research that deals with the rhetoric of street harassment. Together, he said, “We are evolving collective leadership and business models.” While at Bennington, Landsman will continue this two-decade-long project and will be working with advisor **Sherry Kramer** on a book titled *No One Is Qualified*—which stems from his participatory performance *City Council Meeting*—and will build an educational curriculum for secondary and college students about participation, democracy, and empathy.

Also based in New York City, Caroline Woolard’s most recent work has focused on crafting sustainable

and stable conditions for artists to develop work and roots in New York. This exploration began early in her career, Woolard explains in an Art21 feature. “In art school I would always be the one to ask the questions that no one wanted to ask: how do you survive as an artist living in NYC?”

What seems like a pragmatic question became a generative exploration that blossomed into this visual artist’s most recent project: the New York City Real Estate Investment Cooperative. Recognizing the need for affordable, cost-stable commercial space, Woolard organized a coalition of experts and artists to address the need by, as she puts it, “fighting money with money.” Together the group has raised more than \$1.5 million in invested pledges in an effort to make New York City a model for affordable commercial space.

For Woolard this is as much a cause as a canvas. “I’m an art school graduate who rejects the notion of constant movement,” she says. “Truly transformative work takes so much more time than a month-long show...to change yourself in the city, you have to commit to that city and find others who are committed as well.”

In addition to the New York City Real Estate Investment Cooperative, Woolard’s widely acclaimed and commissioned work includes sculptures that use online networks, hand-built objects, and immersive environments. While at Bennington, Woolard will continue this work by creating sculptural objects that honor practices of facilitation and conflict transformation in self-organized groups. These objects will be housed in facilitation object libraries at Moore College of Art and Design, where Woolard is the inaugural Walentas Fellow and at the Crossett Library.

During their study at Bennington, Landsman and Woolard will explore topics such as community

regeneration, civic participation, economic development, creative placemaking, public policy, environmental advocacy, and conflict resolution, among other areas where there is an urgent need for creative approaches to systemic challenges.

“We are excited to offer this new MFA in Public Action, which combines artistry and social justice into a uniquely rigorous graduate degree,” said Provost and Dean of the College **Isabel Roche**. “We are confident that our inaugural candidates will find their time at the College beneficial, as they teach current undergraduates, develop their own socially engaged work, study alongside faculty mentors, and ultimately find themselves challenged, and their skills deepened, from their participation.”

Reflecting the curricular pedagogy of the undergraduate program, courses of study will be largely self-directed by the candidates working closely with faculty mentors. The schedule for each term will primarily incorporate research and work in creative public action. Each candidate will meet for the Graduate Research Seminar in Public Action course, a weekly tutorial with faculty members to discuss and show the development of new material that will be at the foundation of their individual study.

“The MFA in Public Action is a unique program that supports highly accomplished artists in the further development of their creative work tackling systemic challenges facing our world at Bennington’s Center for the Advancement of Public Action,” Ransick explained.

MEET THE CANDIDATES



Aaron Landsman makes live performances and other events, which exist at the intersection of art and community organizing. His work includes site-specific productions in the kinds of places where people perform their lives: homes, offices, buses, and meeting rooms, as well as more traditionally staged works. His recent projects have been presented in New York at Abrons Art Center, The Chocolate Factory Theater, and HERE Art Center. From 2012–14 his participatory theatre work, *City Council Meeting*, created with Mallory Catlett and Jim Findlay, was presented in Houston, Tempe, New York, San Francisco, and Keene, NH. He is currently in year two of a 20-year art and activism project about gentrification called *Perfect City*, making a new theatrical

work about oligarchy and translation with collaborators in Serbia, Nigeria, and Brazil called *Language Reversal*, about translation and oligarchy, and developing a new piece called *Night Keeper*, which takes place mostly in the dark. Landsman is a 2017–18 Guggenheim Fellow in Theater, a former Arts Fellow, and current visiting associate professor at Princeton. His work has been funded by NPN, NEFA’s National Theater Project, MAP, and Jerome, among others. He co-created and teaches the Creative Capital Professional Development Program’s core weekend and daylong workshops. Landsman performed for many years with the award-winning ensemble Elevator Repair Service Theater and has appeared in the work of many choreographers, composers, and directors.



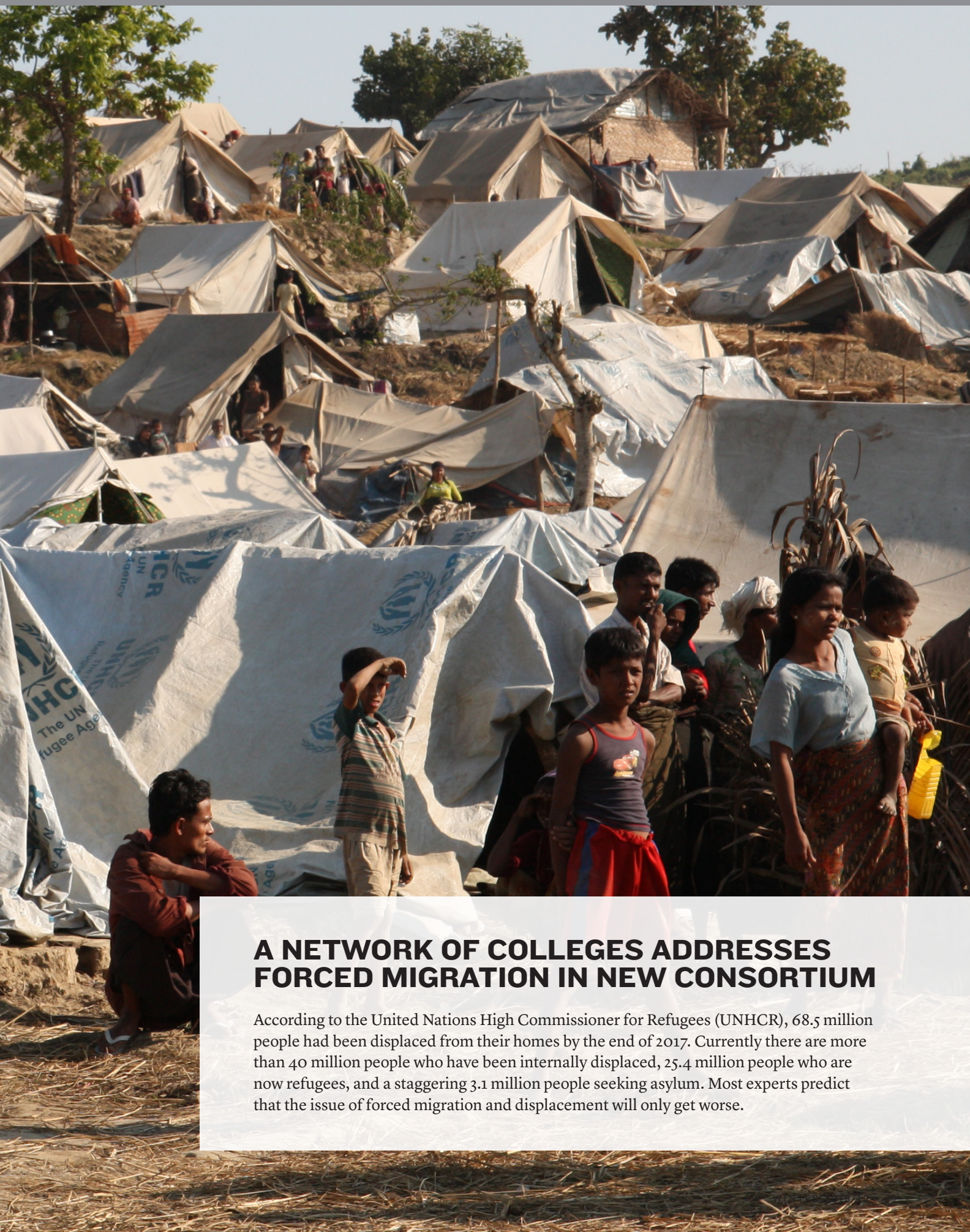
Caroline Woolard is a New York-based artist born in Rhode Island. Woolard creates sculptures using online networks, hand-built objects, and immersive environments. Her work has been commissioned by MoMA, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Creative Time, the Brooklyn Museum, Cornell University, and Cooper Union. Woolard’s work has been celebrated by the National Endowment for the Arts, where she delivered the 50th Anniversary keynote (2017) and in *New York Close Up*, the PBS / Art21 documentary series (2017). Solo exhibitions include *Imperial Forms*, LMAK gallery, New York, NY (2018) and *Carried on Both*

Sides, Lesley Heller Workspace, New York, NY (2018). Group exhibitions include *Crossing Brooklyn*, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY (2014) and *Living as Form*, Creative Time, New York, NY (2011).

Woolard’s work has been supported by residencies at NEWINC, New York, NY (2017); Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC) Workspace, New York, NY (2016); MoMA, New York, NY (2014); Queens Museum, Queens, NY, (2014); and Watermill, Water Mill, NY (2011) and through fellowships at Eyebeam, Brooklyn, NY (2013) and the MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, NH (2009). Woolard is an assistant professor of sculpture at the University of Hartford and a mentor in MFA Fine Arts at the School of Visual Arts. Recent scholarly writing on her work has been published in *The Brooklyn Rail* (2018); *Artforum* (2016); *Art in America* (2016); *The New York Times* (2016); and *South Atlantic Quarterly* (2015). Woolard’s work has been featured twice in PBS / Art21 for *New York Close Up* (2014, 2016). She holds a BFA from Cooper Union (sculpture, 2007) and is a recipient of the Rockefeller Cultural Innovation Fund (OurGoods, 2010–12), the Antipode Scholar-Activist Project Award (Community Economies Collective, 2016), and the Theo Westenberger Estate Fund (2015). Woolard has been named one of 11 Artists to Transform the Art World (2017), has been listed in the *WIRED* Smart List (2013), *ArtNet’s* Top 20 Female Artists (2015), and in the Top 100 Women for the Commons by the Peer to Peer Foundation (2014). **B**

B *Bennington, Bard, Sarah Lawrence, and Vassar form a new consortium to deliver the first liberal arts undergraduate study of forced migration and displacement. Reporting by Elisa Shoenberger*





A NETWORK OF COLLEGES ADDRESSES FORCED MIGRATION IN NEW CONSORTIUM

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 68.5 million people had been displaced from their homes by the end of 2017. Currently there are more than 40 million people who have been internally displaced, 25.4 million people who are now refugees, and a staggering 3.1 million people seeking asylum. Most experts predict that the issue of forced migration and displacement will only get worse.



In April 2018, faculty members, staff, and students from the Consortium on Forced Migration, Displacement and Education met in CAPA's Symposium continuing work to develop new, horizontal, more egalitarian models to address the refugee crisis.

Enter Bennington, Vassar, Bard, and Sarah Lawrence. Two years ago, the colleges formed the Consortium on Forced Migration, Displacement, and Education (CFMDE). Recognizing the power in bringing together a mindtrust of faculty members, staff, students, and alumni from not just one, but four colleges known for their interdisciplinary approach, the group looked to develop a consortium that would address the issue of forced migration absent silos and rhetoric.

"If we are going to solve the crises of forced migration and displacement today, it's going to take students, scholars, activists seriously engaging these issues through a range of interdisciplinary lenses," Bennington faculty member **John Hultgren** explained. "We've got to be putting economics into the conversation with politics, with environmental sciences...and the role that arts can play in promoting social change."

A comprehensive, interdisciplinary, liberal arts undergraduate study of forced migration and displacement was a need seen not only by Bennington, Bard, Sarah Lawrence, and Vassar College, but by major foundations that hoped to address similar issues.

In 2016, supporting the start of the Consortium's work, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation granted \$135,000 for planning to the group. This past fall, compelled by the planning, the Consortium was able to secure a significant \$2.5 million grant from the Mellon

Foundation. The \$2.5 million will go toward a four-year implementation plan.

Together, faculty members from all four colleges meet quarterly to discuss the work. At this early stage the focus is on academic and logistics planning. Soon the group will turn their attention to developing a single shared class, "Lexicon of Forced Migration." Students at any of the CFMDE institutions will be able to register for it in the spring.

In addition to the shared class, each of the colleges offers classes specific to their curriculum and tailored for their students on forced migration. In the last academic year alone, Bennington offered 14 classes on the issue, including International Human Rights Law, Geographies of U.S. Empire: Immigration, Race, and Citizenship, and Migration, Diaspora and Exile: New Voices in the Literature of Global Dislocation. And punctuating these classes are pop-up courses. This past fall a four-week pop-up course, Land of Immigrants, was co-taught by President **Mariko Silver**, CAPA Director **Susan Sgorbati**, **John Hultgren**, and **Eileen Scully**. The course was student-initiated in response to Trump's Separation Policy crisis, which separated migrant, asylum-seeking children from their families. The class brought in many speakers to understand the underlying issues of the crisis. At Bard, migration courses span the curriculum with courses such as Spaces of Exception: Migration, Asylum-Seeking, and Statelessness Today offered in

philosophy and political science, while courses such as *Sacrifice Zones: How Climate Disruption Can Lead to Forced Migration*, are offered in environmental science.

And while most students will spend a majority of their time learning on their home campus, a major benefit of the Consortium is that students can work with faculty members at other schools if they have a particular specialty that is absent at their institution. And that network of experts to study with is only growing. The Consortium has now partnered with the Council for European Studies at Columbia University to feature the work in their digital journal *EuropeNow*.

There are also study abroad opportunities. Students at the four schools can attend Bard's Berlin campus for either a semester or a year to study and learn about forced migrations. Sarah Lawrence is in the process of developing two different study abroad opportunities for students. The first would be a four-week study abroad with the working title *Migrant Ethnographies in the City* in Malaysia and another in Bern, Switzerland that would look at issues of mental health and forced migration. Both study abroad courses are to be launched in the summer of 2019 and will be available to all students. During these trips, students would be expected to conduct interviews and observations at local and international organizations, schools, and residential neighborhoods, among other places.

Assistant Professor of Sociology at Sarah Lawrence, Parthiban Muniandy explains, "Both the goals of the Consortium and the Mellon grant support new integrated projects and initiatives. While we have bigger signature projects, I think there is a lot of space for new developments, programs, and projects, organized by faculty and students. This will be an ongoing thing for the next four years."

And outside of course offerings, CFMDE has held several programs, including conferences where visiting refugee scholars spoke, and students and faculty members presented their research. Given the distance between consortium schools, the group has begun to livestream conversations and speakers. By streaming speakers all students at all of the colleges will be able to benefit from hearing guest scholars.

Community outreach is also an important part of the consortium's work. Students at several colleges are working with local, national, and even international groups. There have been workshops aimed at high school students and teachers, with hopes for developing curricula for high school classrooms.

At Bennington, GANAS has students working with local migrant communities in Bennington County. What started as a student-run tutorial has become a formal class taught by faculty member **Jonathan Pitcher**. And

"IF WE ARE GOING TO SOLVE THE CRISES OF FORCED MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT TODAY, IT'S GOING TO TAKE STUDENTS, SCHOLARS, ACTIVISTS SERIOUSLY ENGAGING THESE ISSUES THROUGH A RANGE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY LENSES."

—Bennington faculty member John Hultgren

naturally, at Bennington, students have also spent their Field Work Term working with organizations tackling the challenges of forced migration. Bennington's signature project, Bennington Translates, led by faculty member **Marguerite Feitlowitz**, now has a broader reach and stage in the CFMDE.

Hultgren emphasized that leveraging the voices of the displaced populations themselves is essential. "We can't study contemporary migrants solely as objects of analysis. We have to find ways to integrate the voices of displaced populations into our classes, and to connect with groups doing on-the-ground work."

For many of the faculty members working to address these issues on the campus, this work is a way of bringing ethics and scholarship together. As this new network of knowledge and understanding continues to unfold on each of the campuses, experts see it as a central and ethical urgency. Vassar's Professor Höhn puts it this way: "As colleges, we need to make an ethical statement and commitment to say that forced migration isn't something we can ignore. If we want our students to be ethical and democratic players in the world and in our country, they need that kind of knowledge." **B**


B

A solo exhibition by Torkwase Dyson features new paintings and drawings shown in Usdan Gallery





Scalar, a solo exhibition by **Torkwase Dyson**, features new paintings, drawings, and sculptures by the artist known for her use of abstraction and modes of inquiry from art, architecture, and geography to explore the production of form within contemporary economic and political climates. With works created in response to the Bennington context, Dyson takes inspiration from the geometric and mathematical formations of the late artist and architectural designer Tony Smith—an instructor at the College from 1958 to 1961. Dyson approaches her time at Bennington as an opportunity for deep reflection on the properties of scale, dimension, and geometry. Artworks on view in Usdan Gallery, including a 12-by-20-foot diptych painted on site, demonstrate the artist's ongoing development of a vocabulary of forms and gestures that speaks to the history of environmental and spatial politics leading to the Anthropocene era of global crisis.

Although working in multiple mediums, Torkwase Dyson describes herself as a painter who uses distilled geometric abstraction to create an idiosyncratic language both expressive and diagrammatic. Her work has been included in exhibitions in New York at the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Studio Museum in Harlem, Martos Gallery, Postmasters Gallery, and We Buy Gold, Brooklyn, as well as at the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, Philadelphia and the National Museum of African Art, Washington, DC. 

B

Funded by a Lumina Foundation grant, Bennington turns inward to study its work curriculum as seriously as its on-campus curriculum. What the College finds is helping to reveal the way forward for Field Work Term by Jeva Lange '15

retooling work

who do you know?

How you answer that question could mean everything when it comes to looking for a job. Maybe it is about knowing a CEO in your industry, or having a relative who can introduce you to a friend in the business. Maybe it is as simple as having a parent who went to college, and who knows what it takes to write a successful résumé or cover letter.

The question stands for something entirely different at Bennington these days. It is a reminder that when it comes to looking for a job, students' networks are anything but equal. And it is a challenge—as the global workforce is rapidly being reshaped, there will be more opportunities for people who don't know the right people to succeed, too.

They just need to have the tools to do so.

integrated learning

PART 1

The Robots Are Coming!

Computer animations are replacing news anchors in China. WillRobotsTakeMyJob.com claims accountants are “doomed,” with a 94-percent chance of their jobs becoming automated to the point of human irrelevance. Even fast food workers could be phased out within decades, with AI software such as Flippy serving burgers to customers in California. And that’s just what we can see coming now—who knows what it will be like in 2030 or 2040?

Naturally this presents a conundrum for colleges and universities across the country. In preparing new generations for the future now, it is no longer clear *what* knowledge will be useful down the line. How do we teach students what they need to know for tomorrow, when no one even knows what tomorrow will look like? “Many of the positions in the future of work will be entirely new and actually unimaginable at this juncture,” explained **Faith McClellan**, director of Field Work Term and Career Development.

Bennington, though, has been at the forefront of preparing students for work beyond the classroom since its founding in 1932. With more than 85 years of effectively preparing college students for careers and craft through Field World Term, Bennington is well positioned to explore questions of equity and gainful employment in the digital age.

Sensing this opportunity, the Lumina Foundation, a nonprofit based in Indianapolis awarded Bennington College a \$100,000 planning grant in 2017 to do a preliminary dive into understanding the challenges of the digital age college, and student equity as it pertains to “work-integrated learning.” This concept is an emerging study—popular internationally and now gaining traction in the United States—of how experiential learning, integrated with students’ academic study and development, serves to enhance learning outcomes such as complex reasoning, problem-solving, and leadership development. Work-integrated learning includes the many opportunities for field learning offered through Field Work Term, including internships, apprenticeships, professional certifications, entrepreneurial ventures, community service, research projects, and now, work study jobs.

The Lumina study, which concluded during the summer, was headed by faculty members **Robert Ransick** and **Debbie Warnock** and has already resulted in a tangible shift in how Bennington understands Field Work Term’s place at the heart of the undergraduate experience. “We came in thinking about Field Work Term,” said **Isabel Roche**, the provost and dean of the College. But as the Lumina study progressed, the College understood that Field Work Term alone was too narrow a focus. “This is really about *work* and all of the opportunities students have to engage with work and reflect upon their learning during their time at Bennington,” Roche emphasized.

PART 2

What Works as “Work”?

The McKinsey Global Institute in 2017 estimated that up to 14 percent of the global workforce—as many as 375 million people—will soon be forced to “switch occupational categories...as their [jobs] evolve alongside increasingly capable machines.” While only a small handful of jobs have been lost to automation during the past several decades, we are now on the cusp of a rapid and devastating rejiggering of the global workforce. As a result, employers are increasingly interested in what are known as “soft skills,” the likes of which are far more difficult to lose out to robots.

But concerning—a 2015 study released by the Association of American Colleges and Universities found that less than 30 percent of employers think college graduates are prepared in key skill areas, such as being able to “analyze and solve complex problems.” Enter Bennington’s curriculum: designed from the beginning to encourage self-directed, intersectional learning. Bennington has long understood that skill development occurs through work—specifically through an experience of learning in action that teaches and refines soft skills, offers iterative opportunities to try out new types of field work, and integrates learning through reflective practice. Emerging research also highlights the value of soft-skill preparation through experiences outside the classroom, as cited in a 2016 national study published in the *NACE Journal*. This study highlighted soft-skill development in areas such as teamwork, communication, decision making, problem solving, organization, and analyzing quantitative data.

In a context in which soft-skill development is increasingly critical to distinguish from Artificial Intelligence capacity, colleges and universities nationwide are reimagining how to effectively and efficiently teach these work-based competencies. At Bennington, this effort now focuses on teaching work-readiness soft skills across a four-year developmental curriculum, starting with first-year engagement, and extending into the diffuse aspects of learning through work. Roche explains how this involved casting aside an arbitrary distinction between Field Work Term and campus work: “In the national landscape of career development, there tends to be—and I wouldn’t exclude us—a kind of bifurcation about the kind of work that has learning value. At Bennington, we were focusing on Field Work Term as the place where students were doing the work that ‘mattered,’ and then there’s this *other* work that students are doing for money, because they’re on Federal Work Study, or because they’re interested in

it—as if all these things weren’t also forms of learning.” Roche explained. “It was like a lightbulb moment for me. We need to really think about work at Bennington in *all* of its dimensions.”

Structurally, that meant there needed to be some changes. If *all* work students did was valuable—not just their winter internships—then the College needed to broaden the definition of what it considered “work integrated learning” opportunities. Offices were subsequently reorganized: Student employment, which had been under the Office of Student Life, was moved into the Office of Field Work Term and Career Development, emphasizing the importance of

But will digital hiring processes really eliminate the problem presented by elite networking and pedigree?

developmental career education that occurs throughout four years of campus work. The Office has also partnered with CAPA to triple the number of off-campus community-service opportunities paid for through Federal Work Study.

In folding student employment under career development, Bennington is following the lead of numerous top institutions who recognize the importance of learning through campus work. McClellan noted, “We followed the lead of model programs overhauling their student-employment programs to emphasize high-quality supervision, regular feedback and evaluation, leadership opportunities, and supports to high need students to obtain and sustain the most competitive campus jobs. With these changes, we are helping students realize that working in a work-study position, you can gain significant and valuable skills.”

Further, by housing campus work opportunities under the Field Work Term office, students would be more attuned to how the skills they were learning on



With more than 85 years of research into how to effectively prepare college students for careers through Field Work Term, perhaps no school was better positioned to explore questions of equity and gainful employment in the digital age.

the job—even if that job is working in the dining hall or library—fit into their skill set for future careers. “What we found was the *type* of work doesn’t matter so much as how good you are at talking about the work that you’ve done,” Warnock elaborated.

While working in the campus bookstore, for example, might not seem glamorous, you don’t necessarily need to be a Goldman Sachs intern to get noticed by potential employers. What is more important is how effectively you present and talk about your work, as well as how sufficiently you identify the skills you gleaned from it.

PART 3

Playing Fair

Another recent focus for Field Work Term has been to increase financial access to superior quality field learning experiences. This stemmed from a pressing concern to arise out of the Lumina research: issues of unequal access when it comes to early work experience.

“When most or many internships are unpaid, that becomes a significant challenge for students who don’t have financial means to take advantage of those kinds of opportunities, and limits where they perhaps can do their work, whether that’s in an urban center that’s more expensive or someplace that’s not near a family home,” Ransick explained. “These are things that Bennington is already quite aware of.”

In looking at the way other colleges run similar work-integrated learning programs during the Lumina planning research, financial support for students was an area of top focus. In a one-day conference organized by Bennington College in collaboration with Lumina Vice President of Strategy Debra Humphreys, Bennington’s team huddled with Massachusetts’ Mount Holyoke College, California’s University of La Verne, Illinois’ Governors State University, and the University of Wisconsin Whitewater in Indianapolis in November 2017 to share how each program incorporated work-related learning into their curriculum.

“There was really helpful and constructive letting down of the guard,” Roche recalled. “Nobody felt like we were competing in the room like, ‘We have the best version of this! Here’s why you should do it our way!’ It was everybody saying, ‘We all believe equally that this is incredibly important and let’s figure out how to do it even better at our institutions.’”

At Mount Holyoke, a new work-integrated learning program in the digital age called “Lynk” connects students to job training, industry visits, and alumni

in their field, with guaranteed funding of \$3,000 for domestic students and \$3,600 for international students for summer internships and research. A “community-based learning” program exists at La Verne, with undergrads participating in a required 20 hours of service, with federal work study funds helping to support eligible students. Governors State allows students to earn credit by working in fields related to their major, while the University of Wisconsin Whitewater offers funding for students to participate in research projects, including a summer fellowship program that provides up to 15 students

What is more important is how effectively you present and talk about your work, as well as how sufficiently you identify the skills you gleaned from it.

a stipend of \$3,500 to work on faculty research and is expanding the frame to allow for other types of opportunities.

“[Bennington] is acutely aware of the cost of Field Work Term and also of limited resources to support Field Work Term grants and stipends,” McClellan reflected. “To support equity, this year the College has prioritized a streamlined system through which our highest need students will be guaranteed a \$500 stipend for field work. Additionally, we have doubled the funding available for full pay fellowship programs for students demonstrating need and merit.” Perhaps most important of all, McClellan added, “In the last five years, the College has doubled the number of fully-paid opportunities and added supports to assist

high need students in being competitive for these opportunities.”

Moreover, in response to student feedback about the need for structural and timing flexibility, Bennington is now considering not only the winter term, but the full year, as rich learning ground for field experience. “We’re piloting this year a program of select full-year work opportunities to count for FWT,” McClellan said. She added that the College is allowing students to petition to pursue specialized opportunities in the summer, such as Research Opportunities for Undergraduates or prestigious, fully-paid summer internships or fellowships.

But flexibility and funding are only part of the story. There is a fundamental issue of elite access to networks, simply put *who you know*. “Money is one part, and making block grants automatically available to high need students helps,” Warnock explained, “but the other part is really teaching students how to build networks and how to present themselves to employers. There are also disparities in terms of social capital and cultural capital that the College is now seeking to address through curricular and advising supports.”

PART 4

Technology: An Equalizer or a Divider?

Enter Handshake, the rising star of the college job search market, migrating more than 700 colleges and universities to its platform since its founding in 2014.

A job-search, networking, and career education tool with a mission of “democratizing opportunity” by connecting students to a network of more than 350,000 employers, Handshake is Bennington’s home base for students who want to apply for on-and off-campus jobs, internships, or post-graduate opportunities. It is also the first step for many students in learning how to use online tools to catch employers’ eyes.

“If you don’t understand that digital presentation of self, you’re at a disadvantage,” said Ransick. Just as many jobs are going the way of AI, artificial intelligence is also being used to hire employees. On the surface, this is a huge opportunity for students who lack the social and cultural capital to which Warnock referred. While earlier hiring processes might have focused on pedigree—pulling job interviewees exclusively out of particular feeder schools, for example—AI is now

being used by businesses to flag résumés in systems such as Handshake or LinkedIn that have the right keywords and skills.

“Being able to learn how to navigate digital presentation of self can help to somewhat even the playing field,” Warnock went on. “Students who know how to use the right keywords, how to present themselves with their résumé or profile online—if we can teach students those skills, that can help.” But this is also a challenge for Bennington in particular, because the College doesn’t have traditional majors. If a student elects to omit an academic major in their profile, “the system may not understand the depth or the nuance or skill set,” Ransick said. It is all the more important, then, that Bennington students learn how to present themselves digitally. To meet this need, the Deans Office and Field Work Term staff are partnering to interweave training about digital presentation into required curricula for first-year students, helping to level the playing field of opportunity.

But will digital hiring processes really eliminate the problem presented by elite networking and pedigree? “That, to me, is in some ways the biggest question mark,” Ransick answered. “It has the opportunity to level because we’re not just looking at pedigree, but it also has an inadvertent side-effect to not engage students who might be great candidates because it’s a machine evaluating, and it’s based on data that may be biased and nomenclature mismatches on language. You could find yourself in a challenging position even though you’re qualified.”

By Bennington’s metrics, Field Work Term helps students to succeed and thrive. While employers are nationally expressing pessimism about college students, there is no such disappointment around Field Work Term. Some 97 percent of employers to date have expressed satisfaction with their two to four returning students (third-term Bennington interns), and 94 percent said they’d hire them again. On the student side, in the 2017 one-year-out survey, recent alumni shared the immediate impacts of Field Work Term: 88 percent were employed full time and 8 percent enrolled in graduate school, while 3 percent were giving back via service-fellowship programs. Notably, 85 percent of these recent alumni who were working held a job directly related to their field of study. Also of note, 72 percent of respondents said that Field Work Term was “important” or “very important” to their learning in college. **B**

field work term fellowships

NEWMAN PUBLIC ACTION FELLOWSHIP

Selected students complete an unpaid FWT position or Independent Study focused on public action, either domestically or internationally, each supported by a grant. This opportunity is available to 5 to 10 returning students (third-term through seventh-term), selected based on need and merit factors, and grants typically range from \$1,000–\$2,000.

IFTEKHAR ENTREPRENEURIAL FELLOWSHIP

The Entrepreneurial Option is available to students interested in learning how to start and run their own business or nonprofit, and/or launch themselves as an independent artist or freelancer. Selected students with demonstrated need who wish to apply to the Entrepreneurial Option may also apply to the Entrepreneurial Fellowship. Through this fellowship—made possible by Adnan Iftekhar ’97—students will receive funding and mentorship to spend their FWT pursuing an unpaid entrepreneurial project. This opportunity is available to two to four returning students (third-term through seventh-term), selected based on need and merit factors, and grants typically range from \$1,000–\$2,000. To qualify, students must have successfully completed at least one FWT, be in good academic standing, and have secured a business mentor/supervisor.

ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY FELLOWSHIP

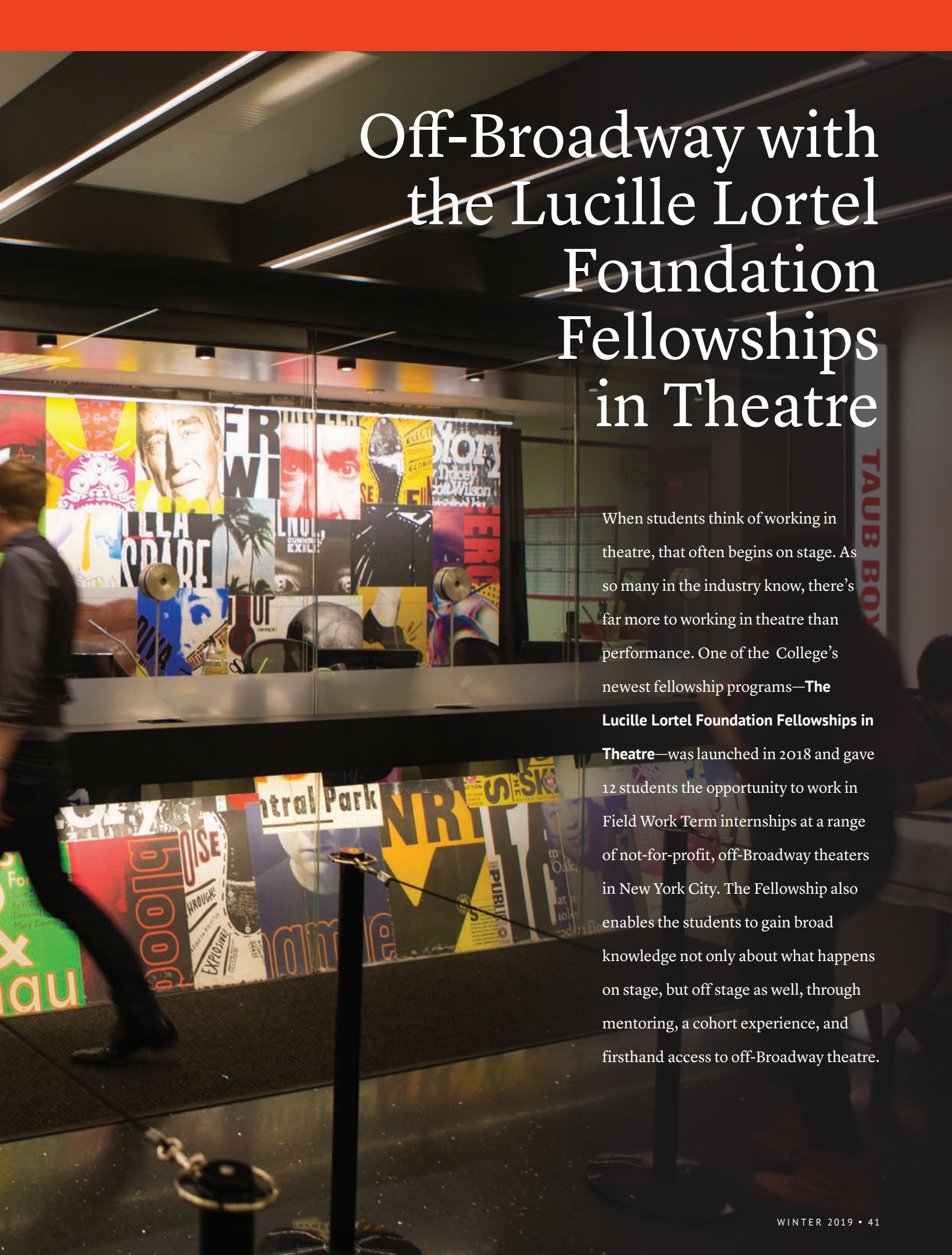
Through the Field Work Term Arts and Technology Fellowship, selected students complete an unpaid FWT position or Independent Study that focuses on work at the intersection of technology and visual and/or performing arts, each supported by a grant. Work may take place anywhere across the globe. Funded by an anonymous foundation gift, this opportunity is available to up to three returning students (third-term through seventh-term), selected based on need and merit factors, and awards will be made up to \$2,500.

Continue to the next page for a full story on THE LUCILLE LORTEL FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP

B

A new fellowship is bringing Bennington students to New York City theatre companies to study what it takes to work off-Broadway with reporting by Emma Grillo





Off-Broadway with the Lucille Lortel Foundation Fellowships in Theatre

When students think of working in theatre, that often begins on stage. As so many in the industry know, there's far more to working in theatre than performance. One of the College's newest fellowship programs—**The Lucille Lortel Foundation Fellowships in Theatre**—was launched in 2018 and gave 12 students the opportunity to work in Field Work Term internships at a range of not-for-profit, off-Broadway theaters in New York City. The Fellowship also enables the students to gain broad knowledge not only about what happens on stage, but off stage as well, through mentoring, a cohort experience, and firsthand access to off-Broadway theatre.

The fellowship is run in partnership with **The Lucille Lortel Foundation**, whose grant-making mission is to provide support for small and midsize, off-Broadway theatre companies in New York, as well as funding for universities and small theatre organizations. With the encouragement of Bennington College trustees **Michael Hecht** and **Matthew Clark**, both of whom also serve on the Lucille Lortel Foundation board, a new idea took shape. For the foundation and Bennington, this fellowship was the first of its kind. While the foundation has funded smaller programs for colleges in the past, it had never before paired with a school to create a fellowship that provided both funding *and* opportunities for students to live and work in New York. But this new partnership became a clear priority when the foundation saw both the need—and the opportunity—to dually invest in

the grantees they support, and in the future off-Broadway talent.

For many Bennington students, interning in New York City is an opportunity they are unable to afford. The city's infamously high cost of living, where groceries cost between 28 and 39 percent more than the national average and housing costs are some of the highest in the country, prohibits many promising drama students the theatre experience they most benefit from before they leave college.

"The chance to partner with the Lucille Lortel Foundation—a foundation deeply committed to sustaining and supporting the off-Broadway theatre—was an extraordinary way to expand Bennington's already formidable drama network," said **Paige Bartels**, senior vice president for strategic partnerships. "Because Bennington faculty are themselves practitioners who understand deeply theatre-

making in all its aspects, they were the ideal partners to work with the Foundation to design the fellowship" said **Isabel Roche**, provost and dean.

Soon the Lortel Fellowship was born. Working with the drama faculty members at Bennington, the program envisioned a way for all students to have access to working in New York. The fellowship allows students who would otherwise be priced out of spending their Field Work Term in New York City to live and work in the heart and hub of theatre. Because the fellowship is both merit and need based, Lortel Fellows receive generous stipends to meet their expenses for the cost of living in New York. The Fellows are placed in competitive internships with one of the Foundation's current grantees, work in a range of roles from production and sets to house operations to marketing and development.



Equally important to the fellowship is the chance to *see* theatre. The Foundation facilitates complimentary tickets to off-Broadway performances—as many as two shows a week, for the seven weeks of the internship. Finally, the fellowship gives the cohort the opportunity to share their experiences with each other and the Foundation staff, who have decades of theatre experience between them, through regular mentoring sessions throughout the fellowship. Fellows discuss with the Foundation staff topics ranging from the business of theatre to networking in the arts and emerging work in off-Broadway theatre.

Edie Salas-Miller '20, one of the inaugural Fellows, completed her Field Work Term at **Cherry Lane Theatre** as a production assistant. For her, the most eye-opening part of the experience was how competitive professional auditions can be.

“You see how many different faces casting directors see in a day. But as soon as the right person comes on, you know that they’re getting cast. You see the amount of preparedness they have,” she remembers. For many students the intensity of competition deflates their sense of what is possible. But Salas-Miller was only more drawn to the city after her experience. “To see the drive that everybody in New York has made me realize that New York is where I need to be.”

Indeed some Fellows came away more determined than ever to land in New York to perform in theatre, but it was only after their fellowship that they fully understood what it takes to live and work in the industry. Lucille Lortel Foundation Executive Director **George Forbes** was most interested in imparting the bigger lesson: what it takes to keep theatre open and operating as a business.

“I think it was very eye-opening to them,” Forbes recalls. “Most of the time in education people are

very eager to teach and to learn the art. But it’s not just show art, it’s show *business*. Everyone who is involved needs to have a relatively high level of understanding of what’s involved.”

At Bennington, because of the required Field Work Term and Plan Process, students are more exposed than usual to the professional application of craft. And that’s essential, **Dina Janis** (the Lortel Foundation Fellowship faculty coordinator) explained. “You can be studying something and have an idea of what the professional application of what you’re studying might look like, but

of some of the top theatre being made right now for free—this access is extraordinarily important, too.”

In most of the Fellows reflections after their Field Work Term, they cite seeing live theatre as one of the greatest benefits of the fellowship. For some, it was the first time they saw professional plays performed. In seeing a diverse array of shows up close, the Fellows could consider production choices, character innovations, and audience reactions—all informing their own work when back in production.

Students met with Forbes and other theatre professionals

“In addition to a living stipend and access to what happens behind-the-scenes in the theatre business, Lortel Fellows also were given tickets to see shows almost nightly.”

when you’re actually in a theater, students can see how work is made, how work is marketed, and how theaters sustain themselves and keep themselves afloat.”

In addition to a living stipend and access to what happens behind-the-scenes in the theatre business, Lortel Fellows also were given tickets to see shows almost nightly. Like great writing, great acting so often comes from the exposure to other great performances. But because of the high cost of shows, it’s difficult to see what that looks like in the city.

“Many students go into theatre, but they really have seen very few actual productions because it’s so expensive,” said Janis. “I think the tickets are fabulous because they get a chance to see a very diverse array

three times during the course of the program. At these evening gatherings, the last of which was a formal dinner that included board members from both the Lucille Lortel Foundation and Bennington College, students reflected on their internship experiences.

“It was really wonderful that everybody was able to hear everyone else’s questions because there was immediately a lot of ‘Oh yeah, I was thinking about that too,’” said Forbes. “And at the same time, it was a great opportunity for everybody to share their unique experiences that were different from one another, as well as to learn about their experiences as a group.”

For students who attended the program, working in professional

2017 FELLOWS

theaters, many of which had multi-million dollar annual operating budgets, was an essential part of figuring out if theatre is a profession they want to pursue after graduation.

Sam Levit '18, who interned as a general management intern at **The Lark**, the Lortel Fellowship solidified his desire to work in theatre after graduation. "It really gave me a sense of what life after Bennington could be like, and what making work professionally could be like," he said. "Facing graduation six months from the fellowship, having that cohort of people and having that experience definitely made it less intimidating to graduate. It didn't make it any easier or simpler, but it gave me a sense of 'oh, this is what it could be like.' And that was incredibly valuable to me."

"With the Foundation's partnership, this immersive experience is now available to all qualified Bennington students, regardless of economic background," said Bartels. "Equally important, this fellowship is investing in the long-term health of the off-Broadway theatre community by building a pipeline of diverse young playwrights, directors, actors, and set and costume designers who represent the future of off-Broadway talent."

Both the Lortel Foundation and Bennington College agree that the first year of the program was a success and look forward to continuing to grow the program in new ways—beyond the now 15 students who will participate as 2019 Lucille Lortel Foundation Fellows this year. "We'd love to see the program expand, we'd love there to be more Fellows, we'd love to continue to build on the success of last year," said Forbes. "And hopefully [students] will form a kind of alumni group in New York that will be supportive, and the program may have the ability to grow through that network as well." **B**

THE MINT THEATER

Catalina Adragna '18
Production Office Assistant / House Manager

"My supervisors at Mint have a lot of confidence in me, and as a result they allowed me to jump into tasks, and that helped me define my capabilities. The commitment and dedication from the Lortel Foundation to meet with us one-on-one and offer advice in joining the theatre world was incredible."

MCC THEATER

Ronald Anahaw '19
Development Intern

"My knowledge of how theaters can survive financially has gone from absolutely nothing to understanding how a prominent off-Broadway theater manages to not only stay afloat, but also thrive. I was able to forge meaningful connections with the staff at MCC and value those deeply."

VINEYARD THEATRE

Joe Coppola '18
Production Management Intern

"Getting to meet with passionate, successful mentors who invested time, resources, and energy into our success was so gratifying. There are so many different aspects of professional theatre (outside of just directors, writers, actors) that I wasn't aware of before. Because of the networking I've done, the professional world no longer seems intimidating. All it takes is a foot in the door one time, and you can make your career."

MINT THEATER COMPANY

Tristan Harness '18
Production Assistant

"The fellowship allowed me to live in New York, which never would have been affordable, and I got to see more theatre than I ever have in my life. I essentially took a master course in acting and wardrobe training."

THE FLEA THEATER

Lilianna Hogan '18
Production Assistant

"It was so rewarding to see different projects go from the rehearsal room to performance. I met so many inspirational people at the theater. I felt very engaged with a community of people passionate about the same thing I'm passionate about. This experience changed my life."

THE FLEA THEATER

Lecil James '18
Technical Director's Assistant

"The fellowship has offered me the opportunity to dive into the robust, and often intimidating, NYC theatre scene. It provided me with support that many early-career performers and technicians seldom see, and time to develop skills that I will be using for years to come."

THE LARK

Samuel Levit '18
General Management Intern

"The FWT really exposed me to the business side of theatre—or rather, how difficult it is to raise and make money in this field. I got to meet some incredible fundraisers this winter who have really piqued my interest in how theatre artists (and administrators) go about making money. The cohort of peers, mentors, colleagues, and artists was invaluable."

CHERRY LANE THEATRE

Edie Salas-Miller '20
Production Assistant

"I think the most beautiful thing about this fellowship was that I was able to make amazing connections in New York because of the tickets we received to go see theatre. Before this grant, I had never really seen professional theatre. The frequent meetings, and the theater being near enough to each other, meant we all connected and got to be together over FWT."

LUCILLE LORTEL FOUNDATION

Rebecca Mitzner '20
Production Assistant

"This FWT reaffirmed my ambition to work in theatre finance. Being paid for my work meant that I did not need to work a second job to cover my expenses and could apply a greater focus to my work for the Lortel Foundation. Additionally, it gave me confidence that the work I was doing was valuable to the Foundation."

ABINGDON THEATRE

Luluwama Mulalu '18
Production Assistant

"The cohort of fellow peers offered support and strength. Having a group of people who are going through similar processes made it easier to thrive—I never felt alone. I met a lot of amazing people who hold the potential for future networking opportunities. The fellowship offered exposure and experience—some of the best teachers."

RATTLESTICK PLAYWRIGHTS THEATER

Annie Stone '19
Marketing and Community Outreach Intern

"Rattlestick is different from other theatre in the way it actively seeks out connections among communities. They strive to create opportunities for people who might not usually see theatre. This internship has pushed me to study all different kinds of theatre rather than just the Western canon."

NEW GEORGES

Phoebe VanDusen '19
Administrative Intern

"The most meaningful aspect of the fellowship was the ability to see a range of off-Broadway shows at no cost. It was overwhelmingly valuable to be able to observe what kind of theatre is being produced and supported at this time. I was able to learn so much about how a theatre company functions based on the work they chose to produce."



New research by **David Bond, Janet Foley, and Tim Schroeder** suggests more extensive PFOA contamination in North Bennington and beyond. Their research has been covered by *The Associated Press*, *VT Digger*, *WAMC*, *The Times Union*, and others.



In an article for *The Diplomat*, **Noah Coburn** discussed Afghanistan's elections and the challenges and opportunities for which the country is posed.



Liz Deschenes spoke on a panel at the AIPAD Photography Show in New York about "History/Her Stories: Photographs by Women."



A new solo work by **Elena Demyanenko** in collaboration with **Josh Blackwell '95** and with costumes by **Richard MacPike** premiered at GARAGE Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow in July.



During the summer and early past fall, **Michael Giannitti** designed lighting for *Anne of Green Gables* at the Weston Playhouse Theatre Company, *Cry It Out* and *Skeleton Crew* at the Dorset Theatre Festival, *Blithe Spirit* at the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, and the new play *Grant & Twain* at PS21 in Chatham, NY.



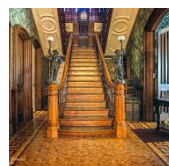
McSweeney's Internet Tendency featured an essay by **John Hultgren** as part of its "One Small Blow Against Encroaching Totalitarianism" series.



Ella Ben Hagai published "We Didn't Talk About the Conflict": The Birthright Trip's Influence on Jewish Americans' Understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict" in *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*.



Jon Isherwood's *Singer of Tales* was exhibited at Asthall manor, Oxfordshire, UK. Isherwood's sculpture was also featured in the *London Times Sunday* magazine.



This summer **Kirk Jackson** took the stage in Living Room Theaters' adaptation of *Three Sisters* at Park-McCullough House.



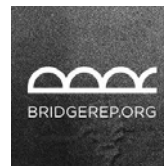
Dina Janis, artistic director of the Dorset Theatre Festival, spoke with *The Interval* about women in theatre and academia.



Springer Nature published "Evidence for Interaction Between Hsp90 and the ER Membrane Complex," a paper co-authored by **Aime McClellan** and **Tambudzai Kudze '10**, **Carlos Mendez-Dorantes '15**, and **Chernoh Jalloh '15**.



Katie Montovan and **Betsy Sherman** published "Modeling Alternative Stable States in Caribbean Coral Reefs" in the journal *Natural Resource Modeling*.



Jenny Rohn performed in George Brant's *Dark Room* at the Bridge Repertory Theater's Multicultural Arts Center in East Cambridge, MA this past summer. The play is inspired by the life and work of photographer Francesca Woodman.



Natalie Scenters-Zapico received The Poetry Foundation and *Poetry* magazine's 2018 Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellowship.



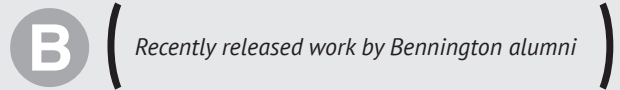
Susan Sgorbati and **Brian Campion** joined The Roundtable on WAMC to discuss Public Policy Forums at CAPA.



Rotimi Suberu published a paper on "Strategies for Advancing Anti Corruption Reform in Nigeria" in *Dædalus, Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences*. The piece analyzes the factors that created an environment for corruption to thrive and details the successes of the Nigerian anticorruption movement.



A chapter co-written by **Debbie Warnock** and **Jocelyn Salcedo-Edwards '18** was published in the edited volume, *Evaluating Campus Climate at U.S. Research Universities*. Their chapter, "Students' Perceptions of Campus Climate by Social Class Background" was co-authored with Allison Hurst of Oregon State University and Will Barratt of Roi Et Rajabhat University. Warnock also presented on this work at the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association in Philadelphia. **B**



Ruth Mordecai '60 released a 160-page, self-titled coffee table book published by Capitol Press in August. The book is a history of 50 years of Ruth's work. Her new book, *Ruth Mordecai*, may be purchased in Gloucester, MA from the artist, Trident Gallery, or where books are sold.

Victoria Houston '67 published the 18th book in her Loon Lake Mystery Series, *Dead Firefly*. It was released by Gallery Books/Simon & Schuster in June and featured in a full-page story in the Travel Section of the *Chicago Tribune*.

Janis Pryor '71 published her first book, a memoir titled *White Roses, a love story before and after death*, through Black Pawn Press last October.

The Monumental Challenge of Preservation: The Past in a Volatile World by **Michelle Cloonan '75** was made available in March.

Vasari's Words: The 'Lives of the Artists' as a History of Ideas in the Italian Renaissance by **Douglas G. Biow '79** was published by Cambridge University Press in November.

Complete Vocal Fitness: A Singer's Guide to Physical Training, Anatomy, and Biomechanics by **Claudia Friedlander '87** was released in June.

Fragments, from the Lost Book of the Bird Spirit by **Karla Van Vliet '89** was released in October.

Caroline Malone MFA '96 published her poetry collection, *Dark Roots*, with Finishing Line Press in May 2018.

Nick Wroblewski '96 has finished illustrating his second children's book, *Hush Hush, Forest* by Mary Casanova. It was published in September through the University of Minnesota Press.

Last January, *Expected Home: A Memoir and a Mystery* by **Judy Rowley '02** was published through CreateSpace Independent Publishing platform.

Ryan C. Tittle '05 published his debut poetry collection, *Eons and Other Love Poems*, in May.

Tami Haaland MFA '00 published her new book of poetry, *What Does Not Return*, in March. Individual poems have been published recently in *Ascent*, *basalt*, *Collateral*, and *High Desert Journal*, among other periodicals.

Willa Carroll '97, MFA '11 published her first collection of poetry, *Nerve Chorus*, with The Word Works press in September.

Cape Verdean Blues, the debut poetry collection by **Shauna Barbosa MFA '17**, is now available.

When We Disappear by **Lisa Haines MFA '02** is available in paperback on Amazon.



Alumni awards and honors, featuring the Elizabeth Coleman Visionary Leadership Award recipient, Gay Johnson McDougall '69

THE ELIZABETH COLEMAN VISIONARY LEADERSHIP AWARD



International human rights and racial justice lawyer **Gay Johnson McDougall '69** is the 2018 recipient of Bennington College's Elizabeth Coleman Visionary Leadership Award. The annual award recognizes a distinguished Bennington graduate, faculty or staff member, or an individual from the larger Bennington College community whose innovative and inspirational leadership is advancing civic and cultural life and improving the lives of others.

McDougall (featured in the 2017 summer issue) served as the first United Nations Independent Expert on Minority Issues from 2005 to 2011. She was executive director of the international NGO Global Rights from 1994 to 2006. From 1997 to 2001, she served as an Independent Expert on the UN treaty body that oversees compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, a committee to which she was recently re-elected for a second term. During her first term on the committee, she negotiated the adoption of General Recommendation XXV on the Gender Dimensions of Racial Discrimination, which requires governments to report explicitly on the situation of women impacted by racial discrimination. She played a leadership role in the UN Third-World Conference Against Racism. As Special Rapporteur on the issue of systematic rape and sexual slavery practices in armed conflict when she served on the UN Sub-Commission on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (1995 to 1999), McDougall led that body in calling for international legal standards for the prosecution of such acts. She was one of

five international members of the South African governmental body established through the multiparty negotiations to set policy and to administer the country's first democratic, nonracial elections in 1994, resulting in the election of President Nelson Mandela and the transition from apartheid. For 14 years prior to that appointment, she served as director of the Southern Africa Project of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. In that capacity, she worked with South African lawyers to secure the release of thousands of political prisoners.

McDougall is currently a member of the faculty of the Oxford University Masters of International Human Rights Law Programme and distinguished scholar-in-residence at the Leitner Center for International Law and Justice at Fordham Law School. She was the Robert Drinan Visiting Professor in Human Rights at Georgetown University Law Center from 2011 to 2012. She was a distinguished scholar-in-residence at American University Washington College of Law from 2006 to 2008 and a professor in the annual Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law at American University. In 1999, McDougall was a recipient of the MacArthur "Genius" Award. In 2015, the government of South Africa bestowed on her the Order of O.R. Tambo Award for her contributions to ending apartheid. She has also received the Butcher Medal of the American Society of International Law for outstanding contributions to human rights law and the Thurgood Marshall Award of the District of Columbia Bar Association, among numerous other national and international awards.



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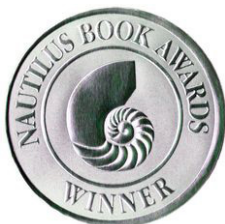
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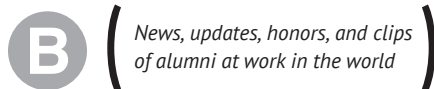


11



12

1. Last February, **Lonny Gordon '67** received the Alfred Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award, which recognized his five decades of work in fine arts, performances, and higher education.
2. **Caren Umbarger '77**'s second novel, *The Passion of Marta*, has been selected as a Finalist (Silver Medal) in the National Indie Excellence Awards.
3. **Kevin Alter '85**, founder of Alterstudio Architecture, has been inducted into the Wm. S. Marvin Hall of Fame for Design Excellence.
4. **Stephanie Bianca '87** won a Daytime Emmy for her work as a segment producer on the NBC food and craft lifestyle series, "Naturally, Danny Seo."
5. **Peter Dinklage '91** has won his second Emmy Award for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Drama Series for his performance as Tyrion Lannister on HBO's *Game of Thrones* TV series.
6. **Catherine Pikula '13**'s piece "I'm Fine. How Are You?" won the 2018 Newfound Prose Prize and was published as a chapbook in fall 2018.
7. **Jodi Lynn Anderson MFA '14** released a young adult novel titled *Midnight at the Electric*. It has been selected as a New York Public Library Best Book for Teens of 2017 and an American Library Association Best Fiction for Young Adults title 2018. It was long-listed for the 2018 Southern Book Prize and has been nominated for five state book awards in young adult literature.
8. **Ayesha Raees '18** was selected as an Asian American Writers' Workshop 2018/19 Margins Fellow.
9. *The Passion of Marta*, the second novel by **Caren Umbarger '77**, was named a 2017 Silver Winner for the Nautilus Book Awards and selected as a Silver Medal Finalist in the National Indie Excellence Awards.
10. **Dr. Jennifer Mieres '82** was named one of *Good Housekeeping's* Humanitarian Heroes for her work in healthcare, diversity, and inclusion. Mieres is the author of *Heart Smart for Women*, the executive producer of two documentaries, including the Emmy-nominated *A Woman's Heart*, and is working on a third called *Misdiagnosed*.
11. **Amber Wheeler Bacon MFA '18** is an honoree of *Epiphany Lit Mag's* inaugural Breakout 8 award for emerging writers. **Lily Houghton '17** has received an emerging playwright commission from Seattle Repertory Theatre's *The Other Season*.
12. Poet and Bennington Writing Seminars alum **Amy Gerstler MFA '01** has been awarded a prestigious 2018 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship. **B**



TENSTHOU EIGHTIES

10s

Emma Conley '10 was part of a panel of a discussion at a Bio Art Symposium at RISD in August. She and her design group, the Center of Genomic Gastronomy, also exhibited work at the Woods Gerry Gallery. She currently resides in Porto, Portugal.

Springer Nature published "Evidence for Interaction Between Hsp90 and the ER Membrane Complex," a paper co-authored by faculty member **Amie McClellan** and **Tambu Kudze '10**, **Carlos Mendez-Dorantes '15**, and **Chernoh Jalloh '15**.

Holly Camisa '13 is enrolled in the Temple University Beasley School of Law. She is expected to graduate in 2021.

In January 2018, *[50/50] old school animation*, a production **Julia Mounsey '13** wrote, directed, and performed in, was featured in the Public Theater's "Under the Radar" festival.

"I'm Fine. How Are You?," a piece by **Catherine Pikula '13**, won the 2018 Newfound Prose Prize and was published as a chapbook in the fall. Catherine recently received an MFA in poetry from New York University. She works as an executive assistant to a Nobel laureate economist at Columbia University.

Claire Elam '14 is the Program Director of adult education at an art center. She manages a co-working office for remote workers and startup companies. Claire continues to paint and do ceramics.

Finn Murphy '14, **Kaya Lovestrand '14**, and **Emma Villavecchia '14** have danced together as Three Planes Collective for the last three years. In August, they had a second residency with faculty member

Elena Demyanenko and performed the resulting work "with a bird walking side by side" in Vermont and New York City.

In March, **John Lawson '15**, **Erika Lygren '15**, **Chris Larsen '16**, **Jordan Macintosh-Hougham '16**, **Sylvia Madaras '16**, **Cleo Zars '17**, **Marshall McGraw '18**, **Lauren Brady '18**, **Liam McRae '18**, **Adi Kang '19**, and **Alison Dennis '94** launched an Oregon nonprofit called The Debt Liberation Laboratory. The group was founded with the goal of accelerating student debt payoff for undergraduate student loan holders. They invite all alumni to sign up for their newsletter by emailing debtliberationlab@gmail.com.

Carlos Mendez-Dorantes '15 was a lead author on the paper "Repeat-mediated deletions can be induced by a chromosomal break far from a repeat, but multiple pathways suppress such rearrangements," which was published in the April issue of the journal *Genes and Development*.

The short story "Montreal, 2014" by **Ray Stevens '15** was included in Prime Book's 2018 edition of *The Year's Best Science Fiction and Fantasy*.

"I have achieved novice/mediocre longboarder status," **Erika Lygren '16** reports. "Here's to more helmets, kneepads, and bruises in the coming year!"

Brian Vu '16 is currently an MFA student at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, Ceramics Department.

Emma Plotkin '17 was the production assistant on *HOME*, a show that toured internationally and was featured at the International Festival Fringe. She is currently a journalist for *Broadway Baby*, *FringeReview*, and *The Reviews Hub*. In September, Emma moved from Edinburgh, Scotland to Ireland. She would like to

connect with alumni who are in the area.

Jorja Rose '18 co-authored a *Bennington Banner* editorial examining Saint-Gobain's controversial PFOA report.

Asad Malik '19 has been named a Top 10 Filmmaker to Watch in 2018 by *The Independent* for his latest AR project, *Terminal 3*. *AdWeek* also selected him as one of its 2018 Young Influentials, a selective group of 31 media, marketing, and tech talents who are innovating in fields from AR to activism, data to diversity.

00s

"Androids & Pearls," a piece by **Liana Conyers '03**, was presented in December as part of the New York Live Arts Fresh Tracks, where she is a resident artist. In October, **Katharine Gardiner '05** released her debut collection of microfiction, *Little Wonder*, on Father/Daughter Records.

Cosmo Whyte '05 presented his art in the exhibition titled *No Longer Yours* at Anonymous Gallery, Mexico City during the fall. Last March, he was a panelist at Black Portraiture[s] IV: the Color of Silence conference hosted by Harvard University. He was also one of the artists at PAFA's Spring Visiting Artist Lecture Series.

Forever, A Little Ghost, an exhibition of work by **Nicole Czapski '06** was shown as part of the Burlington City Arts, in Burlington, VT in the summer.

In the fall, **Sofia Alvarez '07** spoke with *Vanity Fair* about her screenplay for the Netflix adaptation of *To All the Boys I've Loved Before*.

HUNDREDS IN THE NINETIES EVENTS IN THE SIXTIES

Jake Meginsky MFA '09 directed and released a new documentary, *Milford Graves Full Mantis*, last year. The film has been screened at numerous festivals and has brought even more national media interest into the remarkable life and career of his former professor.

In addition to teaching Spanish and French at Yarmouth High School in Yarmouth, ME, **Emily Davison MA '07** also tutors for the Boston Red Sox. To watch a video story about her work with the Red Sox, visit bennington.edu/news.

90s

Hyla Matthews '91 performed a stand-up show titled "You Are Here" in Washington, DC, New York City, and Los Angeles in June. In her performance, Matthews reflects on battling breast cancer for the last four years. Her performance raised \$12,000 for the Triple Negative Breast Cancer Foundation. Matthews has performed in films, television, theatre, and stand-up comedy for 10 years in Los Angeles before relocating to Washington in 2009, where she has performed on the DC theatre scene and appeared on HBO's *Veep*.

In June, **David Williamson '95** completed his doctorate at Temple University, Fox School of Business. He studied management with a focus on organizational behavior and leadership.

Jackie Sedlock '96 recently completed a studio renovation in Pownal, VT. She reports that she and her son love being in close proximity to Bennington and Oak Bluffs Pottery, where Jackie got her start. She writes, "I am constantly investigating ways to challenge myself in my work, broaden programming in the studio, and

make the best use of this beautiful space. If you have ideas, contact me. I love visitors."

Taliesin Thomas '98 gave a talk on how stories bring value in the high-end art world at the Fulton Street TEDx Talk, organized by **Aaron Sylvan '93**.

80s

Paul Lander '80 received his second award for Best Humor Column / Print from the National Society of Newspaper Columnists for his *Humor Times* column "Ripping the Headlines Today." His first honor was awarded in 2015.

The Constant Springs Residence, designed by **Kevin Alter '85**, was featured as the cover story in the March/April issue of *Dwell*. Among other accolades, his project also won the 2017 American Architecture Prize and a 2018 Texas Society of Architects Design Award.

Cynthia Katz '87 is currently showing work at Three Stones Gallery in West Concord, MA following other exhibitions in Boston, MA and West Virginia. To see her work, visit Cynthia-Katz.com.

70s

Andréa (Katz) Vaucher '70 interviewed Geraldine Chaplin, in an audio documentary produced for *Film Comment*, the Film Society of Lincoln Center's magazine.

Janis Pryor '71 published her first book through Black Pawn Press in 2017—a memoir titled *White Roses, a love story*

before and after death. She is adapting it for screen and audio. Janis is also working on another book expected to be released sometime this year.

The Brooklyn Ballet featured *The Speed of Sound* by **David Appel '72** as a part of their First Look dance series.

Laura Chapman '73 recently completed training to become a Jungian analyst. She lives in Cleveland, OH, where she continues her private practice.

A Thousand Crossings by **Sally Mann '73** opened at the National Gallery of Art and will travel internationally through 2020. *The New Yorker* and *The Washington Post* were just some of the publications that reviewed the exhibition.

Derrik "Jordan" Hoitsma '77 has worked in many areas of music throughout his career. In 2017, he began a community TV show and podcast called *The World Fusion Show*. Shot in Brattleboro, VT at Brattleboro Community Television (BCTV). It has been picked up by 67 community TV stations in 16 states across the United States. **Jared Shapiro '83**, **Julian Gerstin '75**, and **Paul Austerlitz '79** have all appeared on the show.

60s

Ruth Mordecai '60 released a 160-page coffee table book published by Capitol Press in August. The book is a history of 50 years of Ruth's work. Her new book, *Ruth Mordecai*, may be purchased in Gloucester, MA from the artist, Trident Gallery, or where books are sold.

In July, **Lonny Gordon '67** created a dance piece *BENCHES* for Kanopy Dance Theatre. He presented it as a preview at the Overture Center. In August, Lonny

SIXTIESFIFTIES

represented the United States at the International Concourse of Dancers Over Forty (and still performing). In October, he was commissioned by the Dance Department of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley to create a large group dance. The piece will premiere in April.

Maren Hassinger '69 and **Fatima Zaidi '16** spoke about the process of designing and installing Hassinger's exhibition *Monuments in Marcus Garvey Park* for the Studio Museum of Harlem.

50s

In October, **Martha Fehsenfeld '53** received an honorary degree of Doctor in Letters from the University of Dublin.

Riva Poor '56 finished her memoir *Raising an Innovator*. She reports that she is still actively creating at 82.

keep us posted

**WE LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.
SEND US YOUR NEWS AND UPDATES.**

You can submit your Class Note in one of three ways:

1. by email to classnotes@bennington.edu or magazine@bennington.edu
2. online at bennington.edu (click on "Alumni & Families," "Connect," then "Share Your News")
3. by mail to the Office of Institutional Advancement, Bennington College, One College Drive, Bennington, VT 05201-6003

Please note: Due to space constraints, *Bennington* reserves the right to edit and condense Class Note submissions.



While every effort has been made to include class notes submitted on time for this issue, we apologize for any omissions.

Please inform the Office of Institutional Advancement (800-598-2979) if we have omitted your class note in error. Thank you.

planned GIVING



ARTIST GIVES BACK TO ENSURE BENNINGTON'S CONTINUATION

Sigrid Burton '73 is living proof that financial planning can, in fact, be fun: "My husband and I have enjoyed the process of considering how our assets can be directed after our deaths. By making these decisions now, we have the opportunity to designate much more personally meaningful gifts. We find it quite gratifying to design how and where we will have an impact beyond our lifetimes." According to Burton, there is also a very practical reason for making estate plans today: "We relieve our executors of a huge burden of responsibility by providing direction about what is most important to us."

A respected and expressive painter, Burton studied art at Bennington after transferring from University of California at Berkeley. At the College, she studied with visual arts faculty members Pat Adams, Richard Haas, Carol Haerer, Sidney Tillim, and Phillip Wofford. During one especially serendipitous Non-Residential Term, Burton started working as a studio assistant for **Helen Frankenthaler '49**, an experience that led to her hire upon graduation. Following two years as a studio assistant for Frankenthaler, Burton went on to work for a year as an assistant to Jules Olitski. Collectively, these influences made a decided impact on her early growth as an artist, something she perceives as a continued benefit of a Bennington education.

"Bennington persists in its unique mission and truly stands alone in its approach. There are really very few comparable educational options available today, and so I feel it is important to ensure its continuation." Burton and her husband are childless by choice, which she says drives much of their thinking when it comes to estate planning. Directing money toward scholarships is a top philanthropic priority for the couple who are "big believers in education and its ability to change and impact lives." She notes: "I support and believe in the mission of the College; I want to demonstrate my commitment through financial support both during and after my lifetime."

For more information contact:

Lauraine K. Goldberg

Phone: 802-440-4367

Email: lgoldberg@bennington.edu

DONALD HALL, WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE

Donald Hall, longtime Bennington Writing Seminars writer-in-residence, former United States Poet Laureate, and dear friend of the College, died on June 23, 2018, while in hospice care at his home in Wilmont, NH. He was 89.

A versatile writer, Donald's prolific publication credits include authoring and editing more than 50 books and anthologies.

Donald was honored as the United States Poet Laureate from 2006 to 2007. His numerous awards include two Guggenheim fellowships, a National Book Critics Circle prize, membership in the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and a National Medal of Art. Donald's relationship to the Seminars extends to the program's very beginning. Donald was an old friend of Liam Rector, the Seminars' founder and first director, and he remained deeply involved with the program. Donald and his wife, the poet Jane Kenyon, lectured at the first residency in January 1994. Shortly after returning home from that visit, Jane was diagnosed with leukemia. She died on April 22, 1995.

Donald frequently returned to the College to lecture, read his work, and engage with questions and discussions at each iteration of the Seminars, never missing a residency until winter travel became difficult for him later in life.

Still, Donald continued to visit the Seminars annually in the summer until his final visit in June 2016, when he read from his in-progress collection of essays, *A Carnival of Losses: Notes Nearing Ninety*, which was later published on July 10, 2018.

"It was amazing, a kind of resuscitation of spirit, when Don returned and brought his new energies," said former Seminars Director and essayist Sven Birkerts. "Bennington saw Don get old, and we were grateful every time he decided to come to the residency and read, talk, be interviewed."

Donald enjoyed a close friendship with the poet and essayist Robert Bly, with whom he would often share the Seminars stage, forming, as Birkerts remarked, a "stand-up poetry duo who brought their strong presence to the residencies and served beyond the call of duty each time."

Although best known for his poetry, Donald's literary work and interests spanned multiple genres and forms. He passed on his advice and love of language and great literature as he lectured, always encouraging his audience to strive for their best, regardless of the challenges incumbent with being a writer.

To honor Donald's legacy and enduring relationship to the College, the Bennington Writing Seminars has established the Donald Hall Scholarship for Poets, which will be awarded to the top poetry candidate in each of the 2019 MFA in Writing residencies.

Donald is survived by two children from his first marriage: Philippa Smith of Bow, NH and Andrew Hall of Belmont, MA; five grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

DANNY MICHAELSON, FORMER FACULTY MEMBER

Daniel Michaelson, a longtime faculty member who served the Bennington College community for more than 35 years, died on December 6, 2018. He was 74.

Danny was a beloved teacher, mentor, and colleague. He joined the College in 1981, teaching costume design and later conflict resolution and mediation. He served as Dean of Studies from 1991 to 1994. After his retirement in 2011, Danny maintained a strong connection to Bennington, teaching courses in the Center for the Advancement of Public Action (CAPA) and continuing his work with the Quantum Leap program, which he co-founded with CAPA Director Susan Sgorbati in 1999. This cutting-edge program—which has reached more than 2,000 Bennington-area elementary, middle, and high school students—uses the Bennington educational model by starting with what students care most about to re-engage them in their educations.

“Danny was an outstanding educator who cared deeply about his students and inspired them to develop to their full potential,” said Sgorbati. “To all his colleagues, his friends, his family, and his former students, he was a true friend and brought out the best in us. He was a bright light in a world of increasing darkness.”

Danny believed deeply and passionately in Bennington. He was an inspiring teacher and advisor to countless students over the years, many of whom attested to the magic of his mentorship—how as a first-year student, they would take a course in costume design to “try it out” and finish it having designed a show. Daniel demonstrated that quality of fearless risk taking himself, becoming a playwright for the Belarusian Dream project—including seeking former students as mentors—in order to tell the story of his grandmother’s roots. He was charming, caring, wickedly funny, a listener, storyteller, and an intrepid traveler who was adventurous to the end.

Daniel is survived by his two brothers, David Michaelson (Sandy Baker) and Peter Michaelson; his nephew Jeffry Michaelson (Mary); his niece Wendy Michaelson (Scott Moller); and four first cousins, Jean Penn, Anthony Man, Roberta McCormack, and Annie Pungello.

DR. HADASSAH “DASSIE” HOUTZ HOFFMAN ’57, P ’87

A versatile artist and dedicated philanthropist, Dr. Hadassah “Dassie” Houtz Hoffman ’57 died on August 5, 2018. She was 83.

Throughout her life, Dassie’s scholarly and professional careers skillfully fused social science and art. She studied Social Science while at Bennington and later earned her MA in Dance Therapy from New York University.

As a registered dance/movement therapist, she co-founded The Center for Experiential Psychotherapy in New York City, as well as The New York Voice Dialogue Center, which teaches Voice Dialogue to mental health professionals. Hassie was also an active supporter of Jacob’s Pillow, where she was a past trustee and performed with fellow alumna Judith Backer Grunberg ’55 in 2001.

A lifelong learner, Dassie completed her PhD in Humanistic Psychology at Saybrook Graduate School. Her dissertation, published in 2002, explored “Connections and Parallels Between Humanistic Psychology and Modern Dance at Jacob’s Pillow.”

Dassie was an enthusiastic supporter of Bennington long after her own graduation. She held a multitude of roles during her time as an alum, volunteering as a phonathon caller in New York and an alumni interviewer for admissions. She also chaired the New York Alumni Association and served as Alumni Fund secretary, as well as wrote the New York City alumni newsletter for several years.

Dassie was predeceased by her husband, Arthur Hoffman, who led the Leir Charitable Foundations, which was a generous supporter of the College’s Center for the Advancement of Public Action. Dassie is survived by her children Douglas Hoffman ’87 and Rachel Hoffman, and by her grandchildren Johanna, Joda, and Juliet.

ROSEMARY “ROSIE” E. O’DELL, FORMER STAFF

Rosemary “Rosie” E. O’Dell, a committed and beloved Bennington College staff member who worked for the College in numerous positions for 52 years, most recently as the associate registrar in the Provost and Dean’s Office, died on August 23, 2018, at Albany Medical Center, surrounded by loving family. Rosie was 73.

Born in Bennington, VT, in 1945, Rosie spent her life in the Northeast, graduating first from St. Mary’s Academy in Hoosick Falls, NY, and then earning her degree in business from St. Joseph’s Business College in Bennington, which later became Southern Vermont College.

In addition to her longtime work as registrar, Rosie always enjoyed taking rides with her husband Richard “Digger,” going to local fairs, reading, crocheting, and spending time with her family.

Along with Richard, she is survived by her sister Ann Marie Flynn Guile (John), brother Nicholas Flynn (Judy), and sister-in-law Pat Flynn, all of Hoosick Falls; as well as brothers-in-law William O’Dell of Hoosick Falls and Bob O’Dell of White Creek, NY. She is also survived by several nieces, nephews, great nieces, and great nephews. Rosie was predeceased by her brother Edward “Pete” Flynn, his wife Beverly, and her brother William Flynn.

HÉCTOR NÁJERA SANTIAGO ’09

Héctor Nájera Santiago ’09, scholar, writer, and teacher, died on October 14, 2018. He was 30.

Born in the small town of Putla in southern Mexico, when Héctor was 8 years old, he saw his father killed by neighbors who had a longstanding feud with his family. Shortly after, Héctor’s mother moved her family to the United States, where they settled in Escondido, CA.

Héctor was a lifelong advocate for the transformational potential of education. He served as Student President of the Chicano/Latino Youth Leadership Project and also sat on the organization’s board of directors. During his senior year at Orange Glen High School, Héctor was named Inspirational Student of the Month by the San Diego County Office of Education for his ongoing work mentoring students at his local middle school.

“It’s about not giving up, it’s about accumulating hope. When you have enough hope, you inspire people,” said Héctor as he accepted the award, reported the *San Diego Union Tribune*.

Before transferring to Bennington, he spent a year at California State University, Chico, where he was a member of the Legislative Affairs Council and was elected Chair to the Multicultural Affairs Council. A talented writer and activist, Héctor’s engaging work continued at Bennington, where he founded the student newspaper *Before the End of the World* and began a multicultural group on campus. His studies focused on Social Sciences and Pedagogy, and his senior work documented part of the College’s history as the school shifted from a women’s college to a coeducational institution in 1969.

Héctor continued to inspire both his mentors and his students as he earned his Master of Arts in Teaching from Brown University in 2011. Bennington staff and faculty members with whom Héctor remained close, including Joan Goodrich, Daniel Michaelson, and Paige Bartels, attended his graduation from Brown to celebrate with Héctor and his family.

Following his graduation from Brown, Héctor moved to Mexico City to begin a passionate career of teaching history, government, and English at a variety of schools in the area. At the time of his death, Héctor had recently begun a new position at Colegio Atid, a trilingual international baccalaureate school serving the Jewish Mexican community. He was planning to apply for PhD programs at UNAM.

Héctor was predeceased by his father, Adrian Nájera Vazquez. He is survived by his mother, Celia Santiago Olivera; his sister, Sonia; his brother, Adrian; and his beloved nieces and nephews.

We extend our deepest sympathy to the families and friends of the following members of the Bennington community.

ALUMNI

Mary Eddison Welch '40
November 22, 2018

Anne Forbes '41
September 6, 2018

Harriet Grannis Moore '42, P '91
August 2, 2018

Mary Pierce Byron '43
August 23, 2010

Frances Berna Knight '43
Date unknown

Pamela Tower LeBoutillier '44
July 16, 2013

Ann Morrison Leonard '45
November 3, 2017

Mary Ellen Crane Rossiter '45
October 21, 2018

Virginia Wells Schwartz '45
March 22, 2018

Joanne Wheeler Dunn '46
December 16, 2011

Dorothy "Dottie" Barbour Hayes '46
August 16, 2018

Elinor Butt Jenny '46
June 21, 2014

Sonia Grodka Blumenthal '47
March 26, 2018

Marydes Chapin Britton '48
February 11, 2018

Jeanne Johnson McCarthy '48
December 7, 2018

Patricia Dunn Silver '48
August 28, 2018

Helen Taylor Humphrey '49
May 7, 2018

Eleanor Cohen Stillman '49
May 4, 2018

Rosemary Brown Vanamee '49
August 14, 2018

Emily Fordyce "Fordy" Ewing Van Winkle '49
June 16, 2018

Joan Walls Gaffney '50
April 14, 2018

Kiriki de Diego Metz '50
November 3, 2018

Skipwith Duncan Ho '52
April 7, 2014

Elizabeth Brady Cavanagh '53
October 26, 2018

Lucretia McPherson Durrett '53
November 21, 2018

Mary Atherton Varchaver '53
April 5, 2018

Gretchen Dykema Belknap '54
November 3, 2018

Sarah "Sally" Holt Parsly '54
July 13, 2018

Dr. Solvi Bauge Sogner '54
March 23, 2017

Patricia Linde Hauser '57
July 5, 2018

Judith Patterson Schultz '57
September 2010

Roberta Bennett '58
July 20, 1992

Tryntje Ostrander Shapli '60, P '87
July 2018

Linda Tolbert Tarnay '64
November 6, 2018

Marcia Heiman '65
Date unknown

Nancy McCormick Caffall '67
August 30, 2018

Elizabeth Stewart '68
March 15, 2018

Cheryl Aldridge Pounds '69
January 17, 2010

Abby Willard Northrop '72
April 23, 2018

Carol Couch Anderson '74
October 2, 2011

William Teltser '75
January 27, 2018

Jenifer Keefe '80
February 2, 2018

Leslie Carol Berge '81
January 15, 2017

Leland Lawder Hyatt '82
December 8, 2016

Rowena Jessica Bart-Mikionis '83
January 5, 2018

Karen Leslie Burke '84
May 21, 2018

Eric Paul Bogart '90
August 10, 2017

Morgan Roberts '92
June 20, 2018

Margo Aragon Herrington MFA '96
April 2, 2018

Leigh S. Waldman MAT '01, former staff
August 24, 2018

Joanna Myer Anderson MFA '02
November 2018

Tatyana H. Schmid '11
May 31, 2018

Kyle Butler PB '16
June 5, 2018

Hytham Hanna '18
June 1, 2017

FACULTY, STAFF, TRUSTEES, PARENTS, AND FRIENDS

Carol Blomquist, friend
June 29, 2018

Paul Bloodgood, former faculty
May 4, 2018

Catherine C. Davison, friend
October 29, 2016

Nicole Desrosiers, former faculty
August 31, 2018

Gregg Devaney P '17
June 26, 2018

Robert Eshoo P '88
February 18, 2018

Frank Gadler, P '17
October 5, 2018

Vincent Gattullo, friend
September 12, 2017

Richard Gray P '79
May 16, 2018

Geoffrey A. Hampton P '84
May 22, 2017

Joseph Hurwitz P '83
September 9, 2014

Edgar "Ken" Kendall Landis, former staff
September 13, 2018

Arthur Lemieux, former staff
May 28, 2018

Leroy Logan, former faculty
December 7, 2018

Vincent Longo, former faculty
September 4, 2017

William Luce, P '09
January 9, 2007

Donald McKayle, former faculty
April 6, 2018

Jean E. Miller, former staff
May 22, 2018

Louise M. Ogert, former staff
May 24, 2018

Robert Rohdie, friend
November 30, 2018

Benjamin Rowland, friend
June 25, 2018

Elizabeth Sgarlat P '79
January 1, 2014

Julius "Jay" Smereck, Jr. P '97
September 18, 2018

James Weldon Smith III, friend
October 24, 2018

Dan Taub, friend
April 11, 2018

We regret that space restrictions do not allow the publication of full obituaries. This list contains the names of deceased Bennington College alumni and community members for whom the College was notified as of December 7, 2018. If you would like more information, please contact us at alumnirelations@bennington.edu.



COLOR FIELDS

1960s Bennington Modernism

JUNE 29 THROUGH DECEMBER 30



FIELDS OF CHANGE

1960s Vermont

JUNE 29 THROUGH NOVEMBER 3



COLOR | GESTURE

Early Works by Emily Mason

MAY 11 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 8

75 MAIN ST, BENNINGTON, VERMONT benningtonmuseum.org

Paul Feeley (1910–1966)
Untitled, 1959 (detail)

Paul Feeley Estate, courtesy Garth Greenan Gallery, New York

Tzaims Luksus (b. 1932)
Evening Dress, c. 1965 (detail)
Bennington Museum Collection

Bennington
museum
ART HISTORY INNOVATION

Emily Mason (b. 1932) *Thread*, 1967 (detail)
Collection of the artist, courtesy of Miles McEnery Gallery, NY
and LewAllen Galleries, NM



BENNINGTON COLLEGE
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