

# BENNINGTON COLLEGE



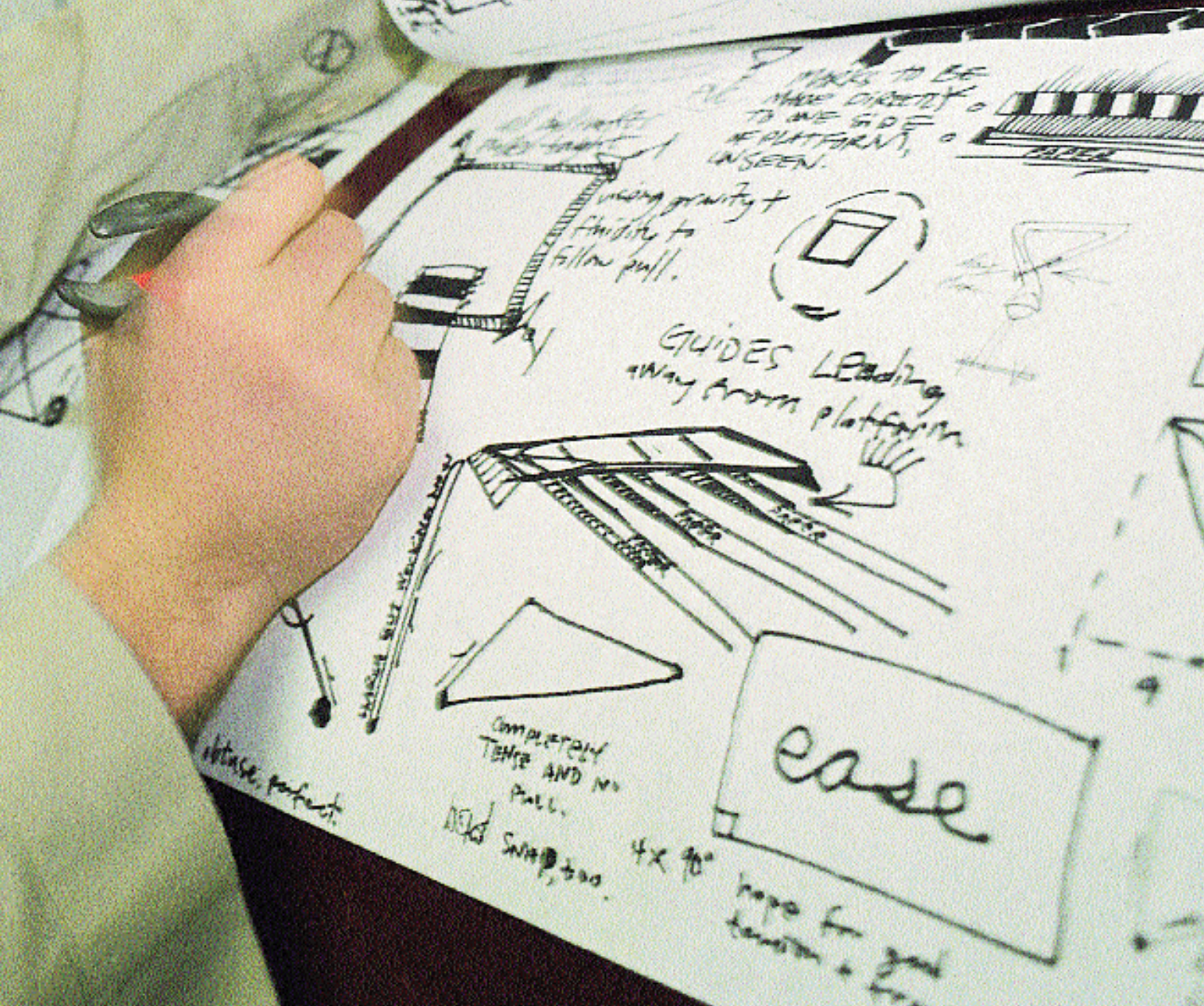
HI FIDELITY  
2008-2010







...the ... of the ...  
... of the ...  
... of the ...  
... of the ...  
... of the ...  
... of the ...  
... of the ...  
... of the ...  
... of the ...  
... of the ...



... TO BE  
... DIRECTLY  
... TO THE SIDE  
... PLATFORM,  
... UNSEEN.

using gravity +  
fluidity to  
fill pull.

GUIDES LEADING  
away from platform

completely  
TENSE AND NO  
PULL.

used SWAP, too.

4x 90°

case

hope for  
tension + ...









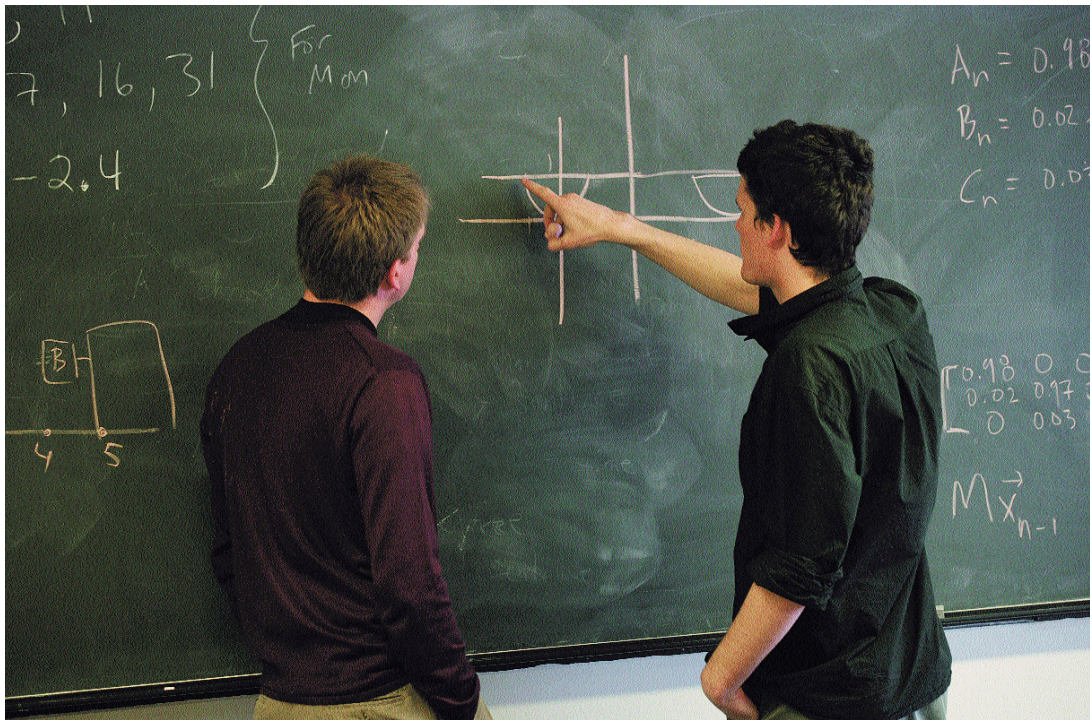














# CHART YOUR COURSE

**BENNINGTON'S CURRICULUM INVITES STUDENTS TO DIG RIGHT IN**

The curriculum at Bennington is shaped by the wide range of the faculty's experience and expertise, which encompasses all of the traditional liberal arts disciplines. As a student, you progress through Bennington by integrating different areas of the curriculum around central ideas or questions, newly discovered and ongoing.



REID GINOZA '09  
hometown: AIEA, HAWAII



# REID GINOZA '09 IS BUILDING A MACHINE —A SYSTEM

his system is not the microprocessor he helped build and document with computer science faculty member Joe Holt and five other students—although that intriguing tale will be told shortly.

It's not the system of composing music that he's currently fascinated with—early 20th-century composer Arnold Schoenberg's 12-tone row, which Reid is using to create original pieces in his Composition class.

It's the system of his mind. It's the engine of his most urgent questions, the thing that drives his education. And it is building up a serious head of steam.

Reid's main strength in high school had always been math, but "I was dissatisfied with the way I learned math and science in high school," he says. "They tell you what the formulas are and give you some examples of when to use them; you do the calculations, and you're done. I didn't find anything that would bother me late at night.

So I wanted to go somewhere that was open to exploring not only what the textbook says, but how it says it and why it says it and why this should matter to the world."

Early in his Bennington education, Reid had discovered that his desire for meaningful inquiry was more than matched by the faculty's. By way of example, Reid offers his Logic Machines class. "The aim of the class," Reid explains, "was to investigate 'What is a computer?' from two angles: 'What is hardware?' and 'What is software?' As we learned about those things, one of the other students had the crazy idea of 'Well, if this all comes together in the microprocessor, why don't we just build one?' So Joe said, 'Oh! Of course! We have to build one' and we did it. In the last three weeks of the term." During Field Work Term that winter, when students were off learning in the workplace, Joe emailed them and proposed a spring term tutorial to document the work they'd done. The documentation tutorial led to further work on the microprocessor, and in April, the class flew to California to exhibit their work at the Maker Faire sponsored by *Make* magazine, attended by 20,000 people.

## CLASSES REID TOOK LAST YEAR

Socrates  
Beginning Composition  
Logic Machines  
Morning Moves  
South Africa's Road to Democracy  
Trombone lessons  
Actor's Instrument  
Kant: The First Critique

Multivariable Calculus  
Moving Out: Beginning Dance  
Technique  
Yoga, Gymnastics and Dance  
Beginning Percussion  
Contact Improvisation  
Documenting the Microprocessor  
tutorial

## FIELD WORK TERM

A multifaceted internship that incorporated work with:

The Army Community Theatre  
Libertarian Party of Hawaii  
George B. Carter Serteens Club of  
Hawaii  
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii



Reid with his influences Ken Himmelman (Admissions), Dorothy Allen '09, and Joe Holt (computing)

Reid's classes were by no means limited to math and science, however. He assembled an array that included not only computer science but also philosophy (Socrates), music composition, dance, and a class with Nelson Mandela's former transportation minister. The next term was no less diverse, featuring courses in philosophy (Kant this time), multivariable calculus, acting, and percussion.

Reid was surprised to find that among all these classes, a theme began to emerge. Joe Holt had urged him to take advantage of the accessibility of the Bennington faculty and talk with his teachers. "So that's what I did. I'd go to class, do some reading, and then go talk to one of my teachers every other day." He sought out staff as well as faculty, talking with the director of the Field Work Term office and others.

The different perspectives of all these people began to help him see the commonalities in what fascinated him about all these subjects. Schoenberg's 12-tone row was a system for composing music. Revolutionary ballet dancer William Forsythe's ideas about the quadrants of the body were systems for creating movement. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a system for acknowledging the injustices of apartheid and facilitating a peaceful transition into democracy. The microprocessor was a system for organizing, storing, and using information. Kant's ideas about how people experience and understand the world were our human systems for storing and using information.

It all clicked for Reid in one of his conversations with dean of admissions Ken Himmelman. "Ken said to me, 'You're obviously very attached to this idea of patterns and how patterns arise.' I thought, 'Oh, that's genius.' It hadn't occurred to me that other people didn't see things the way I see things—see patterns in the same way." More conversations helped Reid see how that fascination might translate into concrete work in the world. Faculty member Susan Sgorbati observed that what Reid was describing as the core of his interests sounded, in fact, a lot like engineering.

The final surprise for Reid was that exploration led him back to math. "Susan pointed out that what I'm really interested in is developing systems. I realized that was perfect. Not only am I looking at systems and patterns, but I'm doing something with them."



Reid Ginoza  
Plan Proposal Essay

"Use any means necessary. I will not help you." Jason Zimba assigned our math class a problem with a number containing over 2000 digits, and told us we would not have class until we turned in the correct answer. By the time our class resumed, we had asked PhDs for help, researched different math ideas, and learned the basics of "Modular Arithmetic." This was not a course in Modular Arithmetic.

How I understand the Plan process is exactly how we solved the problem. I come in with a question that may not necessarily be named with a discipline, I see what is out there, and then I pursue a course of study that will help me answer my question.

Prior to coming to Bennington College, mathematics was the one course of study that I enjoyed and excelled at in high school. However, as I applied to colleges, I wanted more than to just "be good at math." While I could see the importance of spending so much time in the sciences, college seemed like the perfect time to explore other areas, such as literature, music, and philosophy, that people invest their *lives* in.

Grateful for the openness in Bennington's design and curriculum, I've taken dance classes, beginning music composition, an acting class, and so forth as described in my list of courses. There I was in dance class, improvising movement with other beginning dancers as well as musicians in the room. In Allen Shawn's class, I learned of the twelve-tone row developed by Schoenberg. This system gave me a refined enough relationship between notes to guide me in my creative process of composing music. In Paul's Morning Moves class, I learned of William Forsythe who taught using lines in space created by the body, divided the body into quadrants and looked at the movements of the torso. His system changed the way I saw movement.

As more of these revelations occurred, the more I realized how fascinated I am by the relationships between smaller parts and larger groups.

In my Microprocessor Documentation Tutorial with Joe Holt, we talked about the logical necessities of a microprocessor—the part of the computer that manages all the information. I realized amazing similarities between these necessities and Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, where Kant investigated how we as humans know what we know. We have created computers in our image by creating repeating algorithms. What I also saw through acting, though, was that even if we had these same logical processes, we developed into distinct individuals. Joe Holt points out, "the various expressions of an algorithm . . . it's never the same twice." I'm fascinated by this paradoxical idea of having a repetitive algorithmic system that incorporates dynamic development.

Thus, in my course of studies, I'd like to continue to explore the idea of working in systems that have algorithmic features: I'd like to return to mathematics. This mathematics that I plan to study is not the same mathematics I would have studied out of high school, however, because I am now bringing in all these other experiences to delve into the structures and systems around me.

In addition to continuing with math courses—perhaps Adam Boucher's "Projects in Applied Mathematics," Jason Zimba's course on proofs, or "Linear Algebra"—I also want to study music theory, history, and composition, to explore more the idea of artistic innovations in structures. Music was the first discipline where I realized this idea of creation in my sensual responses and I'd like to continue to investigate this area.



## VIEW THE CLASSROOM

# SOLVING PUZZLES, EQUATIONS & PROBLEMS

**I**N THE EARLY 1700S, THE SECRET OF MAKING PORCELAIN was highly prized, carefully guarded, and known only in China. So what do you do if you're an 18th century Saxon king who wants to get that formula? Lock an alchemist in prison and tell him he won't be set free until he figures it out.

And what do you do if you're a mathematician who wants your students to solve a difficult problem they've never encountered before—a problem that includes so many digits that even powerful computer programs can't handle them all—and get it done in short order?

Lock them in prison. That is, tell them class will not meet again until they find the answer.

Here is the calculator-defying problem that faculty member Jason Zimba presented to his students on their first day of Puzzles, Equations & Problems class: “Consider an exponential tower consisting of three thousand sevens:  $(7^{(7^{(7^{(\dots)^{7^{(7)}})})})})$ . What is the remainder when you divide the tower by 11?”

Sound simple? Liz Yenidjeian '07 thought so. "I think we all thought to ourselves, 'Ooooh, calculator time.' I pulled out my handy TI-89 in class, before Jason had even left the room, and started punching in sevens. After the third one, I snapped out of my delusion, realized this number was astronomical, and that a calculator wasn't going to cover it."

One of the rules was that the class had to work out the problem together and submit the answer with their signatures. Together, the students searched for patterns; consulted (and sometimes begged) other faculty members; scoured their books; delved into PhD-level math; and learned about modular arithmetic.

And they found the answer. Class resumed one week after the problem had been first assigned. It was just the beginning.

This was, in fact, exactly what Zimba was looking for. "I could see it had really gotten under their skin the way I wanted it to." Among his many goals for the class, there lurked his own personal curiosity. He wants to figure out exactly what makes a good problem solver. "I'm being drawn to think more about the role of love or excitement," he says. "This Terminator-like tenacity, killing yourself for 10 years to write a proof, has to come from somewhere—and it doesn't come from your boss saying, 'Do this.' How is it that one person looks for a pattern and finds it, and another doesn't?"

After the initial “tower of sevens” problem, Glen Heinrich-Wallace ’09 became intrigued by modular arithmetic, which led to his working his way through a book on number theory and meeting regularly with Zimba to discuss what he came up with. Heinrich-Wallace had come across one of these problems years ago, but at the time he didn’t know where to begin. Now he is more confident and skilled at tackling problems that at first glance seem impregnable.

He says, "In class we've been doing differential equations, functional equations, number theory, a huge amount of mathematics that I've never been exposed to before. But what the course is really teaching me is how to engage a problem that you don't know how to do, which is very tricky. It's about independent thinking and learning how to approach the unknown."

*Physics and mathematics faculty member Jason Zimba, who holds a BA from Williams College, an MSc from Oxford University, and a PhD from the University of California at Berkeley, has used mathematical and computational methods to shed light on the foundations of quantum mechanics.*



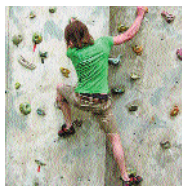
## WE ARE MAKING CHOICES ALL THE TIME

“We are making choices all the time—sometimes unconsciously, sometimes with a lot of thought—and then, when the consequences arise, we excuse ourselves by running away to our intentions. The real problem is taking responsibility for those consequences. The other day in class, we discussed the choice to adopt the armed struggle [against apartheid]. I’d given my students reading from various materials, and I said, What were the reasons for wanting to change? Were there limits to the type of violence they were going to adopt? What was the aim? What was the result? There was quite a healthy response from the students.

I asked my students, What is terrorism? And I found them waking up. Is terrorism defined by the act that is carried out? Does it depend on who does it? Does the aim with which they conducted it determine whether it’s terrorism or not? If they have a lively and inquiring debate, we will take it through longer. And if they all quickly agree, we’ll see if I can disturb them. The intention is not to say, There you are; this one is wrong or that one is wrong, but rather, have we come out of it with a better understanding? Can we now grapple with the question of what terrorism is? When I read a newspaper, can I read it more critically? My purpose is to see that you’ve got the tools to live better in the world in which you are.”

—Mac Maharaj, democracy and international relations faculty member

*In 1964, while working underground for the African National Congress, Maharaj was arrested and sentenced to 12 years in prison on Robben Island. After Nelson Mandela was released from prison in 1990, Maharaj was a lead negotiator for the ANC in talks with the National Party government and joint secretary of the Transitional Executive Council, overseeing South Africa’s transition to democracy. He served on Mandela’s cabinet as Minister of Transport.*



MAC MAHARAJ









TEREKAH NAJUWAN '07  
hometown: **PORTLAND, MAINE**

## TEREKAH NAJUWAN '07 IS FIGURING OUT HOW TO ACQUAINT AMERICANS WITH FOREIGNERS.

“It was here at Bennington that I found my ‘voice.’ I had been trying to capture my experiences as an African refugee using sculpture, painting, printmaking, ceramics, writing—you name it. I came to the United States from Sudan in 1996, and I feel like I’m eternally riding a long-distance bus. Every day there’s something new. I wanted to show all these odd moments and how we refugees are changing, adapting, colliding with this culture. Nothing quite worked.

Then I took a photography course called Street Photography. One day we watched a documentary of Robert Frank, a photographer who came to the United States from Switzerland. He captured almost all the moments of his life in single shots. I

thought, ‘My God, that’s what I’ve been trying to do! Since then, I carry my camera around so I can

document whatever I see. When I develop the pictures, my memory fills in the rest.

There is no documentation of my life before I came to the U.S., to Portland, Maine—no birth records, and only one photograph. In fact, just recently I’ve taken that photograph of me as a child and have begun to reinvent the space around myself to conform to my memories. I’ve also been writing a memoir, but because I’m still developing my written English, it won’t be complete for a while.

There’s virtually no documentation even now of the African refugee experience in America, so I’ve decided to document it myself. My process is very casual. Most of the people I photograph I know, and some I don’t, but none of the people I’ve

approached—including strangers in the grocery store—has ever refused to be photographed. I visit families and spend the day with them. I attend demonstrations, rallies, weddings, and holiday celebrations. Every photograph documents not only my own experience but a whole community’s.

I can think of a certain successful photograph. I had spent the entire day with my extended family—just talking and cooking and hanging out—until finally we were just sitting outside. My cousin was on the stairs. The light was right. I just drew my camera up. And because I’d been holding the camera so long, she wasn’t disturbed but just sat still. Lights surrounded her, and her eyes reflected them. Everything fell together.

Black and white is what I favor because it gives the images a timeless look. The social circumstances they address won’t expire any time soon, and if the pictures remind you of a time in the distant past, that says something about what it’s still like to be an African refugee in this country. Americans seem frustrated with refugees moving into their space, taking their jobs, playing in their streets. I understand that; when my own environment changes and I don’t know why, I get frustrated. The refugees are uncomfortable, too; we’re human.

What I want to do is formally introduce everyone. I’d like to have an exhibit in one of the cities where I took the pictures—Boston or Portland—and invite both natives and foreigners to the show, not just so they might view the work, but so they might meet one another and converse. I recently showed my photographs to some people, and they said, ‘Where were these taken? Sudan?’ I said, Maine. People think of Maine as a white state, and I tell them, You’ve got it wrong. New people are living all around you. Maybe you haven’t noticed.





Terekah with her influences Victoria Pringle '07, Dan O'Connor (photography), Alana Rios '07, and Jeni Mattingly '07

## SOME COURSES TEREKAH TOOK OVER HER FOUR YEARS AT BENNINGTON

Street Photography

Politics and Society

The Actor's Instrument: Centering Voice

The Digital Darkroom

Style and Tone in Nonfiction Writing

Introduction to Sculpture: From the Body

Logic Machines

Monoprinting

Production, Consumption, Exchange

Code Critique









# SAGES & PROTÉGÉS

## WHAT IF AN ENTIRE FACULTY COULD BE YOUR MENTOR?

The Bennington faculty are all teacher-practitioners doing ongoing work that engages the world outside the classroom. As a student, you work closely with a faculty advisor from the outset, and throughout your time at Bennington, a committee of faculty members in various disciplines works with you in developing your Plan. The many ways in which faculty create new work and pose new questions make them models for students, who in turn and over time create work and pose questions of their own with the faculty now as mentors.

**Q** **How did you wind up wading in remote ponds with a biologist?** You mean [faculty member] Betsy Sherman! In Animal Physiology I was doing an in-class project, and Betsy noticed that after looking at the newts I just put them all back in the same tank. She was alarmed: "How can you tell them apart?" I said, "They all have different numbers of spots on each side, and the combinations are different. One side of the spine may have seven spots and the other side only two—they're asymmetrical." She was impressed, apparently, because she invited me to stay on campus over the summer and look into what it might mean. It's exciting.

**Really?** Why does no one ever say, "Wow"? (Laughs.) If Betsy and I find something, it will be a fairly big deal in the field of evolutionary biology just because every new finding in the scientific community—especially regarding evolutionary biology—is important. Amphibians aren't studied much in this way, so new data is always great.

**How can your counting spots help us to understand evolution?** We're trying to find out if there's some correlation between spot symmetry, other symmetries, and the pH levels of the newts' ponds. The ponds in the Green Mountains have a significantly lower pH than the ones in the Taconics, which are almost neutral. The big question is, do the newts from the Greens have more asymmetry than the newts from the Taconics? If so, then spot symmetry is subject to directional selection. And the susceptibility of a trait to directional selection is what determines its rate of evolutionary change.

**What's the verdict?** Newts from the lower pH-level ponds are indeed more asymmetrical than the ones from the higher-pH ponds. However, we're still unsure whether the asymmetries are developmental rather than heritable. If it turns out they're heritable, though, that will make the debate even more interesting, because evolution traditionally favors the most symmetrical systems.

**Does your math teacher, who is helping you analyze the data, have any theories?** If he does, he's not saying! Jason Zimba just shows me everything I can possibly measure in the data. For him, my newt analysis is an excuse to teach me advanced math.

**On the subject of musical spots, I hear your composition style is evolving.** In my first music composition class with Allen Shawn, he said, "You sound like you're in a Russian winter; you never leave the minor keys!" He wanted me to explore more. The last time I met with him he went through what I had written and said, "Let's make a chart of your themes and motives, and then you can see where you need to bring back these themes if you want to carry this over to sonata form." I play flute and piano, but he doesn't want me to use the piano for my composition anymore. He wants me to go to a room and sit and write the music, and then go to the piano and see how it sounds.

**And had you left the Russian winter behind?** The pieces sound totally different from my old stuff. More complex. But for the most part still in minor keys.

**One last question. What's a homework party?** It used to be an excuse to stay up late and hang out! Now that I'm a senior it's a way to be with friends and still get work done. A bunch of us convene in one of Merck's four living rooms—the one on the back has a spiral staircase and a view of the woods—and just hunker down. When we need to, we help each other.



KAYLEE TOCK '07  
hometown: DENVER, IOWA

**KAYLEE TOCK '07 EXPLAINS WHY PEOPLE SHOULD APPRECIATE NEWTS,  
WHAT SYSTEMS EVOLUTION FAVORS, AND HOW TO ESCAPE A RUSSIAN WINTER.**

Handwritten musical score for piano and voice, featuring lyrics and extensive annotations. The score is written on five systems of staves.

**System 1:**

- Lyrics: "I WAS THINKING OF CHANGING THE BASE LINE HERE TO CREATE MORE MOVEMENT... THEN AGAIN THE R.H. PART OF THE BEGINNING."
- Annotations: "BASICALLY I'D BEETER LEAD THE PIANO R.H. TO THE B", "I WAS THINKING OF CHANGING THE BASE LINE HERE TO CREATE MORE MOVEMENT... THEN AGAIN THE R.H. PART OF THE BEGINNING."

**System 2:**

- Lyrics: "I WANT TO OWN MORE", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER".
- Annotations: "I WANT TO OWN MORE", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER".

**System 3:**

- Lyrics: "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER".
- Annotations: "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER".

**System 4:**

- Lyrics: "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER".
- Annotations: "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER".

**System 5:**

- Lyrics: "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER".
- Annotations: "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER", "I'M A LITTLE BIT OF A DREAMER".





Kaylee with her influences Allen Shawn (music), Betsy Sherman (biology), Kristen Scheer '07, Mary Casserly '07, and Jason Zimba (physics)















Costume design student Kirian Langseth-Schmidt '07 talks about working with her professor, finding clarity in 700 types of gray fabric, and going from Minnesota to Manhattan.

“

W

hen I first came to Bennington, I was under the impression that costume designing involved finding the one perfect outfit for each character—no questions asked.

Now I realize that designing is a process of problem solving, with a million potential answers. [Faculty member] Danny Michaelson has taught

me how to see. I locate the arc. I start from a distance, and then I get closer and closer to understanding the relationships among the different characters. I think about them as whole worlds, symbols, and ask myself what are their colors and textures.... In the end, together they create a larger image.

Sometimes the things I'm seeing and thinking go too fast for my mouth to articulate, and Danny runs at that same pace. We'll be looking at something and each start the same sentence, or he'll move his arms and make a funny noise and we'll just get it. Someone who watched us once marveled, 'For the last hour neither one of you has said a complete sentence.' We work in similar ways, too. Chaotically. I become a tornado and just grab everything: thread

and 700 clumps of gray fabric that to me are all very distinct. And through this chaos I reach a clarity

I was adopted from South Korea when I was little—only three months old—and grew up in northern Minnesota. Just two weeks before I came to Bennington I flew to Korea to start my birth search. When I returned, I pushed many of my memories and emotions from my trip away and replaced them with the excitement of college life. As I look back at the last three-and-a-half years I am reminded of what a personal journey learning is. My time at Bennington has been about both learning costume design and learning about who I am. Through my Field Work Terms and other experiences the College led me to, I've been able to move out into the world and make connections with other Asian American artists who share similar experiences regarding their identities. For example, last summer I worked in New York with [faculty member] Jean Randich, who was directing *The Dispute* by Marivaux. The play was put on by the National Asian American Theater Company.

I'm from a small town, and this was my first time spending more than two days in New York. I didn't know my way around at all, and simple tasks—taking out the trash, locking five locks—every task was a new experience.

The day before the show opened, Jean decided that, for safety reasons, everyone in the cast needed to wear shoes on stage. So I went out and bought six pairs—three for the girls and three for the boys—all matching, which in itself was a challenge. Then it turned out that the girls' shoes needed elastic because the show was so physical. I remember running around the city looking for elastic, and after finally finding some, realizing it was too white. I went to Starbucks and got a cup of coffee. I submerged the elastic in the coffee and dyed it, then sewed it into the shoes while it was still warm! There were no set guidelines; I was thinking in the moment, and, through innovation, just got where I needed to go.

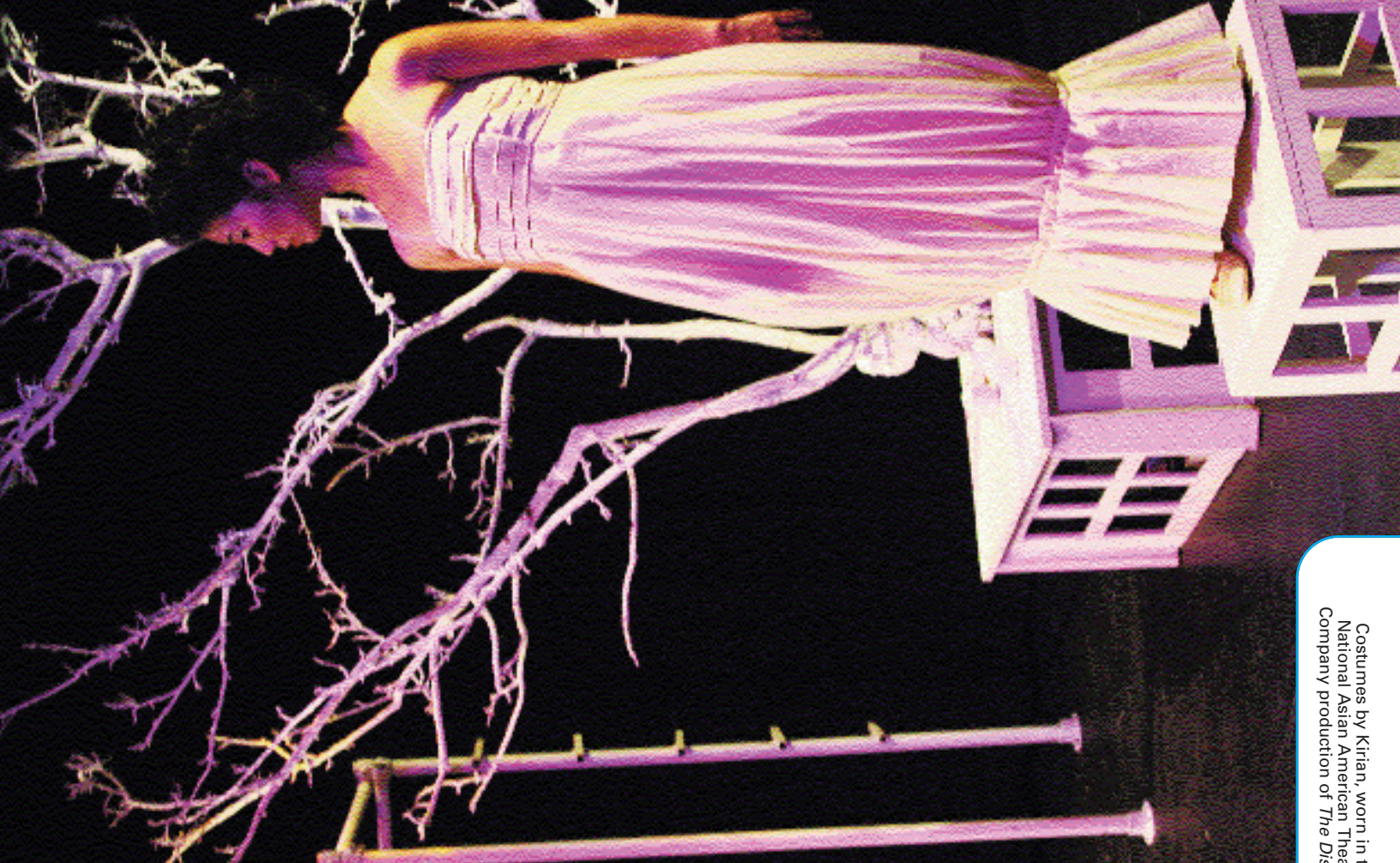
I'm proud of my most recent work, particularly the dresses I designed for *The Dispute*. They were made of plain white cotton so as not to look fancy or glamorous, but they gave the women an air of playing dress-up. Each gown had a short, empire bodice and the skirt was pleated and bubbled out but then ended in a mermaid—elastic at the ankles—with a big ruffle. They could wear the elastic around the waist and make the skirt billow in a baby-doll, or they could wear it at their ankles and look elegant. The transformation was exciting. On the subject of the transformation of self, my advisor, Dana Reitz [dance faculty member], once told me that a thing is only permanent if you make it permanent. Your work can shift and change as you change.

”



Kirian with her influences Terry Teitelbaum (costume), Kirk Jackson (drama), Dana Reitz (dance), Danny Michaelson (costume), and Eva Chatterjee-Sutton (Student Life)





Costumes by Kirian, worn in the  
National Asian American Theater  
Company production of *The Dispute*







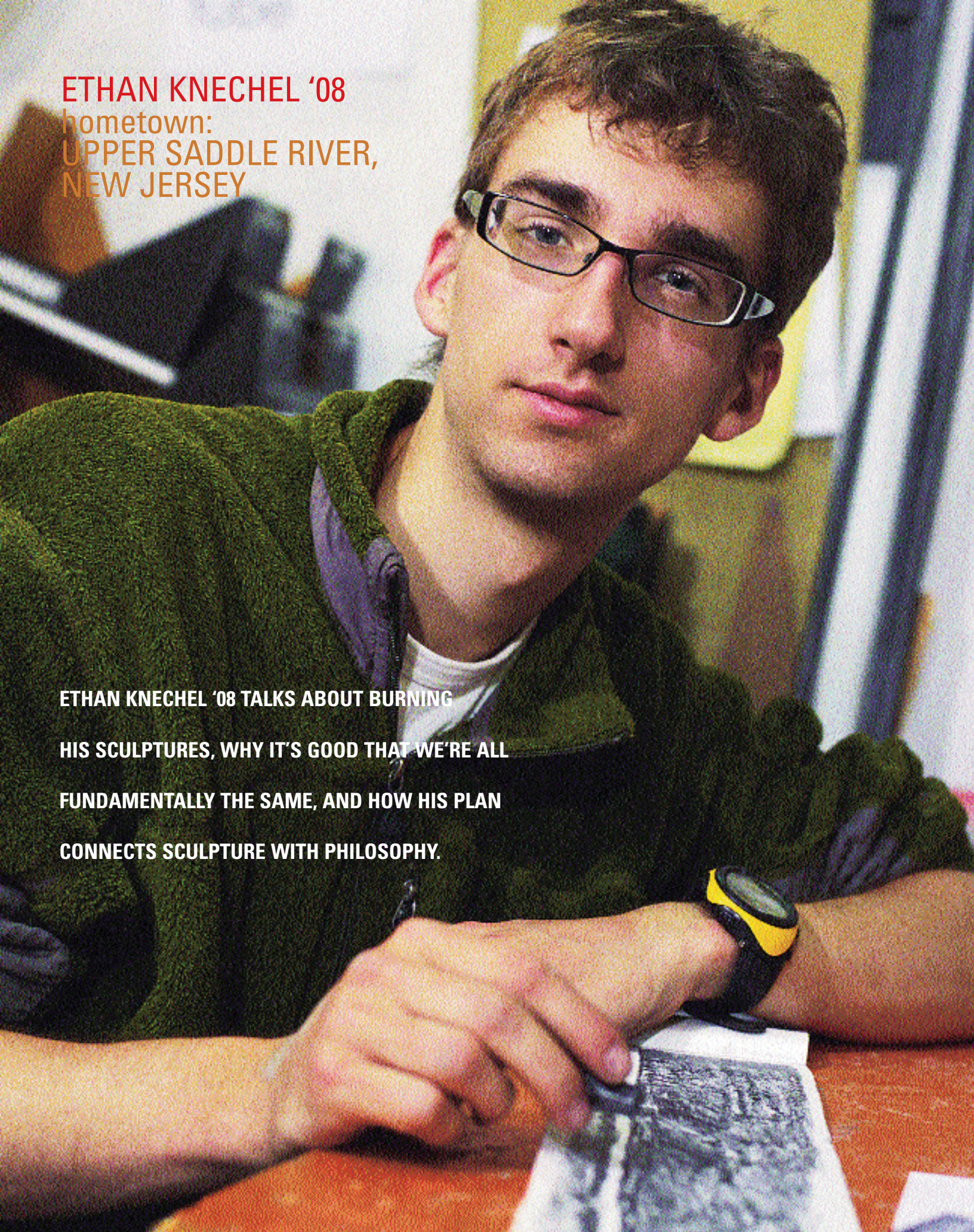


AT BENNINGTON, YOU MAKE

# BIG PLANS

The Plan is the structure Bennington students use to design and evaluate their education. This process involves supervision by faculty in continual one-on-one advising sessions, in reviews by faculty panels that periodically review your work, and a series of both prospective and retrospective essays you write about your education. Bennington's Plan process enables you to make your course of study representative of what might be called the shape of an intellectual identity. Forging that shape—by working through short-lived passions and discovering abiding ones, cultivating abilities and finding resources (whether in the form of a teacher, a method, a craft or discipline), and forming significant questions—can be the most intense aspect of your time at Bennington. While developing an individualized Plan, you learn what it means to take increasing responsibility for your education, your work, and your life.





**ETHAN KNECHEL '08**  
hometown:  
UPPER SADDLE RIVER,  
NEW JERSEY

**ETHAN KNECHEL '08 TALKS ABOUT BURNING  
HIS SCULPTURES, WHY IT'S GOOD THAT WE'RE ALL  
FUNDAMENTALLY THE SAME, AND HOW HIS PLAN  
CONNECTS SCULPTURE WITH PHILOSOPHY.**



**Q** **Why do you call your sculptures “tangible metaphors”?** What I find meaningful in sculpture often starts in something philosophical, and metaphors of space come up a lot in philosophical writing. For example, the image of the ladder appears a lot in Nietzsche’s writings—as well as the images of ascension and seeing things for the first time. And my latest sculpture is a large metal ladder with a grass platform at the top: the “Existential Viewing Platform.”

**The “Existential Viewing Platform”!** (Laughs.) Unnecessarily grandiose, I know. That’s the joking title. When I asked permission to build it on campus, I just called it “The Ladder.”

**You can’t back down now. Explain it.** I’m attempting for it to be a critique of Descartes’ philosophy.

**Now we’re talking.** It’s a place where you are fundamentally alone; you are just a Cartesian perceiver on this plateau. But when you talk with others afterward about the sculpture you each saw privately, you realize that you all saw the same thing. I thought somehow that would be reassuring to people.

I became interested in how people have similar experiences of reality because that’s one of the bases of ethical behavior: People have to be similar.

**What’s the point of making philosophical metaphors concrete?** In some sense, by concretizing these metaphors we actually make them looser, more able to be interpreted. Oftentimes there are thousands of ways to say something, but when we talk or when we write we only say one of them. Sculpture, I think, leaves open the possibilities. It sounds strange, but in creating concrete objects we actually create space around them to be interpreted in different ways.

**Have you had any “ah-ha” moments in your classes?** I took an existentialism class with [philosophy faculty member] Paul. There were “ah-ha” moments every five minutes in that class. My friend and I were incredibly taken by it. We started having philosophical discussions among our friends, hanging out in our rooms ‘til two in the morning, talking about Sartre and *Being and Nothingness*.

But [philosophy faculty member] Karen Gover’s classes had that too. Certainly Plato’s allegory of the cave struck me. I’d heard of it, but when I got into class I thought, “Wow, I could spend my life studying and still not see every angle on this allegory.” That was probably when I realized what sculpture could do: this thing the allegory of the cave did! So I told Karen about that. I think I told her. Maybe I should go tell her?

**I heard that a museum curator from MASS MoCA came to your final sculpture review—and not just because you were lighting magnesium ribbon on fire inside a glass cube.** The bright light being a metaphor for Truth. Yes, [sculpture faculty member] Jon always invites outside people—both to show off his students and to encourage us to work a little bit harder for the final review. The curator had some fantastic comments about the settling particles looking like nuclear fallout...



**On another topic: You live off campus in the College's cooperative house, Welling Townhouse. Why do you call that your "country home" and your sculpture studio your "city home"?** In the bottom of the Visual and Performing Arts building [VAPA] I have my own studio, which is where I do all of my work, and not just sculpture work. I read in there and write in there and do a little architecture in there; I'm pretty much in there all the time that I'm not at home or in class.

But the dynamic of the Townhouse is amazing. There's a crazy kind of exuberance when everyone comes home. The musical taste of the students who are cooking that night have a big influence on the atmosphere. If Yerba Buena's playing, people come in trying to pretend they know how to dance the salsa. If it's hip hop, if my housemate Dan is cooking, then people kind of bounce in.

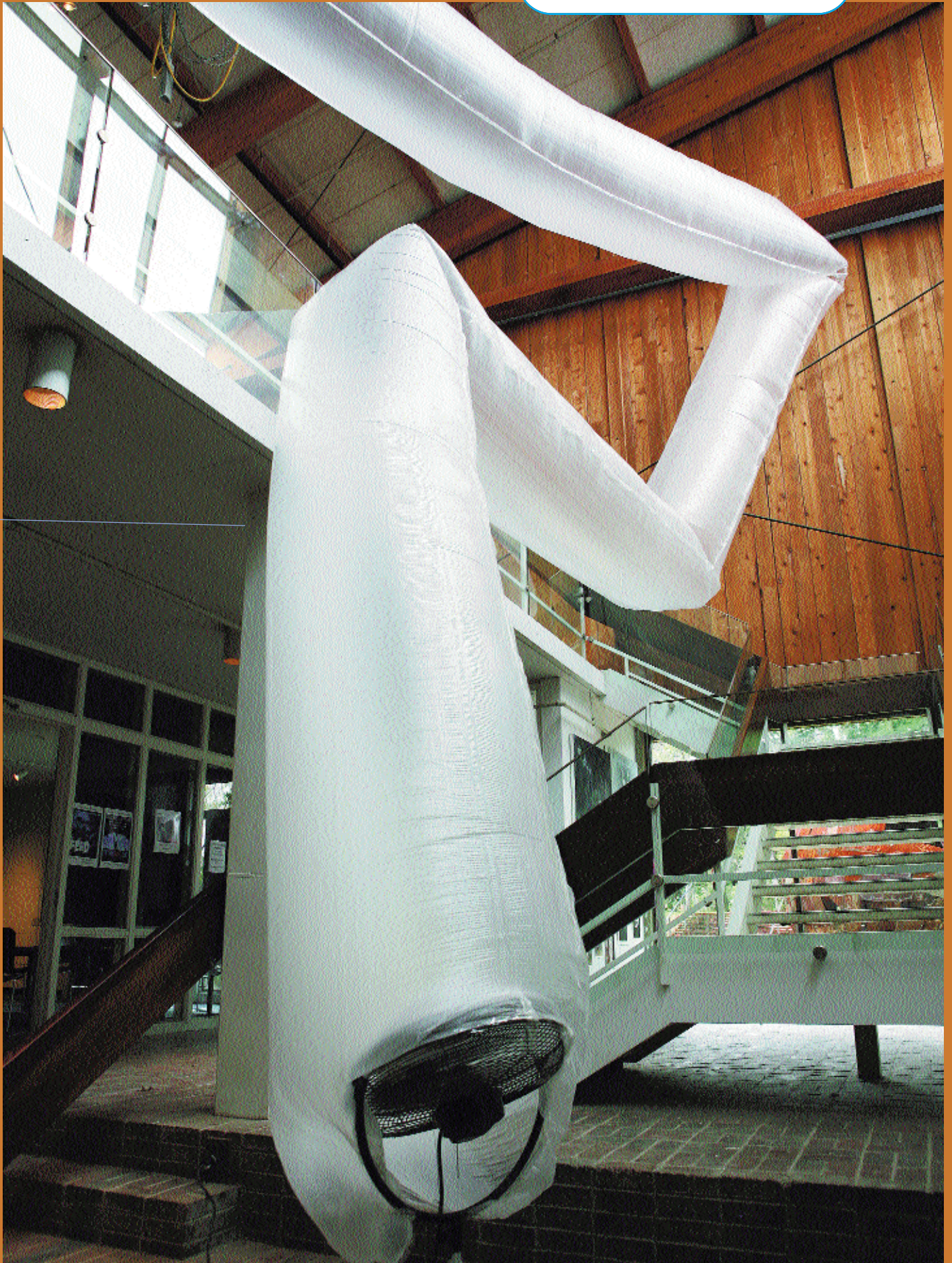
I don't think there's been a night since the beginning of the term that we haven't had dinner guests. Last term when we were reviewing our budget we asked ourselves whether we could afford to keep having people to dinner, and we said forget it; we'll give up all of the luxury food if we can just keep having people over all the time.



Ethan with his influences Jon Isherwood (sculpture), Karen Gover (philosophy), John Umphlett (sculpture), and Donald Sherefkin (architecture)



Ethan's sculpture, "Trash Bag Tube  
for the Brick Patio"







DOROTHY ALLEN '09  
hometown: DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA



# DOROTHY ALLEN '09 IS CONNECTING LANGUAGE AND BIOLOGY.

he says, "In high school, I was the kid who was drawing her biology notes, writing poems for her science classes. I had fallen in love with biology and literature and visual art, and though I didn't know how they worked together, I was sure that somehow they did."

Dorothy came to Bennington hoping and expecting to discern those connections, but even she was surprised at how quickly it happened. "My Experiential Anatomy class was a keystone course. It was about learning how the body works—what different parts do and their relationship to each other—but it was also about what it means to be a body. I became infinitely more aware of my own body and its components, movements, and idiosyncrasies, and I also probed those links between anatomy, language, and visual art.

"I got really interested in the etymology of the words for the bones. So for my final project, I researched the origins of about 20 or 30 of these anatomical words. I started thinking not only about how words evolved, but all their lovely metaphorical implications. If 'spine' means 'thorn,' what happens in someone's mind when they're putting those things together? 'Patella' means 'plate,' which is obvious, but 'tibia' means 'flute.' What's that about? So using all this wonderful, rich imagery, I began to write a fictional history, short stories, about where these words came from. It warmed and stretched my ideas of science education in all directions."

Meanwhile, something else was happening. Dorothy had chosen her classes with an eye toward exploration: Greek tragedy, the philosophy of evolution, and printmaking, which so captured her imagination that she ended up spending hours in the studio, doing more work than was assigned. As the weeks went by, those courses began to do what she describes as "talking behind my back; they all started coming together, and it was all making

'Patella' means 'plate,' which is obvious, but 'tibia' means 'flute.' What's that about?



sense.” In Dorothy’s view, her courses were not only operating independently, but also presenting ideas that harmonized and interacted with each other.

Writing her first Plan essay helped Dorothy clarify her primary interest and set a preliminary direction for her next two years at Bennington. In part, she wrote: “The complex relationships of structures within and between bodies, literal and metaphorical, bring up the questions that I would like to pursue during my next two years at Bennington. I have long been enamored by anatomies—of animals and humans, of ecosystems and social groups, of language structures and visual images. This interest has been heightened in the past year by my academic and creative exploration at Bennington.”

She continues to find herself fascinated and astonished. “I’m taking Comparative Animal Physiology right now, which is amazing. I recently saw a pancreas for the first time.” The decision to organize her Plan thematically, around the idea of bodies—whether “the physical form of an organism, a social group, an amassed collection of creative work, or the main part of an object or natural formation”—is now guiding Dorothy’s choices.



Dorothy with her influences Ron Cohen (sociology) and Ian Kowaleski '09



## HERE NOBODY EVER SAYS, "IT'S TOO DIFFICULT"

“I like the fact that students come to my philosophy class not necessarily from another philosophy class but from the dance studio and the practice room. It means I get papers like ‘Philip Glass, Wittgenstein, and Silence,’ papers that question and explore our understanding.

“Here nobody ever says, ‘It’s too difficult.’ Nobody ever asks, ‘Why do I have to learn this?’

“In the Plan meeting, three faculty members focus on one student and the specific shape of that student’s education. From the outset, learning becomes personal, coherent, and conscious. Nothing is casual. Freedom comes with the demand to be self-motivated. And along the way, lessons get taught, that life is about reflection and scrutiny, and that it is yours to possess, no one else’s. Isn’t this what a liberal arts education is supposed to be about?”

—Paul Voice, philosophy faculty member

*A scholar of moral and political philosophy, Voice is the author of Morality and Agreement: A Defense of Moral Contractarianism. He has also published articles in Studies in Psychoanalytic Theory, Theoria, Psychology in Society, and the South African Journal of Philosophy. He has been a distinguished visiting scholar at the University of Cape Town and has also taught at the University of the Western Cape, University of Witwatersrand, and the University of South Africa.*



PAUL VOICE



BRIAN PIETRAS '07  
hometown: BUFFALO, NEW YORK

Brian Pietras '07 talks about  
self-fashioning, his Plan committee,  
and not having to do something just  
because you're good at it.





In whatever literature I read, I'm always picking out gender problems to look at. Right after transferring to Bennington, I wrote a paper on the Spanish play *Life Is a Dream* (*La vida es sueño*) and decided to give it to Sonia Pérez, even though I'd never taken a class with her. I'd heard she was a scholar of Spanish Golden Age theater and was writing about a cross-dressing nun from the 17th century. 'What do I have to lose?' I thought. So I popped by her office, introduced myself, and asked if she would read my paper.

She must have liked it because a few weeks later when she was scheduled to speak at Bennington's cross-cultural colloquium on gender, she approached me. 'I have the Spanish side of the scholarship and you have the English side,' she said. 'Let's present together.'

Since then, I've presented at the International Congress on Medieval Studies that takes place annually in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and this fall I'm presenting at the Ohio Shakespeare Conference. I've discovered there's an art to writing abstracts of your papers. Faculty members like Sonia, Jonathan Pitcher, and April Bernard have recommended me for Bennington conference travel grants, which have paid for most of my expenses. The last time I thanked Sonia for this, she replied, 'It's a pleasure to work with you.' That struck me. I'd been told 'It's a pleasure having you in class,' but 'It's a pleasure to work with you' is something you tell a colleague.

So when it came time for me to find a thesis tutor, Sonia was it. She has this phrase: 'the voice from the interior.' It's how she describes dramatic soliloquies and autobiographical narratives. My thesis examines the differences between how male writers portrayed cross-dressing women of the 16th and 17th centuries and how women wrote their own narratives of gender transgression. Cross-dressing female characters are rarely given soliloquies in the drama of this period—especially if they are villains—so the autobiographies of their real-life contemporaries form a fascinating contrast. On the subject of cross-dressing women, Sonia and I are asking, 'To what extent are these women fashioning themselves by fashioning their clothing?'

More broadly, I'm interested in questions of narrative, and if they can be applied to theater. Whose story is told? In what way is it told? Why? And in terms of plot, what purpose does the cross-dressing female character serve in the play? She can be eroticized; she can be reviled as a monster. But she

could also, like Rosalind in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, be a combination of the sexes capable of bringing the plot to its conclusion.

My Plan committee always asks me thought-provoking questions. April warned me that people have been writing on this subject for a while now and that I would have to say something truly new.



Brian with his influences Jonathan Pitcher (Spanish), Sonia Pérez (Spanish), and Sarah McAbee '07

Then Becky Godwin, another faculty member on my committee, countered, 'If you're passionately engaged with a subject and aware of what's going on—and read and research widely and voraciously—how can you fail to produce something new?' Becky was also the teacher who, from the first day of our Edith Wharton and Henry James class, said that analytic writing should be every bit as compelling as a piece of creative writing.

I'm really excited to labor over my thesis during my final Field Work Term.

My last FWT was a revelation. I wanted to work in publishing and I wanted to try out New York. I mentioned this to my teacher Steven Bach, and he said he knew the associate publisher at Henry Holt in the Flatiron Building. He said, 'Do you want me to call her?' I couldn't believe it. He conducted the whole 'networking' phone conversation right there in his office. So I went to the city, and I worked, and it worked, and they've asked me to return for my upcoming FWT and also inquired about my post-graduation plans. I'm tempted to go back. But after several FWTs I know that everything you're good at you don't necessarily have to do.

I plan to apply to grad school, where I hope to keep my work as interdisciplinary as it is now—a mixture of literature, history, and gender studies. My tendency is always to narrow my focus, so my teachers have constantly reminded me over these years, 'Don't be afraid to keep your inquiry broad.' This is my goal. At Bennington, everyone assumes you're smart enough and ambitious enough to learn under your own steam, and they assume correctly.





becomes deformed at this moment w/ no childy 9

At the end of *III Henry VI*, Margaret is not burned at stake like her fellow cross-dressing Frenchwoman Joan at the end of *I Henry VI*, but she is punished by being stripped of her husband and son. For the first time in the play, the audience is able to sympathize with Margaret as she cries to the body of her murdered child, "O Ned, sweet Ned—speak to thy mother, boy / Canst thou not speak?" (5.5.50). Margaret then begs for death, now firmly entrenched in the role of a grieving mother and no longer the defiant woman-warrior who lead an army. With this return to the conventional female role of mother in mind, it is interesting to note that she is allowed to speak to the audience in direct asides when she continues this role in *Richard III*. Here, Margaret is a kind of ghostly chorus who exists to remind the audience (and her fellow characters) that she was once a mother, wife, and Queen. The "powerful sexuality and ... Amazonian strength" that characterized her in the previous plays has been replaced by "the anger of an embittered, desexualized crone" (Howard and Rackin 98). In *Richard III*, then, Margaret's self-making of her gender is replaced by an adherence to traditional female roles, even if this can only be accomplished by having her perpetually mourn the men who made these roles real—and rage at those who took them from her. Only once this occurs does Shakespeare permit her to speak to the audience, allowing them to have sympathy for her as a bereft wife and mother, but never as a woman who threatens to make herself into not only a man, but also the king.

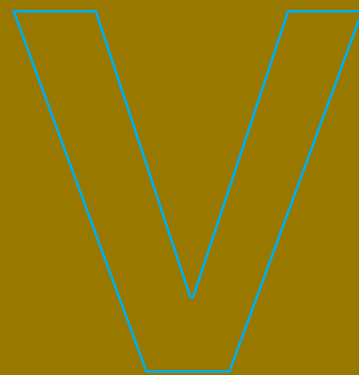
Now, she is deformed. She is not a mother or a wife. She has no identity.

Richard III  
ghost

superior man?

Very good paper  
let's make it excellent!!





## LANGUAGES AT BENNINGTON

**E**VER HEARD OF THE LIEUTENANT NUN? She detailed her exploits in her 16 century autobiography, *Historia de la Monja Alférez*. How about the Lost Generation in 20th century China? The intricacies of their lives during Mao's Cultural Revolution are captured in the Chinese novel *Xuese langman* (*Blood Color Romance*). And have you seen *l'esprit* in action? The dramas that resulted from this courtly caustic wit are reenacted in the French film *Ridicule*.

When you show up for your foreign language class at Bennington, you get to step into these worlds. Even introductory courses are centered on an idea, art form, or period in history; they pair fluency in language with fluency in culture.

Emily O'Brien '09 is taking The Historical Film, an intermediate French class with Isabel Roche in which students analyze—in French and for historical context—French film. “Isabel creates an environment that welcomes talking in class,” says O'Brien. “Because of that, almost without my noticing, my writing skills, comprehension, and vocabulary are all amassing.” Roche allows students to choose their own final projects, and some have decided to write screenplays in French. O'Brien is taking another route, seizing the opportunity to examine, through the lens of French film, her interest in communities. “Last summer I worked in a summer camp with a program for the deaf. I lived with a deaf woman, so I became really interested in that culture. In the film *Ridicule* there's a scene where a famous French abbot, who was one of the first developers of sign language, is presenting it to the French court. I've decided to research and write about the development of sign language and compare the truth with its representation in the movie.”

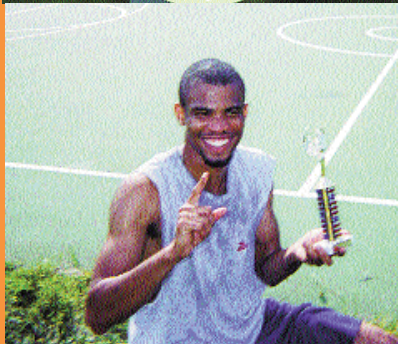
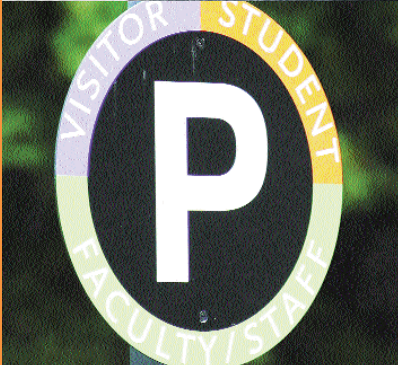
In the class The Art of Spanish: Language through Painting, Mamie Schiller '09 is relishing the chance to examine baroque and neo-baroque paintings from Europe and

Latin America along with texts ranging from commentary by Che Guevara to excerpts from novelist Alejo Carpentier, who pioneered magical realism. “Even if it weren't a Spanish class,” Schiller says, “the content could be a class in itself.” Chelsea MacDonald '07 has had a similar experience, interacting with a range of texts from the classic to the contemporary. In a French class on paraliterature taught by Jean-Frédéric Hennuy, the students “read and analyzed the things an average French person might read on the subway: popular novels, science fiction, comic books, mysteries.” In MacDonald's Francophone Identities class, a discussion about eating in various cultures led to a spontaneous lesson in French table manners. That kind of interaction with French culture—not to mention a junior year studying in France—prepared MacDonald for her upcoming Field Work Term internship with the French company Premier de Cordées.

“We're engaging real issues,” says Shunzhu Wang, who teaches Chinese. “We want to develop language skills as we're developing cognitive conceptual thinking. The cultural understanding is not separate.” Carol Meyer, who directs language study at Bennington, puts it another way. “At every level, we're trying to figure out the relationship between thought and language. Each word has huge conceptual underpinnings, and you can't divorce words from those cultures. So we're trying to teach the word and the whole murky, changing, dynamic world that is behind and supporting that word.”

*The Isabelle Kaplan Center for Languages and Cultures offers instruction, from beginning to advanced levels, in five languages: Chinese, French, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish. Instruction is integrated with art, science, history, literature, politics, music, film, and theater.*







# BECAUSE THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU SEE DIFFERENT SIDES OF YOUR WORK, YOUR PLAN MAY LOOK DIFFERENT TO EACH OF THEM.

THIS CHART IMAGINES HOW

THE REGISTRAR	YOU	YOUR GRANDMOTHER	YOUR ROOMMATE
psychology & democracy	political extremism	international relations	fanatics
literature & visual arts	typography's relationship to linguistics	English	poetry
music	composition	violin	acoustics
biology	evolution & the emergence of life on earth	science	chaos theory
social science	embodied paradoxes	history	gender rights
philosophy & visual arts	mark-making as confirmation of self	philosophy	drawing
anthropology & language	the culture of China	Chinese	Confucianism
social science & music	liminal rites across cultures	anthropology	drumming
religion	metaphors for cause & effect	ancient agriculture	religious literature
drama	directing	farce	actors as forces
math	encryption	math	hacking
dance, philosophy & physics	motion	modern dance	beauty





Malcolm with his housemates at the Swan house Coffee Hour, and with his roommate, Todd Von Ammon '08





MALCOLM PERKINS '08  
Hometown: CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA

## MALCOLM PERKINS '08 PLANS TO BRING MORE COLOR TO THE WORLD.



I based a song I wrote called 'Cherokee Blood' on the seemingly insignificant amount of Cherokee heritage I have—one thirty-second, or something like that. When I write music I feel this power in me, and I like to think the Cherokee heritage is a route to that power. I believe everyone has such a power.

My favorite music evokes clear and complicated visuals—it's colorful. Noise music is what I've enjoyed playing recently. For this upcoming cover night of Elvis and Queen, my roommate and I are going to do a noise version of 'Suspicious Minds.' When people hear noise rock, they often say, 'This is just noise, this isn't music.' In my classes with Allen Shawn and Nick Brooke we're listening to classical composers of the modern period—

Charles Ives and Stravinsky. I think I'm having the same reaction to

their pieces as people have hearing noise music for the first time. It's a matter of training the ear.

In my house people joke about not wanting to live anywhere near my roommate and me because we're musical. But the fact is, our room has become something of a hub. It used to be a triple—actually, it's the room I stayed in when I visited Bennington as a high school student—and we have two old tube amps going into a single mixer; we have pedals and a loop station, an electric guitar, a drum machine, and a synthesizer. When friends come over we end up giving an impromptu show.

But to write songs I need privacy. Last fall I found this tree stump in the middle of a hill; I sat on it and

wrote a song while looking at the mountains. In my first week here I would tell my friends at home about how beautiful campus was—how almost surreal. I'd say, 'There's this weird place on this hill and there are these dark mountains and these red lights and this strange stone building, and we're standing here next to this balcony and there's classical piano dancing upstairs....' You expect to get used to it, but again recently I noticed this place is paradise.

Whenever I wear my headphones I think, 'I wish everyone could hear these sounds in just this way.' I feel music intensely and want everyone to feel what I'm feeling, be as excited.

Making visual art is creating that sensual bubble concretely. My interest in visual art was sparked by my last FWT. I went on tour with the band The Extraordinaires. They had created a 14-song narrative and tucked the CD into hand-bound books. Across the country, everywhere we played, in warehouse spaces and galleries, the music and the community were linked to visual art. So the following term I took a drawing class with Mary Lum. It was the first time I'd been in an environment that forced me to analyze my art. My work was uneven, Mary said. But when she had me combine what I wanted and what she wanted, I improved. Toward the end I did my favorite drawing. It wasn't supposed to be natural; it wasn't supposed to look real; it was everything I actually saw but interpreted in the way that I liked.

Making visual art can be a relief. See, sounds I have to repeat and repeat and repeat because music is transient. That's the nature of it. Whereas visual art I can make, it's out, and I'm done. I'm just trying to connect in any way possible. It's emotional idealism: I want people to be closer.





A detail from Malcolm's "Liana and the Troutneck," oil, pencil, and crayon on paper





## TEND YOUR LIGHTNING FIELD

“There is, in New Mexico, on several acres of land, an art installation that has been there for a couple of decades, called *The Lightning Field*, by Walter De Maria. It’s a huge, many-football-fields stretch of flat land, dotted about with tall lightning rods in a grid.... I love the metaphor made available by *The Lightning Field*. Lightning, naturally, is inspiration, but the grid, the lightning rods, are what provide the skeleton for the lightning to move about and make patterns, to make the art. If there’s no field of rods, there’s nowhere for the lightning to go—except to a stray sheep, maybe, or a rock. Someone had to build the lightning field, and has to tend it, to keep the rods upright. This is the discipline of your job as creators: to build and keep the field of lightning rods so that when lightning strikes, you will be able to catch it.

“Art, dance, science—every discipline has its comparable work of serious, thoughtful, sometimes joyous drudgery, of tending that field of rods to be ready when the weather gets electric. And I have a piece of news for you. No less than in the New Mexican desert, the weather here in Bennington, Vermont, is extremely charged.”

—April Bernard, literature faculty member

*Bernard is a poet, novelist, and essayist. She has three collections of poems: Blackbird Bye Bye (which won the Walt Whitman Award from the Academy of American Poets), Psalms, and Swan Electric. In 2003 she was the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in poetry. Pirate Jenny, a novel, appeared in 1990. Her poems, essays, reviews, and travel pieces have appeared in numerous journals, including The New York Review of Books, The New York Times Book Review, The New Republic, The Nation, Newsday, Parnassus, and Vanity Fair.*



APRIL BERNARD





During the College's seven-week **Field Work Term**, all students leave campus for internships across the country and around the globe. Last year alone, Bennington students worked in 28 different nations. So far, the only continent unexplored by students on FWT is Antarctica.



# THE WORLD AS YOUR CAMPUS

## FIELD WORK TERM GIVES YOU A SENSE OF THE WORKING WORLD

Each academic year, students participate in a seven-week, off-campus winter term called Field Work Term (FWT). During each of your FWTs, you take your interests to the world beyond Bennington, where you pursue a job or internship in an area that complements your studies. By the end of your time at Bennington, you will have acquired a body of work experiences, a significant set of references, a network of professional contacts, and most important, the confidence to make your way in the world. In effect, you graduate with a résumé as well as a diploma.

The College helps you with every aspect of FWT. In addition to hundreds of internship and job listings in particular disciplines, the FWT Office offers a library of information on searching for an FWT position, writing résumés and cover letters, and interviewing. It also holds workshops on these subjects throughout the year.





**CHRIS BROADFOOT '09**  
hometown: **WAYNE, NEW JERSEY**





# CHRIS BROADFOOT '09 NEVER EXPECTED THIS ADVENTURE

A few short months after enrolling at Bennington, there Chris was, maneuvering his '95 Escort into a tight parking spot in Boston with the help of erstwhile presidential candidate and current chair of the Democratic National Committee, Howard Dean. "...Here's Howard Dean jumping out of my car to give me parallel parking directions."

That was just one moment from Chris's first Field Work Term, Bennington's winter term that requires students to work a job or internship relevant to their studies.

"I was hired for an internship at Democracy for America. One day I was working and the executive director asked if I'd like to see Howard Dean give a speech to the New England Press Corps. 'Sure,' I said. Then he asked if I'd like to drive him there." Turns out Dean rides only in American-made cars. In a lot full of Hondas and Volvos, Chris's car was the only Ford.

"I went to pick him up at his house and we drove to Boston. He got on the phone with his communications director, and it was so interesting to hear that behind-the-scenes conversation." As the car neared Boston, Dean took the directions from the other intern in the car and commandeered the job of navigator—and, eventually, parking director.

"On another day I got to have lunch with him," Chris says. "And then later in the internship, [2008 presidential candidate] John Edwards came up for a DFA conference on poverty, and I drove him around Burlington, Vermont. He was such a nice guy. One of the men with him was Fred Barron, the biggest contributor to Democratic politics in the South. He was like, 'So, Chris, when are you running for office?'"

Chris isn't ready to throw his hat in the ring yet, but that may be on the horizon. He came to Bennington with plans of studying literature and eventually becoming an English teacher, but a push from his advisor helped him clarify where his fiercest interests lie. "I took The American Short Story with Doug Bauer, who's also my advisor. He was hard on me, in a great way. He both helped me realize that literature wasn't exactly what I wanted to do, and made me better at it." A political economy class called States, Markets, and Society captured Chris's attention and gave him a clue as to what he did want to do: study politics and education. "Now I think I'd like to be a teacher, and later take that someplace political."



If he does, that could be very good news for the voters of the future. Among the many issues that Chris has examined, the U.S. budget deficit particularly interests him. "I wrote a lot about it in my political economy classes, studying it more and going into hard research. Coming up with my own solutions on how to reduce the deficit, proposing them in my papers, and getting feedback through my evaluations was a really good experience."

Rather than abandoning his interest in literature, Chris was delighted to find it intersecting with his passion for politics. "In my last term I took two classes that ended up relating to each other—The Literary Spy Novel and Trade, Money, and Empire. Both classes included Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*. In the former we were reading from Kim's point of view—what it was like for the people in India under British rule—and in the latter we looked at the British Empire and how it dealt with ruling over India politically and economically. I loved reading the book from the different perspectives and seeing how those fit in with my interest in the theme of democracy."



Chris with his influences Jesselyn Dreeszen Bowman '09, Hannah Torkelson '09, and Geoff Pigman (economics)



# VIEW THE CLASSROOM ABROAD



## BARCELONA ARCHITECTURAL INTENSIVE

**F**ROM THE ANIMATED STREETS OF BARCELONA, Spain, rise buildings dating from Roman times to the 1992 Olympics. These include the gothic church Santa Maria del Mar, Jean Nouvel's Torre Agbar, the primary works of Antoni Gaudí, and designs by Mies van der Rohe and Richard Meier. One might argue that, of the lot, Gaudí's architecture, with its luxe curvaceousness, is the most memorable. But the nine Bennington College students who went to Barcelona last Field Work Term with architecture faculty member Donald Sherefkin did not need to remember; they took the Barcelona Architectural Drawing Intensive with the understanding that what they saw, they would draw.

In addition to *The Rough Guide to Barcelona* and a book by *Time* art critic Robert Hughes called *Barcelona the Great Enchantress*, Sherefkin compiled a set of essays for the three-week course, and among them was a chapter from Alain de Botton's book *The Art of Travel*. In it, de Botton states, "On the basis of this conscious awareness [engendered by drawing], more solid memories can be founded. Carving our name on Pompey's Pillar begins to seem unnecessary. Drawing allows us, in Ruskin's account, 'to stay the cloud in its fading, the leaf in its trembling, and the shadows in their changing.'"

The group stayed 10 minutes from Barcelona's center in a Salesian seminary, which itself, says Sherefkin, "is quite beautiful. It's a whole city block and has a walled courtyard filled with gardens of tropical plants, fountains, moss-covered stones, and amazing birdlife." Each morning the students visited a significant building or museum—such as the Museu Picasso or the Fundació Miró—for on-site drawing. Occasionally they moved from drawing buildings to drawing buskers and the abundant life among the outdoor cafes, flower stands, and market stalls. But after a casual lunch, they would reconvene at the local architecture school,

where Sherefkin led them in drawing exercises until around eight o'clock, when they would break for dinner and return to the seminary. "The students were on such a rigorous schedule," says Sherefkin with a twinkle, "that they had to lobby for time to sight-see."

Of the Architectural Drawing Intensive, Sherefkin now says, "The experience of nine people occupying a public space for the purpose of intense observation and drawing was enlightening. There is a peculiar power which this activity engenders, giving us a sense of almost owning the place." Sherefkin hopes to combine the next intensive with art history—by co-teaching it with Dan Hofstadter, author of the *New York Times* 2006 Editor's Choice, *Falling Palace*, in Sorrento, Italy, next winter.

*Sherefkin practices architecture in New York and Vermont and also pursues various graphic and product design ventures. He has taught at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, where he also headed the University's in-house architecture office at Mies van der Rohe's historic campus. He has served on architectural juries at Harvard, MIT, McGill, and Penn State. He received a BArch from The Cooper Union and went on to study with Daniel Libeskind at Cranbrook Academy.*

*Hofstadter has published four books of nonfiction, Temperaments; Goldberg's Angel: An Adventure in the Antiquities Trade; The Love Affair as a Work of Art (nominated for a Book Critics Circle Award); and Falling Palace. The last was a New York Times Editor's Choice and a Finalist for the PEN Awards in nonfiction in 2006. He has written for The New Yorker and taught in the graduate painting department of the University of Pennsylvania. He was educated at Columbia University and the Sorbonne.*

**SOPHIE BRUNNER '08**

hometown: **SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA**

**SOPHIE BRUNNER '08 TALKS ABOUT WHY EVERY BUILDING NEEDS  
A CONCEPT AND HOW BEST TO SPEND YOUR FIELD WORK TERM**



**Q** **How is it that a building you designed is now being built—and in Vietnam?** For my most recent Field Work Term I got a job at a small, international architecture firm in Vietnam. In Vietnam there is a type of four- or five-story urban house built on long, narrow lots. These buildings are difficult to light and ventilate well. So probably to see if I was serious about learning, my boss—an ambitious young architect who took his mentorship role *seriously*—asked me to come up with lighting and ventilation solutions for these buildings. Concept designs. That was how he started me. I went on to help judge the new university design as well as give a talk there on lighting, ventilation, and green design. By the time my FWT was up, I'd been asked to design an elementary school, which is now being built.

**Does it look anything like the building you designed to represent “wave-particle duality”?** (Laughs.) Which is not being built. That design came about because, in a tutorial with Norm Derby on modern physics, I had been learning how something like the photon can be explained as a physical entity in space and also as something defined by a wave that isn't located in any specific space. I wanted to explore defining any object that way.

I decided to create a visual code, in architecture, for the laws of electromagnetism, in which the magnetic field created by a moving electric current is always perpendicular to the flow of electrical current and moves outward in rings. The building took the shape of an undulating sphere with a wave design perpendicular to the ground and a spiraling floor plan with hallways below and above ground. Electric currents were represented by the spiraling shape; the wave going perpendicularly represented the wave entity of the building, which was also a big, spherical mass.

**So it looked...** Pretty ugly! But I've realized that if a concept drives the design of a building—and it doesn't have to be something so contrived as wave-particle duality—whether the people who inhabit that building understand the concept or not, they'll sense a consistency and feel comfortable.

**And you care how they feel?** I see parallels between the laws of physics and human social development. For me, physics is a lens through which to examine these social patterns. What I ultimately want to do in the world is work with communities. Not as a social worker or an urban planner, but maybe by developing a better system for learning. I'm a student with a learning disability, and high school was tough. This country is due for some kind of educational revolution. My timeline for this project is massive, of course. I'll probably go to school many times.

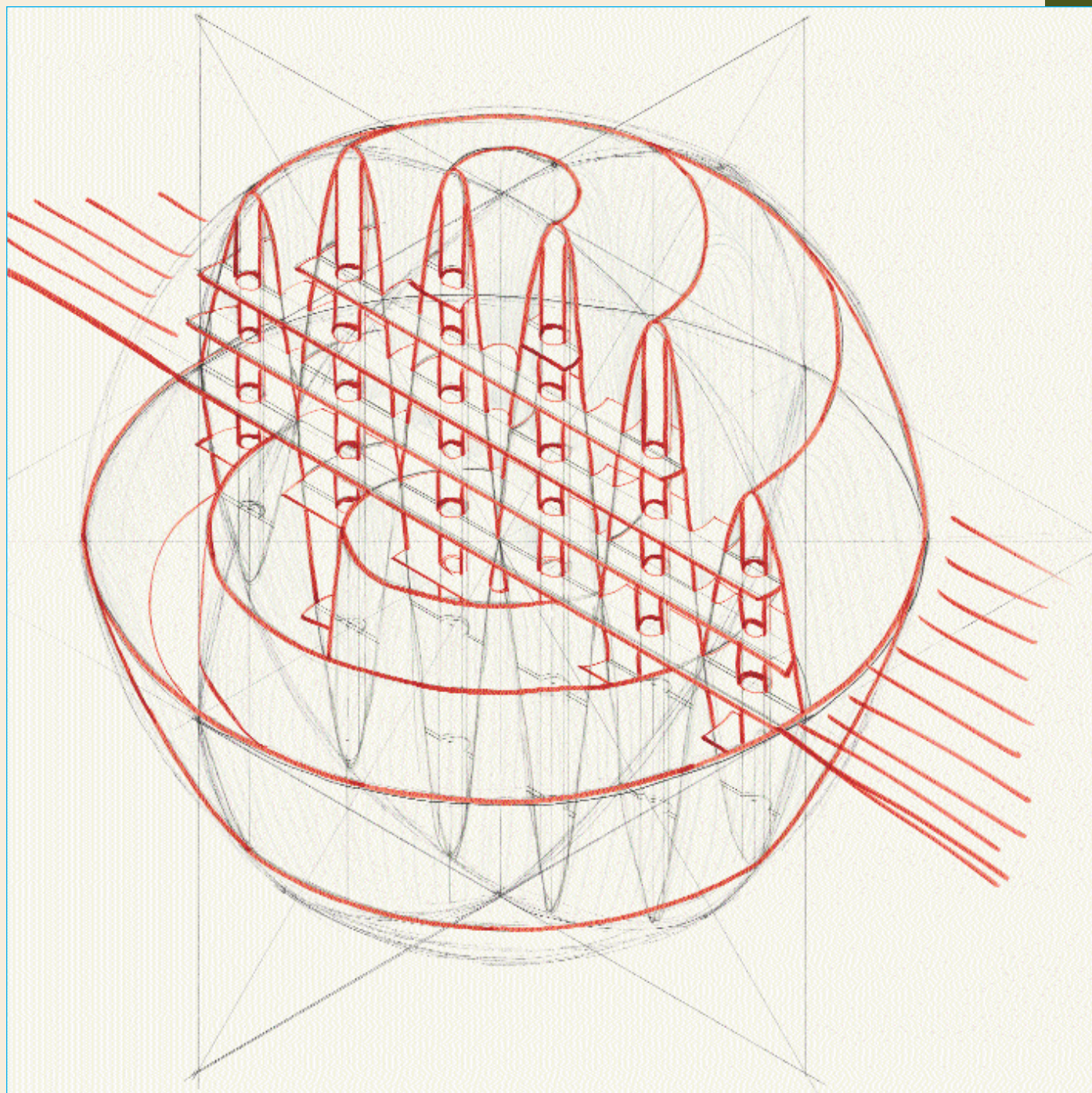
**For physics? For architecture?** I'll apply to graduate school for both and see where that takes me. I've done an FWT in architecture and, to decide what type of actual work I like, I'm hoping to spend my next FWT doing astronomical research in Chile. I'm also considering an abroad program in Senegal on sustainable design.

**I was wondering how you were going to beat your last FWT. Before you go, tell me about the waves you make musically.** Jazz singing is my release from all my structured work. Last fall a friend asked me to do a benefit concert for Hurricane Katrina victims, and that was the beginning of my performing on campus. I ended up playing the Mardi Gras dinner the following term. It's helped me, as a shy person, to open up.

Sophie with her influences Bruce Williamson (music), Norm Derby (physics), and Donald Sherekin (architecture)







# LIVING THE LIFE

**A**T BENNINGTON, learning and living are closely intertwined. To top off your coursework there are productions, film screenings, lectures, panels, exhibitions, recitals, and workshops—an abundance of goings-on. Consider participating in an intramural event. Traverse the Vermont landscape with the Outing Club. Compete for the title of Bennington's Iron Chef. Everywhere on campus you find people at play and, in the very air, an invitation to join.

## ORGANIZATIONS

New organizations crop up every term, but the following groups are ongoing.

- Amnesty International
- *Silo* literary magazine
- Intramural program
- Outing Club
- *Bennington Free Press*
- Campus Activities Board
- Community Outreach Leadership Team
- Drama Collective
- Film Society
- The Bennington-Alexandra Exchange
- Student Educational Policies Committee
- Judicial Committee
- Legal Aliens
- Maple Sugaring Project
- Student Council
- Student Endowment for the Arts

The following are just some of the activities and events you can count on.

## REGULAR EVENTS

- House coffee hour
- Film Society and Documentary Series
- Rock Climbing Club
- Yoga and Pilates classes
- Open Mike Night
- Comedy Night
- Pool tournaments
- Soccer games
- Student and faculty concerts
- Intramural sports and activities (dodgeball, ice skating, crafternoons)
- Stitch and Bitch
- Hoot Night
- Outing Club trips (hiking, kayaking, rock climbing, canoeing)
- WHAM (Women Here and Mobilized) events
- Sophomore dinners
- Community service opportunities
- Acoustic Night



- Nationally touring rock and indie acts
- Gallery openings
- Day trips (MASS MoCA, Six Flags New England, Pompanuck Farm)

### TRADITIONS

- Rollerama
- Bowl-o-rama
- Midnight Movies
- Fashion Show
- Midnight Breakfast
- Campus parties (Versus parties, Halloween, 120-minute dance party)
- Senior Dinner
- Senior Conference
- Pre-Orientation trips
- Senior Art Show
- Family Weekend
- Sunfest
- Orientation
- Fallfest
- The Snow Ball
- Prom
- House Chair Auction

## STUDENT CENTER

Bennington's new 10,000-square-foot Student Center is a sunny haven of cedar and glass. The center includes an upholstered enclave for studying and conversation, an open stage for events such as poetry readings, open mike nights, dance parties, and rock concerts, and a much-in-demand backstage green room for bands.

Here the snack bar, café, and pub combine, providing Bennington favorites (nachos, smoothies, and wraps), as well as gourmet sandwiches and salads made with local ingredients. Mixed in with the slick furniture, you'll find side tables handmade by a local craftsman out of Vermont sugar maple.

The mini-convenience store carries snacks, toiletries, and other sundries, as well as ingredients for cooking and pre-packaged organic foods from Annie's Homegrown and Amy's.

## HOUSING

The *Princeton Review* has counted Bennington among the top colleges with "Dorms Like Palaces." All student houses have kitchens and living rooms—most with fireplaces—where students study, nap, craft, read, make music, play video games, do puzzles, convene meetings, and hold weekly Coffee Hours. Some houses are clapboard and reflect 1930s New England; others are more contemporary, including three that were featured in *Architectural Record* in 2001.

Courtesy always rules within. This allows the housing leaders, called House Chairs, to act primarily as liaisons between students and campus services. Each house has its attractions. Depending on your musical taste, you may reside where there's a melodica, an electric organ, or a Wissner cabinet grand piano with a "special" C# key.

## DINING

In addition to the Student Center fare, Bennington serves up meals in Commons. Five dining rooms and a veranda comprise the dining hall. Hot meals—including vegetarian and vegan options—draw on cuisines from Thai to Cajun to Italian and are always complemented by an extensive salad bar, soups and freshly baked bread, a wok station, a pizza station, a pasta station, a sandwich bar, and even a student recipe book that can help you make use of the copious veggies, beans, and grains on offer. Between meals and in the evenings, students find tasty sustenance at the Student Center.

## SPORTS & FITNESS

With trips organized throughout the year by a staff advisor and a student board, the Outing Club offers a range of outdoor adventures for students of all skill levels. Connections with other college Outing Clubs, including those at nearby Marlboro and Williams Colleges, enable Bennington students to meet other students in the area and to explore even more of the region.

In addition to organizing trips, the Outing Club rents out gear (including tents, snowshoes, and head lamps) to students wishing to strike out on their own. They also distribute trail maps of several beautiful Green Mountain hikes, among them a local segment of the Appalachian Trail, treks to ponds, and hikes with beautiful mountain views.

### OUTING CLUB ACTIVITIES

- Biking
- Camping
- Canoeing
- Caving
- Cross-country skiing
- Downhill skiing and snowboarding
- Hiking
- Horseback riding
- Nature walks
- Outdoor climbing
- Overnight backpacking
- Snowshoeing
- Whitewater rafting

Several excellent ski resorts are within driving distance of the College. The Outing Club organizes occasional ski excursions subsidized by the Office of Student Life, but

you can also venture out to the slopes on your own. Stratton Mountain, Bromley Mountain, and Mount Snow all offer special discounts to students.

The Meyer Recreation Barn houses weight machines and cardio equipment, hosts Pilates and yoga classes, and boasts a sauna to boot. This is the place to go if you're looking to hop on the elliptical trainer or to beef up your biceps. However, the Rec Barn's most immediately striking feature might be the rock climbing wall. With weekly Beginners' Nights and Intermediate Nights, students of various skill levels show up for instruction in knot-tying and technique, and plenty of climbing time, with monitors on duty for belaying. Monday is Women's Night, with two female monitors.

### THE REC BARN

- Aerobic and weight-training equipment (selectorized/cable, cardiovascular, and plate-loaded machines)
- Aerobics room
- Pilates
- Rock climbing wall
- Sauna
- Yoga (hot, hatha/vinyasa, and anusara)

Just as open as (and even more spontaneous than) the Outing Club excursions are the intramurals activities. Student intramurals coordinators organize three to four activities per week, structured so students can pop into a pick-up game whenever time allows or whenever they most need a study break. Fanatics of particular games can sign up to be notified by phone when a game is approaching.

### INTRAMURALS ACTIVITIES

- Basketball
- Bocce ball
- Dodgeball
- Ice skating
- Kickball
- Pool/Ping-pong/Foosball tournaments
- Soccer
- Tennis
- Wiffleball

The soccer team is the most structured and competitive activity, yet it welcomes all skill levels. Though it is not part of a formal intercollegiate league, it plays other college teams from the region throughout the fall months and for part of every spring. A devoted crowd of students shows up to cheer at home games.





**NEW YORK CITY** is just 160 miles away, **BOSTON**, 150 miles, **SARATOGA** and **ALBANY, NY**, 40 miles. To the west lie the Green Mountains, and to the south lie the Taconic and Berkshire ranges. In all directions you'll find woodlands and fields. Only 20 minutes down the road are the internationally distinguished Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute and MASS MoCA, the largest center for contemporary art in the country. Also nearby is the renowned performance space, Tanglewood, as well as Jacob's Pillow, the site of America's first and longest running dance festival. After you visit these attractions, go shopping at designer outlets, go antiquing, go mountain biking, paddling, hiking, or skiing at one of six proximate resorts, and indulge in the fresh cheeses, maple syrup, fruits, and vegetables at local orchards and farms.

Few places are as beautiful as southern Vermont, and the Bennington campus—with its mixture of the rustic and refined—does it justice. If you can, visit while the College is in session: September to mid-December or late February to early June. Tour the student houses and academic buildings, as well as the students' favorite hang-outs and quiet places. Sit in on classes, interview with an admissions counselor or current student, enjoy a meal, and consider staying overnight.

## REGIONAL ATTRACTIONS

### VERMONT

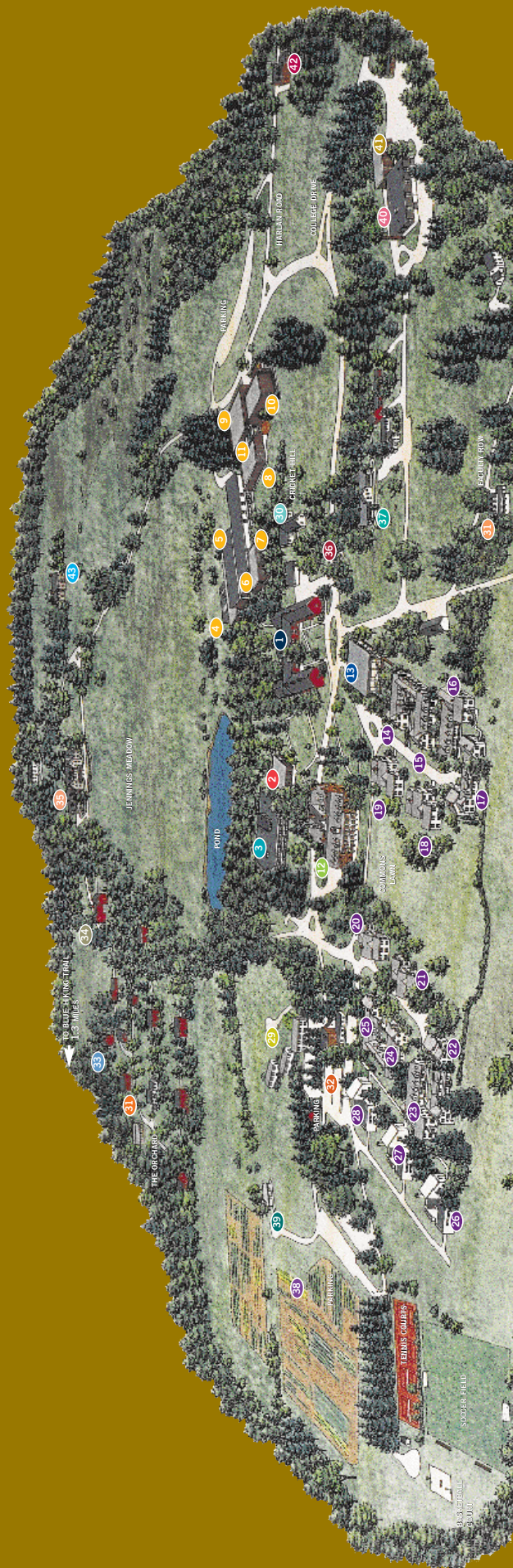
- Park-McCullough House, one of the best preserved Victorian mansions in New England
- Stratton Mountain, Bromley Mountain, and Mount Snow Ski Resorts
- Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Factory
- Appalachian Trail
- Bennington Museum, featuring the Grandma Moses collection
- Hildene (The Robert Todd Lincoln Historic Estate)
- Robert Frost Stone House Museum
- The Old First Church
- Bennington Battle Monument
- Battenkill Canoe trips
- Emerald Lake & Shaftsbury State Parks

### NEW YORK

- Times Union Center sports arena
- Proctor's Theatre, Schenectady's famous stage

### WILLIAMSTOWN AND THE BERKSHIRES

- Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute
- Williamstown Theatre Festival
- Images Cinema, a local indie moviehouse
- MASS MoCA, the region's premier artist showcase
- Tanglewood, summer home of the Boston Pops
- Jacob's Pillow



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Barn</li> <li>● Classrooms and administration</li> <li>● Triham Lecture Hall</li> <li>● Dickinson Science Building</li> <li>● Media Center, Center for Language Technologies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Visual and Performing Arts Center (VAPA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Kiln Room</li> <li>● Gallery</li> <li>● Feely Art Workshop</li> <li>● Usdan Gallery</li> <li>● Lester Martin Theater</li> <li>● Martha Hill Dance Theater</li> <li>● Greenwell Auditorium</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Swan House</li> <li>● Woolley House</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Commons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Crossett Library</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Margot Tenney Theater</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stokes House</li> <li>● Franklin House</li> <li>● Canfield House</li> <li>● Dewey House</li> <li>● Booth House</li> <li>● Kilpatrick House</li> <li>● Welling House</li> <li>● Bingham House</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● McCullough House</li> <li>● Leigh House</li> <li>● Noyes House</li> <li>● Sawtell House</li> <li>● Fels House</li> <li>● Merck, Perkins, Paris-Borden</li> <li>● Cricket Hill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Faculty Houses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Faculty Row, The Orchard</li> <li>● Student Center</li> <li>● Davis Alumni House</li> <li>● Deane Carriage Barn</li> <li>● Jennings Hall</li> <li>● Security Booth</li> <li>● Early Childhood Center</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Stickney Observatory</li> <li>● Maintenance Building</li> <li>● Meyer Recreation Barn</li> <li>● Shingle Cottage</li> <li>● Longmeadow</li> </ul>
--	---	--	--	---	--





# SMALL COLLEGE, BIG VIBE

43

average number  
of epiphanies  
experienced by  
a single student  
in the course of  
a term

28

# of nations where students spent Field Work Term last year

4

# of alumni who have won MacArthur Genius Awards

1

# of faculty members who have served as ambassador to the United Nations

12

average # of students in a class

100

% of modern dance pioneers who taught at Bennington

3.....

number of faculty members who have  
either played with or recorded Neil  
Young, Judy Collins, Joni Mitchell,  
Frank Zappa, and John Lennon

1.....

number of faculty members who have  
headed a Hollywood studio

36.....

average number of participants in a  
free-for-all, pick-up game of dodgeball  
on Commons lawn after Sunday brunch

1

number of faculty  
members who have  
served on Nelson  
Mandela's cabinet

100

percentage of  
Bennington  
alumni who live  
fascinating lives

3

number of U.S.  
Poet Laureates  
who have taught  
at Bennington

## DEGREES CONFERRED AND CERTIFICATES AWARDED

Bachelor of Arts  
Master of Fine Arts in Writing and Literature (low-residency)  
Master of Fine Arts in Performing Arts  
Master of Arts in Teaching  
Master of Arts in Teaching a Second Language  
Postbaccalaureate Certificate in Premedical and Allied Health Sciences

Photography: Scott Barrow, Gregory Cherin, Briece Della Rocca, Mitch Epstein, Sue Huggins, Cynthia Locklin, Erin McKenny, Sue Rees, Carly Whitaker '09  
Design: Carol June Jessop Printed by Brodock Press

Bennington College is accredited by the New England Association of Schools & Colleges, Inc.

Bennington College  
Office of Admissions  
One College Drive  
Bennington, Vermont  
05201

800-833-6845  
Fax: 802-440-4320

[admissions@bennington.edu](mailto:admissions@bennington.edu)  
[www.bennington.edu](http://www.bennington.edu)

[www.bennington.edu](http://www.bennington.edu)

BENNINGTON COLLEGE • ONE COLLEGE DRIVE • BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201