

# College of Fine Arts

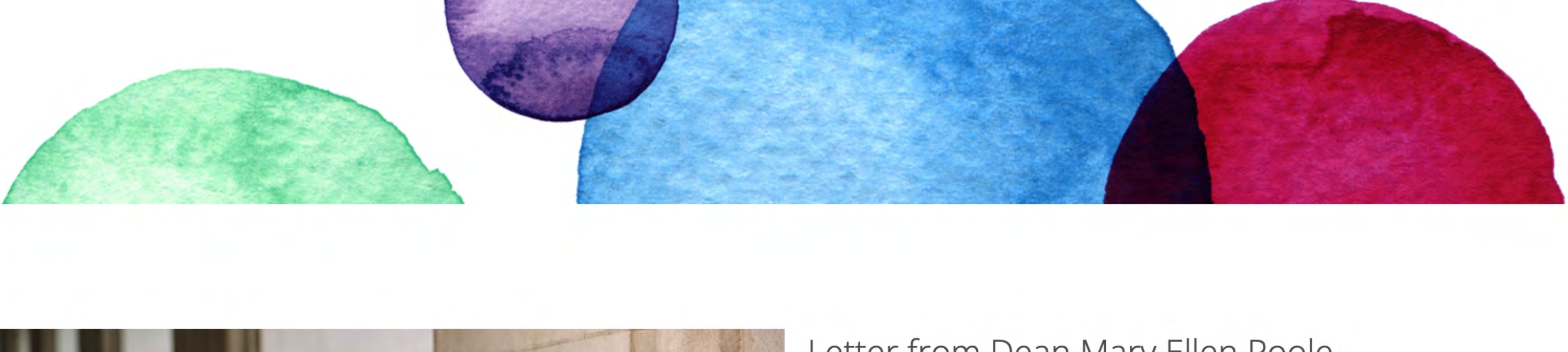
- Academics
- Research & Creative Practice
- ICA Pittsburgh
- Frank-Ratchye STUDIO
- News
- About
- Giving



## Moving Forward with a New Direction

Every area within CFA has experienced positive change — from new leadership, to expanded student-focused programming, to increased awareness of and participation in efforts for shared responsibility for diversity, equity and inclusion. CFA has never been more vibrant or more future-focused.

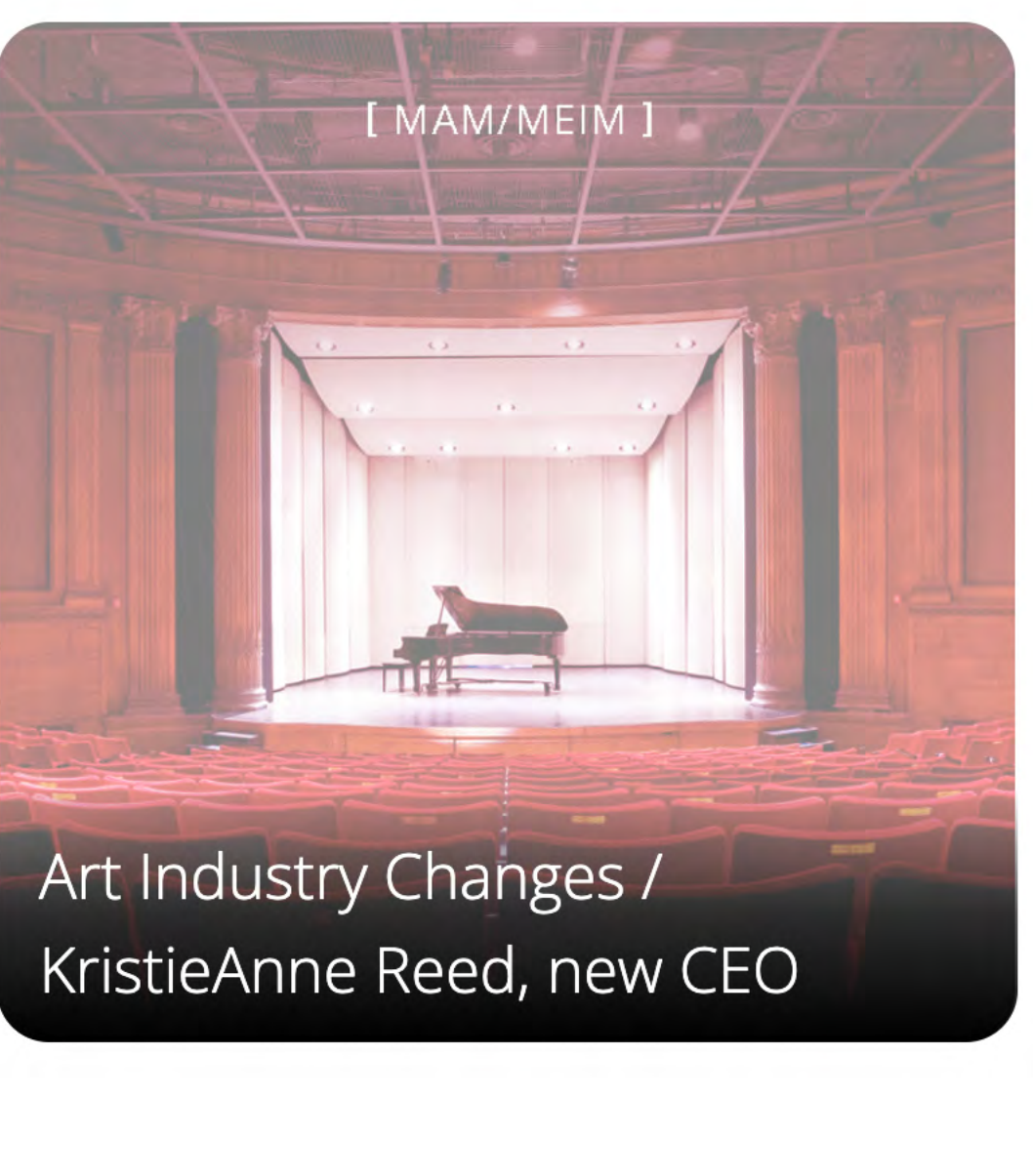
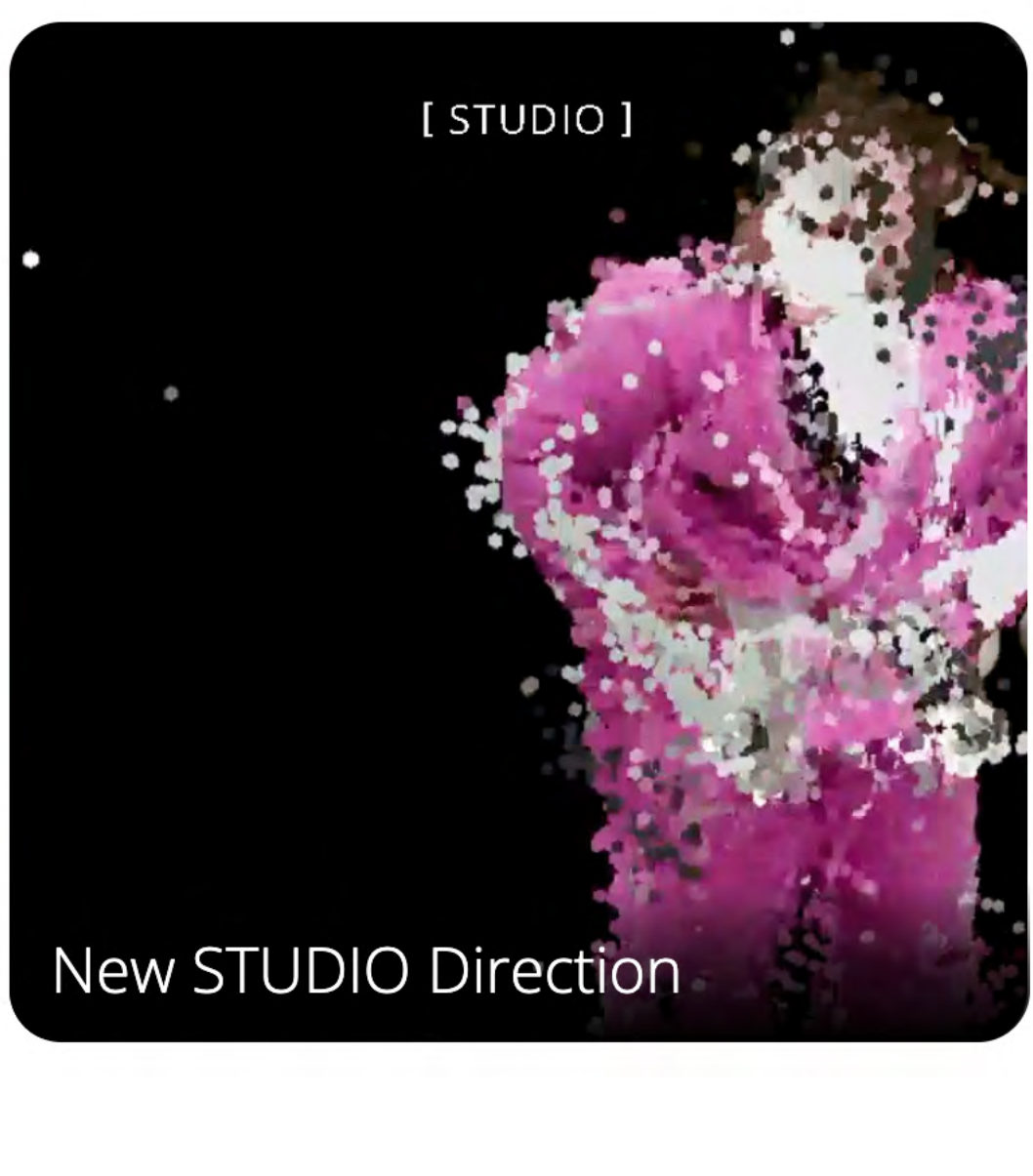
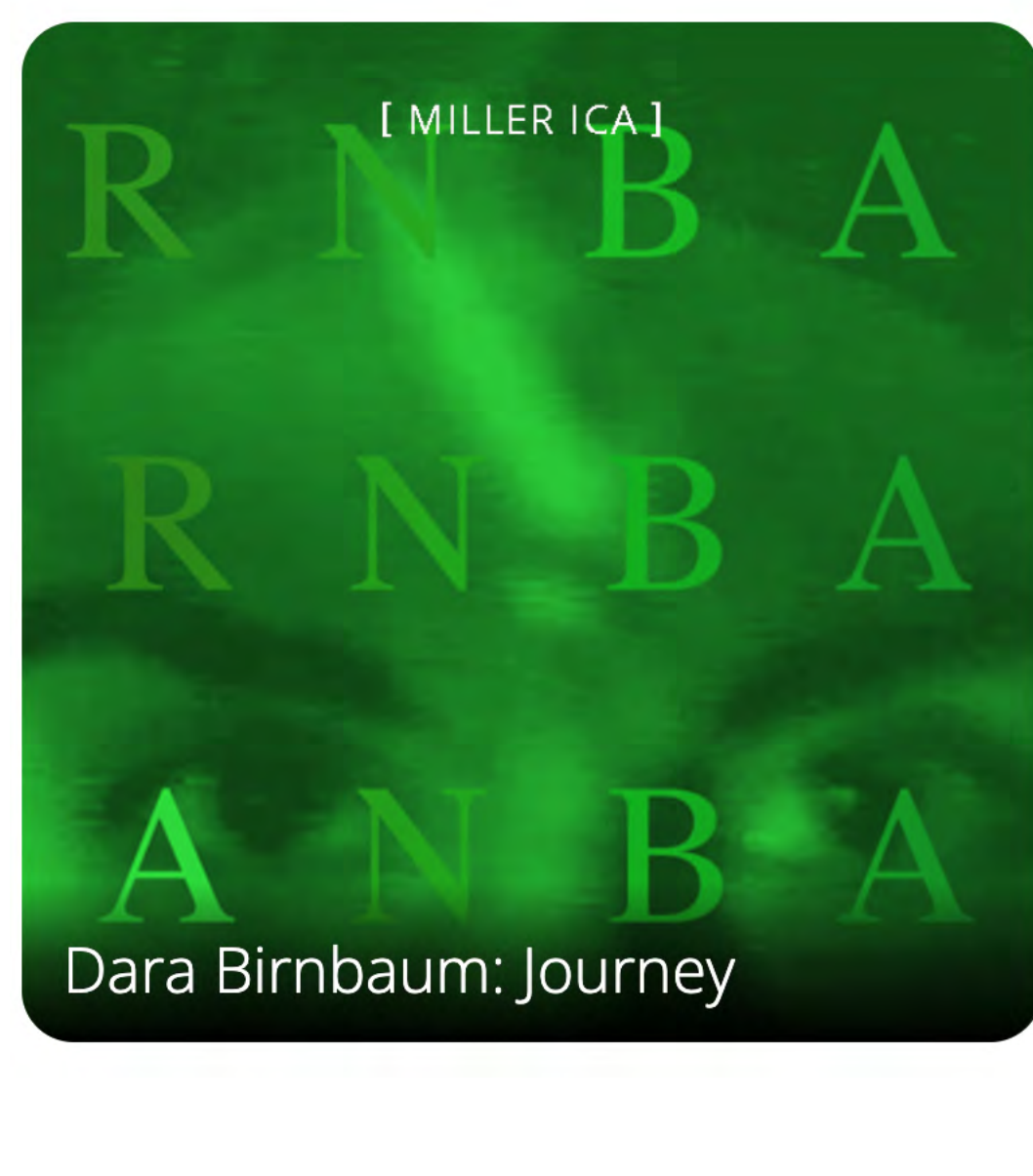
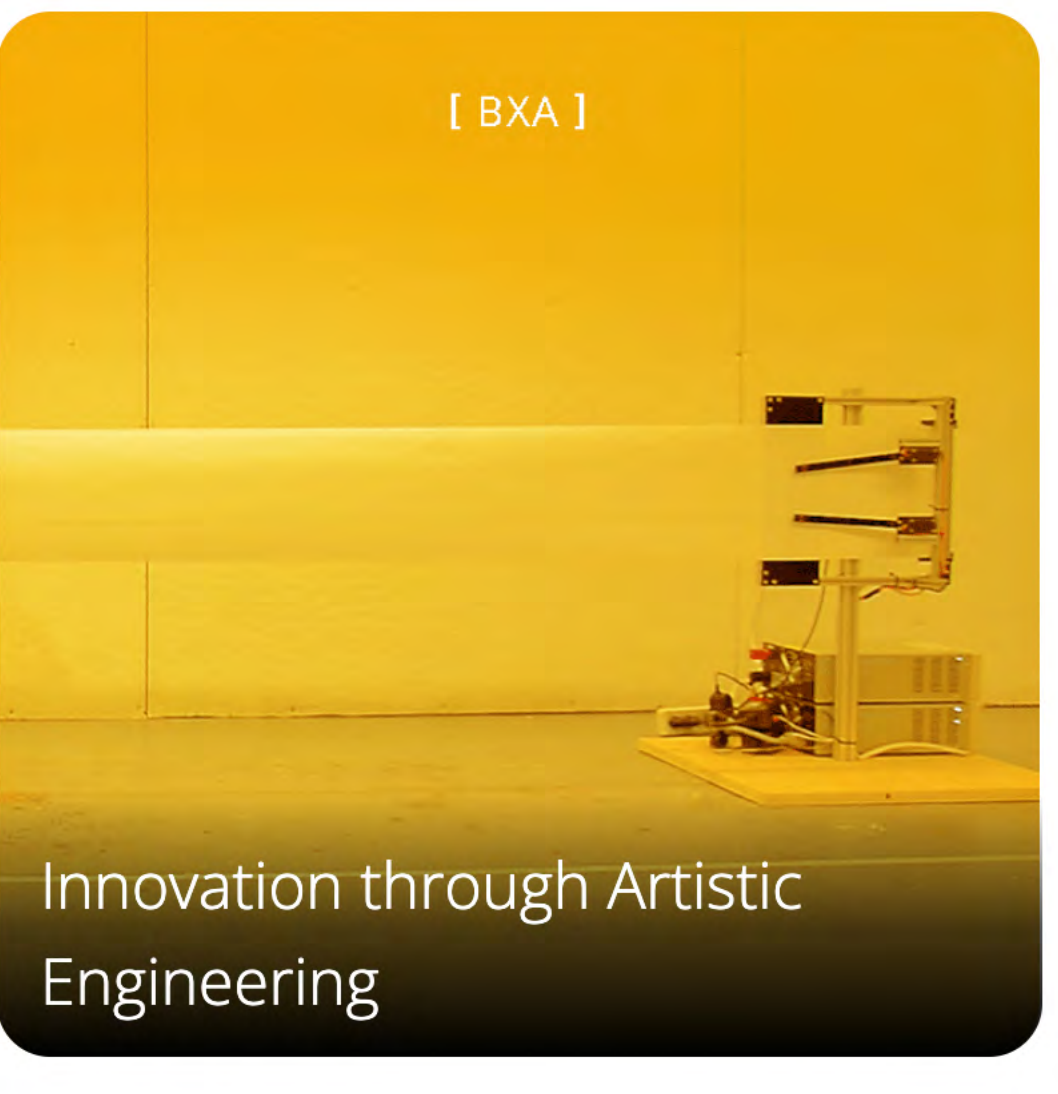
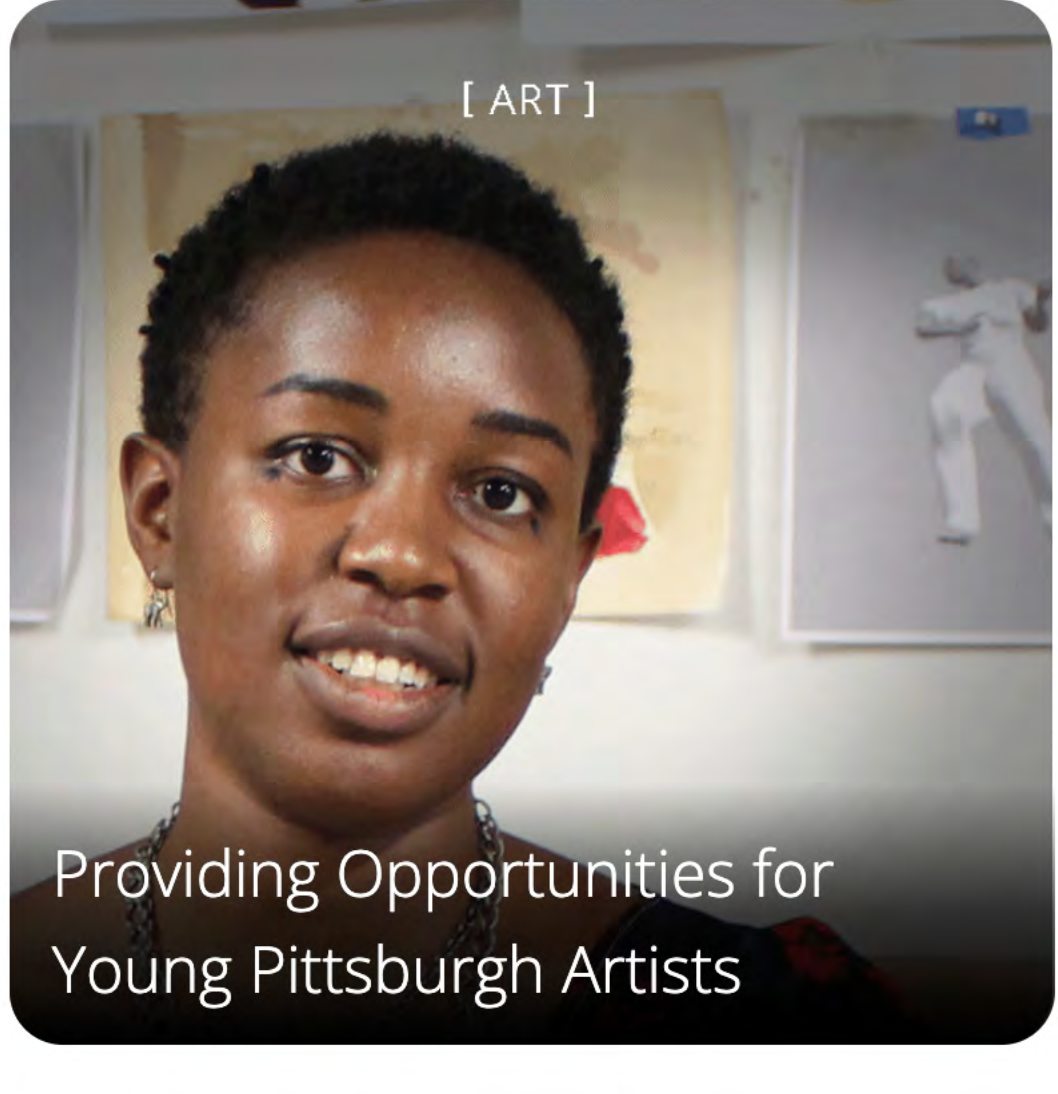
[Discover How CFA is Moving Forward](#)



### Letter from Dean Mary Ellen Poole

"This first-ever online-only issue of the CFA Magazine leans hard into the future, a favorite direction here at Carnegie Mellon University. It's important to give equal weight, however, to the other two states of being — to be fully present in the present, so that we'll know where and who we are and what we need to do — and to learn from the past with humility and candor."

[READ MARY ELLEN POOLE'S FULL LETTER](#)



### Events



[ Architecture Event ]  
**Materiality**  
*Materials shape the world around us.* This series of events examines the tactile, structural and visual qualities of architecture as a built practice. This series is free + open to the public.

[Find more information about Materiality](#)



[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion]

### Inclusive Excellence: A Community Responsibility

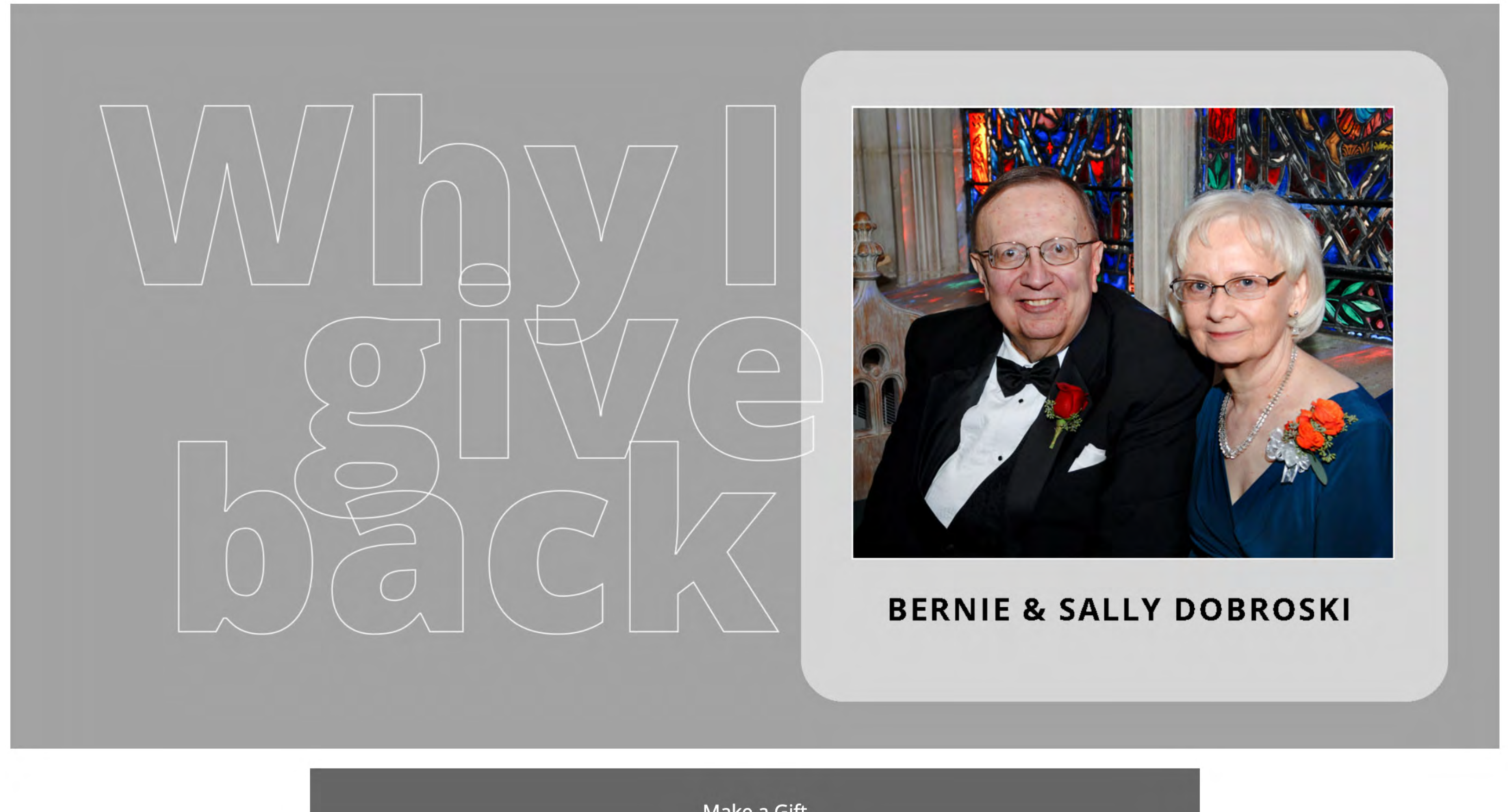
*A goal is a dream with an action plan behind it. In 1996, the goal for researchers Lee and Smith was to identify ways to increase educational achievement. In their study, they measured three constructs of educators' work...*

[Learn How CFA Promotes Inclusive Excellence](#)

### In Case You Missed It

Highlighted stories that you may have missed coming from all of CFA

- ARCHITECTURE
- ART
- DESIGN
- DRAMA
- MUSIC
- BXA
- MILLER ICA
- STUDIO
- MAM



[Make a Gift](#)

### Alumni News

Find out what alumni are doing across the [School of Architecture](#), [School of Art](#), [School of Design](#), [School of Drama](#), [School of Music](#) and [BXA Intercollege Degree Programs](#).

We'd love to hear from you! Keep us up to date on what's happening in your personal and professional life. [FILL OUT OUR ALUMNI CONTACT FORM](#)



Looking for a past version?  
 You can find past digital and print versions of the magazine, starting with our inaugural 2018 CFA 01 magazine in our [CFA MAGAZINE ARCHIVE](#).

Tell us what you think!  
 Let us know what you hoped to see — and what you liked! [EMAIL US AT CONTACT-CFA@CMU.EDU](mailto:CONTACT-CFA@CMU.EDU)

<p><b>College of Fine Arts Magazine</b></p> <p>Publisher: Mary Ellen Poole, Dean, CFA                  Executive Editor: Pam Wigley                  Editor/Digital Content Designer: Alexis Morrell                  Art Director: Monica Banaszak                  Project Manager: Thomas Swiech</p>	<p><b>Writers</b></p> <p>Jessica Bowser Acrie                  Harrison Apple                  Margaret Cox                  Dan Fernandez                  Amanda S.F. Hartle                  Joseph Lyons                  Meredith Marsh                  Jennifer Monahan                  M. Stephanie Murray, Ph.D.                  Shannon Musgrave                  Andy Ptaschinski                  Lydia Rosenberg                  Emily Syes                  Cally Jamis Vennare                  Pam Wigley</p>	<p><b>Design &amp; Production</b></p> <p>University Communications and Marketing</p> <p><b>Photographers</b></p> <p>Margaret Cox                  Alisa Innocenti                  Kevin Lorenzi                  Andrew Ptaschinski                  Nate Smallwood                  Louis Stein                  Pam Wigley</p>	<p><b>CFA Leadership</b></p> <p>CFA Dean: Mary Ellen Poole, Ph.D.                  School of Architecture Head: Omar Khan                  School of Art Head: Charlie White                  School of Design Head: Bruce Hanington                  School of Drama Head: Robert Ramirez                  School of Music Head: Jonathan Bailey                  Holland                  BXA Senior Associate Dean of Interdisciplinary Initiatives: M. Stephanie Murray, Ph.D.                  MAM Program Director: Jessica Bowser Acrie                  MEIM Program Director: Daniel Green, Ph.D.                  Miller ICA Director: Elizabeth Chodos                  Frank-Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry Director: Nica Ross</p>
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# College of Fine Arts

[Academics](#)

[Research & Creative Practice](#)

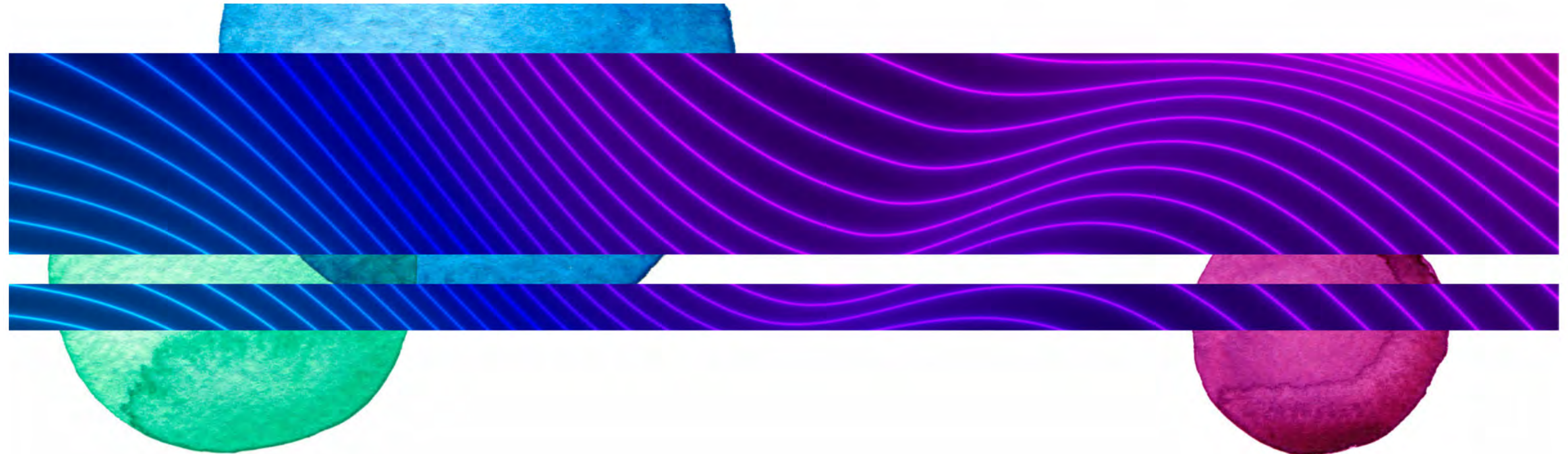
[ICA Pittsburgh](#)

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[News](#)

[About](#)

[Giving](#)



## Moving Forward with a New Direction

For the past two years, students within the College of Fine Arts — like the entire university — successfully pivoted to a new way of learning. Remote instruction was the order of the day, and this academic year marks the beginning of a return to classroom instruction as we once knew it. Of course, there are still protocols in place, both by CFA and the entire campus community, to help ensure our health and safety. As is often said, change is a constant, and our college is no exception to that rule. Every program and academic area within CFA has seen updates and improvements to strengthen educational opportunities, whether through new staff, new curriculum or expanded facilities. What follows is a bird's-eye view of the freshest news from around the college.



### [School of Architecture](#)

School of Architecture's EX-CHANGE Exhibition and Publication Celebrates Student Work that Addresses Future Challenges



### [School of Art](#)

School of Art Launches New Foundations Curriculum this Fall



### [School of Design](#)

Facility Improvements Advance Education



### [School of Drama](#)

Setting a New Course Under Robert Ramirez



### [School of Music](#)

Jonathan Bailey Holland Shares His Vision for the School of Music



### [BXA Intercollege Degree Programs](#)

Looking Ahead for BXA Intercollege Degree Programs



### [Miller Institute for Contemporary Art](#)

New Student Committee Reshaping Arts Engagement at Miller ICA



### [Frank-Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry](#)

Nica Ross Begins First Term as STUDIO Director



### [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#)

Building a Healthier, More Dynamic Experience for All



### [Master of Arts Management](#)

New Adjunct Faculty Bring More Class Choices, Expanded Learning

[◀ Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)

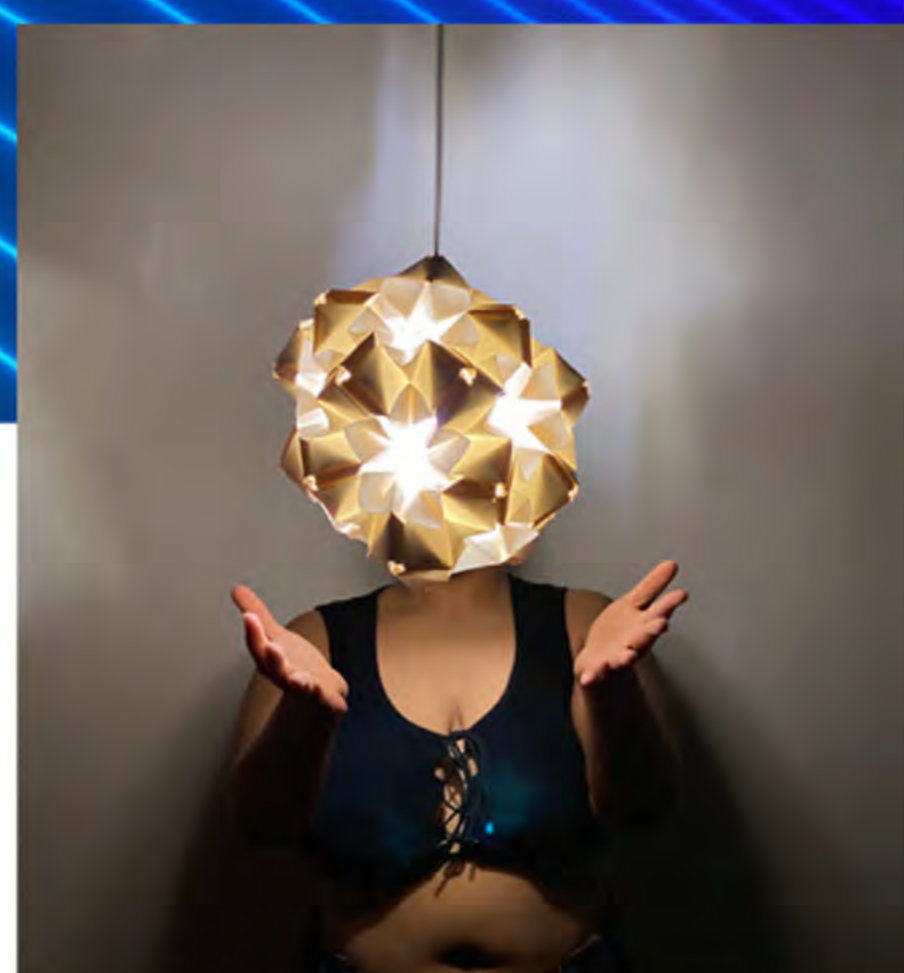
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[Academics](#)
[Research & Creative Practice](#)
[ICA Pittsburgh](#)
[Frank-Ratchye STUDIO](#)
[News](#)
[About](#)
[Giving](#)


## School of Architecture

### School of Architecture's EX-CHANGE Exhibition and Publication Celebrates Student Work that Addresses Future Challenges

*written by*  
Meredith Marsh

The [School of Architecture](#) (SoA) welcomed head Omar Khan in 2020. Under his leadership, the school embarked on a strategic planning process, titled Pedagogies 2020, to review its mission, values and programs. Through this process, the school is developing an actionable vision that can address some of the significant challenges facing architecture and the built environment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The SoA frames its pedagogy in relation to what it has identified as the future's three pressing challenges: artificial intelligence, social justice and climate change. The school's EX-CHANGE, an annual exhibition and publication celebrating student work from first year to doctorate, offers a comprehensive look at how students are addressing these three challenges head on. Inaugurated in 2017, EX-CHANGE represents an ongoing opportunity to shine new light on the SoA's programs and to position the work within larger questions of research and practice.

The 2022 EX-CHANGE celebrated student work through an exhibition in the College of Fine Arts Great Hall featuring a salon-style gallery of projects connecting to a custom-built display in the Great Hall and to the second floor architecture studios. The exhibition, designed by means+methods, led by Aviva Rubin (B.Arch 2007) and Carolynn Karp, was accompanied by a catalog designed by Group Project, Jimmy Luu and Ryan Menefee (DC 2008, HNZ 2009).

From 4:30–8:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 9, the SoA hosted a welcome back celebration featuring tours of the exhibition, remarks by the design teams and a chance to pick up a copy of the catalog. The 2022 EX-CHANGE publication is available in both print and digital editions. To receive a printed catalog, please [complete this form](#).

"The design for the exhibition explores how form and surface can bend, fold and stretch, embracing the multiplicity of voices, authors and approaches to architecture across the SoA," said means+methods' Rubin and Karp. "Works have been organized by thematic focus, allowing for different and new relationships to form across various levels and programs within the school. Using a light structural system, the student works thread through and around a permeable armature, which is both defined and agile. The result is a ribbon, drawn in three dimensions through space."

Every year, EX-CHANGE provides a team of students with an unparalleled opportunity to work alongside alumni and professionals in the development of a unique exhibition and publication that reflects on the school's work. The SoA gratefully acknowledges our 2022 sponsors who have helped make this project possible: Strada | Design With People In Mind®, PWWG Architects, Desmone Architects, GBBN and Akhil Badjatia.

[◀ Back to Discover How CFA is Moving Forward](#)

[◀ Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)

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## School of Art



Launches New Foundations Curriculum this Fall

*written by*  
Andy Ptaschinski

A new Foundations curriculum launching this fall in the [School of Art](#) aims to give first-year students a stronger basis in technical skills, more opportunities to take advantage of CMU resources and a more tightly knit community of artist-peers. The new curriculum is thanks to the work of Associate Professor Imin Yeh, who was named the inaugural director of Foundational Studies last fall.

The new First-Year Seminar, which brings together all 60 BFA and BXA-Art students into one classroom for the first time, will grant students a more structured approach to acclimating to art school and building relationships with peers. This course will be held in the new 2,800-square-foot Foundations classroom, which will serve as a studio space, instructional facility and informal community gathering point.

During the first semester, students will also take three classes based on medium: Drawing, Sculpture and Time-Based Media. In the second semester, students will continue developing their skills by choosing two medium-specific classes: Paint/Print, Expanded Media Sculpture or Digital Media. While teaching the basics of working across a wide variety of media, these courses simultaneously emphasize how each art form challenges artists to think and communicate in different ways.

In the second semester, students will also take their first Critical Studies course, which will introduce them to key ideas in contemporary art through a wide range of texts including essays, artist interviews, short stories, scholarly theory, poetry and more. In addition, students will take an interdisciplinary research studio, titled "Risk, Agency, Failure," which will challenge them to experiment broadly and expand their conceptual notions of artmaking. This class will help prepare students for advanced courses, which place greater emphasis on expanding critical thought through artmaking than on technical instruction.

The new Foundations curriculum, while providing a stronger basis for advanced artmaking, also gives students the opportunity to choose their own classes sooner than the previous curriculum allowed. Beginning their sophomore year, students will choose their own intermediate studios, along with special topic critical studies courses. Students will then choose from a wide variety of advanced studio courses, in addition to professional development classes, during their junior and senior years.

[◀ Back to Discover How CFA is Moving Forward](#)[◀ Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)[Faculty & Staff Resources](#)[Contact](#)**CFA**

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[News](#)
[About](#)
[Giving](#)


## School of Design



### Facility Improvements Advance Education

*written by*  
Joseph Lyons

The [School of Design](#) has been working on numerous facility improvements throughout the school that will advance the act of designing and prototyping while providing easier access to technology.

In Margaret Morrison Carnegie Hall, this semester will see the opening of the Spatial Experience Lab (SxL) and the Electronics Prototyping Lab. The SxL will allow students and faculty the space to experiment with mixed reality and large physical prototyping corresponding to the Design for Environments track. The Electronics Prototyping Lab will provide space for students to solder, build and test products geared toward tangible interaction design. Alongside these new spaces, the Reese Computer Cluster is being upgraded with 3D printers and laser cutters, providing convenient access for studios located in Margaret Morrison.

In Porter Hall, a redesigned layout of the 3D Lab will provide improved support for student, staff and faculty interactions. Traffic flow has been reorganized to facilitate a more productive sequence of conversations between lab staff, students and faculty that will produce innovative design from drawings through to safely built prototypes. Dedicated computing workstations specifically for running prototyping software, like Solidworks and Keyshot, have also been installed. Digital production equipment has been updated and the lab is acquiring a 3D scanner to meet the growing demand for digitally produced prototypes.

[◀ Back to Discover How CFA is Moving Forward](#)

[◀ Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)

[Faculty & Staff Resources](#)
[Contact](#)

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## School of Drama



## Setting a New Course under Robert Ramirez

*written by*  
Shannon Musgrave

The [School of Drama](#) embarks on a new chapter under the leadership of Robert Ramirez, who began his tenure as head of school on August 1. Ramirez joins CMU from the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of Texas at Austin (UT), where he served as professor and chair.

During his tenure as chair, Ramirez prioritized student experience and learning outcomes, as well as the advancement of faculty and staff profiles in the College of Fine Arts and the professional realm. As a teacher and administrator, he set new standards for recruitment of diverse student, faculty and staff populations, as well as the development of equitable and inclusive casting and production processes and curriculum reform at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Ramirez has long been a part of the professional theater industry. He has worked as an actor, director, voice artist and voice and speech coach at theaters across the country including the Guthrie Theater, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Cleveland Playhouse, Hartford Stage, the Alley Theater and American Players Theatre, as well as numerous Shakespeare festivals in every region. He has been a member of the Recorded Books repertory company in New York City for over 20 years and is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association. Robert served several years as a board member and vice president of the United Resident Theatre Association and is a member of the National Theatre Conference. He completed his undergraduate studies at the Los Angeles Theatre Academy at Los Angeles City College and earned his MFA at the University of Delaware's Professional Theatre Training Program.

During the past two years, in the wake of the pandemic and an industry-wide reckoning around racial inequities in the American theater, the School of Drama has worked to examine and reimagine how educational theater can and should contribute to a more equitable and sustainable field. Given his track record for changemaking at UT, and his rich experience as an artist and educator, Ramirez proved the right fit to lead the School of Drama into this new future.

"I've admired Robert's leadership for years and could not be more delighted that he has joined us at CMU. I'm absolutely convinced that he is the right person to take the School of Drama forward, in community and in this exact moment," said Mary Ellen Poole, dean of the College of Fine Arts.

"I am, indeed, honored to join the School of Drama at Carnegie Mellon," Ramirez said. "This is an opportunity to build upon the solid reputation and foundation that exist here among every discipline that contributes to the theater-making process and performance industry."

[◀ Back to Discover How CFA is Moving Forward](#)[◀ Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)[Faculty & Staff Resources](#)[Contact](#)

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# College of Fine Arts

[Academics](#)
[Research & Creative Practice](#)
[ICA Pittsburgh](#)
[Frank-Ratchye STUDIO](#)
[News](#)
[About](#)
[Giving](#)


## School of Music

### Jonathan Bailey Holland Shares His Vision for the School of Music

*written by*  
Cally Jamis Vennare

Even though Jonathan Bailey Holland arrived in Pittsburgh only weeks ago, his passion for the community, institution and students that he now serves as the new Jack G. Buncher Chair and head of the [School of Music](#) at Carnegie Mellon University is infectious. His vision for the school is firmly grounded in CMU's strong foundation of creating successful artists and musicians who are not only prepared for the future, but also thriving in the arts. As an acclaimed composer, he also recognizes that the world has changed, dramatically, during the past two years.

"I think we can all agree that the landscape for any career has changed, particularly in the arts, and that there is a greater need to adapt to changing circumstances," he said. "We need to make sure that we are preparing our students to be self-reliant and to be ready to pivot for whatever it is that is coming next. We must ensure that they have confidence in their vision and their voice ... and the necessary tools to share them." Holland also believes that one of the most important aspects of his new position is to continue to foster a sense of community among various areas of study within and outside of the School of Music. That commitment to, and desire for, "cross-fertilization" of ideas and disciplines is what initially drew him to CMU.

"I want us to think about drama, stage presence and its connection to how a musician can command the stage. I want to discuss the relationship between form and purpose and its importance to musicians, as well as architects. And I want us to continue to foster the interdisciplinary relationships that link science, technology and the arts."

"Jonathan is a celebrated creator of new music, a devoted and inspiring teacher and a leader known for building community," said Mary Ellen Poole, dean of the College of Fine Arts. "We are in very good hands for the adventures ahead."

By reaching outside of the campus community and bringing in guests to share their knowledge and expertise, Holland also seeks to expand the school's "external profile." In summer 2023, American Symphony Orchestra League members will converge in Pittsburgh for the organization's annual conference, providing yet another opportunity for CMU students to engage with an influential national audience of musicians and administrators.

"It's exciting for me to be somewhere where you can have a student focused on being the best musician they can be, and you can have a student who has diverse interests that they want to merge together," Holland said. "Both can be successful here. That's extremely exciting and an example of what I hope I can continue to build upon."

[◀ Back to Discover How CFA is Moving Forward](#)

[◀ Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)

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[News](#)
[About](#)
[Giving](#)


## BXA Intercollege Degree Programs

### Looking Ahead

*written by*  
Emily Syes

After graduating its first students in the Bachelor of Engineering Studies and Arts (BESA) program this spring, the [BXA Intercollege Degree Programs](#) team is looking forward to seeing what kinds of combinations students will pursue in this degree path. This semester, BXA is welcoming a robust first-year class of students who represent all five CFA schools.

“After two years of limited in-person events, students are excited for events including BXA Pride Day, the BXA Alumni Panel and the annual Kaleidoscope student art show,” said M. Stephanie Murray, senior associate dean of Interdisciplinary Initiatives and director and academic advisor, BXA. “We’re also updating our BXA Seminar sequence to better fit the complicated schedules of first-year students and to encourage community-building in all four years of the programs.”

[◀ Back to Discover How CFA is Moving Forward](#)

[◀ Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)

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[News](#)
[About](#)
[Giving](#)


## Miller Institute for Contemporary Art

## New Student Committee Reshaping Arts Engagement

*written by*  
Lydia Rosenberg

The [Miller ICA](#) Student Committee, a new engagement coalition organized by student gallery assistants, launched last fall. The committee was formed to generate peer-to-peer awareness about exhibitions and programs among students from across campus and in the greater Pittsburgh area.

Elizabeth Chodos, Miller ICA director, recognized the potential for student organizations such as this to foster a sense of community and curiosity among students. “Our gallery assistants are our most essential connection to student life on campus,” she said. “The student committee gives them space to bring their unique perspectives to the table and to make connections that enrich visitor experiences, both in-person and online.”

Lydia Rosenberg, Miller ICA’s new visitor service coordinator, oversaw the formation and development of the committee and will continue to offer support as the staff liaison for project logistics and guidance. School of Art rising senior, Ester Petukhova, was essential to shaping the committee’s scope and overall structure during her internship in fall 2021.

“Our hope for the future is that the committee’s programming can reshape student engagements with the museum space on campus and that the program will further develop logistical skills such as grant/project proposal writing, arts organization, public relations and an interest in art within the greater city of Pittsburgh,” said Petukhova, who serves as committee co-chair alongside BXA junior Laurence Gao. “This is really a tremendous stepping stone for students at the school to observe the inner working mechanisms of the museum.”

In its pilot year, the Miller ICA student committee produced response projects for every exhibition, connecting with students and bringing new awareness about the Miller ICA on campus. This year, the Miller ICA team looks forward to expanding committee membership among student employees and generating thoughtful projects that foster community, inquiry and belonging. Follow the committee on Instagram [@millericastudents](#) to learn more about past projects and to see what they are working on this year.

◀ [Back to Discover How CFA is Moving Forward](#)

◀ [Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)

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## Frank-Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry



Nica Ross Begins First Term as STUDIO Director

*written by*  
Harrison Apple

The [Frank-Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry](#) is thrilled to announce new director, Nica Ross (CMU School of Drama). Ross is a long-time collaborator with the STUDIO's anti-disciplinary programs and has just recently completed a year as co-director with professor of Art, Golan Levin. Ross's vision for the future of the STUDIO draws from their [personal and professional practices](#) in performance and immersive media design as well as their academic experience building the School of Drama's Video & Media Design program.

They have already spearheaded workshops and presentations at the STUDIO from internationally renowned artists and collectives including Manual Cinema, Wishnok Studio, Eightfinity and Anna Betbeze. Ross's leadership brings together the STUDIO's historical culture of boundary pushing open-source play with an invigorating emphasis on live performance, critical theory and socially situated practice.

[◀ Back to Discover How CFA is Moving Forward](#)[◀ Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)[Faculty & Staff Resources](#)[Contact](#)

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[ICA Pittsburgh](#)
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[News](#)
[About](#)
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## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



Building a Healthier, More Dynamic Experience for All

*written by*

Valeria J. Martinez

In January 2021, Valeria J. Martinez was named the assistant dean for [diversity, equity and inclusion](#) within Carnegie Mellon University's College of Fine Arts (CFA). One of her primary responsibilities in coming aboard was to help ensure that CFA continues to evolve into a more diverse, truly inclusive and equitable environment for all, according to former dean of CFA, Dan Martin. During the past 18 months, Martinez said she believes the transformative work across CFA has just begun.

Last August, CFA welcomed a new dean, Mary Ellen Poole, and the university welcomed an inaugural vice provost for diversity, equity and inclusion, Wanda Heading-Grant. Working with both of these leaders, Martinez said, helps to foster a new chapter of inclusion for the college.

"Already working in strong collaboration, new initiatives have been passed throughout CFA," she said. "From a new bias response process, new programming and curricula models, various professional development opportunities, including inaugural leadership retreats, CFA is building bridges with the university to foster inclusive excellence."

In the coming months, Martinez will roll out another series of leadership development for students, faculty and staff at the college. In collaboration with DEI leads for Dietrich College and Tepper College respectively, new programs will be offered to the student body. Martinez is also in conversation with LEAP and the Arts Greenhouse to strengthen their partnerships.

"The coming year looks promising as diversity, equity and inclusion are utilized as the building blocks for a healthier and more dynamic collegiate experience for all," she said.

[◀ Back to Discover How CFA is Moving Forward](#)

[◀ Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)

[Faculty & Staff Resources](#)
[Contact](#)

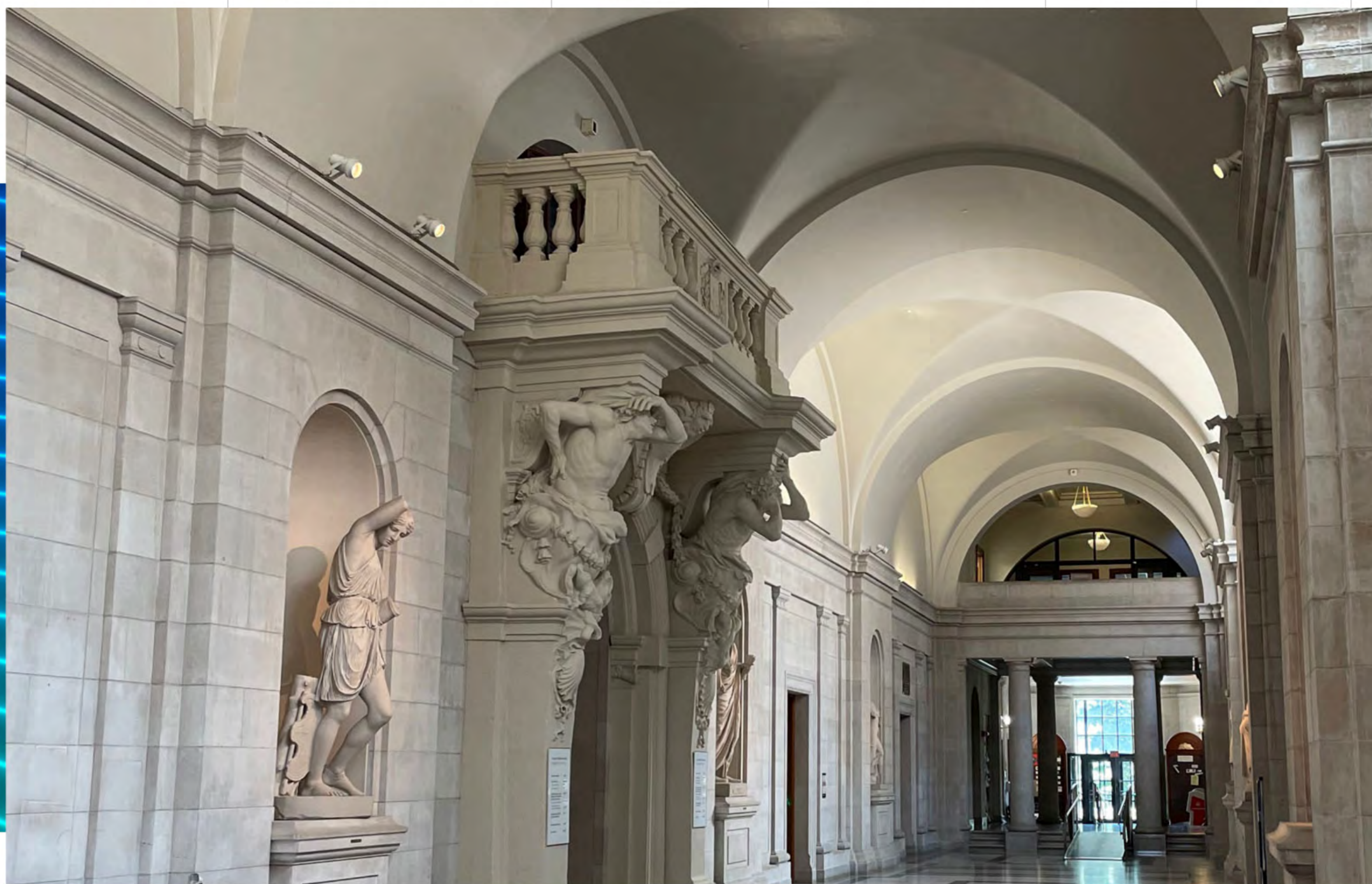
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## Master of Arts Management

New Adjunct Faculty Bring More Class Choices, Expanded Learning

*written by*  
Jessica Bowser Acrie

This fall, the [Master of Arts Management](#) (MAM) program, a joint degree from the College of Fine Arts and Heinz College of Information Systems, Public Policy and Management, is excited to welcome several new high profile professors. Shaunda McDill, Heinz Foundation Program Officer, Arts and Culture; Rachel Saul Rearick, Executive Director of Contemporary Craft; Madeline Gent, Executive Director of Associated Artists Pittsburgh; and Dan J. Martin, Professor Emeritus are just a few of experienced arts management professionals who will be sharing their deep and diverse experience with our students in the classroom this academic year.

“By adding adjunct faculty with this depth and breadth of experience, we increase opportunities for student learning and expose them to diverse avenues for their careers,” said Jessica Bowser Acrie, director MAM Program.

[◀ Back to Discover How CFA is Moving Forward](#)

[◀ Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)

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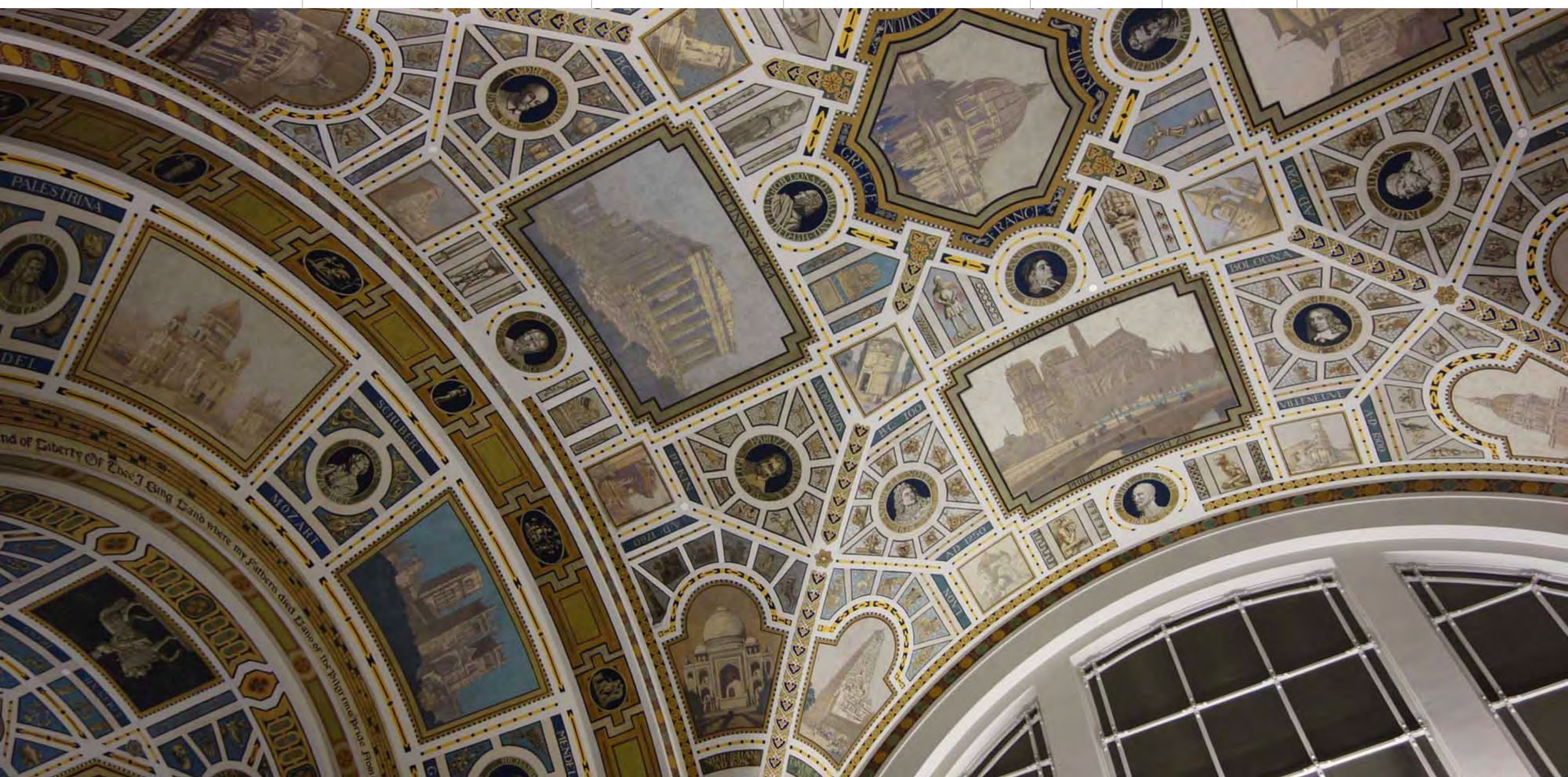
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## Letter from Dean Mary Ellen Poole

Dear friends,

This first-ever online-only issue of the CFA Magazine leans hard into the future, a favorite direction here at Carnegie Mellon University. It's important to give equal weight, however, to the other two states of being — to be fully present in the present, so that we'll know where and who we are and what we need to do; and to learn from the past with humility and candor.

This fall, we celebrate a return to community. We are spending more time in each other's physical presence; sometimes we remove our masks and quietly marvel at the expressiveness of an entire face. Other times we demonstrate our care for each other by continuing to mask. We are alert to and respectful of the virus, but it is not dominating our lives. This August, we welcomed first-year undergraduate and graduate students, who have spent much of the last two years of their prior educational life staring at a screen. Their joy and relief at learning and working together as they practice their art is an inspiration to us all.

Faculty and staff experienced a version of this in mid-August, when we gathered in person for a set of workshops designed by Assistant Dean Valeria Martinez to spark a shared understanding of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. We have come to realize that this work is foundational if we are to construct a healthy ecosystem for learning, creation, performance and research. Colleagues from across the schools and units expressed their gratitude for this opportunity to learn from and about each other.

As you've probably heard, the Schools of Drama and Music welcomed new heads on August 1. Robert Ramirez and Jonathan Bailey Holland have hit the ground running, to say the least. New leadership is always an opportunity for a fresh pair of eyes to reexamine practices we've taken for granted, to reignite important and sometimes challenging conversations with students, faculty, staff, the community and the profession. Robert and Jonathan are without a doubt up to the task, and we are so delighted that they have joined us.

In the life cycle of an organization, it's sometimes necessary to say goodbye. The college is currently mourning the loss of our longtime associate dean for Finance and Operations, Patti Pavlus, who left us on August 19, 2022. Patti was all CFA, all the time, for almost 40 years. She loved her work and did it brilliantly, and she loved her colleagues, who benefited every single day from her immense institutional knowledge and problem-solving skills. We miss her terribly and will do our best to live up to her standards.

I hope you enjoy the stories in this magazine, that they'll amaze and inspire you. It's a thrilling time for CFA. I hope even more fervently to see you in person this year, at a lecture or show or concert or opening. The arts bring people together, we are better together, and that's our value proposition.

Until then,

Mary Ellen Poole

Stanley and Marcia Gumberg Dean  
College of Fine Arts

◀ [Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)

[Faculty & Staff Resources](#)[Contact](#)

# CFA

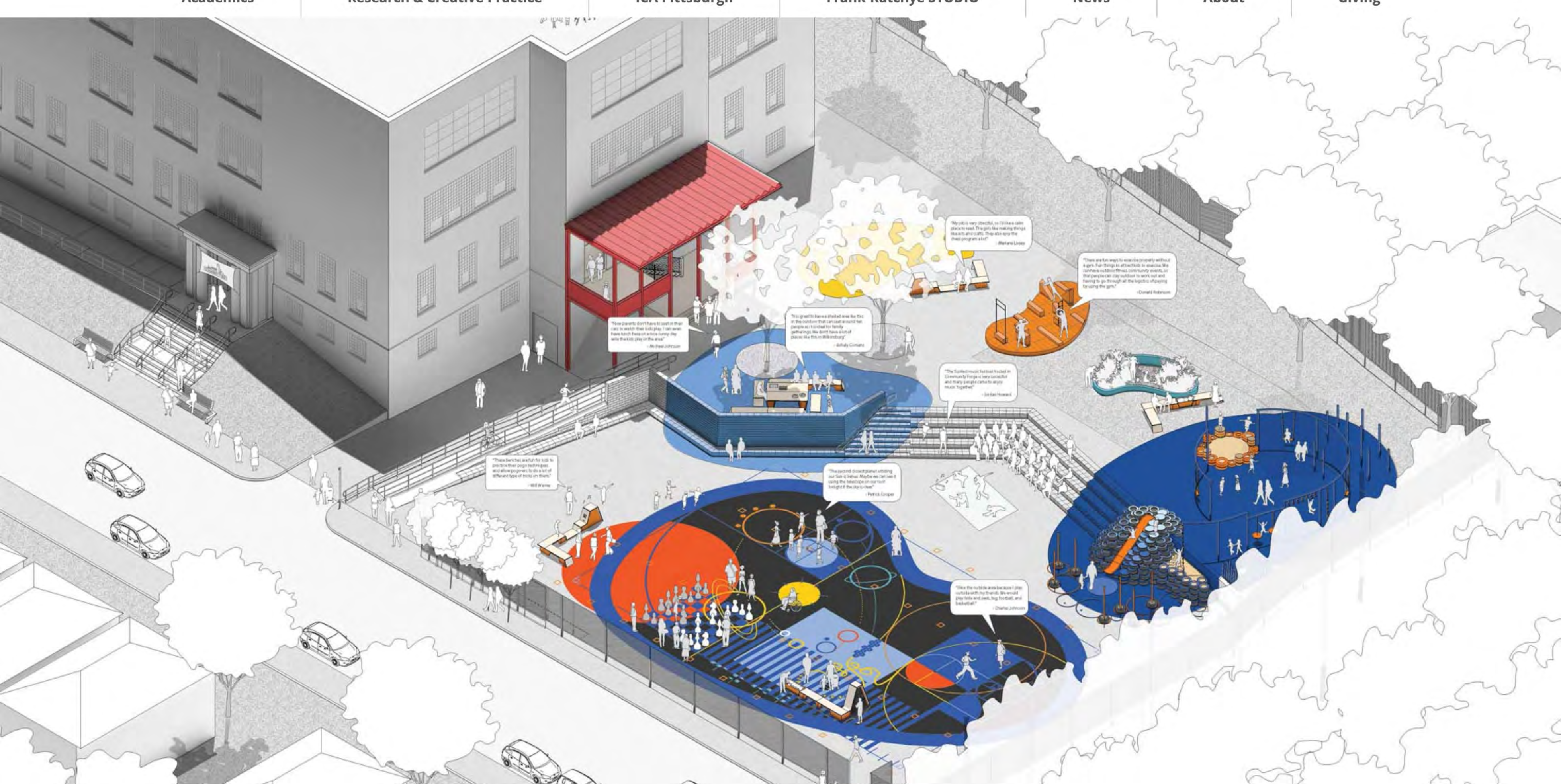
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## Sparking Long-Term Transformation

## "Acupuncture Urbanism" as a Catalyst for Community Change

written by  
Cally Jamis Vennare

How can inspired urban design serve as a catalyst for community engagement and revitalization? The Urban Collaboratory Studio at Carnegie Mellon's [School of Architecture](#), headed by Associate Professor Stefan Gruber, is leading the way by initiating transformative change among Pittsburgh neighborhoods and residents, as well as CMU's dedicated B.Arch students.

"We provide our students with the opportunity to see a very small project through from conception to realization within only 15 weeks," said Gruber. "In that short period of time, they learn how to combine abstract systemic thinking with very concrete and hands-on action."

In a collaborative setting, students go from exploring and analyzing the urban milieu of a neighborhood, to facilitating participatory design workshops with the community, to developing and implementing a strategic design intervention that promises to act as an urban catalyst for the neighborhood's revitalization. Gruber's teaching philosophy reinforces the concept of "Acupuncture Urbanism" — the use of modest interventions that not only spark long-term transformation, but also allow for observation and refinement of the initial vision over time.

"This is a concept rooted in a more collaborative process. It's really about developing a certain humility about the role of the designer: One that seeks engagement and an equal partnership. One that is not primarily concerned with delivering a final product," he explained.

"We explore design as a tactical and performative tool for encouraging community engagement and setting in motion an incremental transformation process."

Stefan Gruber  
Associate Professor, School of Architecture

A distinct example of the Studio's impact is its spring 2019 collaboration with Community Forge (CF), an initiative that is transforming Wilkinsburg's former Johnston Elementary School into a community and youth center. CF is committed to building an equitable economy for Wilkinsburg and the Greater Pittsburgh region by creating opportunities that promote professional development, financial well-being and entrepreneurial growth. As an organization committed to participatory programming that breaks down silos between communities and develops equitable pathways to economic success, CF was an ideal partner for Gruber and his project team. CF Executive Director Michael Skirpan, Ph.D. is also a CMU colleague who serves as a special faculty member in the Institute for Software Research.

Together with community members both young and old, the Studio began transforming CF's former school yard into a playscape — a shared resource for the wider neighborhood with an archipelago of islands that would be implemented in planned phases. The first and largest island realized, "the field," has successfully integrated games and sports in an educational landscape.



Recognition by the Wilkinsburg community has been "phenomenal," according to Gruber. Playscape phases implemented to date have not only been instantly appropriated by the community, but also significantly increased the use of the outdoors and an awareness for activities happening inside the Forge. Gruber continues to collaborate with CF, most recently envisioning a black box theater and community event spaces. Over time, he hopes the cumulative design interventions will lead to long-term transformation for the former school and the community.

Industry accolades have followed. In 2019, the "Acupuncture for Community Forge" playscape won ULI Pittsburgh's Placemaking Award — the prestigious Urban Land Institute honor recognizing outstanding projects, achievements and leaders in the city of Pittsburgh committed to the creation and celebration of "place" and the responsible use of land. In 2022, CF received a \$250,000 grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation for the future rollout of planned phases for playscape islands and other public spaces.

"The Urban Collaboratory Studio explores how the university and communities can work together towards more equitable and sustainable neighborhoods," said Gruber. "There's a lot of work to be done. But it's an important part of the educational experience for our students. They need to venture outside the classroom, talk to people and learn about the real struggles, hopes and concerns of Pittsburgh's communities. That's how they'll understand how complicated, and exciting, urban revitalization can be."

*the CF project team:*

Professor: Stefan Gruber. Students: Ghalya Alsanea, Fon Kornrat Euchukanonchai, Mounica Guturu, Min Young Jeong, Ritchie Ju, Rachel Park, Mariana Alberola Rezza, Shariwa Sharada, Gautam Jagdish Thakkar, Scarlet Nga Chin Tong, Chitika Vasudeva.

*featuring the following:*

project images from "48-410/510: Bricolage at Community Forge: Urban Collaboratory Studio"

[◀ Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)

[Faculty & Staff Resources](#)

[Contact](#)

# CFA

## College of Fine Arts

[Academics](#)
[Research & Creative Practice](#)
[ICA Pittsburgh](#)
[Frank-Ratchye STUDIO](#)
[News](#)
[About](#)
[Giving](#)


## Providing Opportunities for Young Pittsburgh Artists

New School of Art Award Helps Build Young Artist's Career and Pittsburgh's Art Ecosystem

*written by*  
Andy Ptaschinski

A new [School of Art](#) award aims to support a graduating student while helping to grow Pittsburgh's art ecosystem. The Ken Meyer Professional Studio Development Award, given annually, provides funds for a graduating MFA or BFA/BXA student to rent studio space. The award — generously funded by William Kofmehl III, a 2002 graduate of the School of Art — gives a young artist the opportunity to stay in Pittsburgh to pursue their practice.

The first recipient of the award is Petra Floyd, who graduated from the MFA program in May. Floyd is using the funds to rent a studio at the Brew House Association, where she continues to develop work related to her thesis project. Floyd's practice elevates non-Western notions of technology, favoring sound and movement as inherited technologies from ancestors over the contemporary ideology of technology as progress, advancement and expansion, which often come at the expense of colonized people, animals and environments.

Floyd said that having this studio space allows her to connect with other artists and to host studio visits with local curators.

"Through CMU and visiting artists that professors brought in, we started to get an understanding of the arts ecosystem in Pittsburgh."

Petra Floyd

Floyd noted that the obligations of school, along with COVID, made it difficult to become more immersed within Pittsburgh's art scene. "Now that I have graduated, I can focus elsewhere and connect with other artists in the city," she said.

Floyd said that in some ways, Pittsburgh's size is an advantage over Philadelphia, where she grew up. As an emerging artist, there is less competition for funding and, therefore, more opportunities to grow her practice. Floyd also cited the strong community of artists, especially among other Black women artists, including Alisha Wormsley, Bekezela Mguni, Naomi Chambers and Sarah Huny Young.

The award is named in honor of Kenneth Meyer, a machine shop foreman in the Department of Chemical Engineering at CMU while William Kofmehl III was a student. Meyer, along with Quinn Peyton, a technical staff member in the Software Engineering Institute, were tragically killed when the private aircraft they were flying crashed in 2004. Meyer graduated from CMU with a master's degree in physics in 1982 and spent the next 22 running the machine shop. He served as a mentor to Kofmehl while he was a student and fifth-year scholar.



An accomplished artist, Kofmehl is also an avid supporter of the arts in Pittsburgh and sits on the board of Radiant Hall, a nonprofit that operates more than 70 artist studio spaces in the city.

*featuring the following:*

photography by Andy Ptaschinski

photography of Meyer and Kofmehl doing an art performance at an airport

◀ [Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)

[Faculty & Staff Resources](#)

[Contact](#)

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# Joseph Ballay Center for Design Fusion

## New Center to Explore Transdisciplinary Design Fusion

Joseph Ballay Center for Design Fusion Officially Opens Sept. 30

*written by*  
Pam Wigley

This spring, Carnegie Mellon University alumnus and emeritus faculty member Joseph Ballay and his wife, Sue, established The Joseph Ballay Center for Design Fusion in the university's [School of Design](#) through a \$10 million gift, the single largest ever presented to the College of Fine Arts. On Friday, Sept. 30, the CMU community officially welcomed the center during a dedication ceremony on campus. It will be located in Margaret Morrison Carnegie Hall.

The center establishes a formal presence of design expertise and outreach at CMU and also will serve as a central hub for design courses for the CMU campus community, executive education, sponsored projects and collaborations, and design research. When presenting the gift, Ballay said that establishing the Ballay Center is the culmination of his life's work, which has been a study and practice of the arts and sciences.

"There is, I believe, an artistic base in all that we do, which satisfies human needs. Through the center, we will continue interdisciplinary work using design thinking to solve problems. Carnegie Mellon is the right setting to make this happen."

Joseph Ballay

"We are extremely grateful for Joe's vision and support. By establishing The Joseph Ballay Center for Design Fusion, he reinforces Carnegie Mellon's culture, in which the creative and the technical live side by side, strengthening each other," said Carnegie Mellon President Farnam Jahanian. "It has been our long-standing belief that the arts and technology together make us stronger as individuals. Growing out of its roots in the arts, design thinking approaches problem-solving with a transdisciplinary approach that respects the aesthetic forces of human productivity."

Ballay is a 1960 management graduate of Carnegie Mellon, then known as Carnegie Tech. He earned his second bachelor's degree in industrial design from the University of Illinois and, in 1970, he earned his master's degree from the College of Fine Art's (CFA) Department of Design. He was named head of that department shortly after joining the faculty and swiftly rebuilt its focus, curriculum and administration, ultimately helping to establish the School of Design within CFA. He returned to teaching and research in 1985 and is an emeritus professor of design.

In 1989, along with two CMU colleagues from psychology and computer science, Ballay founded MAYA Design, Inc., an interdisciplinary design consultancy, applying design theory and practice to complex contemporary problems. In a little more than two decades, MAYA had transformed itself into a technology design lab, spun off four other companies and had grown to 50 people.

Helping more people to learn about design thinking and the process by which it resolves the world's issues is just one goal for The Ballay Center. Built at the center's core is a blend of education, outreach and partnerships.

"Through Joe's incredible support, we will be able to meet the growing demand for design courses across the CMU campus community, increase our capacity for professional executive education, continue to build on our success with corporate and nonprofit partnerships and enhance the profile of design research."

Bruce Hanington  
Head, School of Design

Ballay's interest in design began early, when he was growing up in Ambridge, Pa., a steel town about 16 miles northwest of Pittsburgh. His family owned the local hardware store, and Ballay eventually took his turn at working there.

"I eventually realized that when I was waiting on customers, this was the beginning of my design education because I had to deal with the practicalities of putting things together and envisioning the needs and wishes that each person was involved in," he said.

Now, through The Ballay Center, he will help others learn to do the same. Creating the center in Pittsburgh and at Carnegie Mellon, he said, was an obvious choice.

"Carnegie Mellon is very special to me," he continued. "It not only has the components to make this center a reality, but also to make it happen with deep commitment. And by components, I mean a tradition of breaking rules and being willing to take chances. If you fail, you fail. But if you succeed, 'Wow!' Our goal, above all, is making the world better."

*for a full biography on Joe Ballay:*

[view his biography on the School of Design's website](#)

*more about the gift:*

The Ballays' gift is the latest commitment to be announced as part of Make Possible: The Campaign for Carnegie Mellon University. The multiyear effort aims to raise \$2 billion in private philanthropy to support CMU's strategic priorities across the university and its seven colleges and schools. To date, more than 55,000 supporters have contributed more than \$1.84 billion in support of the university.

[◀ Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)

[Faculty & Staff Resources](#)

[Contact](#)

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## Transformational Hiring: Attracting World-Class Talent



New Head & Faculty Propel School of Drama Forward

*written by*  
Shannon Musgrave



**Robert Ramirez** is not the only new face at the [School of Drama](#). The new head is joined by several new faculty members at an exciting time of transition and transformation for the school. As part of a broader commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, the School of Drama's leadership team worked with the dean and provost to transform its hiring processes with specific measures to attract a broader, more diverse candidate pool. This exciting slate of new faculty demonstrates the value of that work.



**Dahlia Al-Habieli** returns to the School of Drama as special visiting faculty of scenic design. An award-winning scenic designer and educator based in the Northeastern United States, Al-Habieli was born and raised in Abu Dhabi. As an artist and collaborator, she is interested in exploring unlikely connections and using her work to build cultural bridges. Al-Habieli received her MFA in scenic design from the Carnegie Mellon University School of Drama and her B.A. from Wellesley College.



**Will Davis** joins the School of Drama as associate professor in the John Wells Directing Program. Davis is a transgender director and choreographer focused on physically adventurous work for the stage. He has directed regionally and off-Broadway, and served as artistic director of American Theater Company (ATC) in Chicago. As the artistic director of ATC, Davis became the first transgender person to lead a major nonprofit institution without a defined LGBTQ mission. He is thrilled to bring his experience as an artist, leader, mentor, advocate and educator to the CMU community.



**Kaja Dunn** joins the School of Drama in a first of its kind tenure-track position focused on anti-racist and culturally competent practices in theater. As associate professor, Dunn will also be a member of the acting faculty. She comes to CMU from the University of North Carolina-Charlotte Department of Theatre, where she was the head of acting and affiliate faculty for theatrical intimacy education. Dunn works across the country as an actor, director, leading intimacy coordinator and activist. She serves on the executive board of the Black Theatre Network and consults with Actors' Equity on issues of race and theater.



**Kristi Good** has been appointed to assistant professor of dramaturgy, after having served as special visiting faculty. Good holds a master's degree in dramaturgy from Villanova University and a doctorate in theatre & performance studies from the University of Pittsburgh. Her scholarship and interests lean toward theater of trauma and uncovering suppressed narratives, particularly in regards to new play development. She works as a dramaturg locally and regionally, and is a co-founder of Moderate Woo — a feminist theater collective whose Motherhood Project explores what we don't know about motherhood in America.



**Ryan Prendergast** joins Carnegie Mellon University as an Assistant Teaching Professor with appointments in the Schools of Drama and Music. He was formerly a lecturer in the College of Fine Arts at the University of Texas at Austin and dramaturg for the Butler Opera Center. He received his doctorate in theater from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Fusing theater studies and musicology, Prendergast has presented his work at national conferences of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, the American Musicological Society, the Mid-America Theatre Conference and the International Richard Strauss Society.



**Hilary Ward** joins the School of Drama as special visiting faculty in acting. Ward is an actor, producer, teacher and coach based in Los Angeles. She is a founding member and current co-artistic producing director of Chalk Repertory Theatre, a site-responsive theater company dedicated to exploring new and classical work. As an actor, Ward has worked in television and film, and on stage with companies including La Jolla Playhouse, Ojai Playwrights Conference, Ashland New Play Festival and South Coast Repertory. She is a member of the Television Academy, Actors' Equity Association and SAG-AFTRA, for which she serves on the National Organizing Committee.



**TJ Young** has been appointed to associate professor of dramaturgy, after having served as special visiting faculty. Young is a Texas-born playwright and dramaturg based in Pittsburgh, where he serves as co-representative for the Dramatists Guild - Pittsburgh region. He has served as a dramaturg for the Young Playwrights Festival at City Theatre since 2018. Young is also the NPP chair for Region 2 of the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, where he aids with the Playwriting Intensive and teaches workshops at the regional and national levels. He received his MFA in dramatic writing from Texas State University.

[◀ Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)

[Faculty & Staff Resources](#)

[Contact](#)

# CFA



## College of Fine Arts

[Academics](#)[Research & Creative Practice](#)[ICA Pittsburgh](#)[Frank-Ratchye STUDIO](#)[News](#)[About](#)[Giving](#)

## Record. Release. Rejoice!

## Strauss Recording by CMU Wind Ensemble Proves Popular Among Audiences

written by  
Dan Fernandez

Assistant teaching professor George Vosburgh, who teaches trumpet and is the music director of the Carnegie Mellon Wind Ensemble, has been thrilled with the reception to the ensemble's latest recording of two works by Richard Strauss. The disc, featuring Strauss's rarely performed 1945 composition, "The Happy Workshop," as well as a very early Strauss piece, the 1881 "Serenade," was released this year on the Reference Recordings label to resounding acclaim from critics and professionals.

The School of Music's Wind Ensemble has a long history of releasing recordings dating back to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and the previous incarnation of the ensemble — the Kiltie Band. In the 1950s and 1960s, the concert band was the flagship ensemble of Carnegie Tech's Department of Music, performed at Carnegie Hall in New York and regularly premiered works by luminary composers. In recent years, Vosburgh has pushed to make regular recording a key part of the curriculum that prepares [School of Music](#) students for a life of professional musicianship.

The current Strauss recording project came about after a successful recording of Mozart's "Gran Partita" serenade several years ago. The Wind Ensemble students wanted to continue to challenge themselves, which led to the creation of a new course geared toward preparing and executing musical recordings.



"Whenever students come up with a project that they really want to do, it generally goes extremely well, because they are so committed to it," Vosburgh said. The Strauss recording was made over the course of two days in Kresge Theatre by teaching professor Riccardo Schulz and recording students after weeks of preparation.

Vosburgh sees the exacting nature of the recording process as essential for training a professional musician. "With any students," Vosburgh said, "they don't realize at first that it's not good enough to get it right once. They have to be able to go over it again and again, and it has to be perfect every time. They get exhausted doing it. It doesn't matter if they are playing a show for kids, or at Carnegie Hall or a recording session. It always has to be the highest standard every time you pick up the instrument."

Although the pandemic delayed the production and release of the recording, critics took notice when it was released in 2022. Ken Meltzer of Fanfare Magazine called the CD "excellent" and "breathtaking." Michael Cookson of MusicWeb International writes that the Wind Ensemble "displays satisfying unity, playing with impressive levels of concentration and a warm passionate spirit, clearly relishing the challenge." And Patrick Hanudel of American Record Guide called this recording "impressive playing from the next generation of professional musicians."

"It's that quality of student that we have, and that's why I feel that a recording like this showcases the kind of talent that we're dealing with."

George Vosburgh  
Assistant Teaching Professor, School of Music

During the annual admission auditions, Vosburgh asks prospective School of Music students where else they are auditioning besides CMU. "It's the same list ... Juilliard, Eastman, Manhattan School of Music — it's the top schools. The top talent is auditioning for our school."

[◀ Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)

[Faculty & Staff Resources](#)

[Contact](#)

# CFA



## College of Fine Arts

[Academics](#)[Research & Creative Practice](#)[ICA Pittsburgh](#)[Frank-Ratchye STUDIO](#)[News](#)[About](#)[Giving](#)

## Innovation through Artistic Engineering

## BXA Introduces New Engineering Studies and Arts Degree Program

*written by*  
Pamela Wigley*with contributions by*  
M. Stephanie Murray and Emily Syes

CMU is known for having the smartest arts students around, and this is especially evident with the students who choose the [BXA Intercollege Degree Programs](#). It's only natural, then, that the BXA programs would expand to bring together the College of Engineering and the College of Fine Arts. In May 2022, the first students in this new program graduated with the Bachelor of Engineering Studies and Arts (BESA), setting the standard for what the future of making will look like. The BESA is intended for students with a strong math and science background who want to find creative approaches to engineering problems and technical solutions in creative projects. BESA applications are currently open for CMU internal transfer students, and the program is part of the common application for fall 2023 first-year student enrollment.

Joey Mok, a rising junior, currently is pursuing his BESA degree. A cello player since third grade, Mok said he yearned to combine his STEM interests with music, and found that through the BESA.

"I'm glad the program was in development around the same time that I began to attend CMU, since it allowed me to study both of my main interests: music and engineering," Mok said.

Prior to the creation of the BESA program, BXA and Engineering collaborated to develop the [Engineering and Arts \(EA\)](#) additional major at Carnegie Mellon, which allows students majoring in engineering to choose a concentration in architecture, art, drama or music within the College of Fine Arts. The course of study is tailored to each student, whose primary major is engineering. The curriculum includes a capstone experience through BXA that combines the students' engineering and arts expertise in novel ways.

"The EA additional major blended the strengths of both engineering and the arts. The BESA takes the EA program a step further, allowing students to earn a bachelor's degree that equally combines their engineering and arts expertise, where the EA students add arts training onto their primary major."

M. Stephanie Murray  
Senior Associate Dean of Interdisciplinary Initiatives  
Director, Academic Advisor, Teaching Professor, College of Fine Arts

Thomas Sullivan, teaching professor in electrical and computer engineering and lecturer in the School of Music, understands the student attraction to the BESA program. Sullivan himself combines his electrical engineering knowledge with his interest in music.

"Many of our engineering students are very creative individuals and would like to apply their creative arts interests with their engineering background toward a career rather than just as a hobby interest," Sullivan said. "As an undergraduate at Carnegie Mellon myself in the early '80s, one had to invent these combinations within our engineering curriculum by creatively using free elective units and course substitutions in our humanities breadth."

Annette Jacobson, associate dean for undergraduate studies and teaching professor in chemical engineering, helped establish the curriculum for the BESA. When doing so, Jacobson worked with a team to ensure the depth and breadth of both engineering and the arts is reflected in the course of study.

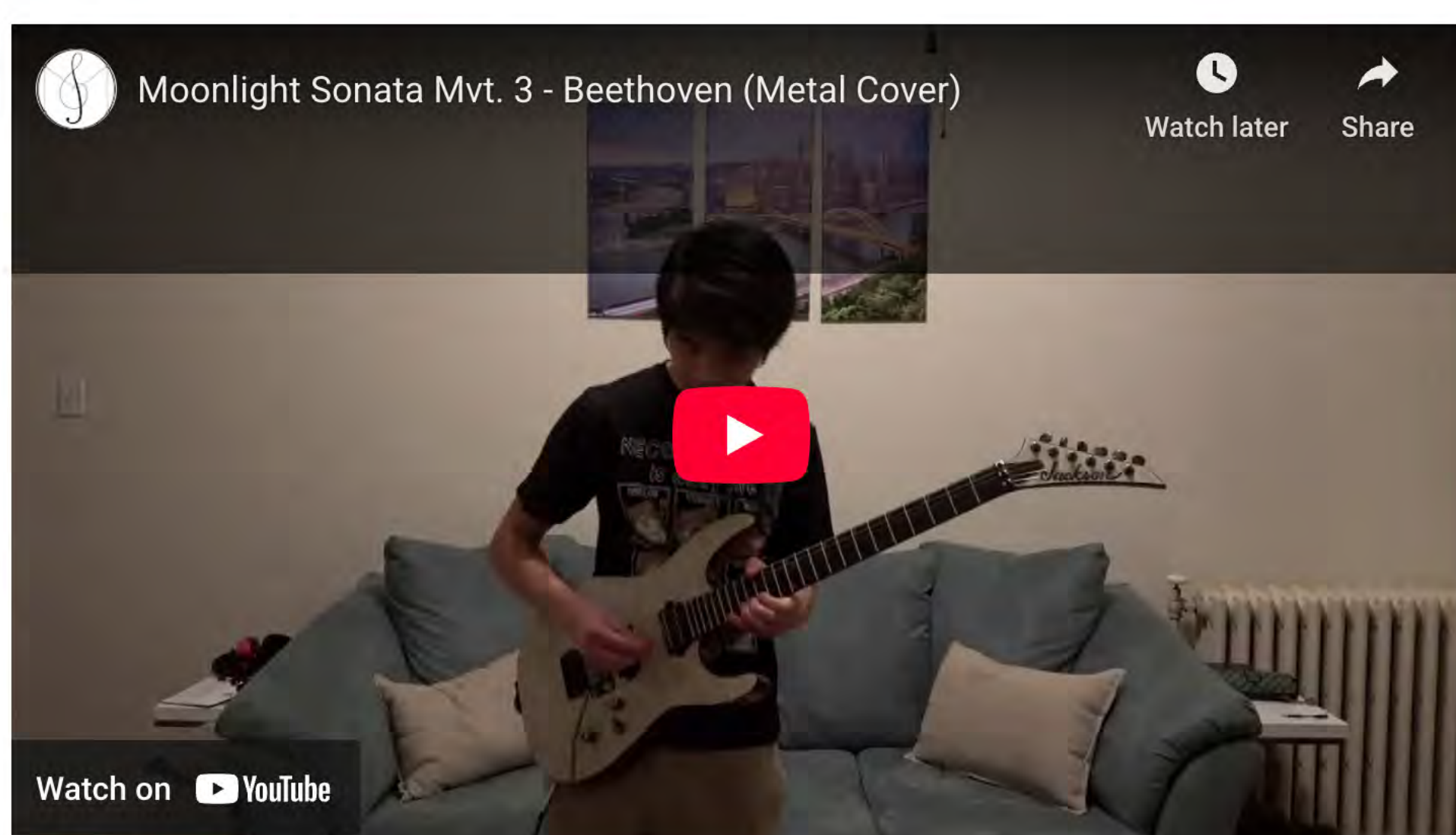
"The engineering studies part of the BESA degree was designed as an extension of the engineering studies minor that we currently offer in the College of Engineering to students interested in taking engineering courses but who are not enrolled in an engineering major," Jacobson said.

"We welcome the opportunity to offer engineering courses to students whose interests lie at the unique intersection of engineering and the arts; this new program accomplishes that goal."

Annette Jacobson  
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies  
Teaching Professor, College of Engineering

May 2022 graduate Perry Naseck focused his studies on electronic and time-based media. His goal while at CMU was to have full knowledge of not only conceptualizing his pieces, but also building them. Naseck worked closely with Golan Levin, School of Art professor and former director of the Frank-Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry, to follow a course of study that would allow him to do both with the BESA degree. He also consulted with faculty and advisors in BXA and engineering.

"I'm grateful to people like Golan [and other faculty], who are resources for me, and I know they will be lifelong connections," Naseck said. "At CMU, I've learned not only the literal skills I need in art and engineering, but I've also learned collaboration and how to navigate a project, how to serve clients and how to operate as a professional."



CMU sophomore Joey Mok plays cello and guitar. He said the new Bachelor of Engineering Studies and Arts allows him to combine his interests in music and STEM.

[◀ Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)[Faculty & Staff Resources](#)[Contact](#)**CFA**

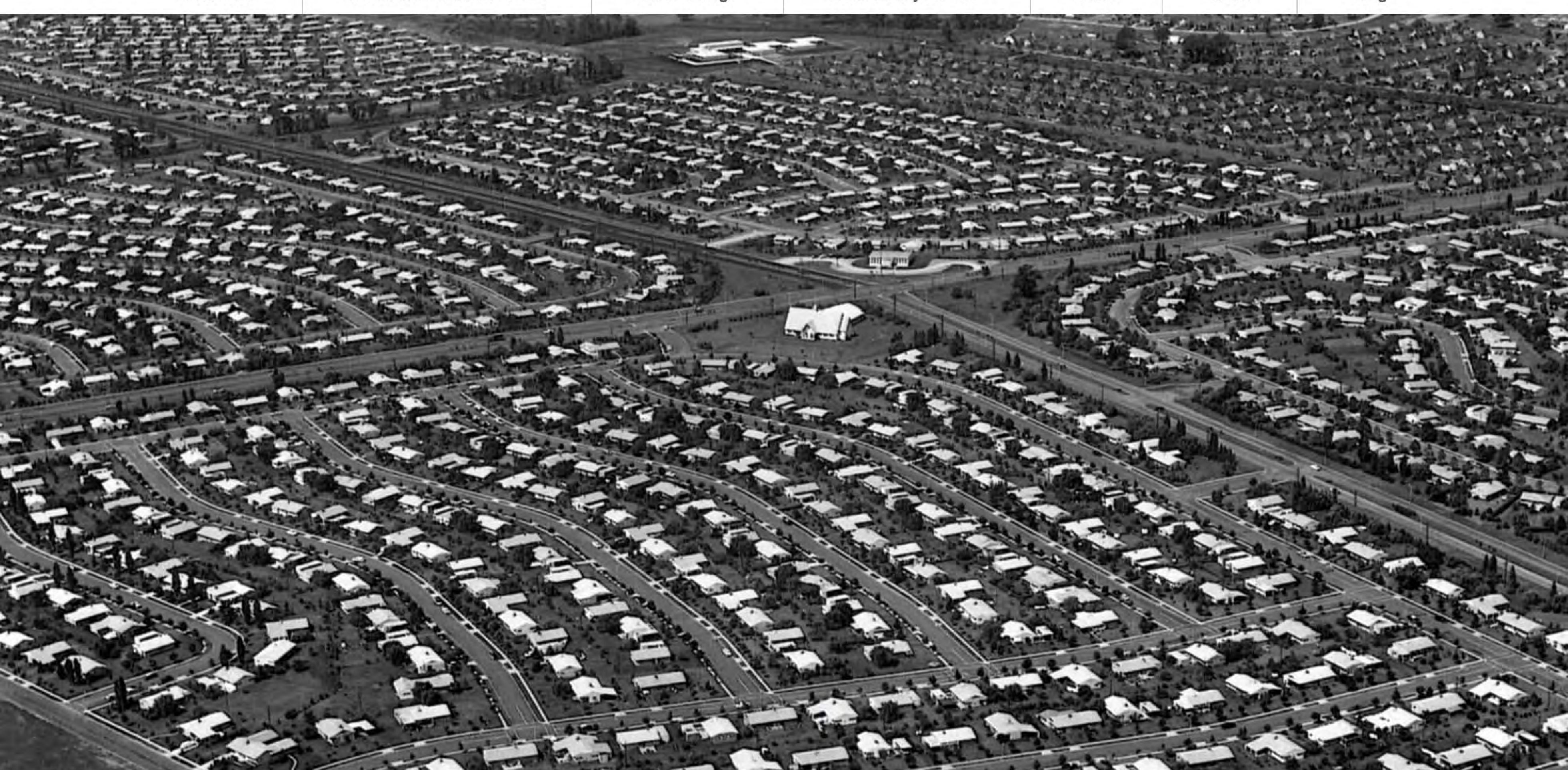
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## Dara Birnbaum: Journey



Miller ICA Presents "Dara Birnbaum: Journey"  
August 20–December 11, 2022

*written by*  
Margaret Cox

This fall, Carnegie Mellon University's [Miller Institute for Contemporary Art](#) (Miller ICA) is pleased to present "Dara Birnbaum: Journey." The exhibition surveys the extraordinary practice of Dara Birnbaum, whose work has transformed media art discourse over the last 45 years.

"Beginning in the 1970s, Birnbaum was one of the first artists to use manipulated television footage in groundbreaking video and installation work that addressed the ideological and aesthetic character of mass media imagery. She is widely recognized as one of the most influential artists working today," said Elizabeth Chodos, exhibition curator and director of the Miller ICA.

"Throughout her career, Birnbaum has continually produced penetrative interrogations of mass media as technological transformations enabled seismic shifts in the consumption of information and entertainment."

Elizabeth Chodos  
Director, Miller Institute for Contemporary Art

"This exhibition emphasizes Birnbaum's remarkable ability to unearth timeless questions in her ongoing efforts to reclaim power against dominant media paradigms — a unique skill that imbues her work with exceptional prescience," Chodos explained.

"Dara Birnbaum: Journey" is a homecoming for the artist, who graduated from Carnegie Mellon University in 1969 with a bachelor's degree in architecture. To mark this special occasion, the Miller ICA has commissioned a new work that premieres during the exhibition.

Birnbaum uses digitized 16mm family footage taken by her father in the earliest years of her life as the foundation of the new work, about which she writes, "At my age of 75, there is the strong desire to review and bring to the viewer an understanding of growing up in this 'shadow' of WWII — the period when the American Dream was weaponized by the United States, after emerging 'victorious' from this world war." In this politically polarized moment in America, Birnbaum turns her gaze toward the origins of her own life and the genesis of the powerful national narrative that has helped shape a fractured American consciousness.

## Artist Bio

Dara Birnbaum was born in New York in 1946 where she continues to live and work. She received a bachelor of architecture degree from Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, a BFA in painting from the San Francisco Art Institute, and a certificate in video and electronic editing at the Video Study Center at the New School for Social Research, New York.



Birnbaum's work is the subject of the retrospective "Dara Birnbaum: Reaction," at the Hessel Museum of Art at Bard College, New York (2022), and has been widely exhibited at MoMA PS1, New York (2019); National Portrait Gallery, London (2018); Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio (2018); South London Gallery, UK (2011); major retrospectives at the Serralves Foundation, Porto, Portugal (2010) and S.M.A.K. Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Gent, Belgium (2009); Center for Contemporary Art, CCA Kitakyushu (2009); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2008); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria (2006); and The Jewish Museum, New York (2003); her work was exhibited in Documenta 7, 8 and 9.

Birnbaum has been the recipient of various distinguished awards such as: John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship (2021); The Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center Arts Residency (2011); the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant (2011); and the prestigious United States Artists Fellowship (2010). In 2016, she was recognized and honored for her work by The Kitchen, New York, at their annual gala. She is the first woman in video to receive the prestigious Maya Deren Award by the American Film Institute in 1987. In February 2017, Carnegie Mellon University's School of Art created The Birnbaum Award in the artist's honor.

First and second floor galleries of the Miller ICA opened on August 20. The full exhibition opens on September 23, with the premiere of the newly commissioned work spanning the third floor.

*more about the gift:*

*Dara Birnbaum: Journey* was curated by Elizabeth Chodos, the director of the Miller ICA, assistant professor of curatorial practice in the School of Art, and the public art curator for Carnegie Mellon University. The exhibition was generously supported by Carnegie Mellon University Alumna and Emeritus Trustee, Patti Askwith Kenner (MM, 1966), an indefatigable advocate for social causes; The Fine Foundation; and with major support from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

*featuring the following:*

images from *Journey: In the Shadow of the American Dream*, 2022. Commissioned by the Miller ICA.

graphical elements from "Dara Birnbaum: Reaction"

[◀ Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)

[Faculty & Staff Resources](#)

[Contact](#)

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[News](#)
[About](#)
[Giving](#)


## New STUDIO Direction

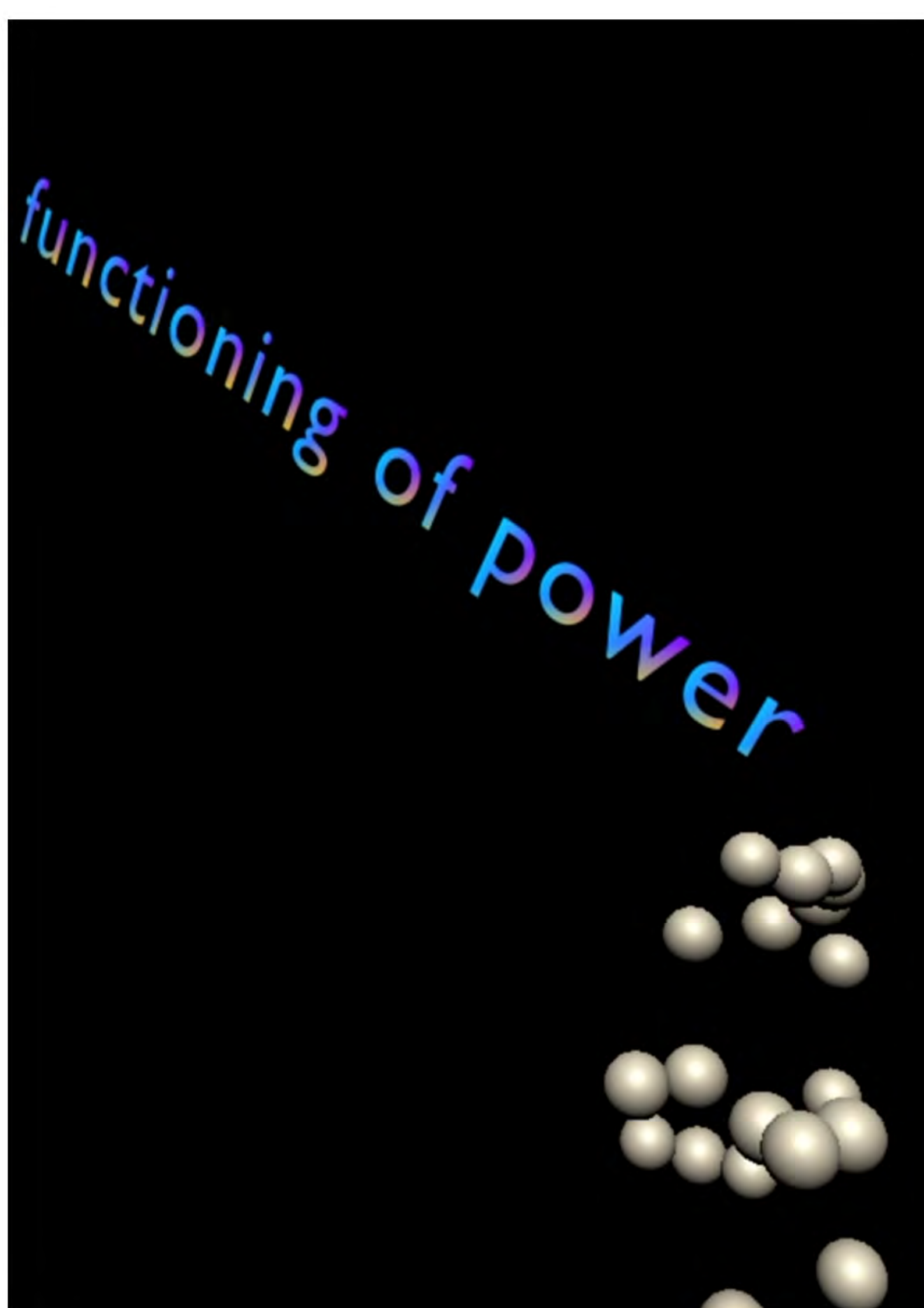


Nica Ross Guides the Future

*written by*  
Harrison Apple

The new director of the [Frank-Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry](#), [Nica Ross](#), is an artist and cultural producer out of Brooklyn, N.Y., San Francisco and Tempe, Ariz. As associate professor in the CMU School of Drama Video and Media Design Program, Ross' creative research challenges normative ideologies and social constructions that are reinforced by technology, performance and play.

Their work takes multiple forms: video installation, performance, gaming, sporting and more. The continuity across these forms is an invitation that is inherent in each piece. Ross holds a B.A. in cinema from San Francisco State University and an MFA in advanced photographic study from The International Center of Photography, Bard College program. Ross has worked in video, theater and event production on both commercial and artistic projects for more than 15 years. They have worked collaboratively with 3-Legged Dog Media & Theater Group, The Joshua Light Show and many individual artists.



Ross breathes new life into the tradition of the STUDIO to serve as a locus for hybrid enterprises on the CMU campus, the Pittsburgh region and internationally. In their previous year as co-director, they supported 46 project grants for students, faculty and staff, along with 66 visiting lectures across CFA and the university, at large, totaling more than \$70,000. Entering the fall 2022 semester, they are rigorously building on the STUDIO's three decades of experience hosting interdisciplinary artists in an environment enriched by world-class science and engineering departments.

*featuring the following:*

project images from Nica Ross's work, "Permanent Visibility"

◀ Back to CFA Magazine 06

[Faculty & Staff Resources](#)
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Academics

Research &amp; Creative Practice

ICA Pittsburgh

Frank-Ratchye STUDIO

News

About

Giving

## The Times, They are A-Changin' for Arts and Cultural Organizations

## Changes Continue in the Arts Industry, at Large, as COVID Effects Linger

written by  
Jennifer Monahan

*COVID's impact on arts organizations is significant and has accelerated systemic changes that were already looming on the horizon. Industry insiders offer insight about the path forward and see cause for hope.*

Like every industry on the planet, the arts and cultural sector has experienced tricky navigation amid the COVID pandemic. Directing an orchestra, running museum operations or managing a theater company are challenging ventures under the best of circumstances. Doing so when a global pandemic keeps your audience at home requires a whole new playbook.

In many ways, the pandemic not only caused us to consider what matters most, but also confirmed a collective understanding about the value of artistic endeavor.



"The arts teach us how to be human. They make you cry. They make you laugh, and they make you ponder about your life," said **André Solomon** (MAM 2020), community knowledge manager for [Creative Generation](#).

Connecting with others and creating meaning through art are fundamental to our very humanity. Creative acts allow us to express the soul of who we are as a society.

During the pandemic, when people faced isolation, loneliness and despair, arts and cultural organizations offered a lifeline. Many people found comfort and joy in outdoor concerts and virtual museum visits.

## Closures and Lifelines

Essential though arts organizations may be, COVID has had a seismic impact on the industry.



**Brad Carlin** (MAM 2006) is senior consultant at [TRG Arts](#), an organization focused on building resilience in the arts and cultural industry. He has been closely involved in tracking the effects of the pandemic and creating strategy to address the changes.

"When the worst of pandemic was happening and we saw venues close, we saw massive shifts into online engagement," Carlin said.

Prior to the pandemic, most theaters and performing arts organizations would have scoffed at the idea that their audiences would be moved by — or want to stay connected to — their organizations digitally. The opposite turned out to be true. Digital engagement offered a lifeline for both community members and those organizations.

While digital programming was effective for many organizations during the most intense part of the pandemic when lockdowns were in place, audience appetite has not continued. Engagement around digital programs has declined massively since the summer of 2021. Carlin said that although some organizations have seen continued success with pandemic-style digital offerings, it is by far the exception.

For those who work in the arts and cultural organization sectors, the closure of facilities and the end of in-person performances had immediate and acute financial implications. Government intervention, in the form of the [CARES Act](#) and the [American Rescue Plan](#), was instrumental in keeping the lights on and the staff on payroll.

Philanthropy has been another key factor in sustaining these organizations throughout the pandemic. Carlin said that donors were remarkably generous in donating the value of their tickets and contributing to financial appeals to keep organizations alive.



**Vann Ellen Mitchell** (MAM 2014) is senior vice president at [CCS Fundraising](#) and partners with nonprofit organizations. Mitchell said overall giving to arts and cultural organizations was down by about 8% in 2020. Although fewer individuals contributed, those who did gave larger amounts. That donor loyalty underscores how much benefactors value arts and cultural organizations. Philanthropy in the industry rebounded in 2021; giving to the arts and cultural sector was up 20% percent from 2020.

The pandemic also highlighted the outdated infrastructure in an underfunded industry.

"COVID really unearthed this historical lack of funding for arts and culture, and then they were expected to adapt so quickly."

Vann Ellen Mitchell

"Organizations that were able to pivot to create online experiences such as virtual museum tours or symphony performances in the park were a boon and a balm during a difficult time, but many did not have the staff structure or financial resources to innovate quickly," Mitchell said.

Nevertheless, in an industry predicated on originality, many organizations responded with resourcefulness and creativity to ensure their communities had access to art, music and museums.

## Changing Demographics

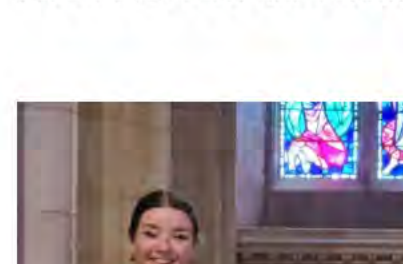
Another industry-wide change highlighted by the pandemic is a shift in audience.

**Baby Boomers** — who generally have more discretionary time and income than their **Gen X** or **Millennial** counterparts — have traditionally been the most loyal theater-goers. They have also been the slowest to return to in-person programming. Although Boomers still comprise the largest group of patrons, their size has declined proportionally. The good news is that attendance has risen slightly for younger generations.

The change was inevitable, Carlin said, though it would likely have happened more gradually without the pandemic.

## COVID, the Arts and Community Relevance

Arts managers from various perspectives said both COVID and the national conversation about race served as catalysts for the industry to reexamine community relevance.



**Kathleen Hill** (MAM 2020) is senior associate for Research and Outreach at [WolfBrown](#), where she focuses on program evaluation and strategic planning. Hill believes that arts and cultural organizations provide a comfortable and safe space to experience difference and serve as a powerful tool to recognize our common humanity.

Diversifying the racial and socio-economic makeup of audiences is a significant issue for arts and cultural organizations, and one silver lining of the pandemic is that it allowed these organizations the space to reflect.

"We've seen organizations use this time to ask some really deep, hard questions about who they are looking to serve: 'How can we be the most relevant organization to our community? Are we serving who we need to be serving? And if not, what are the things we can start to do to make that change?'" Carlin said.

Solomon, whose area of expertise is community engagement, said that success hinges on authentic relationships and honest communication with audiences.

"If you build a theater or install public art with the mindset of 'fixing' a community, you may end up actually pushing that audience out or just doing a disservice overall to the people who live there."

André Solomon

To thrive in and benefit a community, organizations have to spend time building relationships with community members. Asking audiences what they want in their community, and actually listening to the answers is imperative.

Solomon cited the [Cleveland Public Theater](#) and Carnegie Hall's [Ensemble Connect](#) as doing effective and authentic engagement with new and more racially and ethnically diverse audiences.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra created [Notes for Peace](#) in 2017, which empowers parents who have lost children to gun violence to create original songs of tribute. Carnegie Hall's [Lullaby Project](#) pairs new parents in homeless shelters, high schools, foster care and correctional facilities with professional artists to write and sing personal lullabies for their babies. Both are compelling examples of relevant community partnerships, Hill said.

## Forging a Path Forward

Although trends have been positive overall for most of the last year, the aftershocks of COVID are still being felt. The most recent data shows that ticket sales are still 20–30% behind where they were in 2019.

"Planning cycles and season cycles are all out of whack," Carlin said. "We're only just now getting to the point where many organizations are able to plan a normal season on a normal cycle and timeline, and start thinking about putting it on sale. It will probably be another year or even two before we get a real sense of what recovery looks like."

One positive thing to emerge during the pandemic was the creation of new types of donor relationships. Less engaged audience members — those who might purchase tickets for a live theater performance every year or two rather than owning season tickets, or visit a museum once a year rather than signing up for a membership — stepped in with financial support when they saw the risk of such organizations closing. The challenge for arts and cultural organizations now is how to keep these new audiences engaged.

The answer is a multi-pronged approach.

Arts and cultural organizations need to be thinking strategically about the right product mix for their community. Big, spectacular, familiar shows draw in audiences, but lesser-known, developmental work has an important place as well — and it's the latter that tends to appeal to the most loyal theater-goers.

"The way forward is in deepening relationships with the audiences, with the supporters, with the donors and the members and the subscribers that you have, while strategically and selectively looking at where you want to grow your audience and with whom and why."

Brad Carlin

Attention to diversity, equity and inclusion — both within the industry and within the community — will be an important part of whatever a "new normal" looks like, adding a wider variety of perspectives and stories.

"The arts sector is more diverse than it was," Hill said, "but not as diverse as it needs to be."

Showcasing the potential career paths — as artists, performers, arts administrators, etc. — available to young people is part of the solution. Shifting the industry toward a healthier work-life balance is also an important part of the equation.

The arts sector, like many others, is experiencing a time of "churn," Carlin said. People are leaving jobs for better-paying positions, less demanding hours or more flexible work environments.

The pandemic inspired a period of inquiry for organizations because they could no longer do things as they had been done in the past. For those who are bold enough to take advantage, the circumstances offer a chance to reimagine the way they do things.

While the industry's landscape changed over the course of the pandemic, the importance of artistic expression has not.

"People still care deeply about the arts and culture and their communities on the other side of this," Carlin said. "They still want to be in a room with other human beings and experience the kind of magic of live performance. There are artists still making incredible, meaningful and important work. There are still people who want to see it. They still use arts and culture as a way to make their lives better. That's incredibly encouraging."

◀ Back to MAM / MEIM Articles

◀ Back to CFA Magazine 06

## College of Fine Arts

[Academics](#)
[Research & Creative Practice](#)
[ICA Pittsburgh](#)
[Frank-Ratchye STUDIO](#)
[News](#)
[About](#)
[Giving](#)


## KristieAnne Reed, New CEO

Alumna KristieAnne Reed Takes the Reins at Jerry Bruckheimer Television

*written by*  
Pam Wigley



This summer, **KristieAnne Reed** was named CEO of Jerry Bruckheimer Television, an organization known for powerhouse hits like the “CSI” franchises and its spin-offs, as well as “Without a Trace” and “Lucifer.” The [School of Drama](#) undergraduate (Directing, 1995) now serves as an advisory board member for the [Master of Entertainment Industry Management degree program](#) (a joint effort of the College of Fine Arts and Heinz College).

“I was really fortunate at the time [I graduated],” she said. “[Former faculty member] Don Marinelli helped me get an internship with a producer at Disney on a feature film. I realized that producing might be my forte.”

Her work on the film earned her a full-time position, and Reed worked her way up from production assistant to production coordinator on several film projects. Her contributions as a production coordinator on the Nicolas Cage hit, “Con Air,” for Jerry Bruckheimer Films, were key to her being noticed by Bruckheimer. She joined his team as his executive assistant and was promoted 18 months later to director of film production. She went on to work on blockbusters like the “Pirates of the Caribbean” and “National Treasure” film series.

She said she believes her work ethic and passion for storytelling — traits she shared with Bruckheimer — helped to create a bond between them.

“He is an incredible mentor. Our shared passions were definitely helpful to gaining a foothold in the industry. Plus, my experience at CMU helped to guide my passion. Jerry and I shared a vision for kicking down the door and getting things made.”

KristieAnne Reed

Growing up in the Pittsburgh area, Reed said she always had an interest in the entertainment industry, something she called “a natural fit.” As she grew older, she decided that working behind the scenes was more appealing. Directing seemed like the course of study that suited her best.

She graduated from Canevin Catholic High School, where she acted in school plays and set her sights on attending CMU. She was inspired to pursue her theater interests by Rita Yunker, the forensics coach at Canevin, and theater instructor Terry Lindsay.

“[Yunker] taught me so much about speech and communication — how to lose gracefully and how to win gracefully,” she said. “Terri Lindsay directed the musicals and plays we did at Canevin.”

A Canevin classmate, Matthew Stocke, also went on to CMU. Reed fondly remembers others from the Class of 1995, with whom she still keeps in touch, Christian Borle and Patrick Wilson, among them.

“We learned to develop a visual aesthetic there. Plus, at Carnegie, you learn every person’s job as part of your training. Now, I find myself identifying with each person in the process because of that training. I do feel a connection with each department head as it translates to my professional experience.”

KristieAnne Reed

She talked with pride about her work, including the upcoming “Fire Country” for CBS and the “Hightown” series on Starz, which focuses on an LGBTQ wildlife and fishery services officer played by Monica Raymund.

She occasionally returns to Pittsburgh and fondly remembers her time spent living in Shadyside while attending CMU. She works hard to achieve work/life balance, raising a son with her producer husband (they agree not to talk shop at home).

In addition to surrounding herself with talented people, Reed said her secret to success — and advice to current students and new alumni seeking their dream job — is simple: “Why not you? You’ve had the best education at CMU. You are completely prepared.”

*featuring the following:*

image of KristieAnne Reed (pictured middle) with the cast of “Lucifer”

◀ Back to MAM / MEIM Articles

◀ Back to CFA Magazine 06

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[ICA Pittsburgh](#)
[Frank-Ratchye STUDIO](#)
[News](#)
[About](#)
[Giving](#)


Title

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*written by*  
author

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Over the years, these trends have shifted beyond the academic experience. Organizations engage in corporate responsibility models. Communities have neighborhood watches. Politicians have larger teams of advisers, etc. Although different, they all have one thing in common: It takes a community to achieve a goal.

The College of Fine Arts at Carnegie Mellon University shares the goal of educational excellence, recognizing that educational excellence is not possible without inclusion.

“In the past year, my office — in conjunction with the CFA Dean’s Office — has led change among our students, faculty and staff,” said Valeria J. Martinez, CFA’s assistant dean for [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#). “We have reframed the DEI committees at each school; the college has instituted a DEI council that includes the chairs of those respective committees, as well as members from across the college, including the Frank-Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry, Miller Institute for Contemporary Art and the BXA Intercollege Degree Programs; and, we have implemented new policies and practices to foster agency for those addressing bias-related incidents.”

Additionally, the CFA Office for the Assistant Dean for DEI has offered college-wide programming, including inaugural leadership development retreats for staff and faculty across the college. At the same time, each school is diversifying its curriculum to better engage students.

“These initiatives promote the development of each member of our college with the intention to strengthen our community responsibility toward inclusive excellence,” Martinez said.

“We have a responsibility to each other and ourselves if we are to experience a safer, more inclusive and equitable educational environment where excellence thrives. This is transformative work — it will take time; it will take action; it will take every one of us; and it will be worth it.”

Valeria J. Martinez

Assistant Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, College of Fine Arts

◀ [Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)

[Faculty & Staff Resources](#)
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[Academics](#)[Research & Creative Practice](#)[ICA Pittsburgh](#)[Frank-Ratchye STUDIO](#)[News](#)[About](#)[Giving](#)

## Funding the Creative Spirit

Bernard and Sally Dobroski's lives were transformed at Carnegie Tech, and they're ensuring the same for future Tartans through endowed funds.

*written by*  
Amanda S.F. Hartle

College of Fine Arts alumni Bernard "Bernie" and Sally (Seibert) Dobroski's great marriage started as an even greater friendship.

Wearing "dinks" identifying them as first-year students, the couple met during their first day on Carnegie Institute of Technology's campus in 1964 as Sally stored her supplies in a locker.

"We became very good friends before we started dating at the end of our first year," Bernie said. "We joined the same clubs and were interested in the same things like volunteerism, international relations, music theater, good food and art shows."



They married in 1968, three days before graduating from the newly named Carnegie Mellon University with degrees in art education for her and music performance for him.

Bernie and Sally carry with them fond memories of their years on campus as well as crucial Tartan connections that aided them throughout the years.

## Lasting Impact

In 2013, they created a permanent, endowed scholarship to benefit current students and are also establishing legacy gifts to ensure future generations of students can benefit from similar experiences.

"Our sense of gratitude began when we were students and realized what we were getting," Bernie says.

"Our time on campus really opened up worlds to both of us, and our commitment to Carnegie is long-lived."

Bernie Dobroski

The couple's Dobroski-Seibert Family Scholarship supports undergraduate students studying art or music. In addition, Bernie and Sally are intending to create two other endowed funds — one for the School of Art and another for the School of Music. Each fund focuses on interdisciplinary opportunities such as the creation of community-based programs, cross-campus collaboration efforts and support for student travel and materials.

"We want to encourage students to reach out and innovate across schools," Sally said. "These funds also really support materials and collaborative projects. We realize that many times, a trip to a convention or an audition can really make all the difference."

Bernie can relate. He visited the Soviet Union during his junior year, and his \$1,000 travel costs were covered by a donor.

"It transformed my life," Bernie said. "That \$1,000 paid dividends over my 60-year career."

## Family Connections

The first in his family to attend college, Bernie, an All-State tuba player, almost didn't attend CMU due to financial concerns. His next four years were made possible due to scholarship support.



Sally, who also received scholarship support, came from a family whose car trips often included her father's alma mater. Mark Seibert was a cheerleader and graduated from the College of Fine Arts in 1929, followed later by Sally's sister, Susan Pontano; brother-in-law, Benjamin Potano; and several nieces and nephews.

The couple's scholarship honors her father's Tartan devotion, and their funds address financial barriers like purchasing project materials — something that once hampered Sally's father's creative output as a student.

## A Foundation for Success

The couple's CMU educations aided them as they traveled around the country for their careers. Sally taught art in public and private schools in Illinois, Oregon and Virginia and earned her master's degree in early childhood education.

Bernie served as a tubist in the U.S. Navy Band in Washington, D.C.; earned a master's degree and Ph.D. in music; and became a professor and dean in the School of Music at the University of Oregon and Northwestern University.

He retired in 2020 from the classroom at Northwestern where he is a professor emeritus, but not before he left his mark on the university's first dual majors program. Inspired by their CMU experiences, he founded the university's first dual majors combining arts with other areas.

Now, they're setting up their support in perpetuity through their will and estate plans.

"At Carnegie, we really stress the idea that you need to be able to reach out beyond the floodlights," Bernie said. "You need to speak well, think clearly and work collaboratively. We learned that versatility and have leaned on it our entire lives."

[◀ Back to CFA Magazine 06](#)