

THE MAGAZINE OF
UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS

EDGE^U

TRANSFOR

MATION

FROM THE WORLD'S FIRST
PHD IN CREATIVITY
TO THE REGION'S LARGEST
IMMERSIVE MEDIA LAB,
CHANGES AT UARTS HAVE
BEEN A CONSTANT FOR
THE PAST SIX YEARS.

P.20

144TH
COMMENCEMENT

P.28

STUDENT
SUCCESS

P.54

SILVER
STARS

P.36

CONTENTS

FROM THE PRESIDENT	02
ADVANCING HUMAN CREATIVITY	04
TRANSFORMATION	20
From the world's first PhD in Creativity to the region's largest immersive media lab, changes at UArts have been a constant for the past six years.	
144TH COMMENCEMENT	28
SILVER STARS	36
AROUND CAMPUS	42
STUDENT NEWS	54
FACULTY NEWS	70
ALUMNI NEWS	78
ALUMNI NOTES	96
IN MEMORIAM	102
DONOR REPORT	108

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Postmaster: Send address changes to:
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320 S. Broad St., Philadelphia, PA 19102

Edge, Vol. 4, No. 1
Edge is the magazine of University of the Arts. Readers are encouraged to submit ideas for original articles about University students, faculty and alumni; advancements in arts and arts education; and visual, performing and media arts. The submission of artwork for reproduction is also encouraged. Please include contact information when submitting art. Unless requested, artwork will not be returned.

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Letters to the Editor
University of the Arts
320 S. Broad St., Philadelphia, PA 19102
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Featured student work, opposite:
Alison Bermudez BFA '22 (Painting) in her studio, photographed by
Jessica Kaufman BFA '22 (Photography)



From the President



We continue to celebrate our university's recent achievements, remarkable feats accomplished during uncertain times. There are many to note, from the graduation of our first PhD in Creativity cohort to the overwhelming success of our first-ever capital campaign and significant improvements to our campus. Amid those highly visible successes rest the countless accomplishments of our faculty, staff and students, who successfully navigated multiple years of learning and making during a global pandemic by embracing and building community.

Though our successes have been plentiful, we're not content to merely celebrate our accomplishments, so we continue to envision and forge new creative pathways. Deep connections among programs and across disciplines have long been a differentiator for UArts, but we remain committed to strengthening them further. For example, this past summer, MFA students from the School of Dance resumed international travel and have returned from European experiences poised to share their perspectives with our community. Meanwhile, we are rethinking the very notion of storytelling, in all its modes and forms, as we catalyze the diversity of stories shared by our artists. The process of telling and critically analyzing a story is at the very core of artists' practice and professional pursuits, whether the medium is written, performed, painted, designed or directed.

We also recently welcomed 10 intriguing interdisciplinary artists to a renovated floor of Anderson Hall, as part of our new Inspiration Lab (iLAB) Artist-in-Residence program. These residency opportunities have attracted artists from all disciplines and around the world, and the first cohort is already accelerating their contributions to contemporary art. We're looking forward to the formation of new partnerships in our academic programs and campus spaces through this program.

Last year's joyful return to campus brought the resumption of performances, exhibitions and other events, including three Commencement ceremonies for the classes of 2020, 2021 and 2022. Throughout each of these experiences, I was continually reminded of what initially attracted me to UArts: this creative community, whose resilience continues to imbue our contemporary world with ingenuity, compassion and collaboration. This is further reflected in our abiding commitment to equity across all aspects of the UArts experience, and the dedication of our faculty and staff to the success and thriving of each and every student.

It is clear that COVID-19 and other turbulence will remain a persistent challenge for all of higher education. Fortunately, I can think of no other community better equipped to address our evolving circumstances and reflect on changing human experiences than that of UArts. I am deeply honored to share in this brilliant community of students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents and friends, and I am grateful for your support.

Sincerely,

David Yager
President and CEO

STUDENT CENTER COMING SOON — COMING SOON — COMING SOON COMING SOON — COMING SOON — COMING SOON COMING SOON — COMING SOON — COMING SOON



The historic Gershman Y—known at UArts as Gershman Hall—has for years served as a vital cultural center and student support services hub on the Avenue of the Arts. Reimagined as a Student Center, the building will function as the heart of the university itself. Once renovated, the new space will feature community gathering spaces, entertainment venues and study areas under one roof. Phase One renovations (the construction of a first-floor collaboration space, cafe and bookstore named for Trustee Harriet Weiss) are already underway, but this second phase, thanks to a new **\$2.5 million grant** from the commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program, will further the transformation of the building into a campus hub.

Built in 1923, the Gershman Y building hosted a Jewish community center, and later, a secular Jewish arts and culture organization for decades before being acquired by UArts in 2018. It has since become the home of the YGym Dance Theater, the Levitt Auditorium, classrooms, offices, Student Health Services, Student Affairs and dance rehearsal space. The well-traversed halls and rooms already see as many as 65 percent of the student population every day. That number will only increase with these capital improvements.

The second phase of renovations, as envisioned by **JacobsWyper Architects**, will reconfigure the lower level with a new film screening room, a theater lobby and concessions area, restrooms, and a collaboration center.

The update is a boon to Lightbox Film Center, which will use the modernized and dedicated space for its moving image art programs, said Director and Curator **Jesse Pires**.

“Since becoming a part of UArts in 2020, Lightbox Film Center has continued to grow as a resource for film exhibition in the city, building on our legacy as a champion for celluloid formats,” Pires said. “This funding will take our program to another level, allowing Lightbox to expand into a new, state-of-the-art venue where cinema can thrive and where both the university community and the public can enjoy our programs.”

Phase Two also includes general renovations to the third floor’s Levitt Auditorium, replete with new seating. Additionally, the project encompasses important infrastructure upgrades to the building: larger elevators, Watts Street drainage and paving, South Alley stabilization, and updates to mechanical spaces. All told, the construction and building enhancements will help the university retain 44 existing jobs and create 13 new ones. Work on the project has begun and will likely be completed in 2023.

SUPPORT

FROM THE HOME TEAM



Amid a loyal and active university community, UArts is especially lucky to have a group of 13 volunteer family members who serve on the **Parent and Family Council (PFC)** and work tirelessly to advance the school's mission. The council provides a parent and family perspective, giving feedback on their experiences and passing along its observations and insights to university leaders to inform decisions that impact students and families.

In fact, 2021–2022 was a banner year for the council, as it continued to grow its ranks and establish work processes and methods for measuring its success.

"We had a successful parent recruitment effort and onboarded a strong group of dedicated, hardworking and passionate parents to serve on the Parent and Family Council," Council Chair **Lynne Sullivan**, pictured left with her daughter, **Shannon Sullivan '23 (Musical Theater)**, said. "We also enriched our three major committees—Fundraising, Generations and Special Events—by creating clear objectives and expectations, implementing monthly committee meetings, and holding ourselves accountable for achieving our objectives."

The council, which officially meets twice a year in person on campus, gets involved in community engagement activities, such as New Student Orientation, UArts Weekend, Admit One for admitted students and fundraising initiatives.

"I have always been very involved wherever my daughter went to school, but I assumed it would end when she went to college," Sullivan said. "The PFC has provided a noninvasive way for me to be involved—and at arm's length."

In the spring semester, council members served as UArtist Day of Giving ambassadors, to help the university reach its campaign goals for the event, which was held March 1. PFC members personally contacted fellow parents to encourage them to make contributions benefitting student scholarships. Their outreach also helped spur the friendly competition among schools for the most money raised.

Throughout the school year, the council kept the university community up to date on its activities and shared other important information through the monthly Generations newsletter for UArts parents, families and support systems. Topics included student homesickness, campus safety, career and academic advising, recommended restaurants and activities near campus, student mental health, and roommate challenges.

"WE HAD A SUCCESSFUL PARENT RECRUITMENT EFFORT AND ONBOARDED A STRONG GROUP OF DEDICATED, HARDWORKING AND PASSIONATE PARENTS TO SERVE ON THE PARENT AND FAMILY COUNCIL."

— LYNNE SULLIVAN
PARENT AND FAMILY COUNCIL CHAIR

The council has also served as a liaison between prospective parents and the Admissions office, Sullivan added. Prospective parents are invited to request an individual meeting with a council volunteer to find out more about UArts and the student and family experience.

"In addition, we helped connect the Admissions office (through the network of PFC members) to various points of contact in high schools in our respective geographic areas."

These efforts prompted enrollment confirmations from many families. The PFC is eagerly looking forward to making an even more positive impact in the coming months.

Learn more about parent and family resources at uarts.edu/parents.

UArts WELCOMES BACK IN-PERSON GALA

During the initial outbreak of COVID-19, UArts held its annual fundraising gala, Art Unleashed, online. In 2022, however, it safely returned to campus, with a limited number of guests permitted to attend. Despite the health-minded constraints, the event was a major success, netting more than \$250,000 for student scholarships to help UArtists continue their education, and for the UArts Cares Fund, which ensures students equitable access to food, housing, art supplies, healthcare and transportation during the academic school year.

The party, held March 24 at the Philadelphia Art Alliance and Gershman Hall, was underwritten by 46 individual and corporate sponsors, and included a seated dinner, live entertainment and an awards ceremony hosted by jazz saxophonist **Ravi Seenarine BM '22 (Instrumental Performance)**. Seenarine also performed for the audience. While most guests opted to come to the event live, attendees could also attend remotely.

A hybrid virtual and in-person showcase and art sale, which ran from March 25 through March 28, featured photography, sculpture, painting and illustration works by several visual artists—among them, current students, faculty, staff and alumni. Twenty-three original works were sold in total, with proceeds benefiting both the university and the artists.

The evening opened at the newly restored convening and gallery spaces in the historic Philadelphia Art Alliance with a cocktail hour accompanied by live music from a UArts student jazz ensemble. Guests were also invited to browse a sneak peak of the art sale. Later, they traveled by trolley back to the Avenue of the Arts and Levitt Auditorium, where the formal program began.

A video profiling **Paul Mariani '23 (Vocal Performance)**—who is shown singing Billy Joel's "Piano Man" in one of his earliest childhood performances—has benefitted from scholarship and COVID-19 relief money that helped him get back to campus after a gap year spent working for his family business. Mariani's story embodies the true impact of the gala and the university's fundraising efforts on behalf of students.



Left to right: "REALTREE" by faculty and alum Nicholas Lenker BFA '05 (Craft and Material Studies), "Moon Bowl" by Maple Young '23 (Craft and Material Studies) and "Masked Actress (Carlsbad Cavern)" by faculty Marcelino Stuhmer

"There [are] many talented people who can't afford to pay for college, and the fact that the school offers such a big scholarship program makes students feel like, 'Hey, I can pursue this,'" Mariani said.

The video was followed by a surprise performance by Mariani reprising "Piano Man" for the live audience.

The 2022 Excellence in the Arts Hamilton Award was presented to **Sam S. McKeel** in recognition of his stewardship of UArts. The former reporter, executive and publisher of newspapers, including Chicago Sun-Times, The Philadelphia Inquirer and Philadelphia Daily News got involved with UArts in the 1970s. He served as the chair of the board at Philadelphia College of Art (PCA), during which time he was involved in the merger of PCA and Philadelphia College of Performing Arts. During his tenure on the board, McKeel also helped establish the Rosenwald-Wolf Gallery and endowed the Sam McKeel Promising Young Artist Scholarship, which has funded more than 100 students since its founding.

A personal friend of Dorrance "Dodo" Hamilton, McKeel was emotionally moved as he accepted the award named for the fierce advocate for creativity who was a longtime trustee and the university's greatest benefactor.

"Dodo Hamilton was just an extraordinary person who was so involved in the community in a way that made a great difference in the lives of so many people," he said.

Born in the rural south in the beginning of the Great Depression and raised by a single mother who lost everything in the bank crash, McKeel views his philanthropic work as a way to uplift others with humble beginnings and help them make their creative aspirations a reality.

"I'd grown up not expecting things to happen automatically, but I was the beneficiary of people who mentored me and who have pushed me in the right direction at the right time," McKeel said. "They demonstrated to me what can happen if people put their minds to it and work hard at it—they have a real chance to succeed."

Save the Date: Performance Unleashed, an evening celebrating the talent and artistry of the UArts performing arts community, returns in person April 13, 2023.

1. Left to right: President and CEO David Yager, Trustee Ebonne Ruffins and Elena McDonald



2. Left to right: "RISE Philadelphia" by Jonai Gibson-Selix BFA '22 (Graphic Design), "untitled 03" by Erica Honson MFA '21 (Book Arts & Printmaking) and "Vessel 1 (Black Series)" by Alex Bell BS '22 (Craft & Material Studies)

3. "I watched the clouds fade in ur eyes, the sparse clouds, red, blue, green the whole freakin rainbow" by Zeinab Diomande '23 (Painting)



4. Left to right: Meredith Aristone and Trustee Joe Aristone

5. Ravi Seenarine BM '22 (Instrumental Performance)

6. Left to right: Nancy Bellber and Excellence in the Arts Hamilton Awardee Sam S. McKeel

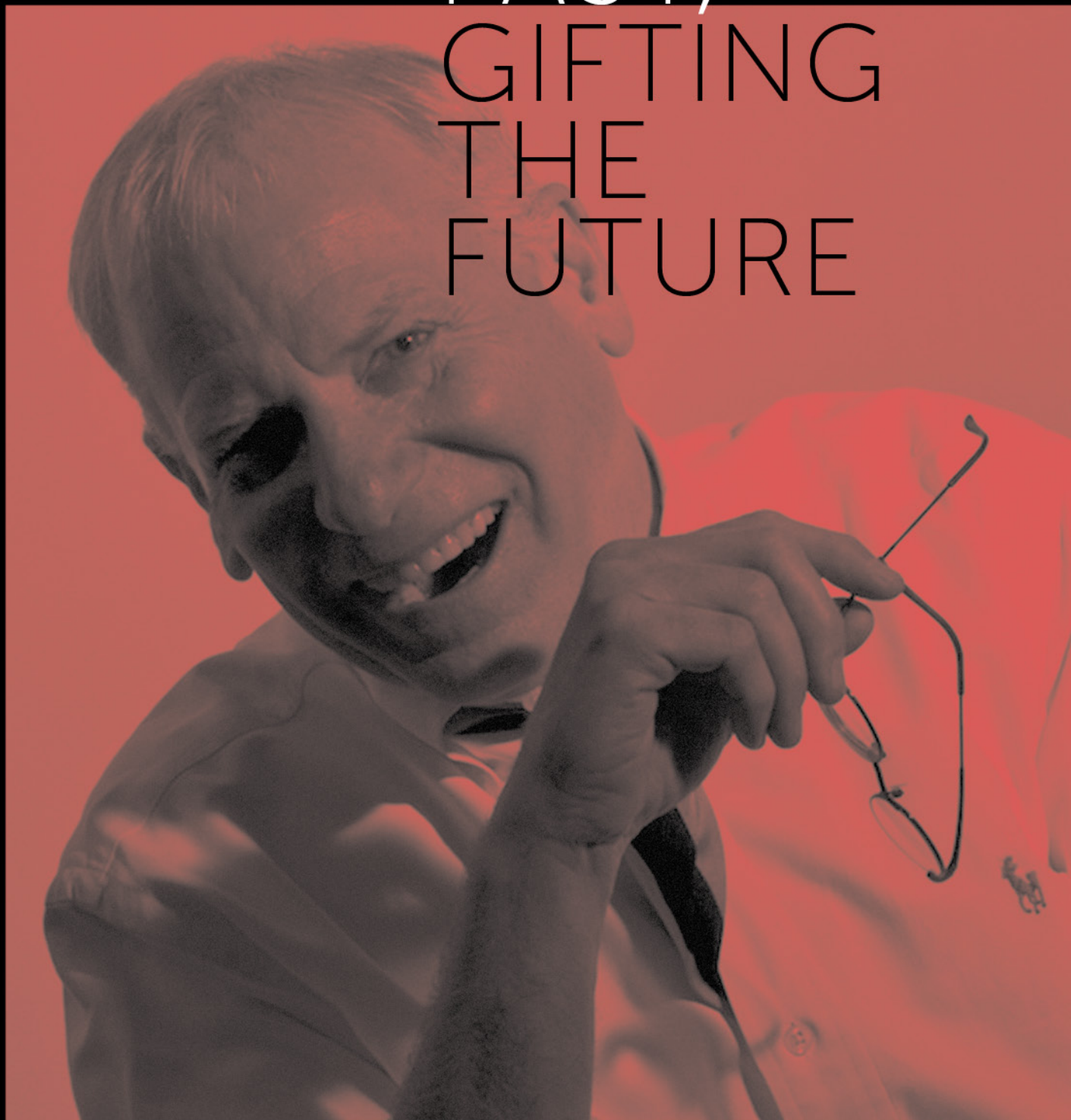
7. Trustee Travis Gaylord participates in the paddle raise to support student scholarships.

8. Trustee Eleanor L. Davis (left) and Eileen Rosenau



CHRIS RANSOM

INSPIRED BY THE PAST, GIFTING THE FUTURE



raphic designer, photographer and emeritus professor **Chris Ransom BFA '82 (Graphic Design)** has built a multifaceted career in which education has occupied a key role—so it's not entirely surprising that he has generously planned a gift to his alma mater.

Ransom retired from a rewarding teaching career, most recently at the School of Visual Communication Design at Kent State University, Ohio, in spring 2017.

"A year before that, in 2016, I started to prepare a living trust, which, as it happens, represents a magnificent tool that enables one, while present, to allocate and come to terms with what you would like to have happen in the future," Ransom said. "For me, UArts was certainly one of those considerations—I've always had an affinity with the school. The word 'intrinsic' comes to mind, because my experience there was so central to the career that was to follow."

Ransom came to Philadelphia College of Art (PCA) after graduating from University of Texas at Austin in 1975. At the time, he'd been researching art schools across the country. After a chance encounter with photographer George Krause, who suggested the program at PCA, he flew to Philadelphia to investigate.

"Within the first five minutes, it felt like I'd walked right into a new home," Ransom recalled. "There was all this beautiful, refined typography present, which immediately got my undivided attention. It was an insightfully structured program that allowed each individual to work within its given constraints to eventually find their special path."

He later taught his own classes at PCA, with an approach greatly inspired by his professors.

"From my studies at PCA, I saw that it was about bringing forth what might innately be unique to or intrinsically reside within a particular student," he said. "The more I can truly, carefully listen to what it is my students are saying, or to what it is that they are trying to achieve in their work, the greater the chance I might form a response that subtly guides them to an effective path of personal inquiry."

Ransom went on to earn a Master's degree in Photography at University of Delaware in Newark before his arrival at Kent State University. During his tenure at Kent State, he specialized in the planning and design of typographic and photographic curricula and spearheaded the configuration of an Applied Photography major, which earned accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Art and Design in spring 2013. His students have gone on to become successful designers, photographers, educators and industry leaders.

His work has been exhibited at the Samuel S. Fleisher Art Memorial, Philadelphia; the Maine Photographic Workshop in Rockport; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and UArts, among other places. His photographs have been published in *Graphis*, *Print* and *Architecture* magazines. Ransom continues to work as a creative photographer and is currently working on a color series titled *Challenging the Known*.

"It is a privilege to have the opportunity to dedicate oneself to this exciting visual journey," he said. "The fact is, I had a great education at PCA, for which I am grateful and would like for others to have that same opportunity. The intent is that in some appropriate fashion, that same solid, relevant educational experience continues."

For more information, or for language specific to your bequest or beneficiary designation, contact

Andrew Pack
Vice President for Development
and Alumni Relations
215-717-6147 or apack@uarts.edu

UARTIST DAY OF GIVING



“Not only was it my first time designing socks, but it was also my first professional job as an illustrator, and I felt honored to be chosen for it.”

— JULIA BUCKLEY '23
(ILLUSTRATION)

MAKING ART & BREAKING RECORDS

The third annual Day of Giving was the biggest and best yet, with 921 individuals raising **\$253,290** entirely in support of students. Held March 1, 2022, the 24-hour fundraising drive activated students, faculty, staff, families and alumni alike to generously contribute to the emerging talent at UArts.

This year's campaign featured a series of videos made by **Kate Flannery BFA '97 (Acting)**, best known as Meredith on the TV show *The Office*, who exhorted the UArts community to dig deep and help students realize their dreams.

“UArts is an amazing place and this is a great opportunity,” she said. “Students directly benefit from your generosity. Make the life of an artist happen, because the world is a much better place with the arts.”

Student **Julia Buckley '23 (Illustration)** was selected to design a limited-edition pair of socks for Day of Giving, which was used as an incentive for gifts of \$25 or more.

“It felt amazing to take on a high-profile design project like this,” Buckley said. “Not only was it my first time designing socks, but it was also my first professional job as an illustrator, and I felt honored to be chosen for it. It was really an incredible first experience, because I was given the opportunity to work with established artists who work at UArts and whom I admire. I was able to help create a product that raised money for a community I love so much.”

Buckley's whimsical and colorful design was inspired by school mascot Arty the unicorn.

“Since Arty is a newer addition to UArts, I haven't seen them a lot around school yet, and I wanted to give them another place to shine. After close to a century and a half of UArts being established, we've gotten a fun mascot that represents us well as a community. I see people walking around [wearing] the socks, and it feels wonderful every time! I love seeing Arty accompany people as they walk to their classes and around Philly.”

As in previous years, the university held a giving contest among its schools, with the winners taking UArtist Day of Giving trophies, as well as additional pledged funds for the school from loyal UArts supporter and Trustee **Nathaniel P. Hamilton Jr. BFA '07 (Photography)**. Competition was fierce, but in the end, the School of Dance led the School Challenge, out-raising all other departments with 140 donors for a total of \$7,500 and winning a trophy. (Second place went to the School of Art, and Ira Brind School of Theater Arts came in third.)

“Seeing many members of the UArts community come together to participate in the overall UArtist Day of Giving and directly support the School of Dance was amazing,” Dean Donna Faye Burchfield said. “I want to thank our faculty team leadership and our donors, as the funds raised greatly benefit our students and the school. We're proud to have received the coveted School Challenge trophy and aim to hold on to it next year, too!”

The number of donors soared by more than 44 percent in 2022, raising \$105,313 over the previous year's total. This boost in donations was matched only by the enthusiasm of supporters across the UArts community. More than 200 alumni made donations, unlocking a \$50,000 challenge gift, with the School of Design landing the coveted Day of Giving school trophy. Likewise, the Finance department won the staff trophy, and staff as a whole unlocked a \$25,000 challenge gift from the Virginia & Harvey Kimmel Arts Fund of The Philadelphia Foundation.

The thrill of winning may be fleeting, but Arty socks—and the knowledge that you've supported young artists, encouraged creativity and empowered others to give—last a lifetime.

Mark your calendars: The next UArtist Day of Giving will be held Feb. 28, 2023.

UArtist 
DAY OF GIVING

The Transformative Power of the Campaign for Creative Capital



Left to right: Nathaniel P. Hamilton Jr. BFA '07 (Photography), trustee; David Yager, president and CEO; Judson A. Aaron BM '81 (Saxophone), board chair; and Brian Effron, trustee

A defining moment in UArts history, **Uniquely UArts: The Campaign for Creative Capital** came to a triumphant close in 2022. Launched in 2018, the fundraising initiative encouraged the university community to dream big with a future-facing goal of \$50 million. In fact, the response was even bigger: By the final count, the campaign raised **\$67.2 million**.

With the stated aim of strengthening the university's mission to advance human creativity, UArts' first-ever comprehensive capital campaign focused on four areas: enhancing the student experience, investing in faculty, reenvisioning campus buildings and spaces, and developing innovative programming. The campaign has already made a material difference in all of these areas.

To support students, more than \$5.5 million of campaign funds have been dedicated for unrestricted and endowed scholarships awarded on merit and/or financial need. The UArts Cares Fund devoted \$309,347 to supplemental support for students' health, needs, well-being and belonging.

In addition to the active recruitment and hiring of new faculty members and deans, the university has invested in faculty leadership and collaboration. **The President's Fund for Excellence** launched its inaugural round of **Grants for Creative Research and Innovation** with funding for 11 UArts faculty and staff projects.

Multiple capital projects, including new spaces and updates to existing ones, have reenvisioned the campus and improved the lives of students. Among them are the **Albert M. Greenfield Makerspace**, visiting artist studios, the state-of-the-art Laurie Wagman Recording Studios, renovation of the **Philadelphia Art Alliance**, a **Student Center** in Gershman Hall and the **Living Steps** in Solmssen Court.

The first-of-its kind **PhD in Creativity** program embodies the innovative programming the campaign has enabled. UArts celebrated its first cohort of graduates in May 2022.

All told, Uniquely UArts has created a culture of giving that has forever changed both the university's physical and philanthropic landscapes, enabling the community to think more broadly and ambitiously about fundraising.

With \$24,250,000 now invested in UArts' endowment, Trustee and Campaign Chair **Brian Effron** says that the outcome exceeded even his own expectations.

"When I agreed to chair the campaign, I knew that UArts had so much to offer, having served on the board for several years before its launch," he told the audience at the Campaign Closing Reception on April 26. "Even so, I never dreamed that we would far exceed the goal we set out to attain. It has been exciting to be part of the many transformational changes that this historic effort has brought to the campus. I look forward to seeing how these changes and improvements will benefit our talented students, now and in the future."

UNIUELY UARTS

The Campaign for Creative Capital.

1. UArts President and CEO David Yager gives opening remarks at the event.
2. Counterclockwise: Daniel Horning BM '22 (Instrumental Performance), Robert Rutigliano BM '22 (Instrumental Performance), Ravi Seenarine BM '22 (Instrumental Performance)
3. Left to right: Trustees William R. Gast BFA '68 (Graphic Design), Travis Gaylord and Patricia Fowler
4. Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations Andrew Pack
5. Left to right: Trustees Harriet Weiss, Eleanor L. Davis and Nathaniel P. Hamilton Jr. BFA '07 (Photography)



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TRANSFORMATION

FROM THE WORLD'S FIRST PHD IN CREATIVITY TO THE REGION'S LARGEST IMMERSIVE MEDIA LAB, CHANGES AT UArTS HAVE BEEN A CONSTANT FOR THE PAST SIX YEARS.

by JoAnn Greco




Open Mic Night, 2022

It's been more than six years since **President and CEO David Yager** assumed the helm of University of the Arts, and since then, he's spearheaded a remarkable transformation. The single most potent force behind that change has been the Uniquely UArts capital campaign, the university's first-ever comprehensive fundraising effort. But dig a little deeper, and it becomes clear that it's the new and precise articulation of the institution's mission—Advancing Human Creativity—that has been the most impactful.

Those three words, President Yager explained, "move us toward a holistic, rather than a siloed, view to help us reach a new level in arts education." The mission includes four critical strategies that, in turn, drove the fundraising efforts: enhancing the student experience, investing in faculty, reenvisioning the campus and developing innovative programming.

Launched in 2018 with a stated goal of raising \$50 million, the campaign wound up increasing the university's coffers by **\$67 million**. Several board members assumed leadership roles in the effort, said **Judson A. Aaron BM '81 (Saxophone)**, chair of the Board of Trustees, including **Brian Efron** and **Nathaniel P. Hamilton Jr. BFA '07 (Photography)**. Aaron also singles out UArts' Advancement office, led by **Andrew Pack**, as key to the campaign's stunning success. But, he pointed out, President Yager's vision and relationship-building acted as guiding principles throughout the campaign.

"He focused on implementing significant capital improvements and lifting our academic standing to bring about some incredibly positive changes," Aaron said. "The money raised will go toward hiring new deans and academic leaders with national profiles, building and improving new facilities, enhancing our scholarship programs, and increasing our endowment."

Here's a closer look at some of the projects and developments that have been key to UArts' dynamic transformation. 

1. A student creates in a Sculpture class.
2. A Product Design student presents her work.
3. Brind School of Theater Arts students rehearse *Sometimes the Rain, Sometimes the Sea*, performed at Arts Bank Theater in February 2022.
4. Adjunct Assistant Professor Darryl Smith reviews a student's painting.

“Everything we do starts with the students.”

— **DAVID YAGER**
PRESIDENT AND CEO

BOLSTERING STUDENTS AND FACULTY

“Everything we do starts with the students,” President Yager affirmed.

“Some initiatives, such as improving our facilities or increasing scholarship opportunities, are clearly and quickly change-making,” he elaborated. “Others take a longer view toward raising our name recognition and value. No matter the approach, Uniquely UArts always kept a student-centric focus.”

Consider the **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) Student Fellowship** and the **Inspiration Lab (iLAB) Artist-in-Residence program**, two initiatives that directly enhance student life. The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) Student Fellowship, introduced in time for the beginning of the 2020–2021 academic year, is awarded to one undergraduate student from each school. In these compensated positions, fellows advocate for their peers in the development of DEIA-related education, programming and planning and act as intermediaries between the student body and university leadership.

iLAB, which launched this summer, gathers 10 artists-in-residence from within the UArts community, across the U.S. and around the world for three- to 12-month residencies. In addition to private space in purpose-built studios and galleries, they have access to other university facilities and receive a monthly

stipend. The first cohort includes a Pulitzer Prize-winning Diné composer, a UArts Dance alum and a Philadelphia-based mixed-media artist who examines immigrant history and values. “In addition to supporting their work, our hope is that these artists will influence the students through lectures and exhibitions,” President Yager said. “It’s exciting and very useful for students to see how young practicing artists work out in the real world—their successes, their struggles, their opportunities.”

Stellar teachers attract and produce stellar students, so providing new opportunities for artistic exchange and collaboration for existing faculty was another key component of Uniquely UArts. “The more support the faculty get for their work, the easier it is for them to bring that work back to the students,” President Yager said. “It’s about cementing the idea that the faculty are working artists. And, not incidentally, it rejuvenates faculty members, so they become better teachers.”

One effort toward that goal, **Creative Research and Innovation Grants** available to faculty and staff, was introduced earlier this year. The initial round awarded support to 11 projects, including funding for a Dance professor’s five-day research trip to attend *documenta 15*, an exhibition curated by an Indonesian art collective; a Fine Arts professor’s exploration of the history, techniques, equipment and evolution of wood engraving; and a project by Photography Program Director Jennifer Greenburg that incorporates costuming, performance and stagecraft to analyze sociohistorical narratives.





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1. University of the Arts represents the United States at the 2019 Beijing Biennale in the National Art Museum of China.
2. The National Art Museum of China hosts the 2019 Beijing Biennale.
3. Jonathan Fineberg, along with President and CEO David Yager (not pictured), is the innovative educator behind the nation's first-ever PhD in Creativity.
4. A current PhD in Creativity candidate participates in the two-week immersion program that kicks off each cohort's experience at UArts.

“After learning more and more about neuroscience and how the brain works, I’ve come to realize that practitioners in any field can learn to think more creatively.”

— **JONATHAN FINEBERG**
PHD IN CREATIVITY PROGRAM DIRECTOR

INVIGORATING PROGRAMMING

Whether it’s being the only representative for the U.S. in an international biennale or developing the world’s first **PhD in Creativity**, UArts hasn’t been averse to shaking up the opportunities it offers.

In 2019, the university presented 22 artworks by 11 teaching artists and alumni at the National Art Museum of China as part of the **Beijing International Art Biennale**. The American Special Exhibition—curated by President Yager and former Vice President Rick Longo—showcased the university’s legacy of arts leadership and spotlighted UArts’ mission of advancing human creativity.

The PhD in Creativity, developed by President Yager and Program Director **Jonathan Fineberg**—along with an advisory panel of academic and artistic luminaries that includes two MacArthur “genius” award recipients—is the first PhD program at UArts. It grants an individually tailored, low-residency degree for advanced interdisciplinary research in the arts, humanities, sciences and social sciences to a variety of candidates. “After learning more and more about neuroscience and how the brain works, I’ve come to realize that practitioners in any field can learn to think more creatively,” Fineberg explained.

The first cohort of eight graduates—including a wine writer for Forbes magazine, a psychotherapist and a law professor—provided ample evidence for his theory. This year, a second cohort of 10 candidates entered the three-year program, all of them scholars whose pursuits don’t fit easily into existing PhD programs, Fineberg emphasized. One such candidate, **James Brandon Lewis**, is also the inaugural recipient of the new Balvenie Fellowship, supported by Scotch whisky producer The Balvenie and informed by music legend Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson. A critically acclaimed composer, saxophonist and writer, Lewis has pioneered a twofold approach to music that braids the fundamentals of music theory with the ideas of molecular biology.

1. Students explore the Albert M. Greenfield Makerspace, which opened in 2018.
2. The Philadelphia Art Alliance at University of the Arts has undergone renovations to create a “living room for the arts” in Philadelphia.
3. The Center for Immersive Media, which opened in late 2019, creates opportunities for virtual- and augmented-reality skill building, as well as human-computer interaction.
4. The Laurie Wagman Recording Studios, which opened in 2019, provide state-of-the-art, hands-on production and recording experiences for Music students.

Never-before-imagined synergies have been the lifeblood of UArts of late.

Another grand opening, that of the **Center for Immersive Media** in Juniper Hall, quickly followed. Acknowledging that the meaning of “arts” has changed and will continue to morph, the 5,600-square-foot facility is dedicated to exploring the au courant fields of virtual reality, motion capture and human-computer interactions that blend data, simulations, stories, performances and digital communities. At the turn of 2020, UArts realized the transfer of the 40-year-old **Lightbox Film Center**, the area’s premier showcase for experimental film and moving-image art. The organization’s operations are now under the auspices of the university, fostering a “collaboration across [its] seven schools and more than 40 programs,” President Yager said at the time.

Lightbox screenings are pegged to shift to the campus’ forthcoming **Student Center** located in Gershman Hall, which is currently undergoing a major renovation and reconfiguration. In January 2021, Yager announced the university’s receipt of a \$1 million grant from the commonwealth of Pennsylvania to develop the center, which will also be designed by JacobsWyper. The nearly 100,000-square-foot transformation of the historic building involves three phases: a retrofit of the lower level to include a purpose-built film screening room and a flexible student lounge, and lastly, the conversion of the upper floors to centers for health and wellness, learning and access, and activities and engagement. The building will also serve as a “destination for arts and culture enthusiasts from across the city and region,” according to Paul Beiderman, then-president of the Avenue of the Arts Inc. “[It] is exactly what we need on South Broad Street at this moment.”

The building, when completed, will undoubtedly cap the legacy of President Yager. As he prepares to bid farewell to the UArts community, he looks back fondly on all that has happened during his years on Broad Street.

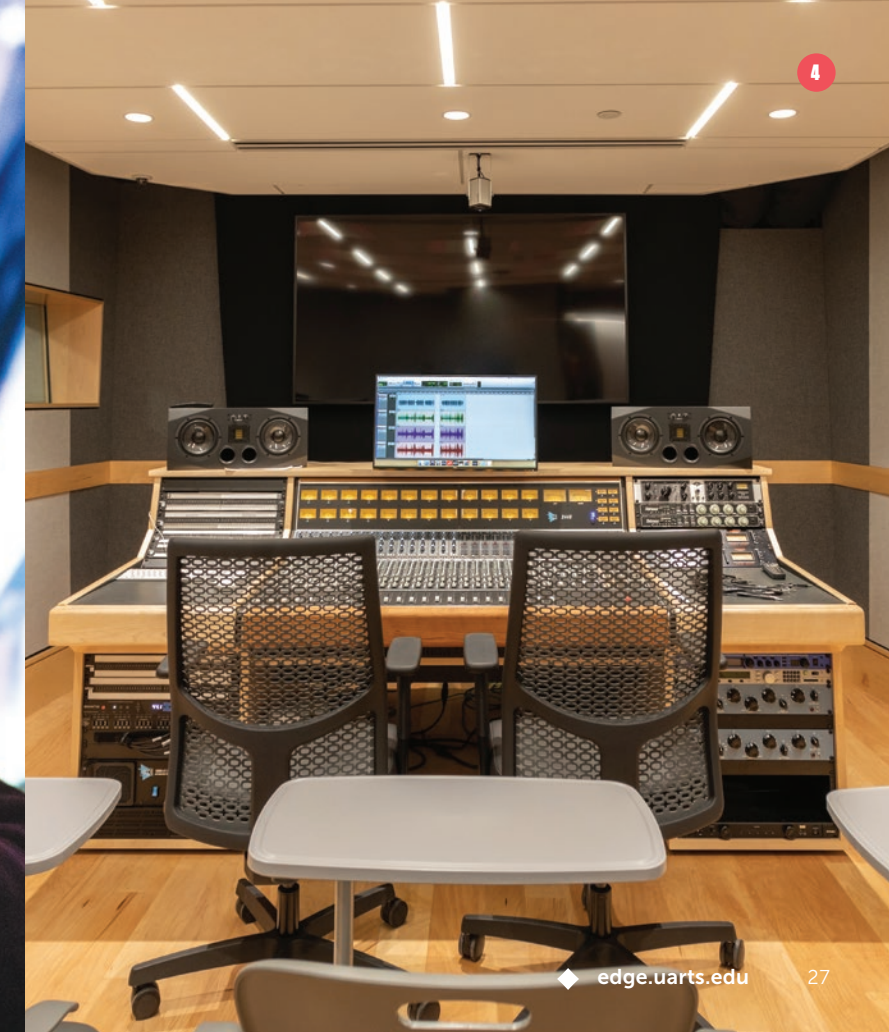
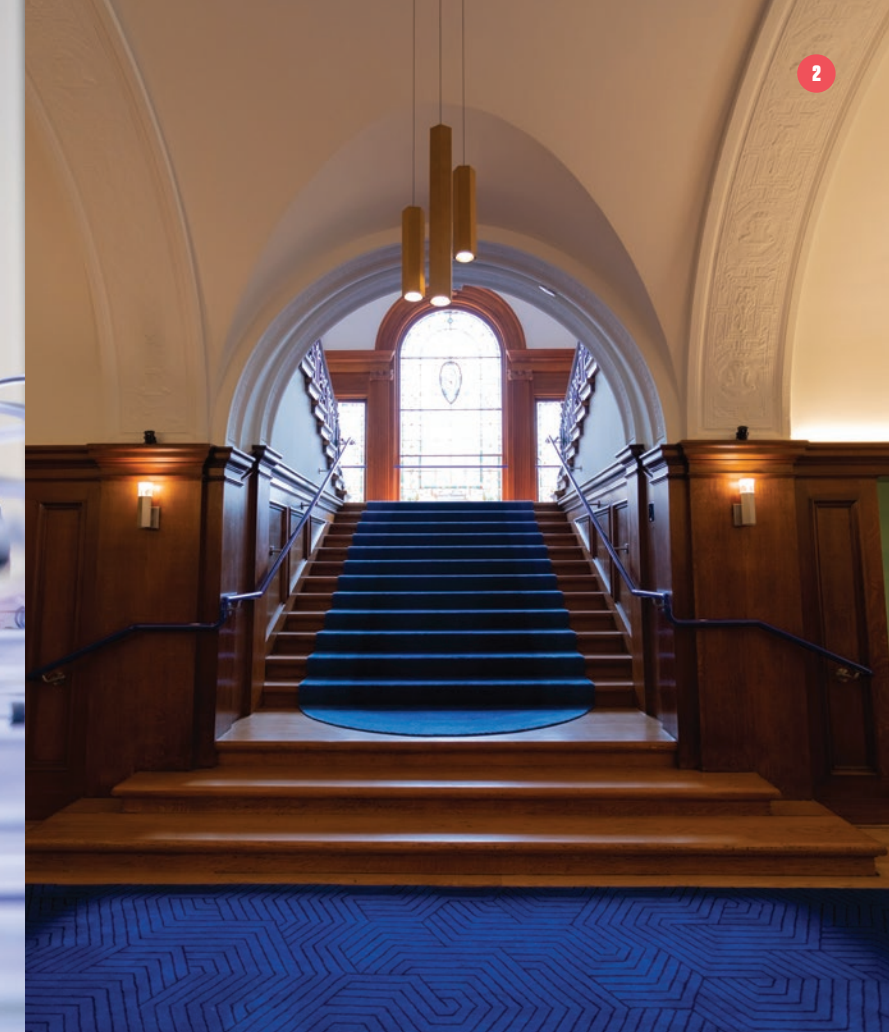
“I’m happy about so many of the changes and improvements that have worked toward growing our brand and reputation,” he says, “but the most important thing has been the goal of encouraging us all to think bigger. To think about creativity as a real and tangible thing that we can all strive for, achieve and succeed in.”

REIMAGINING THE CAMPUS

Never-before-imagined synergies have been the lifeblood of UArts of late, in fact.

When the university merged with the **Philadelphia Art Alliance**, the oldest multidisciplinary arts center in the U.S., it seemed a match made in heaven. The move, finalized in 2017, kicked off a growth spurt that hasn’t stopped. By midsummer of the following year, the university announced that it would soon open the **Albert M. Greenfield Makerspace**, a 3,500-square-foot digital and traditional fabrication studio. The facility, an adaptive reuse of an existing sculpture studio, was designed by Philly-based architecture firm **JacobsWyper**, the creators of the university’s campus-wide transformation plan. The space opened in 2018 and includes a significant product development component.

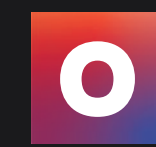
The winter leading up to the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic brought even bigger news for the university, with another merger and the debut of two new spaces that added depth and breadth to the campus infrastructure. First came the unveiling of the **Laurie Wagman Recording Studios** in Terra Hall, named for the UArts trustee and founder and president of American Theater Arts for Youth Inc. and American Family Theater, both based in Philadelphia. Studio A can function as a full analog space (it’s equipped with a 16-track tape machine) and possesses a surround-sound system, while Studio B gets big sound from a pair of Adam reference monitors.



UArts celebrates 144th Commencement in person again



Honorary Doctorate in Fine Arts recipients Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson (left), Aaron Dessner (right) stand on the steps of Hamilton Hall with President and CEO David Yager.



On Thursday, May 19, University of the Arts celebrated its 144th Commencement, the first in-person ceremony since 2019, at Philadelphia’s venerated Academy of Music. A total of 467 students received degrees during the ceremony, including the inaugural cohort of the university’s PhD in Creativity program. During the ceremony, UArts also presented Honorary Doctorates in Fine Arts to two distinguished multidisciplinary artists: **Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson and Aaron Dessner.**

Commencement marked a return to longstanding traditions, with the procession of students, faculty members, trustees and other honored guests led by three marshals: now-retired School of Film Dean Wendy Weinberg, who carried the presidential mace; Photography Professor David Graham; and Ceramics Professor Jim Makins. As the procession made its way from Hamilton Hall, Questlove took a moment to drum with SNACKTIME, the band leading the processional, and high-five young students lined up to attend an open rehearsal at the Miller Theater.

1. Jonai Gibson-Selix BFA '22 (Graphic Design) addresses her fellow UArtists during her Commencement address.
2. Honorary degree recipient Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson hops behind the drum kit to play with SNACKTIME, the band who would lead the procession from Hamilton Hall to the Academy of Music.
3. A member of the Class of 2022 documents the Commencement reception, which begins immediately after the ceremony in Solmssen Court.
4. Graduates cheer throughout the ceremony, the first in person since the pandemic began in 2020.

During his opening remarks, **President and CEO David Yager** lauded the Class of 2022 for its resiliency and adaptability, two traits he hopes they continue to embody throughout their creative careers. "In rising to face all of these unprecedented challenges, you've continually proven that artists are the necessary catalysts for meaningful change in our society and the betterment of our world," Yager said. "I genuinely believe that your success is and will continue to be grounded in the ideals of creativity and innovative thinking. As artists, you must leverage your empathy, adaptability and keen understanding of innovation to alter our condition for the better."

Jonai Gibson-Selix BFA '22 (Graphic Design) echoed that sentiment in her valedictory address, during which she encouraged her peers to believe in themselves and transcend any self-doubt or fears they might carry.

Following Gibson-Selix's address, seven students received President's Awards from President Yager. Each award recognizes a student's academic and artistic excellence during their time at the university and carries a \$1,000 prize.

Corey Seals BM '22 (Vocal Performance) received the President's Award for Cross-Disciplinary Excellence.

Gibson-Selix, the valedictory speaker, was also honored with the President's Award for Outstanding Service to the Community.

Two President's Awards for Excellence in Creative Practice were presented to **Song Tucker BFA '22 (Dance)** and **Li-Wen Kuo MDes '22 (Product Design)**.

Lucky Marvel BFA '22 (Film and Video) and **Amelia Hoskins MA '22 (Museum Education)** received the President's Awards for Critical Inquiry.

The President's Award for Innovation was presented to **Devon Thoms BFA '22 (Photography)**.

President Yager also honored two faculty members for their outstanding contributions to the university. The Lindback Distinguished Teaching Award was given to Associate Professor **Steven Saylor** from the School of Film. Adjunct Associate Professor **Dinita Clark** from the School of Dance received the President's Distinguished Teaching Award.

"The thought I want to leave you with is to embrace those moments of getting lost in your work; making your work simply for the joy and emotional outlet of it; and working diligently, passionately and courageously."

— **AARON DESSNER**
HONORARY DOCTOR OF FINE ARTS

After a moving performance of "With a Little Help From My Friends" by UArts' Transfusion Ensemble and graduating Vocal Performance majors, Professor Lowell Boston presented a Silver Star alumni award to **Musa Brooker BFA '95 (Animation)**, whose work has been featured on MTV; *The Simpsons*; and the Michelle Obama-produced Netflix series, *Waffles + Mochi*. Next, Assistant Professor **Tommie-Waheed Evans** from the School of Dance announced the Silver Star awarded to **Jeffrey Page BFA '02 (Jazz Dance)**. Page is an Emmy-nominated director and choreographer who has worked with star performances including Beyoncé and Mariah Carey. Page is currently co-director and choreographer of the Broadway revival of *1776*.

Trustee Chair **Judson A. Aaron BM '81 (Saxophone)** joined President Yager to present honorary degrees to Questlove and Aaron Dessner. Questlove, a native Philadelphian, is an Academy Award-winning filmmaker, drummer, DJ, producer, director, culinary entrepreneur, six-time Grammy winner and New York Times bestselling author. During his remarks, he joked about being elevated to Dr. Love and encouraged the Class of 2022 to unearth new creative ideas in moments of silence. Dessner is best known as a founding member of the rock band The National and for collaborating with Taylor Swift on the artist's albums *folklore*, *evermore* and *Midnights*. Dessner told the crowd about his experiences working with Swift, noting that if he had not been making music purely for music's sake, it's unlikely the award-winning collaboration would have occurred.

"The thought I want to leave you with is to embrace those moments of getting lost in your work; making your work simply for the joy and emotional outlet of it; and working diligently, passionately and courageously," Dessner said.



1, 3, 6. Commencement begins with a procession down Broad Street to the Academy of Music, and ends with graduates processing back to Hamilton Hall.

2. Geoffrey Kershner BFA '00 (Acting), who welcomed the Class of 2022 to the Alumni Association, processes to the ceremony.

4. Honorary degree recipient Aaron Dessner inspires students by encouraging them to create for the sake of creating.

5. Honorary degree recipient Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson greets students on Broad Street during the procession to the Academy of Music.

7. SNACKTIME, which was co-founded by a UArts alum, leads the Class of 2022 and honored guests down Broad Street.



1



4



6



5



2



3



7





Select Images

1. President and CEO David Yager places the honorary doctoral hood on Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson.
2. Trustee Chair Judson A. Aaron BM '81 (Saxophone) addresses the Class of 2022.
3. Assistant Professor of Dance Tommie-Waheed Evans honors Jeffrey Page BFA '02 (Jazz Dance), a Silver Star award recipient.

Silver Star

stars

**Questions
and answers
with this
year's
awardees**

Each year, UArts bestows upon two graduates its highest honor for alumni, the Silver Star Alumni Awards. In 2022, **Musa Brooker BFA '95 (Animation)** and **Jeffrey Page BFA '02 (Jazz Dance)** were celebrated during Commencement.

Though their bios alone are deeply impressive, the Q&As featured here give you the opportunity to experience something beyond their résumés. In a few brief sentences, empathy, memory, regret and success emerge from a series of quickfire questions.

Musa Brooker



Musa Brooker BFA '95 (Animation) is a Los Angeles-based director, animator, writer and producer who has worked for clients such as MTV, McDonalds, Disney, Hasbro, Target, Honda, Netflix, Paypal and Google. When he's not tinkering on projects in his own small studio (Platypus Pictureworks), Brooker can be found at the award-winning animation house Six Point Harness, where he serves as creative director. Along with his degree from University of the Arts, Brooker holds an MFA in Experimental Animation from California Institute of the Arts, where he was a Jacob K. Javits Fellow.

Throughout his career, Brooker has animated, supervised or directed various elves, trolls, cake, cars, cereal, corn dogs, a sponge named Bob, a mystery-solving dog, tumbling leaves, cybernetic fowl, celebrities fighting to the death, a talking tree, a group of Bratz, a town of cougars, a tower of taste buds, robots in disguise, a super-powered sandwich, an aerobic egg, an atomic-powered super lizard, a pickled diva, a former First Lady, a Sith Lord and a Wookiee. He has had the pleasure of animating sequences for *The Simpsons*, *Community*, the feature film *Elf* and a standup comedy special by Tig Notaro, in addition to commercials for Sonic Drive-in, Chipotle and Nabisco. He has directed animation sequences for ABC's *black-ish*, the Netflix

original series *Waffles + Mochi*, and an upcoming sequence for a returning hit Amazon original series, as well as directing spots for Ziploc, Play-Doh and Lyft.

Brooker has been a selection committee member for the New York Animation Festival and the Annie Awards for ASIFA-Hollywood. He has written for *The Animation Journal*, appeared as a panelist at Comic Con, been a presenter at the Society for Animation Studies Annual Conference, and lectured at the Pictoplasma Conference and Festival of Contemporary Character Design and Art. Since 2010, Brooker has also been a faculty member at University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts in the John C. Hench Division of Animation and Digital Arts.

"The work I do as a teacher—I view that as the second half of my career. Both of my parents were teachers, and two of my grandparents were. It's in my blood."

— MUSA BROOKER BFA '95 (ANIMATION)

Q&A by JoAnn Greco

DESCRIBE WHAT YOU DO IN ONE SENTENCE.

I'm doing what I've wanted to do since I was literally five years old.

WHAT IS YOUR MOTTO?

Do the best that you can. Deal with the circumstances—the budget, the client, your team members, the time frame, whatever—that are in front of you.

WHO ARE YOUR FAVORITE ANIMATORS?

There are so many. [Warner Brothers animator and director] Chuck Jones comes to mind. He moved from the cute sentimentality of his early days to outrageous humor and sophisticated character studies. I love when you can see an artist develop, when you see those little hints of things to come.

WHO IS YOUR HERO OF FICTION?

Superman: With all the extraordinary abilities and immense powers he has, he always chooses to do the right thing.

WHAT LIVING PERSON DO YOU MOST ADMIRE?

My mom. She was a school teacher in Philadelphia for 35 years—a hard and thankless job. My parents divorced when I was still in grade school, and she was tenacious. She got a part-time second job; she found a way for herself.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT?

The work I do as a teacher—I view that as the second half of my career. Both of my parents were teachers, and two of my grandparents were. It's in my blood.

WHICH TALENT WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE?

To speak another language fluently. There's something pretty magical about that.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST MARKED CHARACTERISTIC?

My curiosity. I get lost on the internet exploring the natural world and space and music. That translates to my work, too. And playing with options in my work: "What would happen if we made this character look a little different or changed up this background painting?"

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST EXTRAVAGANCE?

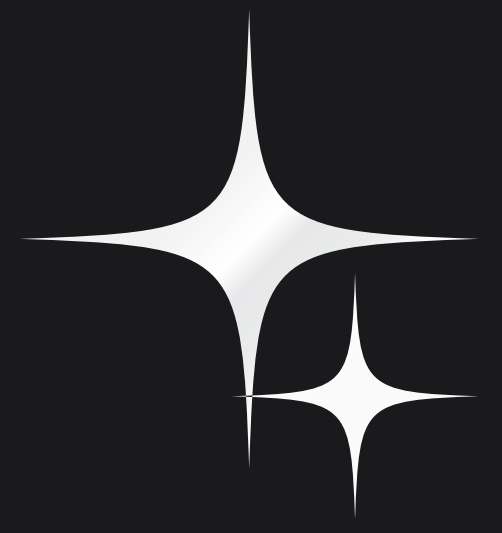
Comic books. I love collecting them, just as I did when I was 12, but now I'm in a place where I can spend more on them. Some of it's aesthetic—the smell and look of them. But I also admire the work, and I read them carefully.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST FEAR?

Not living up to my potential. Life is a series of choices and circumstances, but I want to be like those artists I admire, continually pushing and seeking new challenges.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY OF UARTS?

Hanging with my friends. Many of them—as well as some of our teachers—are still in my life, and they work in all disciplines. It was only four years, but it felt like a lifetime.



Jeffrey Page



Jeffrey Page BFA '02 (Jazz Dance) is a choreographer and an opera and theater director of both classical and contemporary works. He has directed numerous projects in Tokyo that received Yomiuri Award nominations, including Best Musical. Page is the first African American to be named the Marcus Institute Fellow for Opera Directing at the Juilliard School. He serves as guest faculty and has directed and choreographed for its Theater and Opera departments. Page maintains a faculty lectureship in Harvard University's Theater, Dance and Media department. He has also been nominated for an Emmy Award and has won an MTV Video Music Award for his work with Beyoncé, whose creative team has included him for more than 12 years. His work was featured on Beyoncé's The Formation World Tour, in her historic Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival performance, and in two of her HBO specials. In addition to his working with Jazmine Sullivan for more than 10 years, Page was associate creative director for Mariah Carey's Sweet Sweet Fantasy European Tour. He has also been a featured choreographer on Fox's *So You Think You Can Dance*.

At the Eugene O'Neill Theatre, Page was in the original, award-winning Broadway cast of *Fela!* He worked alongside Tony Award-winning composer Jeanine Tesori to choreograph the hit Broadway musical *Violet*, starring Sutton Foster, at Roundabout Theatre Company. At Barrington Stage Company, Page received glowing reviews as the choreographer for *Company*. He also won a 2016 Berkshire Theater Award for his work on *Broadway Bounty Hunter*.

In 2016, Page established Movin' Legacy, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the ethnology and documentation of contemporary and traditional dance from Africa and the African diaspora. Page holds a Master of Fine Arts degree with a concentration in Directing from Columbia University in New York City and has been awarded the Chuck Davis Emerging Choreographer Fellowship from the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Most recently, he directed and choreographed the first Japanese version—and critically acclaimed production—of *Everybody's Talking About Jamie* and *Choir Boy* for Philadelphia Theatre Company. In 2022, he was director and choreographer of *Ain't Misbehavin'* for both Barrington Stage Company and Geva Theatre Center. With Diane Paulus, Page is currently director and choreographer of the Broadway revival of *1776*.

"I look to people who saw something bigger than themselves, who went beyond performance and entertainment to lean into our craft and to look at our shared humanity."

— JEFFREY PAGE BFA '02 (JAZZ DANCE)

Q&A by JoAnn Greco

DESCRIBE WHAT YOU DO IN ONE SENTENCE.

Theater and dance are for me like a painting: My painting uses the color, lines and blank spaces of stage, text, music, dance and the body to create something new and inspirational about the world.

WHO INSPIRES YOU?

James Brown. He busted open our idea of what music and performance can be. I look to people who saw something bigger than themselves, who went beyond performance and entertainment to lean into their craft and to look at our shared humanity.

WHO IS YOUR HERO OF FICTION?

Lauren in *The Parable of the Sower*. She's just one of the characters of Octavia Butler that I find really interesting and inspiring.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST EXTRAVAGANCE?

A first-class plane ticket. It's part of a commitment I've made to myself during the past two years to only be around, and take into my mind and body, quality. Not in a shallow sense, but so that I can live life to the fullest.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED POSSESSION?

My quirky way of looking at the world. It causes me to be a bit of an outsider.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT?

My love of reading. It's relatively new and it makes me super happy to have found it.

WHICH TALENT WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE?

To play the piano. I consider myself very musical, but I never really learned to play any instrument.

WHAT WOULD YOUR FRIENDS SAY IS YOUR MOST MARKED CHARACTERISTIC?

Depends who's talking. Some see me as loud and comical and the center of the party; others see me as pensive and thoughtful. I can be both in a single breath.

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE TO CHANGE ABOUT YOURSELF?

I wish I was even more attentive. I think it's a great characteristic to completely zero in and be 100 percent there for a conversation. But I wouldn't want to lose my sense of the macro, either.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST REGRET?

I regret not honoring my own brilliance and ideas—not being fearless earlier in the game.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY OF UARTS?

The original Dance building. I practically lived in that space. My schedule would literally be: ballet class in the morning; then my full day of classes; then run like a crazy person to the train to go down to D.C., where I was rehearsing in a show with Debbie Allen; then finish at 11 p.m. and run to the station to get back to Philly; sleep for a couple of hours; then do everything all over again.

AROUND CAMPUS



UArts President and CEO David Yager Announces June 2023 Retirement



“My singular intention has been to leave our university in a stronger position than I found it. I sincerely believe that by **working collaboratively with our students, staff, faculty and trustees**, we have done just that. Together, we have placed the university on a new and visionary trajectory.”

— DAVID YAGER
PRESIDENT AND CEO

University of the Arts President and CEO David Yager announced to the university’s Board of Trustees that he intends to step down from the presidency and ultimately retire on June 30, 2023. President Yager will remain in his position for the academic year to provide support during this transitional period as the university launches the search for his successor.

“Leading this incredible creative community has been the highlight of my career, and it has been a true honor and privilege to serve our university and its inspiring students,” Yager remarked. “Since I arrived at UArts in 2016, my singular intention has been to leave our university in a stronger position than I found it. I sincerely believe that by working collaboratively with our students, staff, faculty and trustees, we have done just that. Together, we have placed the university on a new and visionary trajectory.”

“Though I will be stepping away from UArts at the conclusion of the next academic year, it will be impossible to completely separate myself from this extraordinary institution. UArts has simply become an integral part of my DNA.”

Judson A. Aaron BM '81 (Saxophone), chair of the Board of Trustees, said, “David’s leadership during his time at UArts has been nothing short of transformational. Because of his thoughtful guidance and visionary ideas, I am confident that our university is poised for a new chapter of continued success. I know that I speak for the entire board when I express my deepest gratitude that David is serving for an additional year as we begin the challenging task of finding his successor.”

Since being named just the university’s fourth president in 2016, Yager’s presidency has been marked with success. In 2018, he led the initiative to articulate the university’s mission, Advancing Human Creativity, to better reflect UArts’ focus on cross-disciplinary artistic excellence and innovation. Yager also implemented and oversaw Uniquely UArts, the university’s first-ever capital campaign, which concluded earlier this year. The immensely successful \$67 million campaign grew the university’s endowment by more than \$24 million, funded several major campus capital projects, provided more than \$5 million in student scholarships and offered students critical support throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

The campaign allowed UArts to radically transform its historic campus, delivering compelling and state-of-the-art, new learning spaces for students, such as the Center for Immersive Media, the Albert M. Greenfield Makerspace and the Laurie Wagman Recording Studios. Additionally, the construction of a new Student Center in Gershman Hall, supported in part by \$3.5 million in grants from Pennsylvania’s Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program, began this past summer. During Yager’s tenure, the university also acquired the Philadelphia Art Alliance and restored the Italian Renaissance-style building to its position as a “living room for the arts” in Philadelphia.

Yager’s vision has been responsible for numerous programmatic advances, including UArts’ international MFA in Dance and the PhD in Creativity, the first program of its kind in the nation, which graduated its inaugural class in spring 2022.

Read more about UArts’ incredible transformation during President Yager’s tenure on [page 20](#).

Pioneering PhD Scholarship Focuses on Creative Thinking



“The PhD in Creativity program was created to remove the constraints that many higher education programs have and allow students to fully embrace new ideas and innovation in ways they may not normally have in other fields.”

— JONATHAN FINEBERG, PROGRAM DIRECTOR



In collaboration with Academy Award–winning producer, musician, author and film director **Questlove** and whisky producer **The Balvenie**, University of the Arts announced in late 2021 that they would present one creative thinker with an opportunity to participate in UArts’ PhD in Creativity program through an innovative scholarship program.

The recipient of the Balvenie Fellow in the PhD in Creativity is fully funded in the three-year program. It is open to anyone age 21 and older for the PhD in Creativity, and the winning 2022 candidate was selected by Questlove, in partnership with UArts and The Balvenie.

Besides a two-week intensive summer immersion program and a return visit to Philadelphia in the winter of the first year, all coursework is completed remotely.

“The PhD in Creativity program was created to remove the constraints that many higher education programs have and allow students to fully embrace new ideas and innovation in ways they may not normally have in other fields,” said Jonathan Fineberg, program director for the PhD in Creativity. “Questlove and The Balvenie share the PhD program’s core ethos that reimagines how we think about craft, in its many forms, and we’re thrilled to be giving a student an opportunity to explore their own creative journey with this scholarship.”

UArts’ PhD in Creativity was born in 2015, when President and CEO David Yager met Fineberg at a conference on cross-disciplinary thinking in art and science sponsored by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. Both were invited to serve on the conference’s steering committee, and their engagement led to collaboration in building a radically re-envisioned PhD program. Based on the notion that creative thinking is at the heart of all innovation, it was destined for this first-ever PhD program to be hosted at an arts school and begin with an intense focus on creative thinking.

The scholarship’s announcement was tied to the launch of *Quest for Craft: Season One*, which debuted on YouTube in October 2021. Hosted by Questlove, who is best known for his roles as a founding member of The Roots and musical director for *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, the show highlights the vital intersection of craft and creativity through conversations with four iconic creative minds. The first season’s guests were Grammy Award–winning music producer Jimmy Jam, *Saturday Night Live* writer and cast member Michael Che, musician Patti Smith and author Malcolm Gladwell.

Read more about the 2022 Balvenie Fellow in Creativity on [page 56](#).

UArts' fall 2022 iLAB artists include (top to bottom, left to right): Raven Chacon, Naomieh Jovin, Lucia Garzón, Mia Kang, Breyanna Maples BFA '18 (Dance), Ana Mosquera, Jonathan Santoro, Sweet Corey-Bey, Orlando Thompson and Wilmer Wilson IV.



University of the Arts Launches Inspiration Lab Artist-in-Residence Program

In summer 2022, University of the Arts welcomed 10 artists in residence from within the university community and around the world who accelerate and cultivate contributions to contemporary knowledge production. This new **Inspiration Lab Artist-in-Residence program**, made possible by generous donor support from **Jessica Hamilton Hardy** and the **Connelly Foundation**, offers unprecedented residency opportunities at a thriving arts institution on Philadelphia's Avenue of the Arts.

The program gathers together 10 individual artists or small collaborative groups at pivotal moments in their careers for three- to 12-month residencies. The emerging and mid-career artists—selected by a committee of external arts professionals, such as curators, academics and critics—receive the critical support needed to reflect, experiment and produce compelling new work.

To accommodate and support this residency program, the university has built 10 new studios and accompanying installation and exhibition spaces on the third floor of Anderson Hall. Two of the studio spaces will be reserved for members of the university community. As a means to elevate and sustain relationships with the UArts and greater Philadelphia communities, all artists in residence will explore connections with ongoing courses and provide public presentations of their work.

"I eagerly anticipate our inaugural artists in residence to productively engage members of our creative community through their innovative practices," President and CEO David Yager said when the program was announced. "I am particularly appreciative of the pathways that will undoubtedly connect our students, faculty and staff to these residencies, and I look forward to experiencing the many ways these artists will contribute to and learn from the UArts community."

In addition to dedicated studio space, artists will have the potential to utilize advanced workshops and labs across UArts' campus, including fabrication studios; the cutting-edge Albert M. Greenfield Makerspace; the Laurie Wagman Recording Studios; and the Center for Immersive Media, which houses one of the largest motion-capture stages on the East Coast. (Access to these spaces will be subject to availability and the scope of each project.)

Through these residencies, a wide range of creative disciplines will intersect and cross-pollinate, reflecting UArts' commitment to interdisciplinary arts education. Artists ages 21 and older with proven histories of creative practice from disciplines such as visual arts, new media, performance, design, film, moving images, writing, choreography and music composition are encouraged to apply when the next cycle opens in the spring.

Visit ilab.uarts.edu to learn more.

iLAB: ARTIST
IN RESIDENCE

UArts Receives First It's On Us PA Grant

“I’m incredibly excited that UArts has the opportunity not only to address sexual violence prevention and education at our institution, but also to **contribute to the narrative.**”

— LAURI MILLOT
DIRECTOR OF TITLE IX, EQUITY AND COMPLIANCE



University of the Arts is one of 34 Pennsylvania institutions of higher education to receive an It's On Us PA grant, Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf announced in December 2021. Replicating the federal It's On Us campaign, Gov. Wolf introduced the grant program in 2016, which focuses on combatting sexual violence on campuses by supporting initiatives and strategies that bolster awareness, prevention, reporting and response systems. This is the first It's On Us PA grant UArts has received.

“Pennsylvania’s colleges and universities must be a safe space for students to learn and grow without fear of violence, harassment or abuse,” Gov. Wolf said in announcing the 2022 grants. “Each one of us has a responsibility to promote healthy relationships, and the It's On Us PA grant program was created to provide pathways to training and resources that improve campus culture and engagement.”

UArts received a grant of \$25,000. The funding will address a pressing need, as students became reacquainted with life on campus following the social isolation spurred by COVID-19 and the limited number of educational events addressing sexual assault, consent and healthy relationships available during the pandemic.

UArts will leverage the grant to create an innovative and authentic docu-fiction film that addresses sexual assault and intervention from a student perspective, capitalizing on the boundless creativity of its diverse community of artists, performers, designers and leaders. The film, highly reflective of the university community’s values, will provide students with a hands-on opportunity to work closely with several of UArts’ award-winning faculty filmmakers.

“I’m incredibly excited that UArts has the opportunity not only to address sexual violence prevention and education at our institution, but also to contribute to the narrative,” said **Lauri Millot**, director of Title IX, equity and compliance. “UArts students have the skill set and vision to create a film that is relevant, giving voice to the experiences of students, valuing inclusivity, challenging negative stereotypes and victim blaming, and acknowledging bad behavior in a way that we believe will foster a safer learning environment and campus community.”

With guidance from Millot, UArts students will begin a dialogue to explore student perceptions and experiences relative to risk. They will also be encouraged to highlight their view of effective and appropriate intervention techniques and provide insight on the university’s current prevention and response approach. This work will inform the script and overall production, resulting in a film that identifies and challenges all manner of power differentials and aims to reduce the effect of the bystander phenomenon. In addition, the film will be shared across a wide array of platforms, ensuring that it can be accessed virtually.

The It's On Us campaign is a national initiative to raise awareness about sexual assault, teaching participants that assault includes non-consensual sex, advising them on how to identify dangerous situations, empowering them to intervene, and urging them to create an environment of support for victims and survivors.

Since 2016, Gov. Wolf’s administration has awarded over 190 It's On Us PA grants, giving nearly \$4 million to more than 75 postsecondary institutions, including public and private two-year and four-year colleges and universities.

Lightbox Film Center Premieres New Cut of Wayne Wang's 'Life is Cheap ... But Toilet Paper is Expensive'



“Lightbox is really about preserving the legacy of cinema and expanding the canon.”

— **JESSE PIRES**
DIRECTOR AND CURATOR, LIGHTBOX FILM CENTER



On Friday, March 4, 2022, Lightbox Film Center at University of the Arts presented the U.S. premiere of a never-before-seen director's cut of **Wayne Wang's** 1989 film *Life is Cheap ... But Toilet Paper is Expensive*. The film, long absent from the public eye, was carefully restored in 4K through a collaboration among Lightbox, Berkeley Art Museum, Pacific Film Archive and Arbelos Films.

The restoration was made possible through the generous support of **Ron and Suzanne Naples**, whose gift seeks to elevate the prominence of film at UArts. The Naples' support has allowed Lightbox to establish a film preservation program, and *Life is Cheap ...* is the first of many films to receive a full restoration. *Life is Cheap ...* was accompanied by a publication featuring an interview with Wang conducted by **Jesse Pires**, Lightbox's director and curator, and an essay by Aliza Ma.

“Lightbox is really about preserving the legacy of cinema and expanding the canon,” Pires said. “There are canonical works we know and love, but there's a broad selection of work that has been overlooked or neglected. For me, it's about giving underrepresented artists time to shine.”

Ron Naples, former chair and current member of UArts' Board of Trustees, said, “Suzanne and I are delighted to fund this compelling new chapter in Lightbox's storied presence in Philadelphia. We are sure that Lightbox will continue to build upon its already robust slate of programs that expose a greater number of viewers—especially UArts students—to a wide range of important films.”

ABOUT THE FILM

In 1989, while on location in Hong Kong shooting the feature film *Eat a Bowl of Tea*, Wang found inspiration for his next film in real-life experiences as well as local news stories. The resulting film, *Life is Cheap ... But Toilet Paper is Expensive*, is a crime-world docu-fiction film populated by foul-mouthed cab drivers, seedy hucksters, aging Elvis impersonators and privileged upper-class progenies.

A nameless Chinese American courier (Spencer Nakasako) arrives in Hong Kong to deliver a mysterious briefcase to the “big boss.” As he becomes involved with the boss's mistress, things spiral out of control, and he journeys deeper into the criminal underworld and his own tormented subconscious.

Wang punctuates the action with a series of monologues delivered by a host of unforgettable characters in a tableau vivant style. *Life is Cheap ...* is a dizzying, hallucinatory travelogue of pre-handover Hong Kong with a touch of American Wild West cowboy theatrics. It has lost none of its original energy and wit.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Wayne Wang was born and raised in Hong Kong and named after his father's favorite movie star, John Wayne. At age 17, his parents arranged for him to move to the U.S., expecting him to attend medical school. Instead, Wang turned to the arts and studied film and television at Oakland's California College of Arts and Crafts.

Wang established his reputation as a visionary director with *Chan is Missing*, *Dim Sum: A Little Bit of Heart* and *Eat a Bowl of Tea* in the early 1980s. His best-known works are the mainstream *The Joy Luck Club* (1993) and *Maid in Manhattan* (2002), as well as the independent features *Smoke* (1995) and *Anywhere but Here* (1999). His accolades include receipt of the 2007 Golden Shell at the San Sebastian Film Festival and a lifetime achievement award at the San Diego Asian Film Festival in 2016.

Wang lives and works in San Francisco and New York.

James Brandon Lewis is The Balvenie
PhD in Creativity fellow of 2022.



Student

News

Inaugural PhD in Creativity Fellow Announced



“The work **James** has already done, alongside the complexity of his studies, is inspiring, and we’re thrilled to have **The Balvenie** and **Questlove** by our side as he excels in this program.”

— JONATHAN FINEBERG
PROGRAM DIRECTOR, PHD IN CREATIVITY

James Brandon Lewis (left), a critically acclaimed composer, saxophonist and writer, has been named the inaugural recipient of The Balvenie Fellowship in University of the Arts’ PhD in Creativity program. The scholarship opportunity is supported by The Balvenie and informed by drummer, DJ, Academy Award–winning director, New York Times bestselling author and founding member of The Roots, **Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson**.

The first-of-its-kind PhD program at UArts supports creative minds from anywhere in the world while removing the constraints typically found in higher education programs, which allows students to explore new ideas in innovative ways. The low-residency degree advances interdisciplinary research in the arts, humanities and sciences through intensive immersion in creative thinking. Lewis joined the second cohort of PhD students in June 2022, and embarked on a fully funded, three-year journey that will bolster his studies at the intersection of molecular biology and music through the lens of art, life and philosophy.

In 2011, Lewis created Molecular Systematic Music, a twofold approach to music that braids the fundamentals of music theory with the ideas of molecular biology through the context of DNA. Though Lewis is not a molecular biologist, the ideas he expresses deploy the vocabulary of molecular biology as useful metaphors while exploring new possibilities and relationships across disciplines. These previous explorations are the foundation of his studies at UArts.

“University of the Arts seeks students who have achieved proficiency in an intellectual pursuit in any field and, in many cases, this pursuit has not been able to fit easily into existing PhD programs,” said **Jonathan Fineberg**, program director for the PhD in Creativity. “The work James has already done, alongside the complexity of his studies, is inspiring, and we’re thrilled to have The Balvenie and Questlove by our side as he excels in this program.”

The scholarship runs parallel with the online *Quest for Craft* series, which represents The Balvenie and Questlove’s commitment to expanding and showcasing the convergence of craft in creativity. The partnership was launched in 2021 and intends to unpack the uniquely human elements that elevate the great to the exceptional.

Lewis attended Howard University and earned his MFA from California Institute of the Arts. He has received accolades from NPR, The ASCAP Foundation, MacDowell and the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation and has been heralded as “a saxophonist who embodies and transcends tradition” by The New York Times. Rolling Stone described his music as “deep, gospel-informed spirituality with free jazz abandon and hard-hitting funk-meets-hip-hop underpinning.”

Lewis has released several critically acclaimed albums, most recently, 2021’s *Jesup Wagon*. In addition, Lewis leads numerous ensembles that tour internationally and is a member and co-founder of the American Book Award–winning ensemble Heroes are Gang Leaders. In 2020, he was voted the rising star tenor saxophonist in Downbeat magazine’s international critics poll.

Graphic Design Students Explore New Territory



“It’s not just digital screens anymore or print editorial. There are so many options, and it’s opened so many new doors.”

— JOJO SCOTT '23 (GRAPHIC DESIGN)

In late fall 2021, Graphic Design students at UArts experienced a new evolution in the School of Design’s curriculum. In *Design for Interaction*, a class co-taught by Graphic Design Program Director **Angela Riechers** and designer **Ksenya Samarskaya**, the students engaged with immersive media through a playful, experimental approach, a critical element of the school’s new pedagogical strategy.

Riechers and Samarskaya adapted lessons they learned while teaching remotely during the pandemic to re-envision the traditional class structure. The class paired the instructors’ differing backgrounds—print for Riechers, typeface and interactive design for Samarskaya—with a flexible hybrid schedule. Remote-learning technology also allowed guest lecturers worldwide to inspire students from a distance as they prepared to explore unfamiliar territory.

“With the students, we tested boundaries, learned and pivoted as we went along,” Riechers said. “Co-teaching made it a true laboratory, where everyone is learning alongside each other.”

For their first assignment, students were tasked with creating something, sans technology, that people could interact with physically. **Alexandria Kenny '23 (Graphic Design)** responded with *Nice to Meet You*, an icebreaker game that is a box filled with thought-provoking questions for players to ask one another.

After opening the box, which requires at least two people working together to do so, questions such as “What is the best thing that has happened to you?” and “What was the last exciting experience you had?” await the players.

Kenny said she got the idea for the game from the time she spent in the foster care system as a child. Gathering around classic games like *Twister* or *Candyland* was often one of her first interactions with new families and other children. But Kenny recalled that playing together while making small talk never eased the anxiety of living with strangers or helped form new bonds.

Recognizing that many students were setting foot on campus for the first time that fall, **Jojo Scott '23 (Graphic Design)**, **Vanessa Dinh '23 (Graphic Design)** and **Kayla Klavins '23 (Graphic Design)** created a six-page zine that contains a

scavenger hunt meant to guide students through UArts’ different buildings and resources. After students make their way through three rounds of progressively difficult questions, they are led back to Hamilton Hall and presented with instructions to create an origami version of the university’s unicorn mascot, Arty.

Later in the semester, the class gathered in the Center for Immersive Media to bring one element of their project into a virtual- or augmented-reality space. To do so, they employed tools such as Google’s *Tilt Brush*, which allows for 3-D painting in virtual spaces, and smartphone apps like *Overly* and *Lens Studio*.

After successfully testing the game with a group of strangers in Philadelphia’s Rittenhouse Square, Kenny turned to IKEA’s proprietary room-planning application to construct different virtual atmospheres in which people can play *Nice to Meet You*. They range from an aquarium to a customizable living room.

“I really like video games, specifically ones that are very open worlds where you can do whatever you want. I wanted that aspect in my game,” Kenny said. “I have prebuilt worlds. You can move cushions and furniture around, or you can upload your own things and make it your own space.”

Scott and her teammates enhanced their scavenger hunt with augmented reality, using elements of a virtual campus tour created by the Office of Admissions. Using *Overly*, they added scannable markers to bring UArts’ spaces and student experiences to life through a smartphone camera’s lens. The group also planned to expand its use of the technology to create a map of affordable food options near campus for their fellow students, specifically those who commute.

For many students, the class was their first foray into melding design with immersive media, which can be an intimidating venture at first, Scott admitted. However, she added, for them to be more well-rounded professionals, it’s crucial to have a working knowledge of the rapidly evolving field.

“It can be overwhelming to think of an entirely new form of design and how you can use it,” Scott said. “It’s not just digital screens anymore or print editorial. There are so many options, and it’s opened so many new doors.”

Students' Film Raises Awareness of the Plight of Wild Wolves in the U.S.



“Through this project, I not only learned about wolves and the horrors they face, but also what it’s like to work with a client like the Humane Society of the United States and as a production unit.”

— JAMIR SMITH BFA '22 (ANIMATION)

This past spring, UArts Animation students in Adjunct Assistant Professor **Jason Hsu’s** *Client Animation* class collaborated with the Humane Society of the United States to produce a compelling animated film that showcases the many dangers wild wolves face. The project highlights the ecological benefits wolves provide and the threats they face from trophy hunters and wildlife management decisions. The film debuted in early May on the Humane Society’s YouTube channel.

Working with the Humane Society’s suggestions for the video’s tone, the students worked collaboratively to research and develop characters and create visuals and a storyboard. The students and representatives from the Humane Society also met regularly for feedback sessions, providing real-world experience in developing a film for professional clients.

“It was a real joy to work with UArts students in creating this film, which brings much-needed awareness to not only the cruelties and challenges that wolves face, but also an appreciation for the wolves themselves,” said **Amanda Wight**, the Humane Society’s program manager for wildlife protection. “Wolves are highly valued by Americans, and this creative and thoughtful film will inspire people to take action to protect this vulnerable species.”

“I think classes like this are a great opportunity for students to get experience working as a group while learning time management and communication skills,” Hsu said. “It was disturbing to learn how many wolves have been killed in such a short amount of time due to changes in protection status, but it’s great news to hear that the courts are restoring some of those protections. I hope projects like this can help the Humane Society continue to bring awareness to how many threats they face.”

The film arrives at a critical moment for wild wolves in the U.S. In February, a federal judge overturned a 2020 decision by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to remove wolves from the Endangered Species Act across most of the U.S., thereby restoring federal protections for the wild wolves. Though the ruling ended detrimental wildlife management practices in many states, it did not restore federal protections in the Northern Rocky Mountains region, which includes Idaho, Montana and Wyoming, and portions of Washington, Oregon and north central Utah. Currently, the Fish and Wildlife Service is considering relisting wolves in that region, where they are killed by the hundreds each year.

“Through this project, I not only learned about wolves and the horrors they face, but also what it’s like to work with a client like the Humane Society of the United States and as a production unit,” said **Jamir Smith BFA '22 (Animation)**. “These are important skills that will aid my future career, and I’m thrilled I was able to learn them while working on such a worthy cause.”

2022 Alum Spotlights Upcoming Underground Artists—and Discovers a New Path

Photos by Jessi Kaufman BFA '22 (Photography)



Rachel, aka Tuff Baby Tatts

Like so many other artists, **Jessi Kaufman BFA '22 (Photography)** was stumped by the pandemic. The unfolding COVID-19 crisis disrupted countless artists' creative habits and their access to studio space, creative tools and usual sources of inspiration. Their creative trajectories and career expectations were scrambled and interrupted. But the predicament gave Kaufman an idea for her capstone project.

Kaufman initially struck out to explore how artists were living and coping with the pandemic and how the COVID-19 headspace was affecting creativity, but she quickly discovered that the practical realities of finding one's footing as an artist muddled the mix.

"All of my friends who had just graduated were having a very hard time making it into the art world," Kaufman said of the struggles artists faced during the pandemic. "I wanted to create a platform where it was easier to find artists, because it's so hard to connect outside school."

In response, Kaufman set out to develop a platform that could help elevate artists with different levels of exposure and serve as "a one-stop shop for finding new, upcoming artists."

The resulting platform and accompanying photo and interview series turned into Kaufman's capstone project. Dubbed Melt, her project is a visual record of up-and-coming underground artists' studio spaces and works, coupled with extended conversations with them. The current incarnation of Melt exists as an Instagram account that showcases local artists.

For Kaufman, producing the series was an eye-opening experience that forced her to grow as an artist and as a documentary photographer.

"It was out of the box for me," she said. "I used to be a street-type photographer; I never had a relationship with subjects, or never took the time to sit with a project, so it was a totally different experience. The [artists] were super-comforting and let me into their minds and practices and studios."

The experience of being let into such a vulnerable and intimate space with artists kicked off a new trajectory for Kaufman: She intends to pursue photojournalism and more documentary photography in her future pursuits.



Mukhtar Stones, aka Uncle Muk, BFA '22 (Fine Arts)



Natalie Chapo

Seeing their own works, studios and workflows from another point of view helped many of the featured artists imagine more clearly the paths they are on as creatives and artists.

Participating in Kaufman's capstone project was also incredibly validating for the artists featured. For many, it was the first time their work and spaces had been documented professionally. Seeing their own works, studios and workflows from another point of view helped many of the featured artists imagine more clearly the paths they are on as creatives and artists.

UArts student **Zeinab Diomande '23 (Painting)** is among the artists profiled by Kaufman. "I never had anyone document my studio experience the way Jessi did, and it was very refreshing to be in my element, the environment I spend the most time in and asked these questions pertaining to my practice," Diomande said. "It was a wonderful experience and felt like a studio visit in a less formal way!"

With the exception of one artist, Kaufman's subjects were strangers. In most cases, she researched and connected with artists through social media after meeting them at exhibitions. A few were UArts students. Some were entrenched in Philly's art scene.

Connecting with local artists required digging deep into the local arts community and sometimes going out on a limb to make connections. It's also a testament to how being embedded in UArts' and Philadelphia's creative communities helped Kaufman flourish—as an artist and beyond.

Kaufman pointed to her experiences at UArts and in Philly broadly as life-changing and integral to really becoming herself. Living and practicing art in Philly helped her both find herself and flourish after coming from a more stifled background.

"Philadelphia will always have a special place in my heart, because I grew up in a very conservative area in Florida, and it definitely suppressed my creativity and my individuality," Kaufman said of growing up in Weston, near Fort Lauderdale. "Coming to

Philadelphia allowed me to come into my own. I met my partner and other gay and queer people, and I came out after being with my partner. I really just became 100 percent myself here, and that flows directly into the work I wanted to do. I definitely wanted to be a voice for other artists."

Kaufman's university experience played a key role in helping her arrive at a place from which she felt able to uplift other artists. "The UArts community was super-helpful in allowing me to become the artist I am, and this culminated in me wanting to give back to the community that allowed that to happen."

With her capstone completed and Commencement behind her, Kaufman and her partner moved to Miami in June. She fully intends to delve into the gallery ecosystem in Miami, meet new up-and-coming artists and keep the Melt platform alive.

"I want to find artists who haven't come to the surface yet ... [and] dedicate myself to ... creating this platform and growing it outside Miami, getting it out there," Kaufman said of her long-term intentions. "I think it's a good place to find artists because of how much of a melting pot it is. It's a great place to find inspiration for continuing this project."

Beyond tending to Melt, Kaufman is applying her photography and research skills professionally. She is working with a civil engineering firm in South Florida, supporting the firm's forensic, structural and architectural studies as a drone photographer—a skill she acquired during one of her many peak-pandemic creative pivots. The firm takes Kaufman's drone imagery and integrates it into analyses determining if buildings are structurally sound.

At the time of this interview, Kaufman was also looking forward to "getting out of the hustle and bustle" and relaxing before focusing on building a photo studio once the move and capstone project were in the rearview mirror.

Zeinab Diomande '23 (Painting)



New Internship Opportunity Broadens Alum's Creative Legacy



Sean Gibson '23 (Graphic Design) spent the summer working with Crayola through the Crayola Creative Arts/Lee Volpe Internship.

“This internship has made me much more confident, and I’m ready to go out and start working.”

— SEAN GIBSON '23 (GRAPHIC DESIGN)

During his tenure as an executive at New Jersey’s Tyco Toys, **Lee Volpe BS '69 (Industrial Design)** shaped imaginative play-based experiences for countless children. Dubbed a true Renaissance man by his peers, he was the creative force behind hundreds of patents and brought countless much-loved products to the toy market in the 1980s and '90s, including the Dino-Riders line of action figures and the Garfield phone, still sought by vintage collectors.

In addition to being a highly successful designer and inventor, Volpe was instrumental in landing licensing deals for Tyco with big names such as Jim Henson, Disney and Nickelodeon. Throughout portions of his design career, which spanned more than 40 years, Volpe developed a presence at the Philadelphia College of Art, now UArts, as a faculty member, leading Industrial Design classes for the college’s evening program.

Following his death in October 2020, his wife, Jolene Schwartz, hoped to find a way to honor Volpe’s legacy and vision. Rather than accumulate flowers from well-wishers in her home, Schwartz said in a recent interview, she asked donors to contribute to the **Crayola Creative Arts/Lee Volpe Internship**, an annual opportunity to support a UArts student’s creative pursuits through a paid internship at a toy company.

“Lee’s passion for fostering creativity was just above and beyond,” Schwartz said. “He just loved solving problems, whether that was creating a new product or teaching people how to do things. I wanted to be able to keep that spirit alive.”

The first recipient of this new internship is **Sean Gibson '23 (Graphic Design)**, who spent the past summer working with Crayola, the Easton, Pennsylvania-based company recognized globally for its crayons, markers and other kid-friendly art-making supplies.

Since joining Crayola’s creative design team—which handles everything from concepts to execution for the company’s toy line and its family-focused attraction, The Crayola Experience—Gibson has gained considerable real-world work experience. In just a short time, he has illustrated pages for Crayola’s coloring books, packaging for its main toy line, Scribble Scrubbies, and has even developed and pitched logo designs for a new line of art products.

“They’ve kept me extremely busy, and it’s great. I love it,” Gibson said. “[The team] involves me in nearly everything they do.”

Gibson was nominated for the internship by School of Design Dean **Mark Tocchet**, but landing it required Gibson to assemble a fully branded portfolio and résumé showcasing who he is as a designer and complete a professional interview with Crayola’s creative design manager. The internship is a prime opportunity for the school, Tocchet said, because the operations of Crayola’s robust in-house team reflect nearly every aspect of the School of Design’s core instruction areas, from illustration to product design. Gibson also brings with him experience in interactive design and a keen interest in augmented reality—gained through experience in UArts’ Center for Immersive Media—two areas Tocchet said Crayola hopes to explore.

Though Gibson is unsure if kid-focused design work will be his future, he said he’s grateful for the experience and feels much more prepared for life after UArts. He even joked that he enjoyed working so much that he had difficulty preparing to return for his senior year.

“This has made me less afraid of what’s out there,” Gibson said of his experience. “I’ve been asking myself, ‘What am I going to do after graduation?’ The career world just seems so scary. This internship has made me much more confident, and I’m ready to go out and start working. It’s so exciting and not as scary as I thought it was going to be.”

Commencement is now Student- Designed



Hyeona Lee BFA '22 (Graphic Design) is the 2022 graduate who created and executed graphics for UArts' Commencement website and social media assets, the program and in-event slideshow, and the banners that hang up and down Broad Street.

UArts has a new Commencement tradition: Each year, the brand assets developed for Commencement are designed and conceptualized by a graduating student. In 2022, under the direction of UArts Design Director **Ryan Penn BFA '12 (Graphic Design)**, **Hyeona Lee BFA '22 (Graphic Design)** created and executed graphics for UArts' Commencement website and social media assets, the program and in-event slideshow, and the banners that hang up and down Broad Street.

"In the community of the artists, the moments of connecting and collaborating with others ignite the sparkles of imagination and inspiration," Lee said. "In my 2022 Commencement design, the use of curvy threads with coils represents UArts' ability to share our ideas, perspectives and creativity and emphasizes how we interact with each other. These threads are as flexible and extendable as each UArts student. Also, the color palettes are made of gradient hues, and the transitions among the colors reflect the moments of blending the boundaries of visual art, dance, film, music, theater, design and writing."

Fine Arts Program Director
Rebecca Sack works in her studio on
Shadow Fliers, a series for which
she was recognized with a UArts Creative
Research and Innovation Grant.



Faculty

News



Dean of School of Music Appointed

“Leading a School of Music as committed to the value of **cross-disciplinary** study as UArts was an opportunity I couldn’t pass up. I’m so **thrilled** to be here.”

— KEVIN HADEN, DEAN, SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Kevin Haden, a renowned educator, musician, composer and lyricist, pictured left, has joined University of the Arts as dean of the School of Music. Haden will bring his visionary and collaborative leadership to UArts, advancing the school’s mission to embrace an evolving music landscape and positioning it at the vanguard of creative practice. He will also work closely with his colleagues in the university’s other schools and programs, spanning art, dance, design, film, theater and writing to sustain and deepen the relevance of an interdisciplinary arts-focused education.

Haden holds an MA in Music Composition and a BM in Music Theory and Composition, both from New York University (NYU). Prior to joining UArts, he served as director of academic operations for NYU’s Department of Music and Performing Arts Professions in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development. In one of the largest and most complex academic departments at NYU, Haden oversaw its critical operations and served as a key advisor to its chair. He was also active in the university’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Courses, Curricula and Programs committees.

Since 2005, Haden has taught numerous courses in performance, composition and music business and guided NYU’s vocal and instrumental acoustic pop ensemble, channeling his experience as a professional musician to inform his students. In one recent class, Haden led students as they engaged in semester-long experiences operating Village Records, an NYU record label founded in 1995. Additionally, he contributed significantly to the university’s Music Business Summer Institute, a two-week intensive experience for high school students interested in music business opportunities in higher education, for more than 17 years.

“Now more than ever, I find inspiration at the nexus of music and other creative arts like dance, theater, film, visual art and literature,” Haden said. “Leading a School of Music as committed to the value of cross-disciplinary study as UArts was an opportunity I couldn’t pass up. I’m so thrilled to be here.”

Though grounded in its storied history, the School of Music’s curricula draw heavily on contemporary developments and music’s ever-changing role in society to frame its pedagogy. The school comprehensively integrates performance, technology, business and education, forging creative catalysts for collaboration across disciplines and industries. As Haden assumes leadership of the school, he will champion music as a cultural force and a prism through which artistic explorations can be examined.

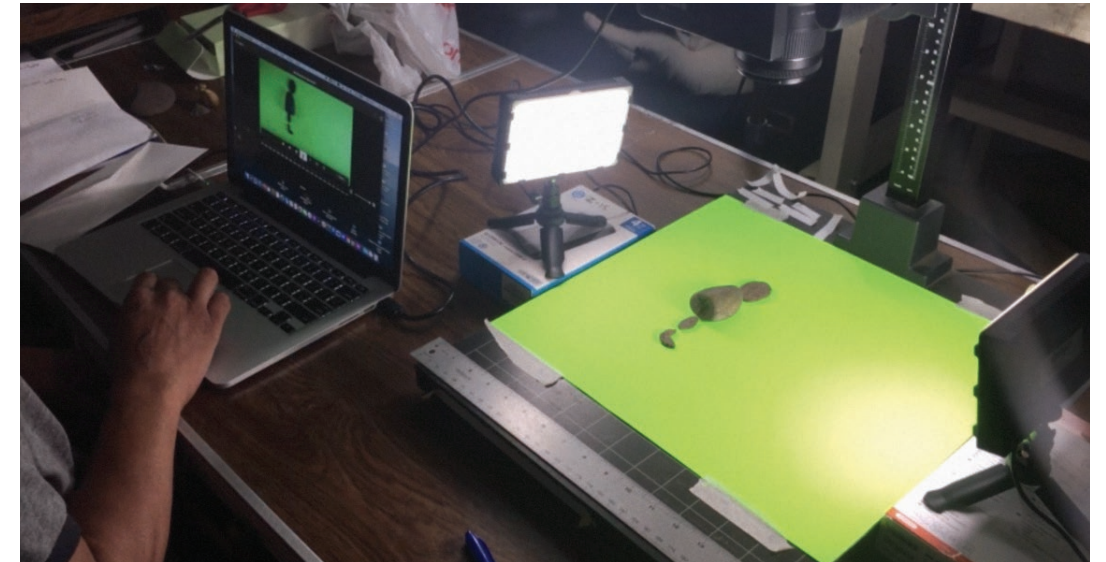
As a musician, Haden is recognized for his versatile voice and songs that fuse multiple genres. A gifted songwriter, composer and lyricist, he crafts a provocative blend of genres that include folk, soul, pop, dance and rock with compelling lyrics and infectious hooks. His diverse and inviting catalog includes releases from renowned international electronic dance music labels, two independent LPs and a wide array of releases across social media. Haden was also featured on Alaia & Gallo’s international dance hit “Who is He?” and Gok Wan and Kumora’s “All Night Long,” released in late June.

Haden succeeds **Micah Jones MM ’99 (Jazz)**, who served as the school’s director and then dean for a total of seven years. Jones, a crucial advocate for the School of Music, emphatically prioritized student success throughout his tenure. He will retain an academic leadership role, serving as the program director for Instrumental Performance.

“The School of Music has seen significant advancement and success through the past seven years, including the growth of our Music Business, Entrepreneurship and Technology program and the strengthening of our culture,” Jones said. “I look forward to bringing the skills I’ve developed to the Instrumental Performance program and supporting Kevin as we reinforce UArts’ reputation as a prime destination for students seeking to hone their creative voices.”

Faculty Member's Film Featured in Exhibition Focused on the History of Segregated Swimming

Animation professor
Lowell Boston shares his process for *Water Born*, a 16-minute film about his subjects' experiences with swimming and stereotypes.



For an avid swimmer like Animation faculty member **Lowell Boston BFA '88 (Film and Animation)**, summer is a time for jumping into the pool to work on his freestyle stroke and remembering the lakeside days of his youth in Massachusetts. In summer 2021, however, Boston spent most of his time alternating between virtual teaching and creating a new film that explores the swimming experiences of people of color.

"I love swimming," Boston said. "For me, it's like flying. I love swimming underwater. I wasn't able to go a lot [last] summer. That's the ironic thing. I couldn't go swimming, because I was making a film about swimming."

The result of Boston's labor-intensive animation work is *Water Born*, a 16-minute piece that introduces the voices of six of Boston's fellow teachers and former students and their experiences with swimming and water. Boston's subjects range in age from 22 to 58. Throughout the film, each shares their experiences with swimming and problematic stereotypes—some joyful, others quite scary—as voiceovers, while Boston's unique animation supports the power of their narratives.

His film was commissioned for the immersive multimedia exhibition *POOL: A Social History of Segregation*, developed for the Fairmount Water Works Interpretive Center along the banks of the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia. Inspired by Jeff Wiltse's 2007 book, *Contested Waters*, the exhibition examines the history and implications of segregated swimming throughout U.S. history.

As the exhibition's materials highlight, public pools have played an important role in communities in the U.S. since the early 20th century, but they are often spaces where those on opposing sides of stark racial and economic divides clash, sometimes violently.

POOL was slated to open Sept. 3, 2021, in the Fairmount Water Works' historic Kelly Pool, but the space flooded when the remnants of Hurricane Ida moved through the region just two days before. The exhibition was severely damaged, but the digital content created by Boston and fellow Philadelphia-area artists can be experienced online at poolphl.com.

In making the film, Boston approached each of his interviews with a few simple questions, including, "Do you know how to swim?" and "What was your first experience jumping into the water?" His subjects' varied answers formed the basis of his art direction.

In one of the film's first segments, David Rosario III discusses his discomfort with deep water despite his height, noting that he prefers to "hang on to the side and pretend I'm Spider-Man." Based on that, Boston implemented a comic book-style overlay that sits atop footage of goggles and feet splashing in the water. In another, a collection of stones is assembled into a human figure, as Charles Cooper recounts a memory of jumping into a summer camp pool despite not knowing how to swim, and sinking straight to the bottom.

"It was crystal clear," Cooper says in *Water Born*. "It was so peaceful and quiet. I had no sense of the danger I was actually in. If no one had saved me, I could easily have drowned."

Highlighting stories like those told by Rosario and Cooper is the core of the exhibition's mission. According to the Centers for Disease Control, Black children and teenagers are nearly six times more likely than white children to drown in a pool. Additionally, USA Swimming reports that 69 percent of Black children have little to no swimming ability, compared to 42 percent of white children.

Recent events demonstrate that Philadelphians care deeply about their public pools. In 2004, community advocacy was primarily responsible for keeping 20 pools open and operating. More recently, a pool constructed in 1954 in the city's Bridesburg neighborhood, which welcomes hundreds of children for lessons, camps and swim meets, received a \$3.7 million renovation.

The Water Works hopes that the artistic visions and historic voices presented in *POOL* can bolster similar initiatives and nonprofits working throughout Philadelphia to broaden access to public waters and swimming lessons.

UArts Awards Inaugural Round of Creative Research & Innovation Grants

University of the Arts announced the recipients of the inaugural round of the Grants for Creative Research and Innovation program, providing funding to 11 innovative projects led by UArts faculty and staff.

Through funding provided by the President's Fund for Excellence, the Grants for Creative Research and Innovation program disbursed \$53,000 to realize the 11 projects that comprise staff and faculty members' imaginative, innovative ideas and advance the creativity of the UArts community.

The inaugural round of grants allowed UArts staff and faculty members to pursue research in dance and motion, explore the history of wood engraving, prototype augmented-reality devices, develop theatrical and dance performances and curricula, give voice to Syrian refugees through podcasting, and more.

The grant recipients conducted research, traveled and executed their projects in 2022, and shared or reported on their projects and discoveries in the fall 2022 semester.

See edge.uarts.edu for details about the 2022 awardees.

Dance faculty member and grant winner Jungeun Kim will produce a new video work that incorporates dance and animation with the artist serving as choreographer, performer and animator, in collaboration with a guest composer.



Visiting Sculptor's Work in Philly Goes Viral

Visiting sculptor **Miguel Horn** installed his latest work, "ContraFuerte," along a bridge connecting a Philadelphia hotel and parking garage. It didn't take long for the installation—which features eight figures seemingly struggling to keep the bridge aloft—to go viral, appearing in social media around the globe.

Miguel Horn's "ContraFuerte" quickly went viral.



Assistant Professor of Photography featured at the Exposure Photo Festival 2022

Assistant Professor of Photography **Julianna Foster MFA '06 (Book Arts & Printmaking)** had work from her award-winning project *Geographical Lore* featured at the Exposure Photo Festival 2022 in Calgary, Alberta, in February.

Foster's work was selected for the international exhibition at Contemporary Calgary and was also displayed on billboards throughout the city during the festival.

A work from the series *Geographical Lore* by Julianna Foster MFA '06 (Book Arts and Printmaking)



Faculty Member and Alum Exhibits in Philadelphia International Airport

Terminal E in Philadelphia International Airport featured the work "Sensu Rain" by **Michele Kishita MFA '10 (Painting)**, who teaches in the Fine Arts program. Kishita was quoted on the airport's website, saying that the "lines are always about the rhythm of the landscape ... like trees' trunks, negative space and sunlight." The work comprises flat wooden sticks that are painted, decorated with paper and fanned out, resembling a series of fans.

Dave McKenzie BFA '00 (Printmaking)
"Disturbing the View," Whitney Museum of
American Art, 2021, courtesy of the artist

Alumni

NEWS

Alum Shapes User Experience for Comcast's First Smart TV



“It’s: Launch that app, look in that silo, launch this app, look in that silo. It’s a very **fragmented experience. You have an hour window, and you’ve wasted 20 minutes trying to find that thing to watch.”**

— MARTIN HIGHLEY BFA '07 (GRAPHIC DESIGN)

As TVs get smarter and more complicated, **Martin Highley BFA '07 (Graphic Design)** hopes Comcast's XClass television—the cable TV and technology company's first foray into consumer TVs—simplifies things. Highley, an associate creative director at Comcast, led the team that developed the project's user-experience platform.

Launched in mid-October 2021, the new TVs are produced through a partnership with Hisense and are available as 43- and 50-inch models at select Walmart locations and online through walmart.com. Comcast billed the new sets as a way for anyone to access its entertainment platform, whether they live within its coverage area or not.

Highley's approach considered how many streaming services the average TV watcher subscribes to and how frustrating it can be to remember where their favorite content lives. Endless scrolling through Netflix, Hulu or Amazon Prime can result in serious click fatigue, he said.

“It’s: Launch that app, look in that silo, launch this app, look in that silo. It’s a very fragmented experience,” Highley said of typical content streaming interfaces. “You have an hour window, and you’ve wasted 20 minutes trying to find that thing to watch.”

To combat that, Highley's plan for the XClass TVs was to deliver a content-forward experience instead of focusing primarily on applications. He explained that a central home screen provides users with a clear view of what free content is available to them, instead of static rows of icons for them to explore. He and his team employed rigorous testing, including bringing people into faux living rooms to use the TVs and gather feedback from audiences of diverse backgrounds. Highley added that the launch was successful, but as the TVs garner good reviews and positive press, he's already envisioning their next evolution.

The TVs are the culmination of Highley's work to support user experience and streaming strategy at Comcast, where he has worked since 2014. Earlier, he helped bring Netflix to Comcast's more traditional cable boxes and was instrumental in developing Xfinity Flex, a streaming device the company debuted in 2018.

Alum Wins Regional Emmy for Work with the Philadelphia Flyers



“It’s crazy that the Flyers allow us to do this ... It shows that they care about the community, not just about the guys on the ice, which is massive. These are genuine human beings.”

— RYAN HAAGEN BFA '19 (FILM)

Growing up in Bucks County just outside Philadelphia, **Ryan Haagen BFA '19 (Film)** became a Philadelphia Flyers fan at a young age. Today, as a member of the Flyers’ content production team, he advances the club’s mission to give back to the community and welcome diverse communities into the sport. His efforts in doing so were celebrated with a 2021 Mid-Atlantic regional Emmy award.

During most Flyers home games, you can spot Haagen capturing game-day footage from his perch behind the team benches in the Wells Fargo Center. But in addition to those duties, he is a critical member of a small team that produces the Flyers’ documentary-style web series, *New Heights*. The series is produced with the support of Philadelphia-based film production company Cinescope.

Since its 2021 debut on the Flyers’ YouTube channel, the series has explored the impact of hockey among those not typically associated with the sport, which has long been seen as the realm of straight, white male players and fans. In its inaugural season alone, the series focused on LGBTQIA+ hockey fans and the work of the Ed Snider Youth Hockey Foundation to broaden the number of players of color in the sport. The episode, titled “The Constant Motivator”—which highlights four women, ages 7 to adult—seeks to normalize who plays the sport, received an Emmy in the Sports Program-Post-Produced or Edited category from the National Academy of Arts & Sciences Mid-Atlantic chapter. Haagen was one of the episode’s cinematographers.

“It’s crazy that the Flyers allow us to do this,” Haagen said of the team’s support of *New Heights*. “It shows that they care about the community, not just about the guys on the ice, which is massive. These are genuine human beings.”

Though the National Hockey League has made strides in fostering diversity in hockey through initiatives like the You Can Play Project, which argues for safety and inclusion for all who participate in sports, the Flyers’ vision is singular, Haagen said. The content production team generates all of the ideas for *New Heights* episodes and is not influenced by league-wide directives.

“They were ideas cooked up at a table and executed by people who really wanted to tell these stories, which was super-important,” he said. “You’ve got to sit down, and if you believe in something and believe it’s the right thing, then go for it. That’s their quota.”

Haagen said the club’s deep ties to the community and extensive charitable works ensure there will be no shortage of future ideas. He also worked on an episode featuring the Flyers’ sled hockey team, which allows players with physical disabilities to compete on the ice, and wrapped a feature on Philadelphia Flyers Warriors. The Warriors is a series of three teams composed entirely of military veterans, many of whom have had emotional and physical scars from their service and have had difficulty adjusting to civilian life.

“Just like so many guys, this team saved my life,” Jim Young, the captain of the first Warriors team, told *The Philadelphia Inquirer* last year. “It got me out of the house. It got me to where my social functions weren’t revolving around detracting behaviors. Let’s put it that way: I played in high school and played in college. But when I left college and went into the Marine Corps, I didn’t skate again for about 17 years.”

Alum's New Book Seeks to Make Museums More Accessible to Children



“As adults, we don’t take the time to understand and break down what impacts the real world has on young people, because we expect them not to care and not to understand.”

— NHI NGUYEN MA '19 (MUSEUM EDUCATION)

Growing up in Philadelphia, **Nhi Nguyen MA '19 (Museum Education)** was surrounded by world-class museums and cultural attractions but never set foot in one until she was 16.

Cost and her parents’ limited time were the primary factors in her delayed visits, but Nguyen also pointed out that many museums are often not equipped, physically and pedagogically, to welcome young people appropriately. She hopes a book she co-authored, *Welcoming Young Children into the Museum: A Practical Guide*—published by Routledge in November 2021—will help change that.

The book, which Nguyen penned with educator Sarah Erdman and exhibition designer Margaret Middleton, is a guide for museum professionals seeking to cater to young audiences in ways that benefit both visitors and museums. Through the lens of early childhood education ideals, it provides actionable steps for hiring staff, developing programs and shaping physical spaces.

“How do we use the trust that guardians give museums to build thoughtful programming that really encourages children to grow, think deeper and affirm their own value?” Nguyen said of the book’s intent. “How do we talk about things like racism or the pandemic or anything in a way that is understandable and digestible to a kid under eight, and how do you train your staff to do so, too?”

The connections Nguyen made at University of the Arts led directly to her involvement in the book. She met Erdman through Mickey Maley, program director for the university’s Museum Studies program. Erdman helped Nguyen devise her thesis, which focused on incorporating early childhood racial identity into museum education.

Following Nguyen’s graduation, the two kept in touch, and Erdman approached Nguyen to contribute to the book because of her thesis research. Her contributions to the book center on staff training and professional development emphasizing anti-bias and anti-racist education.

“I think there are a lot of misconceptions [about age]: If the kids are young, they’re not really learning things or they don’t understand what’s going on around them,” Nguyen said. “So often, as adults, we don’t take the time to understand and break down what impacts the real world has on young people, because we expect them not to care and not to understand.”

That philosophy is something that is reflected in Nguyen’s day-to-day work, too. As the Philadelphia YMCA’s Best Buy Teen Tech Center director, Nguyen leverages her research to foster an inclusive and creative learning community, while broadening young people’s access to technology. Anyone in Philadelphia ages 12 to 22, Nguyen said, can access the center’s equipment, which includes a complete music studio, 3-D printers, cameras and computers.

“We’re really here for teens and young people, to make sure that they have a space where they’re heard and they’re valued,” she said. She added that the overarching mission of the center is to ensure that young people feel empowered and supported in exploring their chosen creative pathways.

Alum's Cinematography Draws Praise



“If you’re doing the job, you’re expected to be able to execute the craft, but a million people can do that. So what’s going to make you, you? What’s your process? UArts really laid that foundation for me.”

— ANDREW WHEELER BFA '01 (FILM)

After years of touring the world as the guitarist for the Philadelphia punk band R.A.M.B.O., **Andrew Wheeler BFA '01 (Film)** has traded dim, sweaty venues for the much brighter lights of Hollywood.

Now a firmly established and award-winning cinematographer, Wheeler saw his most recent work, *God’s Country*, debut at Sundance Film Festival in January to wide acclaim. Set in a stoic frozen Montana landscape, *God’s Country* follows the story of Sandra (played by Thandiwe Newton), a college professor grieving the death of her mother, who confronts a pair of white hunters who intrude on her rural property. Their interactions evolve into a battle of wills, which ultimately yields catastrophic consequences. The film is based on “Winter Light,” a short story by James Lee Burke.

After its Sundance debut, *God’s Country* was praised for its unflinching examination of grief and contemporary culture’s dominant social and political themes and hailed as a “psychologically charged neo-Western.” In the original story, the landowner is an aging white man, but the filmmakers opted to examine what would happen if a Black woman in her 40s were thrust into the same situation.

“It’s a very political movie, but it’s very indirect also,” Wheeler said. “Whatever your class, race or social strata is will affect how you view the film.”

God’s Country is an evolution of a short student film Wheeler made with colleagues he met during graduate school at AFI Conservatory in Los Angeles. Since completing his MFA there, Wheeler said he has enjoyed a long and fruitful collaborative partnership with writer and director Julian Higgins, writer Shaye Ogbonna and editor Justin LaForge.

“The bond was definitely formed in our first year of film at AFI,” Wheeler recalled. “We were like, ‘This is just too easy for all of us to work together. Let’s team up for our thesis film next year.’ And here we are, 12 years later.”

Though music is no longer Wheeler’s primary mode of creative and professional expression—R.A.M.B.O., however, is poised to release a new album soon—punk’s DIY mentality and attitude have served him well in show business. He is admittedly direct and not one to mince words, an uncommon trait in the entertainment scene, but that’s merely a byproduct of “growing up in Pittsburgh and getting into punk stuff when I was 12 years old,” he said. Much of his current success can also be directly attributed to his willingness to roll up his sleeves during the early days of his career.

That East Coast attitude is something Wheeler brings to every one of his projects, whether it’s filming *God’s Country*, a Hellmann’s Mayonnaise commercial that debuted during Super Bowl LVI or the pilot for *Kill the Orange-Faced Bear*, a TBS comedy starring Damon Wayans Jr. and Sarah Silverman. Wheeler has also shot music videos for artists like Ariana Grande, Iggy Azalea, Jessie J and Jennifer Hudson.

His approach is something he also impresses on students through the occasional classes he leads at UArts, where he was initially exposed to the European and experimental films that continue to inform his vision. The technical know-how—things like lighting, grip and camera operation—will come, Wheeler said. What’s more important, he believes, is that students temporarily put aside any starry-eyed expectations that they might have for the early days of their careers and embrace what they’ve learned about form, function, critical thinking and the philosophy of art.

“If you’re doing the job, you’re expected to be able to execute the craft, but a million people can do that,” Wheeler said. “So what’s going to make you, you? What’s your process? UArts really laid that foundation for me.”

Dance Alum Realizes Jasper Johns Costumes for Art Museum Performances



“In the performance itself, you get the surprise of seeing various color combinations come to life through choreography.”

— REID BARTELME MFA '21 (DANCE)

As the Philadelphia Museum of Art wound down its landmark retrospective *Jasper Johns: Mind/Mirror*, a series of Philadelphia Dance Company performances ran from Jan. 14 to 16, 2022, that underscored the artist's deep and abiding artistic connections to dance.

As dancers moved through the museum's recently completed Williams Forum, they did so in costumes originally designed by Johns in the early 1970s and more recently realized by Reid Bartelme MFA '21 (Dance) and his design partner, Harriet Jung. The duo operates the New York-based design studio Reid & Harriet.

Though Johns is widely known for his paintings, sculptures and prints, he also enjoyed a fruitful and inspiring artistic partnership with legendary choreographer Merce Cunningham. For more than a decade, Johns served as the artistic advisor for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, and many of the compositional strategies he employed in his work echoed Cunningham's beautifully complex choreography. His engagement with performance continues to this day. The museum's event was staged in conjunction with Patricia Lent, a trustee and director of licensing for the Merce Cunningham Trust as well as a former dancer, and featured choreographic material from four Johns/Cunningham collaborations: *Canfield*, *Landrover*, *Un jour ou Deux* and *Exchange*.

Landrover was the focus of Bartelme's charge, and the dancers wore the same costumes through all four works. Johns' original designs for the piece were leotards and tights in various solid colors to accompany what Cunningham envisioned as "people moving in different landscapes. American, perhaps in the sense that we move in our country—across varied spaces—with varied backgrounds."

During the Philadelphia Museum of Art's retrospective *Jasper Johns: Mind/Mirror*, a series of dance performances underscored the artist's connections to dance. The dancers wore costumes originally designed by Johns in the early 1970s and reinterpreted by Reid Bartelme MFA '21 (Dance) and his design partner, Harriet Jung.



For the original staging in the early 1970s, Bartelme said, the female performers wore leotards with nylon tights underneath them, and male performers wore leotards with tights over the top. Bartelme noted that though slight, the variations created different styles, since Cunningham and his collaborators may not have been quite willing to challenge gender norms at the time. Later, however, unitards that covered the entire body with minimum seams became ubiquitous at Cunningham performances and formed the basis of Bartelme and Jung's reinterpretation.

"You can use the unitard to distinguish gender through whatever mode you want, through neckline or sleeve length," Bartelme said. "But at the end of the day, it does blur the boundaries of gender more effectively than what the costumes previously were."

For their reinterpretation, Bartelme and Jung worked from archival photos that were gathered when the trust moved its costume archive to Minneapolis' Walker Arts Center. Bartelme said Johns' *Landrover* designs and their solid colors were a good fit for an event that features excerpts from multiple dances.

"You get to experience each person as an individual, but when dancers come together to perform duet material or group material, you get to experience those colors in different configurations," he said. "In the performance itself, you get the surprise of seeing various color combinations come to life through choreography."

In addition, costumes designed by Bartelme and Jung also accompanied choreographer Pam Tanowitz's *Finally Unfinished (Solo for Melissa for Jasper)* at the museum. Performed by Melissa Toogood, a former dancer for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, the work playfully evokes *Walkaround Time*, a dance Cunningham created in 1968 as an homage to Marcel Duchamp with a Johns-designed set.

Two Alumni Included in 2022 Whitney Biennial

Alex Da Corte BFA '04 (Printmaking) and Dave McKenzie BFA '00 (Printmaking) were among the 63 artists named to the Whitney Museum of American Art's 2022 Biennial. This year's exhibition was on view April 6 to Sept. 5 and was the 80th iteration of the series originally begun by the museum's founder, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, in 1932.

The biennial is the longest-running exhibition of its kind and takes advantage of the Whitney's unique architecture to survey the state of contemporary American art. 2022's edition, titled *Quiet as It's Kept*, featured an intergenerational group of artists with interdisciplinary perspectives. Rather than opt for a separate video or film program, the curators chose to integrate these forms into the exhibition to ensure an equal and consistent presence.

Da Corte is a native of Camden, New Jersey, and lives and works in Philadelphia. He often describes himself as an "anthropologist of the immediate past," creating sculptures, paintings, performances and installations replete with colorful artifacts of consumer culture. His work is filled with vibrant colors and crisp advertising imagery and is often accompanied by Da Corte in costume. He has appeared as pop-culture figures such as Eminem, Mr. Rogers, the Wicked Witch of the West and Jim Henson.

"He's one of the best working today," Jamillah James, senior curator of the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, said of Da Corte in a June 2021 New York Times Magazine profile. "He's maturing as an artist, refining his visual language, providing some alternatives to the horror of today with work that has some lightness to it."

McKenzie originally hails from Kingston, Jamaica, and now lives and works in New York. As a visual artist, he leverages video, performance and text to explore how his subjects engage with and become one another. His work uncovers complex layers of meaning through simple gestures and exploration of popular culture, language and politics. He is the recipient of a United States Artist Fellowship Award and was a fellow at the American Academy in Rome. McKenzie has taught and lectured at colleges and universities across the U.S., was recently an artist in residence at Bard College and serves as a faculty member at the School of Visual Arts.

Both artists have presented their compelling work at UArts, and both recently concluded significant exhibitions in New York City. Da Corte's whimsical sculpture "As Long as the Sun Lasts," featuring a blue version of Sesame Street's Big Bird sitting atop a Calder-inspired mobile, was the focal point of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's rooftop garden from the spring through fall 2021. In addition, several of his works were included in *New Grit: Art & Philly Now* at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

McKenzie's solo exhibition at the Whitney, *Dave McKenzie: The Story I Tell Myself*, presented his performances for the camera alongside pieces from the museum's collection that informed the concepts, gestures and sensibilities found in his work. The exhibition was accompanied by a commissioned performance, "Disturbing the View," in which McKenzie used the Whitney's façade as a canvas to disrupt the institution's daily rhythms. Following a circuitous path around the museum and obscuring windows with a squeegee, McKenzie explored the very idea of what it means to be visible.

Alex Da Corte,
"As Long as the Sun
Lasts," Metropolitan
Museum of Art, 2021,
courtesy of the artist



Dave McKenzie
"Disturbing the View,"
courtesy of the artist



Through His Films, Alum Explores the History of Retro Gaming



As a true child of the 1980s, **Zach Weddington BFA '99 (Film and Video Production)** feels most at home in an arcade, immersed in the chattering of pinball machines and seemingly endless stacks of quarters and tokens. Weddington's love of arcades and retro technology has also shaped his artistic voice, and his documentary series *Arcade Dreams* is the newest installment in his exploration of retro technology and entertainment.

Following his graduation from UArts, Weddington landed a job at cable and tech giant Comcast, where he served as a jack-of-all-trades video producer, creating short commercials and product spotlights. Such corporate work was steady and fulfilling, Weddington said, but he longed to make films of his own. Fortunately, he rediscovered the Commodore Amiga computer, a nearly forgotten line of mid-80s PCs at a vintage computer show, which sparked a new creative venture and the formation of Weddington's Philadelphia-area production company, Rock Steady Media.

The encounter birthed *Viva Amiga: The Story of a Beautiful Machine*, a feature documentary that traces the development of the Amiga and the "freaks, geeks and geniuses" who brought it to life. The hour-long film, Weddington's directorial debut, explores the creation of the world's first multimedia digital art powerhouse and Commodore's eventual bankruptcy and descent into obscurity. *Viva Amiga*, which was released in 2017, was distributed by Hulu and topped several of iTunes' movie rental charts.

"I had gone to school for the arts, but I hadn't ever made any of my own films," Weddington said. "[The Amiga] is not a Mac; it's not a PC. It was made pretty much for artists, since it gave you the ability to do some pretty complex animation and video production in your house in the '80s."

After wading into the waters of retro computing with *Viva Amiga*, Weddington noticed that many of the enthusiasts he met while making the film were just as enthralled with arcades. As a child growing up in Marietta, Georgia, Weddington was obsessed with arcades, and he would often sneak out of his room at night to ride his bike and pump quarters into the game cabinets at his local roller-skating rink. The community he found himself in, especially on social media, inspired him to pursue *Arcade Dreams*, an examination of a central component of his childhood.

"It just popped in my head to do something about arcades," he said. "It has been done before, but not quite in the way that I wanted to do it. Part of my process, before I even really start the thing in earnest, is to make myself a teaser trailer. That is something I learned at UArts from [emeritus faculty member] Peter Rose."

Weddington gathered footage of vintage arcade machines in Las Vegas to create his trailer, which eventually formed the basis of a successful Kickstarter campaign that helped fund the series. Since then, he's gathered hours of additional footage and interviews that explore the origin of arcades in Prohibition-era speakeasies, the evolution of family-owned corner arcades into oversized family fun centers, and the community keeping that era of video gaming alive.

As he currently searches for a distribution deal, Weddington presents *Arcade Dreams* as a three-episode series with an approximate run time of 42 minutes per episode. However, he has enough footage to expand even more. Concurrently, Weddington is in the initial stages of a documentary project with Ken and Roberta Williams, the founders of Sierra On-Line, who revolutionized PC gaming with their iconic text-based adventure games in the late 1980s.

Xenia Matthews BFA '21 (Film)

Congratulations to **Xenia Matthews BFA '21 (Film)**, who was awarded a fellowship in BlackStar's inaugural Philadelphia Filmmaker Lab! Matthews' film, *A Few Things I'm Beginning to Understand*, also recently won the Best Departures Short jury prize at the Memphis Film Festival.

Most recently, Matthews was included in Filmmaker Magazine's 25 New Faces to Watch 2022 list.



Silvana Cardell BFA '90 (Dance)

Silvana Cardell BFA '90 (Dance) is a 2022 Guggenheim Fellow in Choreography. She is also chair of the Georgian Court University Dance Department, located in Lakewood, New Jersey, and founder of Cardell Dance Theater. For her Guggenheim project, she said, "I plan to create *Disposable Bodies*, a dance performance that examines the treatment of human and nonhuman bodies as disposable. By including the nonhuman animal realm, I question the categorization of protected versus abandoned lives, and I respectfully address Judith Butler's fundamental questions: 'Who counts as human?' and 'Whose lives count as lives?'"



Four UArts Alumni Nominated for 2022 Tony Awards

Each year, UArtists around the world garner acclaim for their excellence. This news, though, deserves extra attention: Four UArts alumni were nominated for 2022 Tony Awards.

LaChanze BFA (Dance), was nominated for Best Performance by a Leading Actress in a Leading Role in a Play (*Trouble in Mind*).

Sidney Dupont BFA (Musical Theater), earned a nod for Best Performance by an Actor in a Featured Role in a Musical (*Paradise Square*).

L Morgan Lee BFA (Musical Theater), was recognized for Best Performance by an Actor in a Featured Role in a Musical (*Strange Loop*).

Mikaal Sulaiman BFA (Theater), was honored for Best Sound Design of a Play (*Macbeth*).

LaChanze BFA (Dance) was one of four alumni nominated for Tony Awards this year.



Joseph Game BFA '07 (Illustration)

For the past decade, **Joseph Game BFA '07 (Illustration)**, aka Chogrin, has worked in the animation industry on shows like *Adventure Time*, *Regular Show* and *Big City Greens*. Chogrin has also explored the many facets of pop culture as an illustrator and storyteller, from curating and participating in various art galleries to writing bilingual children's books like *Kid del Toro*. For his latest vinyl toy release, he has teamed up with Netflix to bring his unique take to the *Stranger Things* universe known as Elegorgon. Chogrin's Elegorgon is an inspired fusion design of the popular characters Eleven and Demogorgon. In addition to the vinyl toy, Chogrin's Elegorgon is available on apparel like shirts, sweatshirts, socks, fanny packs and more in the Netflix shop.



Alumni Notes

Ellen Soffer
BFA '81 (Painting)
"#30," 2020
mixed media on paper
30 x 22 inches
©2020 Ellen Soffer



1960s

For decades, **Anne Bascove BFA '68 (Illustration)** created eye-catching covers for beloved books by authors like Alice Walker and Virginia Woolf. The Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, recently compiled these book jackets into an exhibition that seamlessly blends literature and visual art. *BASCOVE: The Time We Spend with Words* was on display until June 5, 2022.

In 2021, **Ivan Barnett BFA '69 (Illustration)** opened his photography exhibition *Seeing the City Different*. Through 2020, Barnett scoured the empty streets of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and took imagery of places he has held close to his heart for over 50 years. The exhibition is a piece of Barnett's history, while also reflecting on how Santa Fe was affected during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

1970s

Cheryl Goldsleger BFA '73 (Painting) presented her work on paper in two summer 2022 group exhibitions. Her work was exhibited at Waterhouse & Dodd Gallery in New York City July 7 to Sept. 6, 2022, and C. Grimaldis Gallery in Baltimore July 14 to Sept. 10, 2022.

Marc VanDermeer BFA '75 (Film) exhibited a solo show of mixed media and photography, *A Sea of Dreams* at Images of Old Greenwich in Connecticut in May and June 2022.

Joe Fyfe BFA '76 won a 2022 Rabkin Foundation Award for visual arts journalism. Fyfe has written numerous catalog essays on Hans Hartung, Serge Poliakoff and Kimber Smith, among others, and reviews and essays for Artforum, Art in America, Arts AsiaPacific, Artnet.com, Hyperallergic, Modern Matter, Kilimanjaro, The Brooklyn Rail, Artcritical.com, The Tablet and BOMB. He is currently working on a biography of the artist and critic John Coplans.

Kathleen Ziegler Greco BFA '79 (Industrial Design), MFA '16 (Studio Art) received the Betsy Meyer Award for Contemporary Art from the Main Line Art Center in Haverford, Pennsylvania. The competition was juried by James Claiborne, curator of public programs for the Barnes Foundation. Additionally, her graphite work on paper "Torso 02" was on view as part of the *Uncommon Prints x Common Matrices* 2022 exhibition at Woman Made Gallery, Chicago.

A coral sculpture Greco created from her innovative Jelly Yarn was also included in the *Value and Transformation of Corals* exhibition at the Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden, Germany. The exhibit was on view from Jan. 29 to June 26, 2022. Follow Greco on Instagram at [@kathleengreco](#).

Louise Pierce BFA '79 (Painting) wrote *Not a Contest, How to Love Teaching*, which offers practical advice and solutions to help professionals bring out the best in their teaching.

1980s

Ellen Soffer BFA '81 (Painting) showed her work in an exhibition titled *Triologue* at Mesquite Arts Center, Texas. It was held July 11–Sept. 24, 2022.

Joseph V. Labolito BFA '82 (Photography) has digitized and donated over 1,200 original images of Philadelphia that he captured from the 1980s, '90s, and '00s to Temple Libraries at Temple University, Philadelphia, this year. He attributes the start of this project to his time at University of the Arts.

William Quigley BFA '84 (Painting) opened a gallery exhibit at AB NY Gallery in East Hampton, New York, which consisted of artistic collaboration between world-class photographer Nigel Barker and movement artists the Chin Twins. The exhibition opened July 16, 2022. The opening was accompanied by a musical performance by Dispatch founder Pete Franics with his wife, singer Katie Heimbold.

Janine Bryant '86 (Dance), a guest teacher at Boston Conservatory at Berklee and Metrowest Dance, Boston, traveled to Limerick, Ireland, in October to present research at the IADMS (International Association for Dance Medicine and Science) Conference. Bryant's research focuses on aging and range of motion while emphasizing nutrition as a catalyst for improving the aging and performing body. Bryant is an active member of the IADMS Dance Educators' Committee and is dedicated to spreading information on dancer wellness to younger generations to promote career longevity.

1990s

Eric Battle BFA '90 (Illustration) was a featured artist in the Society of Illustrators' installation *The Artist's Experience: from Brotherman to Batman*, from June 15 to Oct. 29, 2022. The exhibit celebrated some of the top African American artists in the comic book industry.

Todd Zalewski BFA '94 (Illustration) had a solo show of his paintings at the Marblehead Arts Association in Massachusetts March 5 to April 17, 2022. The painting subjects were dogs, his side specialty, in addition to his wildlife and natural history paintings. All paintings were done in oil on either board or linen.

Seth Kramer BFA '96 (Film) and his partners at Ironbound Films directed *Yung Punx: A Punk Parable*, which was featured in the DOC NYC festival in 2021. The film follows Color Killer, a punk rock band comprising four kids, ages 8–12. Color Killer is the youngest-ever band to headline the Vans Warped Tour.

Joe Vaccaro BS '98 (Industrial Design) and **Sheila (Curtin) Vaccaro BS '00 (Industrial Design)** are now successfully showcasing Vaccaro Design, a new product design company in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Recently, their new cutting board for Vaccaro Design was a 2022 Kitchenware finalist at the Inspired Home Show in Chicago.

2000s

Sheila (Curtin) Vaccaro BS '00 (Industrial Design) and **Joe Vaccaro BS '98 (Industrial Design)** are now successfully showcasing Vaccaro Design, a new product design company in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Recently, their new cutting board for Vaccaro Design was a 2022 Kitchenware finalist at the Inspired Home Show in Chicago.

Anne Kraybill MA '01 (Museum Education) was appointed director/chief executive officer of the Wichita Art Museum in Kansas. Kraybill previously served as the Richard M. Scaife Director/CEO at The Westmoreland Museum of American Art in Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

David Seidman BFA '01 (Illustration) illustrated and designed the full visual package for the latest album release from multi-gold album industrial rock band Stabbing Westward. Follow Seidman on Instagram at [@seidmanart](#).

Felix St. Fort BFA '02 (Illustration) collaborated on “Cecil B. Moore Freedom Fighters,” a new mural in North Philadelphia, in 2021.

Katie Baldwin MFA '04 (Book Arts and Printmaking) participated in the Impact 12 International Printmaking Conference in Bristol, England. She exhibited a series of woodblock prints titled *Modified Land*, which she created on a Fulbright scholarship in Taiwan. Baldwin also gave a presentation about her experience creating this work and shared her zine, *Neighborhood Garden*, during the conference's Open Portfolio.

Jaime Aitkens BFA '06 (Photography) was named a part of Cambria's 2021 President's Circle. Cambria is the leading producer of American-made quartz surfaces. President's Circle members are selected because of their superior performance, tireless dedication to excellence, and diligent work on behalf of Cambria and the company's customers.

Daniel Joseph BS '06 (Industrial Design) was featured as a top inventor in the arts at the United States Patent and Trademark Office's Invention-Con in August 2022.

Adéa Michelle Sessoms BFA '09 (Jazz Dance) performed in the national tour of *Moulin Rouge* in 2022.

**Seth Kramer
BFA '96 (Film)**
Still from *Yung Punx:
A Punk Parable*



**Illkya Acosta
BFA '18 (Graphic Design)**
Love + Grit
Storefronts Project
installation



**David Seidman
BFA '01 (Illustration)**
Chasing Ghosts album cover



2010s

Alex Lozier BFA '10 (Crafts) is a jeweler based in the Poconos and a first-generation Ukrainian American. She recently launched a Ukrainian Tryzub (trident) pendant fundraiser to raise money for humanitarian aid in Ukraine. The Tryzub (trident) is the Ukrainian coat of arms. She donated \$100 for every piece sold through the Ukrainian Women's League of America, of which her aunt was an active member. Learn more about the fundraiser at [alexlozier.com](#).

Molly Johnston (née Everts) BFA '11 (Modern Dance) is co-director of DanceBARN Collective in Battle Lake, Minnesota. The collective is committed to increasing dance opportunities in rural areas.

Anne Rossman BFA '11 (Acting) earned her Master of Arts in Clinical Psychological Counseling: Expressive Therapies from Lesley University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, in May 2022. She is currently employed as a clinical case manager for Hearth Inc., a Boston-based nonprofit organization dedicated to the elimination of homelessness among the elderly.

Will Harris BFA '13 (Photography) made this year's Silver List from Silver Eye Center for Photography in Pittsburgh. The Silver List was compiled from the suggestions of over 125 nonprofit photography curators, scholars, publishers and critics.

Jess Adams BFA '16 (Modern Dance) and **Teddy Fatscher BFA '15 (Dance)** toured the country as dancers and aerialists with MOMIX, a company of “dance illusionists.”

Illkya Acosta BFA '18 (Graphic Design) contributed an installation as part of the Love + Grit Storefronts Project, a Philadelphia-wide exhibition that transforms empty spaces into art. Acosta's work was installed on South Street.



Loveis Wise BFA '18
(Illustration)
Magnolia Flower
book cover

Loveis Wise BFA '18 (Illustration) was a mainstage speaker at ICON 11, a premier illustration conference for illustrators, educators, designers, buyers and others. It was held June 28–July 2, 2022, in Kansas City, Missouri. Wise also collaborated with bestselling author Ibram X. Kendi (*How to be an Antiracist*) on *Magnolia Flower*, a children's book based on a story by lauded 20th century writer Zora Neale Hurston. It was published by HarperCollins in 2022.

In conjunction with the book's release, Wise and Kendi visited UArts for an event hosted by **Jeanine Cook BS '04 (Communications and Media Studies)** during which they discussed the intersections of art, activism and literature.

Nathan Alford-Tate MFA '19 (Devised Performance) developed and performed an original theatrical piece for the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia. *Meet James Forten*, written by a local playwright, is a 20-minute performance that explores the story of historical figure James Forten, a free, Black Philadelphian who served on a privateer ship during the Revolutionary War and later became a prominent businessperson and abolitionist. It premiered regularly on weekends from December 2021 through spring 2022. It will also be part of the museum's 2023 exhibition specifically on James Forten and his family. It is also performed virtually for school groups across the country.

Nhi Nguyen MA '19 (Museum Education) recently co-authored *Welcoming Young Children into the Museum: A Practical Guide*. The book seeks to make museums more accessible to children.

2020s

James Bruenger-Arrenguin BFA '21 (Directing, Playwriting and Production) was named to the 2022–2023 Leon Levy Foundation Roundabout Directors Group.

As a senior, **Jonai Gibson-Selix BFA '22 (Graphic Design)** won a CASE Agency Award and an AIGA Together Award. AIGA Worldstudio Scholarships awards funds to underrepresented students and those in need who study photography, illustration and design in the U.S.

While a student, **Zakiyah Stewart BFA '22 (Fine Arts)** was appointed an Andrew W. Mellon Undergraduate Curatorial Fellow at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. This fellowship provides specialized training in the curatorial field for students across the U.S.

Jonai Gibson-Selix BFA '22 (Graphic Design)
Elusive: A Visual Meditation on Black Rest



in memoriam

William Daley

University of the Arts mourns the loss of ceramic artist and distinguished educator **William Daley**, who passed away Jan. 16, 2022, at age 96. For nearly 40 years, Daley was an important and influential figure at UArts, where his studio practice intertwined with his life as an arts educator.

Daley's teaching style was inspirational, drawing on references to literature and philosophy, as well as all forms of art. He nurtured countless students, including many who later established their own renowned careers. For his visionary work in clay—or "mud," as he affectionately called it—Daley was awarded an honorary doctorate from UArts in 1994. In addition, Daley held an honorary doctorate from Maine College of Art and was celebrated with distinguished awards from the College Art Association, the American Craft Council, the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, and the Northern Clay Center.

"As an artist, Bill was ceaselessly engaged in exploring the possibilities of ceramics as a medium and the vessel as a form," President and CEO David Yager said. "As a teacher, he was equally devoted to his students, introducing them to the joy of making for making's sake. He left an indelible mark on UArts, and his legacy will forever be linked to his generosity, his extraordinary work and the countless contributions he made to the arts. He will be sorely missed."

Daley was born in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York, where his father, a house painter and art lover, supported his creative endeavors. After surviving prison camp during World War II, Daley graduated in 1950 from Massachusetts College of Art, where he met and married Catherine Anne Stennes. The two were married for 70 years until her death in 2021. Daley earned his graduate degree from Columbia University Teachers College in 1952.

Many of Daley's large, unglazed stoneware vessels have been featured in numerous prominent exhibitions and are included in the permanent collections of many museums, including the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Arts and Design, and the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American Art. In and around Philadelphia, Daley's architectural commissions are featured on the exterior wall of the Ritz Five theater, at Germantown Friends School and at the Westminster Presbyterian Church in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

He is survived by a son, Thomas; daughters Barbara and Charlotte; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; a sister; and other relatives.

LaDeva M. Davis

LaDeva M. Davis BME '65 (Piano), a beloved and influential Philadelphia teacher, choreographer, dancer, producer and entertainer, passed away Sept. 8, 2022, at age 78.

Davis is best known as a founding educator of the heralded Philadelphia High School for Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA), where she remained active until her death. Her teaching career spanned nearly 60 years.

Throughout the 1970s, Davis hosted *What's Cooking* on Philadelphia's WHYY. The show became so popular that she was the first Black woman to have a nationally syndicated cooking show. Later, Davis was included in a Smithsonian exhibition about food and television. In addition, she was a master of kung fu, an avid deep sea angler and a Grammy nominee for co-producing the 2007 Dixie Hummingbirds album, *Keeping it Real: The Last Man Standing*.

Though Davis led many interesting lives, her persistent focus was dance. Her commitment is evident in the lives of the thousands of young people she influenced and whose careers she helped launch. She often joked that she had thousands of children, and the most popular nickname among her many was "Mama Dee."

Many of Davis' students have gone on to dance on Broadway; form their own companies; or teach and work with troupes such as Alvin Ailey Dance Theater, Dance Theater of Harlem and the American Ballet Theatre. In 2014, when

Boyz II Men visited CAPA, the group's alma mater, singer Shawn Stockman credited Davis with producing its showcases and ensuring all of them took their classes seriously even though they weren't dancers. Her commitment to education was celebrated with a prestigious Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching from the Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback Foundation and the School District of Philadelphia.

Davis' classmate and close friend, **Judith Jamison '64 (Dance)**, said that Davis would be best remembered as a tireless advocate for children. When her students could not afford ballet shoes, Davis often purchased them with her own money.

In addition to her work at CAPA, Davis taught at Swarthmore College; served two terms as president of Philadanco's board of directors; and was a choreographer for commercials, theater productions and a brigade that performed in Philadelphia's annual Mummers parade. As an entertainer, she performed with Natalie Cole, Billie Dee Williams, Gregory Hines, Jamie Farr and many other luminaries.

"Really, she could do anything. And she was an all-around nice person, and giving," Jamison said. "She had a great sense of humor, a terrific laugh."

Davis is survived by a niece and a nephew.

Brian Feeney

Brian Feeney passed away Oct. 16, 2022. He was hired in 1985 and supported the audiovisual needs of the UArts community for 35 years. He was present at almost every event on campus, setting up microphones, speakers, video cameras, projectors and podiums, as well as troubleshooting any mid-event technical issues. Feeney was an active member of Staff Council for many years and spearheaded the traditional start-of-semester welcome back breakfasts/coffee breaks, as well as taking the lead on planning many staff outings, including Phillies and Sixers games, bowling, softball and more.

Outside UArts, Feeney was an avid concert-goer and an active Mummer who would march up Broad Street right past UArts in the annual New Year's Day parade. He was recognized by Staff Council as the UArts Employee of the Month in May 2006. In nominating him for that honor, colleagues noted that Feeney was "unfailingly generous with his time, upbeat in the face of confusion and quite imaginative in problem solving." He was also recognized for his "patience, attention to detail and ever-present good humor. There are few as reliable and enduring as Brian."

Robert A. Knight

Robert A. Knight BFA '53 (Illustration), a prolific artist whose sweeping watercolor scenes of the Philadelphia area's landscapes and vibrant program covers for the Philadelphia Phillies, passed away Nov. 22, 2021.

Knight was born in 1930 in Manhattan and moved to Elkins Park, a suburb of Philadelphia, while in middle school. After graduating from La Salle High School, he graduated from the Philadelphia Museum School of Art (now UArts) in 1953. An eclectic career spanning nearly 60 years followed, and Knight's work included award-winning commercial illustrations for TV Guide, Chilton Publishing, banks and many other organizations.

Knight was also an avid golfer and painted dozens of golf-themed scenes from courses around the country, many of which were reproduced as prints marketed in limited editions worldwide. Country Club Editions, a leader in golf artwork publishing, hired Knight as its first artist. For years, he created at least one golf course painting per week for the company.

"He always had his sketchbook and paints, wherever he went," Leah Vare, co-founder of Country Club Editions, said.

In addition to golf courses, Knight painted churches and other distinctive buildings and regularly donated the works to the buildings' owners. He exhibited his work at Perkins Center for the Arts in New Jersey and many local galleries. He was also a member of the Philadelphia Sketch Club and won awards from the Artists Guild of America and the Art Directors Club of New York.

Knight was preceded in death by his wife, Grace M. Knight (Muir). He is survived by his children, Robert A. Knight Jr., Geoffrey Miller, Franklin Miller, Joseph Miller, Christopher Miller and Carlotta Miller, and seven grandchildren.

Regina Marzell

A well-loved member of the UArts community, Regina Marzell, passed away Oct. 16, 2022. Marzell served for more than two decades on staff as the Accounts Payable manager in the Finance Department. She was known on campus as someone who always went above and beyond the call of duty to assist and support others and offered a friendly smile to anyone who ventured into her office. In fact, at the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, Marzell volunteered to go into the office once a week to print checks, insisting that vendors and students be paid in a timely manner. She was one of very few staff members on campus during that time, underscoring her loyalty to the school and the UArts community.

Marzell had an arts background, having earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting from Tyler School of Art, Temple University, in 1983. This informed her commitment to supporting arts students and gave her the ability to think critically from multiple points of view, traits that endeared her to her colleagues over the course of her career. Marzell is survived by her son, Alex, and will be missed greatly by all who knew her.

Adolf A. Paier

UArts mourns the loss of business leader and arts education proponent Adolf "Dolf" Paier, who served on University of the Arts' Board of Trustees from 1989 until the time of his death. Paier passed away Oct. 11, 2022, at the age of 83.

A resident of Penn Valley, Paier was a successful businessman who graduated with honors from Wharton School of University of Pennsylvania in 1960. In 1967, after obtaining his CPA (certified public accountant), he joined Safeguard Industries and was steadily promoted until he was named the company's president and chief operating officer. He later served as CEO of Healthworks Alliance and Novus Corp. He believed in giving back, particularly to arts and culture organizations. In addition to his work with UArts, Paier also served on the boards of the Lincoln Center for Family and Youth and the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

As a vital member of UArts' board, Paier helped shape the institution into what it is today, overseeing the transformation of the school over decades, and he was known by his peers on the board as an insightful contributor and a kind friend.

Paier was born in Branford, Connecticut. He is survived by his beloved wife Geraldine (née Shnakis); his children Nate (Elin) and Andrew (Barbara); his grandchildren Gabriel, Penleigh, Joseph and Caitlin; his older brother, Saule; and younger sister, Dorothy Sheldon.

Thelma Rubin

Thelma Rubin BFA '51 of Media, Pennsylvania, passed away Sept. 23, 2022, at the age of 92. Rubin's passion for art and her loyalty to her alma mater leave a lasting legacy at UArts. After obtaining her degree in Painting in 1951, Rubin worked for local interior designers, painting furniture, lampshades and murals. In the 1970s, she studied weekly with painter Hobson Pittman at the Philadelphia Museum of Art studios, painting still lifes and portraits and later, moving into monoprints.

She showed her work at local galleries before launching a career selling recycled paper greeting cards—thanks to a connection formed by then-local artist Sandra Boynton. In the last decade of her life, Rubin returned to painting.

Throughout her life, she was a supporter of art and arts education. Indeed, it was her influence that inspired her children, who worked for their uncle's business, CRW Graphics, to strike up a unique partnership with UArts, donating equipment, returning to campus to teach printing skills and later sponsoring a student award.

Thelma Rubin was the beloved wife of the late Leonard; loving mother of Bruce Rubin (Elizabeth), Mark Rubin and the late Steven Rubin; and cherished grandmother of Isobel, Beatrice, Zach and Seth Rubin.

Thomas Wise

Thomas Wise BFA '72 (Fine Arts) of Northumberland, Pennsylvania, co-founder and first dean of administration for the Pennsylvania School of Art in Lancaster, Pennsylvania—now known as the Pennsylvania College of Art and Design—passed away Aug. 13, 2022, at age 75.

After graduating from Northumberland High School, Wise earned degrees from Philadelphia College of Art (now UArts), University of Delaware, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and York Academy of the Arts. Wise was guided by an artistic philosophy of painting, "the simple things I know and love." His work was included in exhibitions both locally and internationally, and his graphic designs were used in a variety of commercial products. Wise's painting of a former Pennsylvania lieutenant governor hangs in the state's capitol building.

Wise was an elected member of the Society of Illustrators in New York City and a signature member of the Pennsylvania and Philadelphia Watercolor societies. In addition, he was a member of the American Watercolor Society, the Susquehanna Art Association and the Millersburg Art Association.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Cheryl B. Wise (Snyder). He is survived by his daughter, Millicent Wise Brown; grandson, Conrad Brown; son-in-law, Michael Brown; and brother, Jeffrey, husband of Karen Wise.

In Memoriam (Continued)

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"Sun Halo and Moon Halo" (detail)
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