Welcome to the Summer 2018 College of Fine Arts Alumni Chapter Newsletter!

I was remiss in the last newsletter to not recognize the new UNLV College of Fine Arts Alumni Chapter Board of Directors members that were added in January. Please welcome Bianca Scott, Art Alum, as Vice President; Dwayne Eshenbaugh, School of Architecture Alum, as a Board of Directors member and Lisa Jablonski, School of Music Alum, also as a Board of Directors member. Thank you three for joining us on this journey forward!

Our Alumni Chapter had a very accomplished Spring semester! In February, we held a panel for current students titled, Your Arts Career: What's Next, where all six Fine Arts disciplines were represented. In March, we volunteered for the Alumni Association's Senior Send-Off, a two day event that lets Seniors get all their graduation needs in one place. In April, we participated in the College of Fine Arts' Hall of Fame ceremony and dinner as our 2017 Alumnus of the Year, Tim Bavington, was honored. Also in April, we collaborated with the School of Music for a very successful Rebels at Lunch Concert date that allows students to practice their craft in a relaxed setting. In May, we participated in the College of Fine Arts Commencement Reception, so we could welcome them into the Alumni Family!

In Los Angeles, also in May, the College of Fine Arts held an Alumni mixer that I attended (since I lived in L.A. for ten years). It was a triumphant event! There were so many Alumni & friends that gathered at Edendale restaurant to reminisce, laugh and network. This will become an annual event!

Lastly, as Alumni we have a voice, and we need to start using it! Our College of Fine Arts Alumni Board is your voice to the UNLV administration & Board of Regents. If there is anything you would like discussed, please email me at stacy.swim@alumni.unlv.edu.

Have a lovely summer, and we will see you in the Fall!

With Rebel Pride, Stacy Swim ‘98 Theatre
CFA hits the Road: Sundance Film Festival and L.A./Silver Lake

The College of Fine Arts continued our 2017-18 series of alumni road trips in January. First on the map was scenic Park City, Utah during the Sundance Film Festival. Both the deep snow and the ski slopes were there to greet us, as were dozens of Rebels alongside a large cross-section of the international film and television community. Freezing as the outside temperatures might have been, the cold was amply countered by the warmth and collegiality inside the friendly confines of the Park City’s 350 Main Brasserie. Celebrating the artistry, fine cuisine and revelry of Sundance, Dean Nancy J. Uscher welcomed alumni and guests, industry professionals, and a dozen UNLV Department of Film students and faculty. Film Chair Heather Addison and professor Francisco Menendez offered greetings and thanks, and short films produced by both the College of Fine Arts and the Department of Film were viewed by the attendees. Much food and beverage was consumed, and numerous acquaintances were made and renewed. Mid-Winter in the Utah mountains never felt like this before!

Then, to Los Angeles in May. Dean Uscher welcomed the newly assembled College of Fine Arts Los Angeles Council for dinner and a lively panel discussion at Nik & Stefs Steakhouse downtown. The panel focused on the future of Film education and included: alumna film and television music editor Robin Whittaker ’08; Cal Arts animation educator Maiya Bennett; Michael Vanderbilt of Dreamworks; writer and editor Liz Segal; Constanza and Domenica Castro (Film ’13); Jason Aaron Goldberg (Theatre ’00); and UNLV faculty members Sean Clark, Nate Bynum, Francisco Menendez and Heather Addison. On Saturday, the group moved out to the historic Edendale Restaurant in Silver Lake (1924) to celebrate Cinco de Mayo. Dean Uscher greeted upwards of ninety fabulous UNLV alums, faculty, spouses and guests. It was a lovely day and all present had a magnificent time (running overtime by an hour). The margaritas were amazing, and the conversation sizzled like the warmth of the California Sun.
The CFA names new Art Chair and School of Architecture Director

This Summer the College of Fine Arts will welcome Marcus Civen as our new permanent Chairman of the UNLV Department of Art. An interdisciplinary artist, critic and educator, Civin comes to UNLV after spending nearly a decade at the Maryland Institute College of Art. Born in Boston and raised in Baltimore, Marcus earned a Bachelors Degree in Theatre from Brown University (1999) and subsequently an Art MFA at the University of California at Irvine (2009). Delighted to be coming West again, Civin remarked that he is “emboldened by the challenge of addressing art and design education in the most diverse public university in the U.S. I think we can be leaders in the state and in the fields of art and design by honoring and engaging formerly marginalized perspectives and practitioners.”

After a long and extensive search process, the UNLV School of Architecture will proudly welcome Steffen Lehmann as its new Director on October 1. Lehmann is a German-born urbanist, designer, educator and researcher. He comes to UNLV from the University of Portsmouth (England), where he held the position of Director of the Innovation Cluster for Sustainable Cities. While at that post, Steffen spent much time in Berlin and Australia, as well as in London. As a full professor of Sustainable Architecture, he was the recipient of several significant research grants. Prior to his recent post he was Department Chairman at the University of South Australia in Perth where he founded the China-Australia Centre for Sustainable Urban Development. Steffen has published 18 books, over 300 papers and more than 450 presentations in 40 countries.

“Heathers” actor Jasmine Mathews ‘16 visits with Theatre Students

Theatre alumna Jasmine Mathews ‘16 returned to campus on April 6 to visit with current Theatre students here at UNLV. After her introduction by her faculty mentor Nate Bynum, Jas gave our budding actors invaluable real-world advice based on her recent experiences in the acting profession. Two years ago, after three years of performing with Nevada Conservatory Theatre at UNLV while earning her MFA, Jas found herself in New York City, blazing a path through the treacherous audition circuit.

Not expecting to meet with rapid success, she soon discovered that great things were happening for her much faster than she even dreamt. In the short time since leaving UNLV, Jasmine has been performing in featured roles on multiple popular television shows, including Blue Bloods (CBS), Sweetbitter (Starz), and the new Paramount Network series Heathers. Thanks so much, Jas! Come back and visit any time!
Film alumni couple find success with their own L.A. dance outfit

L.A. is a tough market for dance artists to make a splash in, but Noelle Andressen (a.k.a. Noelle Rose) and Kristopher Kale have done just that. After earning their UNLV Bachelor’s degrees in Film Studies in 2000, the couple took a few steps back to look at their lives from a new perspective. Kris’ passion was film and multimedia, but Noelle’s background was centered upon dance, which was her focus in the formative years. After ample reflection, they developed an artistic strategy that would transform their lives. Following the move of their young family to competitive Southern California, they brought a new dance company to life. Their creation, the cutting edge Rubans Rouges Dance Company, is now in its ninth performance season.

An additional challenge came in the form of Noelle’s breast cancer diagnosis. With no health insurance at the time of diagnosis, Kris and Noelle had to sell their home in order to pay for her life-saving treatment. Drawing much of her courage from the bravery displayed by both her mother and grandmother (both lost battles with cancer), Noelle decided that her story would have a different ending. She is now a decade-long survivor, and the fight for life provided her with renewed inspiration to make a difference in the lives of others, something she carries with her daily as artistic director of Rubans Rouges.

Noelle is also a survivor of childhood abuse. As a result, much of her work as a choreographer and dancer draws upon the difficult situations that have transformed her understanding of life. Women’s and children’s issues are a primary focus for the contemporary dance outfit that the pair created in 2009. Noelle has two Emmy nominations and was also nominated for Performance Artist of the Year in 2012. While Noelle concentrates on choreography and thematic elements, Kris provides strong technical support with a multimedia-dance fusion approach to production design. Kris, a music composer for four decades, maintains a career in film, having won a regional Emmy with his original score for Baby Doe’s Heartbeat, along with the couple’s EMA Media Award for that film. Kris is of Native American descent with Chickasaw, Choctaw and Cherokee heritage.

Their annual Los Angeles area Awakenings & Beginnings Dance Festival is now in the 8th year, drawing dozens of local dancers and thirty to forty talented dance companies for a two-week period each January at various L.A. venues.

Left, Kristopher Kale and Noelle Rose Andressen
Right, Rubans Rouges Dance Company in Performance

College of Fine Arts
Fun Facts:

In 1959, Dr. Paul C. Harris founded what would become the Department of Theatre at UNLV. Until 1972, theatrical performances were held in the Grant Hall Little Theatre, the original THA performance venue.

The School of Architecture joined the College of Fine Arts in 1997, headed by Director Micheal Alcorn, who guided the School through their first accreditation.

On April 8, 1972, the Judy Bayley Theatre opened with a preview performance of the French comedy, A Flea in Her Ear by Georges Feydeux (1907).
Fine Arts Class Notes

Julie Arnoff, 1978 Art, is a fine artist specializing in portraiture. Arnoff works and lives the historic Santa Fe Art Colony in Downtown Los Angeles, exhibiting her work at local galleries such as Gallery 825 and Frostig Collection at Bergamot Station. Working with a variety of media, Julie creates “drippy, painterly portraits exhibiting her sensual use of paint and love of the natural form.” A crowd favorite with exhibitors, Arnoff can be seen at such LA traditions as The Melrose Trading Post, The Arts District Flea Market, and LA Live in Downtown Los Angeles. https://www.juliearnoff.com/

Derek Riley, 2016 Theatre MFA, has performed with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Santa Cruz Shakespeare, Richmond Shakespeare, and the Sacramento Theatre Company. Derek recently returned to campus to appear in the Nevada Conservatory Theatre at UNLV production of Take Me Out.

Kyle Ross, 2016 Film, is starting his own creative business, The Feeling Of. After several years working as Creative Director of JusCollege and building it into a national firm, Kyle and partners have sold that business, and will now focus on a new firm, designing cutting edge event and business marketing strategies.

Noelle Garcia, 2012 Art MFA, recently displayed her new work Doritos at UNLV’s Barrick Museum of Art. Based in Chicago, Noelle works with a wide range of media, infusing Native American traditions such as weaving, and glass bead work and thread into other popular cultural symbols such as cigarettes and food in a commentary on pervasive cultural change in America. During the Spring 2018 semester she created a workshop for current UNLV art students entitled Claim it, exploring young artists to make artwork their own.

Daniel Joseph Chenin, 2005 Architecture, recently received a blind peer reviewed Honor of Design Excellence Award from A.I.A. Nevada for his TNT Residence.

Linda Manley Darling, 2005 Art, is a stock market investor. Attending theater, hockey, and community events are among her hobbies. Linda lives in Kennewick, Washington.

Eduardo Mayen, 2002 Film, is a cinematographer living in Los Angeles. His numerous credits include work on noteworthy television and films including Stitchers, From Dusk Till Dawn, All Saints, Singularity and We Bought A Zoo.

Mikayla Whitmore, 2010 Art BFA, has distinguished herself as a photographer, with recent shows such as There Is No Right Time, mixing topographical scenes’ unexpected details. She has chosen multiple Nevada and California landscapes to show value in preservation of wild terrain untouched by mankind. Whitmore states that her images “amplify mementos of American values by way of isolation and freedom.”

Sarah Norris, 2008 Theatre, is the founding artistic director of the New Light Theatre Project. Working with producing director Michael Aguirre, Norris aims to capture the Little Theatre Movement (artistry over commerce) in the New York City theatre community. Aimed directly at the NYC downtown theatre crowd, NLTP has produced cutting edge works such as Anne Adams’ Strange Country, Dan Giles’ Breeders, and Hal & Bee, a new dark comedy by Max Baker.

George Tuzzeo, 1983 Music, served as music director and performer with Jay and the Americans at the Golden Nugget in November. George is a pop and classical musician who also deals in Steinway piano sales in Paramus, New Jersey.

Jane Callister, Art 1994. Jane’s recent exhibition at Royale Projects: Contemporary Art was entitled Baroco-Pap. The show explored a painterly dialogue between two bodies of gestural works: earlier monochromatic grays and a more recent brightly colored palette. Jane is a member of the art faculty at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Her work has been exhibited in Sweden, the Czech Republic and at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles.

Domenica Castro, 2013 Film, is a producer and director for television, short films and commercials. Her projects have included the series Nightwing, Waste and The Track, a documentary short film about sex trafficking in Las Vegas. Domenica also does work for the Las Vegas Film Festival.

Travis Coyne, 2001 Theatre MFA, is Technical Director for the Brigham Young University School of Theatre Arts and Media. A member of the United States Institute for Theatre Technology, he serves as Special Exhibits Coordinator for the U.S.I.T.T. Conference Committee. When time allows, Travis also enjoys scenic design for the stage. Travis lives in Provo, Utah with his wife, theatrical lighting designer Amber Coyne (Theatre MFA 2001) and their five children.

Greg Dorchak, 1988 Film, has a film production company called Class Clown Pictures, which has just released its first feature film, Kopy Kings, a workplace comedy. His acting credits can be found on imdb.com. He earned a bachelor of fine arts degree in digital media from the International Academy of Design and Technology in 2012. He is married to Carmen Zayas, also Film 1988. Besides working as a producer on her husband’s indie film productions, she is also a local activist passionate about politics, feminist issues, and reproductive rights. The couple, who met at UNLV and have been married 31 years, live in Austin, TX.

Timothy Bonenfant, ’82 ’84 ’05 Music, is a professor of music at Angelo State University (San Angelo, Texas), where he directs the SASU Jazz Ensemble. Tim gave a world premiere performance of Persona No. 4, composed by UNLV music professor Virko Baley, this summer in Madrid. He previously recorded an album of Baley’s works, Multiple Personae: The Family of Clarinets, which was released in 2014.
Trio of UNLV Architects from Punch firm take design prizes

Punch Architects, an architectural firm begun in June of 2015 by a trio of UNLV Alumni, has captured a highly significant prize in Architecture. Clemente Cicoria ‘03, Drew Gregory ‘03, and Zak Ostrowski ‘07 are the winners of a prestigious blind peer reviewed honor accorded by the Western Mountain Region of American Institute of Architects. This Design Excellence Award was given for their recent project, Fo Shou Sugi conceived for the San Juan Islands region of Northwestern Washington State.

The Punch Architects team also captured a recent Nevada 2018 Veterans Memorial Competition Award in Carson City for Battleborn: Memorial to Nevada’s Fallen Warriors, a new public art project that will be built on the grounds of the Nevada State Capitol. In addition, the firm has previously garnered three Nevada AIA awards for earlier projects, such as Portland’s Jackrabbit (hotel restaurant design) and Cayambe (a hillside residence in Northern Ecuador).

After graduation from UNLV, all three architects began their careers in different cities (Portland, Denver, Los Angeles), but later came together to create this dynamic young firm. Congrats, guys!

China Adams, Art ‘01: Massage-Generated Energy Drawings Series

She has been featured in art exhibitions the world over, but now L.A. artist China Adams, MFA Art ‘01 believes that she is on to something completely different. The USC Roski School of Art and Design professor is also a licensed Massage Therapist in the State of California. Naturally, it was only a matter of time before China found a way to combine those two passions into a new art form. Her recently concluded exhibition at Porch Gallery Ojai involved a complex collaboration with 80 other artists, exploring positive energy and healing touch as an artistic means.

During the month-long run of that event, Adams performed four one-hour massages on fellow artists. Three times during each session an assistant rang a bell at random, at which time the massage recipient was asked to utter the first word that came to mind, to be logged as the daily sessions progressed. Each evening, Adams incorporated all twelve words into a new drawing. Through the rest, relief and relaxation provided during the massage sessions, Adams created an uplifting new mindset that characterized the overall project.

Each of the resulting drawings was notarized and indicates the name of the participating artists. Using a variety of media, Adams’ recent exhibition venues have included the Ace Gallery and Steve Turner Contemporary in Los Angeles. An L.A. transplant, China Adams was born in San Francisco, earning her BFA degree in Art at UCLA in 1995, and her MFA at UNLV (far left, A Certain Period of Time by China Adams, 2015).
UNLV Artist Thomas Ray Willis ‘09 introduces “Retrofit Painting” luxury line in Boston and Las Vegas

Artists from UNLV continue to make impressive strides in the world of art, not only here in Las Vegas but in art capitals such as Los Angeles, Chicago and New York City. One such up and coming artist is Thomas Ray Willis, BFA Art ’09. Since leaving UNLV for the East Coast, the ball-cap wearing Willis has been featured in dozens of solo and group exhibitions in Boston, New York City, Michigan, and here at Las Vegas’ own venues. While painting has long been his primary focus, Willis also works in sculpture and craft work.

In May, Willis unveiled a fresh line of limited edition jewelry, jewelry boxes, eyeglass frames, hand bags, wallets, and planters under his own luxury brand, entitled Retrofit Painting. These works will be sold at the deCordova Store at deCordova Sculpture Park outside Boston. The venue recently completed an installation of these works, followed by an opening reception. The line is based on a conceptual theme of stretched canvas frames that become an art form of their own. To promote his line, Willis has coined the tag line “Think Outside the Frame.”

http://www.thomasraywillis.com

Rebels at Lunch Concert Series

The Fine Arts Alumni Chapter and the School of Music finished the sophomore season of the Rebels at Lunch Concert Series in grand style on Wednesday, April 18th. Performances included pieces by such revered composers Mozart, Liszt, Chopin, Henderon, Skoryk and Stupka. To date, Rebels at Lunch has been fortunate to present more than three dozen works, played and sung by amazing UNLV student and faculty performers.

Featured highlights have included the UNLV Viola and Horn Ensembles, the UNLV Chamber Chorale, sopranos Kimberly James and Mariah Wilcox, pianists Mykola Suk and Leo Berenguel, and powerful baritone Adonis Abuyen. The talent level has been phenomenal, and audiences have left Tam Alumni Center all smiles.

The collaborative lunchtime music project began in 2017 as brown bag concerts. For 2017-18, the CFA Alumni Chapter began providing complimentary lunches from Firehouse Subs on Maryland Parkway, along with soft beverages and cookies. Come and join us for the next Rebels at Lunch event next Fall!
Ulrich “Uli” Geissendoerfer has been a tremendous addition to the UNLV Jazz Studies Faculty, transforming the UNLV Latin Jazz Ensemble into an award-winning colossus. The group has won Downbeat Awards in 2013, 2014, 2015, culminating with a first place win in 2016. Geissendoerfer created a lecture series for the School of Music and also curates their outstanding Steinway Concert Series.

For these accomplishments, it was fitting that Uli should be honored with one of two Outstanding Part-time Teacher of the Year Awards at the recent UNLV College of Fine Arts Honors Convocation. Jazz Studies Director Dave Loeb noted that, “Uli is a world-class Latin and Jazz pianist, composer, arranger, director and music educator.”

Originally from Munich, Germany, Geissendoerfer moved to Las Vegas in 2009 to take the helm as Music Director for the new Cirque Du Soleil production Viva Elvis. He has recorded seven albums and enjoys created sound designs, soundtracks and film scores, including the co-composition Climbing Miss Sophie, winner of the New York Film Festival in 2002.

Working primarily within the realm of jazz, world music and improvisation, among his current projects are the Uli Geissendoerfer Trio and Quartet. Uli is also the founder of the Vegas Records label. You can check up on his latest releases at his website at www.ulimusic.com/home.html.

Carnell Johnson, Music ‘06, is voice of the Vegas Golden Knights

When Carnell Johnson graduated from the UNLV School of Music with his Bachelor of Music degree in 2006, he probably wasn’t thinking his claim to fame would be earned by singing Italian arias on a gondola, much less on the ice in front of 18,000 screaming hockey fans. Well! Proudly, his alma mater can say that both things are true.

By day, Carnell entertains delighted lovers and tourists with romantic tunes aboard charming little boats at Venetian Las Vegas. By night, he can be found at the T-Mobile Arena (or on national sports television) wowing throngs of Vegas Golden Knights fans with his powerful rendition of The Star Spangled Banner. Hockey enthusiasts have even assigned him the nickname “Golden Pipes,” referencing the key Knights logo color.

At 6 feet 2 inches and 280 lbs., Carnell is visible from even the farthest seats at T-Mobile, but his forte is audibility. As any sports fan can tell you, a great rendition of our National Anthem really does matter to the home team. Go, Carnell, Go!
Select Upcoming Events in the UNLV College of Fine Arts:

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For tickets and information call the
Performing Arts Center Box Office (702) 895-ARTS (2787)
or purchase online at http://pac.unlv.edu

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Vertex: New Volume of 2013-18 Rebel Student Work in Architecture

The UNLV School of Architecture has now published an exceptional new 325-page full-color soft-cover volume of new and recent student works. The book, entitled Vertex, is an extensive, eclectic collection of impressive designs created between 2013 and the present day, including successful projects such as UNLV’s participant entries in the 2013 United States Department of Energy Solar Decathlon and 2014-2015 DOE Race to Zero competitions. Released in early May in celebration of the culmination of the 2017-18 semester, Vertex will soon be available for purchase via the School of Architecture’s website at https://www.unlv.edu/architecture. Call (702) 895-3031 for additional information.

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2018 College of Fine Arts Alumni Chapter Board

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