BEHIND THE SCENES OF VIRAGO-MAN DEM

In November, Krannert Center presented Virago-Man Dem as part of the Marquee series. Created by Dance professor and Bessie Award-winning choreographer Cynthia Oliver, the work explores the expressive cultures particular to Caribbean and African American men, going beyond stereotypes to create a nuanced depiction of Black male identities. You can watch a behind-the-scenes mini-documentary on the making of Virago-Man Dem, which also features artists and designers from across the College of Fine and Applied Arts who contributed to the work.

Professor Kevin Hamilton was appointed dean of the College of Fine and Applied Arts (FAA) in August 2018. A member of the Illinois faculty since 2002, he is a professor of New Media in the School of Art and Design and previously served as a senior associate dean for the college.

**What college goals are you most excited to work on?**
First, we want to be a better partner to the rest of campus, the many students and researchers outside FAA who come to Illinois with commitments in the arts, design, or performance. Second, it’s time to discover the next level of our historic work as a campus leader in serving those beyond our campus. The future holds a bolder, more effective vision for public engagement in this college.

**Where do you see FAA fitting into the growing opportunities around design thinking?**
Our partners in the new Siebel Center for Design are eager to connect Illinois students with not only our designers, but also our sculptors, painters, and other builders. Design thinking requires design making—it’s important to get your hands dirty. As storytelling and improvisation are also central to this work, I see a growing role for our performers, choreographers, composers, and historians as well.

**Tell us about your book with Ned O’Gorman: Lookout America! The Secret Hollywood Film Studio at the Heart of the Cold War.**
Our book makes the case that photographs have been as important as bombs or missiles in this nation’s rise to global nuclear supremacy. We tell the story of the people behind those ubiquitous and fearsome images of nuclear explosions—both the photographers and those who commissioned and controlled the resulting film footage. The Smithsonian Channel just dedicated a program to this subject, drawing from our research and including interviews with us (note: the program is called “Atomic Age Declassified: Filming the Bomb”). We hope to show how the Cold War is still very much a going concern, with vision playing a central role in the ethics of nuclear war.

**What role do you see for alumni in the college’s present and future?**
As we aim to be of service to the city, state, and nation, our alumni will be our first points of contact. Where we look to better partner with our neighbors in industry, philanthropy, education, arts, or culture, we have to start with our alumni in those areas. They will be hearing more from us in the seasons to come.

**Outside of your role as dean, what are you passionate about?**
I am passionate about social transformation and justice concerns—I want to work with others to make right the ways in which universities like ours rose to power on the backs of people who weren’t then allowed to enjoy them. Our brightest futures lie in drawing from the life-giving knowledge of peoples and traditions previously excluded or even exploited.

On a different note, coming from an art school background, I still feel a great passion for the weird and the fringe in the arts, particularly in music. I’m a big supporter of a listener-supported radio station in New Jersey called WFMU. Every few hours on WFMU, you’ll hear a different DJ who brings deep knowledge about some obscure musical niche. What excites me about WFMU is not only the sounds they bring but also the community they’ve built around the uncool and unprestigious.

**Is there anything else you want to share with our readers?**
Having lived in this town and been in this university long enough to really know our people, understand what their passions and commitments are, and work together with them—that makes this work special. It’s not just any leadership role; it’s especially meaningful for me to take a place-based approach to this work.
In 1962, Herman (BS ’12 Engineering) and Ellnora Krannert made a visionary gift to the University of Illinois: the funding to build a performing arts center unlike any other—one that is now recognized as the nation’s premier university-based center.

Krannert Center launched its two-season 50th-anniversary celebration in September 2019 with the joyful Opening Night Party bringing together over 2,000 students, faculty, staff, and community members. The season was bookended by the April 2019 Come Home Weekend, a three-day curation of events featuring a forum on the future of the performing arts in higher education that welcomed thought leaders from across campus in addition to nationally renowned peer institutions and arts organizations.

The Come Home Weekend also offered reflection and revelry through a panel discussion on the early history of the Center, a special behind-the-scenes open house, the Golden Cocktail Party fundraiser, the Krannert Center Debut Artist recital, and the Come Home Gala, which featured congratulatory remarks from university leadership, live music, memorable displays, and a special “global toast.” Along with gala attendees, well-wishers from around the world shared their greetings through social media and video, including actor Nick Offerman (BFA ’93 Theatre) and Academy Award-winning director Ang Lee (BFA ’80 Theatre).

While April 2019 marked 50 years since the Center officially opened its doors, the celebration continues through spring 2020.

A GOLDEN Opportunity

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF KRANNERT CENTER

YOUR STORIES

Over the past two years, Krannert Center has been collecting your stories. These colorful memories—budding friendships and romance, life-changing performances, connections with mentors, learning and working behind the scenes—demonstrate the deep and lasting impact of the Center on so many lives.

“I was a graduate student during construction of the Krannert Center and enjoyed the seasons of 1969 and 1970 before completing my degree. I vividly remember the performance of the Berlioz Requiem. The quiet positioning of the off-stage brass choirs had gone largely unnoticed; I think they were in the balconies at all four corners of the hall. When they all came in at the tuba mirum, it just electrified the audience! It’s a moment I remember every time I hear that piece, but it’s never been equaled for me.” – Nicholas Carrera (MS ’65, PhD ’70 ENG)

“I was a graduate student during construction of the Krannert Center and enjoyed the seasons of 1969 and 1970 before completing my degree. I vividly remember the performance of the Berlioz Requiem. The quiet positioning of the off-stage brass choirs had gone largely unnoticed; I think they were in the balconies at all four corners of the hall. When they all came in at the tuba mirum, it just electrified the audience! It’s a moment I remember every time I hear that piece, but it’s never been equaled for me.” – Nicholas Carrera (MS ’65, PhD ’70 ENG)

“Among the many highlights during my time at Krannert Center are the Valentine’s Day blizzard of 2007, which shut down the campus for two days, Yo-Yo Ma and Lyle Lovett greeting me in the hallway (I was on cloud nine), and the production of Bernstein’s Mass that celebrated the 75th anniversary of the College of Fine and Applied Arts. Stage-managing that production changed my life and turned my attention towards the integration of music and performance in show production, which eventually became my career focus. I owe so much gratitude to everyone who was a part of my life (and still is!) at Krannert Center.” – Claire Friday (MFA ’08 Theatre)


—HERMAN KRANNERT
The Krannert Center Under Construction

Designed by architect Max Abramovitz (BS ’29 Architectural Engineering), who also designed State Farm Center (Assembly Hall) and David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center, the 300,000 square-foot facility hosts more than 400 performances and events annually and is home to the School of Music and Departments of Theatre and Dance. The iconic Amphitheatre, visible through the windows here, was beautifully refinished this summer.

The Next 50

“It’s more important than ever for Krannert Center to nurture the art of gathering—to celebrate the role of the arts in bringing people together to find renewed hope and strength through the experience of music, theatre, dance, and all art forms.”

—Mike Ross, Krannert Center Director

Access to the arts is at the core of the Krannert Center dream. Since its inception in 1982, the Youth Series has welcomed more than 370,000 attendees to experience the arts at Krannert Center and at in-school performances.

The 2019–20 season is brimming with inventive commissioning projects and new works, cherished familiar faces and compelling newcomers, and innovative collaborations. Explore the season at KrannertCenter.com.

Artists left to right: Bizhiki Culture and Dance Company, Cirque FLIP Fabrique, and Sasha Velour.
BARCELONA BOUND:
STUDENT PROJECT SELECTED FOR EXHIBITION

Interview by Matthew Ehlers (BS ’18, MArch candidate ’20)

Architecture graduate students Shelby Orr and Logan Whitley have had their pavilion selected for exhibition at the 2019 International Association for Shell and Spatial Structures (IASS) Conference in Barcelona. The project was initiated in Arch 551 – Structural Analysis, under the faculty supervision of Professor Marci Uihlein. The competition, held by Working Group 21: Advanced Materials and Manufacturing, was judged by a distinguished international panel of jurists. Orr and Whitley will travel with Uihlein to Barcelona this fall for the conference and exhibition.

How did you choose your design for the competition?
Orr: Logan lived in Barcelona for a semester and was inspired by their famous ceramic used throughout the city. That sparked the idea of using ceramic in an innovative way. We went through several iterations before deciding on ceramic in tension and used the tensegrity sphere to achieve that. Logan designed the compression struts in the sphere so that the compression forces are resolved through tension.

Whitley: There is good reason why ceramics are not the first choice of any structural engineer, but the project challenges participants to innovate and try something new.

How did the design and competition research progress over the last year?
Orr: The design has not changed much, but the connections are changing a little as we have discovered that ceramic fiber is very brittle. If you tie it in a knot or pinch it, it breaks. Most of our fiber connections were knots or clamps, so we are in the process of designing new connections for those. We are also testing different materials to determine how strong they are and what is the best and lightest material to use for the compression members.

Whitley: Tensegrity structures are a bit finicky, so we have been focusing on getting the details right in order to ensure a smooth construction process.

The project is titled “Ceramic Tensegrity.” What is the reason behind this?
Orr: Ceramic is almost exclusively used in compression because it’s a strong material when it’s compressed, but under tension, it’s extremely brittle and breaks. Our idea is to use ceramic fiber in tension to hold everything together.

Whitley: New advances in ceramics research have led to the creation of high strength materials that, while not ceramic in the traditional sense, still fall under the ceramic category.

What is your goal for the competition?
Whitley: My overall goal is to develop my understanding of structures in general. The physicality of the process is extremely eye opening and has led to many light-bulb moments where I have matched a structural concept to a structural behavior that I am actually seeing.

Orr: The current goal is to finish the pavilion and get it to Barcelona. A secondary goal is to learn from the other teams there, to see their pavilions, and to learn how they solved their structural challenges.

What are some takeaways from the competition and the ARCH 551 course that will benefit you in the future?
Whitley: ARCH 551 was the deep end that I needed to be tossed into in order to grasp basic structural concepts. This competition is the deep end I am currently swimming in to help me understand the full process of construction, from sketchbook ideas to organization of manufacturing and assembling of parts.

Orr: I’m currently a structural designer, so I will be using the content of structural analysis a lot in my job. The competition was a fun way to think about innovative structures and how to solve complex problems. Structural engineering requires innovative thinking similar to the pavilion competition.

How does this project relate to your aspirations as professional architects/engineers?
Whitley: I want to work on projects that present interesting problems, and this project has had no shortage of those. The project is also helping with my overall understanding of structures.

Orr: As a structural designer, I want to create beautiful structures that inspire people. I think this project did that.
Standing at 55 Randolph Street in Chicago’s Loop, amid the bustling throng of traffic, would you know that art is underfoot?

Below street level in Chicago’s Pedway—a sprawling network of pedestrian tunnels unknown to many yet used by thousands daily—you can find the nonprofit art gallery Space p11.

David L. Hays, associate professor of Landscape Architecture, and Jonathan Solomon, associate professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), are codirectors of Space p11, which they named for its plot on a building plan. The idea for the gallery grew from their editorial collaboration on Forty-Five, an open-access journal of research undertaken outside traditional institutional or disciplinary frameworks.

Solomon suggested they translate that ethos of experimentation into a small, noncommercial gallery. Working with architects from Future Firm (Craig Reschke, a Landscape Architecture instructor at Illinois, and Ann Lui, an assistant professor at SAIC), they designed a space with eye-catching window displays and neon signage—a nod to the storefronts sprinkled throughout the Pedway.

The first exhibition was Lindsey French’s Phytovision, which included video portraits of old growth forest filmed from a phytocentric perspective, as well as live plants. Hays recalls an impromptu conversation with a passerby who stopped to see French’s work. “She asked if I had heard that trees can communicate with each other through mycelial networks, and it was funny because I had just been reading more about that,” said Hays, who happened to have related printouts of articles to share with her. It’s a fitting discussion: these intricate mycelial networks act as an underground system linking the roots of plants. Similarly, Space p11 is part of an underground system of sorts, linking people and places.

Hays sees the Pedway as a “Frankenstein” in its patchwork of spaces with disparate uses. “You walk through subway lines and then a swanky mall, go a little farther and you’re at the County Office Building and City Hall—or, in the other direction, at Macy’s and the Cultural Center,” he said. “It’s incoherent in a way that makes it fascinating.”

Within this subterranean labyrinth, the gallery has become a point of interest not just for daily commuters but also for organized Pedway tours. In addition to a rotating series of exhibitions, the space hosts artist talks, performances, and readings.

Among the artists on view this year were Art and Design faculty members Melissa Pokorny and Ryan Griffis and Landscape Architecture graduate Chris Carl (MLA ’14).

“I was really impressed with the breadth and richness of the exhibitions at Space p11, so when David asked me to show work there I jumped at the chance,” said Pokorny. “The ability to engage with an audience in this way was really compelling to me. It’s not the typical art-going or academic crowd. It’s everybody and anybody: tourists, commuters, people looking to get out of the cold. It feels like a space for reverie.”

While not an explicit requirement, most of the exhibitions explore landscape as a relationship between humans and nature. Individuals experience that work in vastly differently ways—observing and engaging in those differences is part of the experiment.

“It’s like teaching,” Hays said. “I can put something out there that I hope might be useful, but I have no idea what students are actually going to do with that information.” In one case, a passerby stopped to ask Hays about the live plants in Phytovision. She had a plant at home, was worried it was dying, and asked if she might bring it to the gallery to commune and recover with other plants; she sought advice on its care because the plant was personally significant—a memento from her mother’s funeral.

Hays values these moments of connection. “If the gallery sparks even one conversation,” he said, “that’s meaningful.”

CURBED CHICAGO NAMED SPACE P11 ONE OF “7 SMALL PROJECTS THAT HAD A BIG IMPACT IN 2018”: “IT TAKES A SPACE THAT PEOPLE USE AS AN ESCAPE OR FOR A COMMUTE AND TURNS IT INTO A PLACE WHERE REFLECTION MIGHT HAPPEN.”

Space p11 will be a partner site for the 2019 Chicago Architecture Biennial, and in spring 2020, for The Wrong, a global biennial of digital art.
Visit the lively Instagram account of Painting alumna Aleia Murawski (BFA ’11), and you’ll find vibrant imagery—pinks, yellows, and aqua colors in scenes with intricately arranged miniature everyday objects. Far from being quotidian, though, her work evokes a subversive, playful eccentricity: snails playing Twister, or a frog relaxing in a heart-shaped hot tub.

Murawski’s work in miniatures has garnered commissions that include Vogue, Nike, and music videos. Her frequent co-collaborators, Sam Copeland (BFA ’08) and Alex Wallbaum (BFA ’14), are also Art and Design alumni. Inspired by the work of other miniaturists, she said her current fixation on 70s and 80s interior design—especially the now abandoned “love hotels” made famous in the Poconos Mountains—has informed her recent work.

“I use a lot of nostalgic elements in my work to explore my own interiority as well as recreate and escape my sense of reality,” she said. Tapping into childlike imagination is important, too. “As a young person, you imagine the objects you play with as living things. There is so much pleasure in animating a scene and creating dramas within private walls of your own.”

In many cases, those unexpected guests are snails, which have become something of a signature element in her work. Her partner, Sam Copeland, found snails in his backyard in 2015 and brought them to Chicago, where they kept them as pets in a terrarium. Serendipitously, it was around the same time that she and Copeland started making miniature scenes together. “We realized the sets we were creating were roughly snail-sized, and we added them into our scenes,” she said. “We loved how the snails interacted with the objects within the sets and animated the pieces we made.”

Her Instagram presence (@aleia) has played a key role in showing her work and generating commissions. “For someone who wants to stay inside all day working on various projects, Instagram has been an incredible way for me to have a personal and fluid art practice and still stay engaged with an outside world,” she explained.

Murawski focused on painting while a student at Illinois, but in her senior year began to expand her practice. She remembers filling her Flagg Hall studio with random collected materials. “I made a couple of miniature scenes in college, including a miniature of my studio in clay. It was more of a curiosity then, and I became more invested in miniature work when I met Sam a few years ago, and we started collaborating together.”

For Murawski, becoming a full-time artist after college—without access to the same equipment or the structured environment—is a challenge worth tackling. She uses found materials, hunts at thrift stores for interesting objects, and shoots mostly with her phone. “There are so many avenues you can take, so let the limitations be a way to force you into new creative places.”

---

**Construc**

**Constructing a Career in Miniature**

**By Erin Ciciora**

Visit the lively Instagram account of Painting alumna Aleia Murawski (BFA ’11), and you'll find vibrant imagery—pinks, yellows, and aqua colors in scenes with intricately arranged miniature everyday objects. Far from being quotidian, though, her work evokes a subversive, playful eccentricity: snails playing Twister, or a frog relaxing in a heart-shaped hot tub.

Murawski’s work in miniatures has garnered commissions that include Vogue, Nike, and music videos. Her frequent co-collaborators, Sam Copeland (BFA ’08) and Alex Wallbaum (BFA ’14), are also Art and Design alumni. Inspired by the work of other miniaturists, she said her current fixation on 70s and 80s interior design—especially the now abandoned “love hotels” made famous in the Poconos Mountains—has informed her recent work.

“I use a lot of nostalgic elements in my work to explore my own interiority as well as recreate and escape my sense of reality,” she said. Tapping into childlike imagination is important, too. “As a young person, you imagine the objects you play with as living things. There is so much pleasure in animating a scene and creating dramas within private walls of your own.”

In many cases, those unexpected guests are snails, which have become something of a signature element in her work. Her partner, Sam Copeland, found snails in his backyard in 2015 and brought them to Chicago, where they kept them as pets in a terrarium. Serendipitously, it was around the same time that she and Copeland started making miniature scenes together. “We realized the sets we were creating were roughly snail-sized, and we added them into our scenes,” she said. “We loved how the snails interacted with the objects within the sets and animated the pieces we made.”

Her Instagram presence (@aleia) has played a key role in showing her work and generating commissions. “For someone who wants to stay inside all day working on various projects, Instagram has been an incredible way for me to have a personal and fluid art practice and still stay engaged with an outside world,” she explained.

Murawski focused on painting while a student at Illinois, but in her senior year began to expand her practice. She remembers filling her Flagg Hall studio with random collected materials. “I made a couple of miniature scenes in college, including a miniature of my studio in clay. It was more of a curiosity then, and I became more invested in miniature work when I met Sam a few years ago, and we started collaborating together.”

For Murawski, becoming a full-time artist after college—without access to the same equipment or the structured environment—is a challenge worth tackling. She uses found materials, hunts at thrift stores for interesting objects, and shoots mostly with her phone. “There are so many avenues you can take, so let the limitations be a way to force you into new creative places.”

---

Artist Aleia Murawski. What does she miss most from Illinois? Living in Allen Hall with all of her friends. “My parents met in Allen Hall, so it has a forever special place in my heart,” she said.
The purpose of wagashi in Japanese tea ceremony is to enhance the taste of the tea: the supporting actress to a leading lady. As with many art forms in Japanese culture, whether it is the star of the show or not, it is a pleasure to behold, a testament to the level of care and craft that goes into making the delicate sweet confection. It provides the opportunity for something extraordinary in our daily routines—something beautiful, something treasured, something more than the sum of its parts.

Professor Emeritus Kimiko Gunji, former Japan House director, recently released her first cookbook, *The Art of Wagashi*. This cookbook, like many creative pursuits, has its roots in necessity. When Gunji first came to Illinois and began teaching tea ceremony, there was only one Asian grocery store, and it sold one kind of wagashi. Gunji and her then colleague, friend, and mentor, Professor Emeritus A. Doyle Moore, regretted that their students were missing the incredible variety and deep cultural expression that is wagashi in Japan. But neither Moore nor Gunji knew how to make them. Though Moore was a gourmet cook, he had never trained in wagashi specifically. Gunji had never considered making wagashi when she lived in Japan because it is so readily available and made by highly trained chefs.

In the summer of 1987, Moore visited Japan to learn wagashi making. Because he was American, a wagashi shop (which are usually very protective of their recipes, not even allowing customers to take pictures) allowed him to learn from their chef. Moore would go back to his hotel room every night and write down everything he could remember of the day’s lessons. Upon returning to Champaign, he shared these notes with Gunji and together they worked out recipes with viable ingredients and techniques. Moore and Gunji spoke often about publishing the recipes in a book. But before they could dig into the project, Moore passed away.

After repeatedly seeing the book on her list of unfinished projects, Gunji decided to accomplish it in honor of Moore. Her first goal for the book was that it be a piece of art in itself. She lamented the fact that even though there were wagashi cookbooks, there were very few in English, and even fewer whose aesthetic matched the beauty of the traditional sweets.

“It is said in Japan that you should eat wagashi with your eyes first,” Gunji said, “then your ears when you hear its poetic name, then your touch when you hold it, and finally with your mouth when you taste it. The person I could think of who would be able to understand my aesthetic, and be able to produce it the way I could see it in my mind, was my daughter, Jennifer Gunji-Ballsrud (current director of Japan House and Graphic Design alumna, ’94 and ’01).” Gunji and her daughter decided to complete the project in honor of Moore as a gift to Japan House, with all proceeds donated to support its programming.

Now that the book is complete, Gunji hopes that people who have never tried to make wagashi will have an easier time in their first attempts than she did all of those decades ago. She hopes that those who are already familiar with the art form will discover something new and that it will serve as a useful and educational tool for the interns at Japan House. But most of all, she hopes that in reading through the recipes, whether you try one or not, you will come away with the awareness that simple and ordinary ingredients mixed with patience, practice, and care can create something extraordinary.

*The Art of Wagashi* is available for purchase at [japanhouse.illinois.edu/shop](http://japanhouse.illinois.edu/shop).
With each season, Illinois Theatre reaches further to explore artistic expression and technical advances while engaging audiences with performances that delight, inspire, and challenge. Their production of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Simon Stephens, which was presented in March, is another example of their efforts to create theatre that can be experienced by all.

Adapted from Mark Haddon’s award-winning novel of the same name, the play follows Christopher Boone, a 15-year-old on the autism spectrum, as he explores the meanings of family and forgiveness while investigating the death of his neighbor’s dog. As the play is told through Christopher’s eyes, the company worked with The Autism Project to tell the story in a way that is truthful to families who experience life with autism spectrum disorder.

Beyond their work to represent autism accurately on the stage, Illinois Theatre offered a special sensory-friendly performance of the play for adult and young adult audience members (and their families) who are on the autism spectrum or who otherwise need a less intense sensory experience. “Opening the arts to all audiences is something really important in the community, and this is a great first step for Illinois Theatre,” said Kenzie Sinta (BFA ’20), student dramaturg. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* is a heavily technical production with many effects, and so the cast and crew worked closely with community partners including CU Able, CU Special Recreation, life skills classes at area high schools, and the CU Autism Network to test and modify the lighting, sound, and media designs to create a safe and welcoming experience.

The relaxed, sensory-friendly environment also accommodated those who have other chronic issues, may not be able to sit for long periods of time, or simply enjoy a more casual performance experience. “Social Story” booklets were created and distributed in advance to help audience members know what to expect during their visit to Krannert Center for the Performing Arts and during the play itself. Audiences were invited to bring comfort items (fidget toys, blankets, etc.) with them and to use a “safe space” area outside of the theatre as needed, where a live video feed of the performance was displayed.

Sinta shared that this was a great experience and a first for many students, staff, and faculty involved in the production. “This is where art is going, and it was really important for us to learn as a whole.”
Dancing 50: Moving Forward/Looking Back was a yearlong celebration of the 50th anniversary of Dance becoming an autonomous department. Alumni from across the country returned to participate in special mash-up projects, performing and co-choreographing with faculty to create new works that were performed in November Dance, February Dance, and Studiodance I.

Some pieces were reprised from the past but refreshed in new ways. Department Head and Professor Jan Erkert reconstructed Antigamente, a dance she choreographed 30 years ago for Juli Hallihan-Campbell (BFA '84, MFA '92). For November Dance, Erkert reset the dance as a duet rather than a solo.

Professor Sara Hook brought back alumni Betsy Brandt (MFA '12), Randi Townsend (BFA '17), Kendra Portier (MFA '18), and Chloe Nagle (MFA '18) to continue explorations of her work, Janes, a title that refers to "all the famous Janes and the forgotten Jane Does," and an evocation of feminism and inclusivity.

Professor Tere O'Connor set the duet Double Flower Possibility on Nico Brown (BFA '10 Theatre, MFA '14 Dance) and Charles Gowin (BFA '15) as a fresh take on a work he originally created in 1989 for a benefit gala for ACT UP (the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power).

Another duet, created and performed by Professor Jennifer Monson and nibia pastrana santiago (MFA '12), was part of their ongoing Choreographies of Disaster dance project. The project, a collaboration that also includes Puerto Rican choreographers Javier Cardona and Alejandra Martorell, uses choreography as a research method for understanding disaster.

Professor Linda Lehovec co-choreographed In Conversation with alumna Paige Cunningham (MFA '07). The piece has many duets that draw on their physical likeness and their shared backgrounds, exploring the give and take, coming and goings of pairs.

Several new works explored and celebrated Black culture and identities. Professor Cynthia Oliver explored Afrofuturism—superheroes, Black iconography, and imagining new possibilities for the future—in her work Tether. Three alumni, Leslie Cuyjet (BFA '04), Jessica pretty (MFA '16), and Angie Pittman (MFA '15), joined her in collaboration with current students.

Inspired by the music and lyrics of Stevie Wonder, Professor C. Kemal Nance’s I Wonder... celebrated the culture of Black men. Nance performed it with three alumni—Grant Hill (BFA '18), James Washington (BFA '18), and Raheim White (BFA '11)—and current students.

Dance Professor Endalyn Taylor co-choreographed Kuendom of the Shade with Raheim White (BFA '11). Both performed in the piece, which they described as embodying "all creative expressions and genders while particularly celebrating the Black Femme."

Some new work came together through longtime friends and collaborators. Professor Rebecca Nettl-Fiol (BFA '75) and alumna Melanie Bales (MFA '83) co-choreographed Picked Up Pieces, which blended threads of work and experiences they’ve shared during their 30-year friendship. Other new work, like Momar Ndiaye’s (MFA '17) sous la peau d’un autre, reversed the student-teacher role: he created for Professor Abigail Zbikowski.

In all, the mash-up series involved 23 alumni as choreographers and performers, while more than 100 alumni returned to share their research, teaching, and dancing over the 50th Alumni Weekend celebration. Alumna Renée Archibald (MFA '13) said of her return, “I was overwhelmed by the amount of joy and support bubbling in and around the department. Students were beaming ear to ear at each other, and their cells seemed open like sponges.”
CELEBRATE!

First row: Toasting Krannert Center’s 50 years at the Come Home Gala; Shonen Knife performs at Japan House’s special 20th-anniversary Matsuri event. Second row: Large-scale calligraphy by Japanese calligrapher Seiran Chiba, created during a performance of Ho Etsu Taiko at Matsuri; Urban and Regional Planning graduates. Third row: Victor Orozco (MArch and MS Civil Engineering) celebrates at commencement (Photo by Fred Zwicky, Public Affairs); Chancellor Jones and Marching Illini member Sohum Nagi show their best alma poses (Photo by Fred Zwicky, Public Affairs).
First row: Distinguished FAA alumni honored at the inaugural Legacy Awards ceremony (Photo by Justine Bursoni); Guitarist AJ Ghent performs at Krannert Center’s 2018 Opening Night Party (Photo by L. Brian Stauffer). Second row: Art and Design’s class of 2020. Third row: A Theatre student’s adorned graduation cap (Photo by Darrell Hoemann); Professor Jeffery Poss and Vicky Stropus (MArch) (Photo by Fred Zwicky, Public Affairs); the Marching Illini—which celebrated 150 years—perform in Chicago for Illini Days. Fourth row: Dance alumni join together in joyful movement during the department’s 50th-anniversary reunion weekend.
Professor Emeritus Lew Hopkins remembers that when the PhD program in Urban and Regional Planning launched in 1983, the department’s research was largely funded by external grants and contracts. While these funding sources were vital, research areas outside of the funders’ interests remained unsupported.

Hopkins, who served as department head for 13 years, started a fellowship to increase the breadth and accessibility of the PhD program. He and his wife, Susan, donated property to the university and then leveraged alumni contributions and a provost match to create the Lewis D. and Susan C. Hopkins Fellowship. Today, his fellowship and others like it are fueling vital graduate research that will make an impact on communities around the world.

Shruti Syal, who completed her PhD in spring 2019, was supported by the Hopkins Fellowship for three semesters. Her dissertation on stormwater pollution in India’s formal settlements focuses on how regulatory agencies can deepen resident engagement in planning.

Syal said it can be challenging to find outside funding when your field is inherently interdisciplinary. “You can try to target environmental funding, or science and STEM funding, or social sciences funding, but planning really is a mix of these disciplines,” she explained.

Another such fund, named after and initially awarded to Professor Emeritus Tschangho John Kim, was established by an anonymous donor to support a faculty position and their research. Professor Andrew Greenlee is currently finishing his three-year term as Kim Scholar. “Doctoral education is a kind of apprenticeship,” said Greenlee. “The type of support I’ve received through the Kim Fund allows me more time to foster that relationship with my PhD students.”

Greenlee’s research considers how neighborhoods affect the well-being of low-income subsidized households. “The Kim funds have allowed me the time and resources to develop key connections with policymakers and officials in the federal government,” he said, pointing to the unique access he’s been granted to US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) data. Natalie Prochaska and Sowmya Balachandran, both third-year PhD students, have benefited, too. Prochaska’s access to the HUD information as well as other data sets has been key in her research of the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) requirement.

Prochaska and Greenlee established a local intergovernmental collaboration to prepare an assessment of fair housing and developed a coordinated plan among city governments in Champaign County and regional housing authorities. “My role in this would not have happened without Andrew’s support or the financial support from the Kim funds,” said Prochaska. Balachandran is working with Greenlee to review opportunity maps from across the country, critically assessing the structure, content, and process by which the maps were prepared, as well as how they influence local policy and action. They are preparing a paper that offers a plan analysis framework.

“The next step is to take that critique and see how we would do it differently,” said Balachandran. “We took the Chicago metropolitan region and prepared a new kind of opportunity map.” Using additional sources such as public school data and the EPA’s Toxic Resource Inventory, they geared their work towards spatial justice for low-income households.

The Andrew Mark Isserman Fellowship Fund was established through the estate of Professor Andrew Isserman after his death, as well as through additional generous contributions by his wife, Ellen Jacobson-Isserman, and family. This year, graduate students Ati Ashtari and Tanvir Hossain will receive support from the Isserman Fund.

Ashtari’s research looks at women’s contributions to family and society in her home country, Iran. “My research could facilitate spaces of reflection through community-based organizations for much-needed solidarities among women of my country who are fierce in their contributions yet are deliberately unheard, silenced, and made invisible,” Ashtari explained. “This fellowship will alleviate some of the financial pressures that slows the process of my research. This will provide me with more time, opportunity, and space to devote to it.”

For Lew Hopkins, these fellowships are more than financial support—they also foster valuable faculty-student mentoring and an intergenerational connection. “I see it as supporting the whole program,” he said, “as a sort of historical link and a continuing legacy.”
As one of the most formidable cultural movements in recent decades, it’s hard to ignore the global impact of hip-hop. Hip-hop connects people through the expression of shared experiences within communities, and it’s this powerful expression and connection that has led to the rise of hip-hop in the School of Music curriculum and public engagement. Now a collaborative ecosystem of hip-hop educators, students, and performers is reimagining music education classrooms as centers for community building and youth empowerment.

The work of Adam Kruse, assistant professor of Music Education, has galvanized this change. Urbana High School choir teacher Becky Park (BA ’08), who was a student of Kruse’s, was among the first to collaborate with him. Inspired to explore activities that fostered greater agency and expression in her choral classes, she had students create mash-ups of songs such as Wiz Khalifa’s “See You Again” and Adele’s “When We Were Young,” which they arranged and performed for their graduation ceremony.

“Allowing students to choose and arrange their own mash-ups represents their own voices and experiences,” Park said. “Hip-hop is what the kids are listening to. It’s a real form of expression—what’s happening in the real world today. It says what needs to be said, and kids want to talk about these issues.” Local artists such as DeAngelo “Black Mage” Brown and Jarrel Young also work with local schools, further strengthening the community-centered focus.

Hip-hop programming continues to grow beyond the School of Music. Professor Lamont Holden (BA ’04 LAS) presented beat-making workshops at the inaugural Remixing General Music Workshop organized by Vince Genualdi (BME ’13, MME ’18), as well as the Illinois Music Educators Conference. Holden hosted a series of sample flip competitions as part of his Popular Music Production class in partnership with istandard producers, Tracklib, Serato, and Curtiss King.

Collaborating with industry professionals is an integral part of the community-building process, Holden said. “Music educators need to learn how to teach digital audio workstations as a means of connecting with the lived experience and culture of students. Most urban artists rise from a community of other supportive artists. I want to close the circle by providing a path to becoming a commercial musician and by teaching music technology, the Xpress will connect communities and classrooms across the state. The current project builds upon previous versions of the Xpress, modeled after George Washington Carver’s Jesup Wagon, a sort of “movable school.” The bus is expected to launch this coming school year.

Educators often use the phrase “meet students where they’re at” to express a desire to foster welcoming learning environments. Projects like the Hip-Hop Xpress take the phrase literally, meeting students where they live, supporting the needs of some of the most vulnerable young community members.

As Professor Holden reminds us, “it’s not about the bus, it’s about where the bus is going.”

For more information on the Hip-Hop Xpress, visit publish.illinois.edu/hiphopxpress. For more information on ISYM Hip-Hop, visit isym.music.illinois.edu/programs/hip-hop.php.
CAMPUS AS CANVAS: CURATING THE PERFORMANCE ART OF AUTUMN KNIGHT

Amy L. Powell, curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at Krannert Art Museum (KAM), sat down to discuss the performance art of Autumn Knight and In Rehearsal, a new book documenting Knight’s 2017 KAM exhibition. Powell edited and contributed to the book, published by KAM and Project Row Houses, Houston.

Drawing from her training in psychology and theatre, Knight gathers Black women at the center of her work—whether herself as performer-facilitator or members of the networks she makes around her—to enact absurd situations and offer new ways of thinking and feeling.

Knight’s performances were staged in diverse locations on campus. El Diablo y Cristo Negro, a comedic dialogue between the devil and Black Christ, and Here and Now, a conversation using elements of psychology and theatre to explore group dynamics, were performed at the museum. During An Experimental Freezing of a Room through Metaphorical Means, set at the Activities and Recreation Center (ARC) outdoor pool, Knight moved around and inside the pool, sometimes portraying a figure of Black motherhood against the soundtrack of court-sanctioned violence against Black people. Lament, a dance interpretation of addiction, class, and mental illness was staged at the U of I Stock Pavilion.

What are some of the unique challenges and opportunities in curating performance art?
Performance art communicates context and emotion through a medium that’s ephemeral—it’s very much about being in the room to experience the artist’s work. Like painting, film, and sculpture, performance is an active transmission between the artist, artwork, and audience, but it has a live quality that makes it unique. It also requires the museum and its staff to accommodate things that we’re not necessarily used to accommodating.

For Knight’s performances set outside the museum, did she come to you with specific locations in mind, or did you work together to make those choices?
An Experimental Freezing of a Room didn’t necessarily require a pool, but it did require water and ice. Of course, we can’t have water and ice in the galleries. Instead of seeing that as a challenge, we took the campus as our canvas. After considering locations like classrooms or the ice rink, we decided on the pool at the ARC.

Lament needed water from hoses overhead, a solo dancer, and a specific soundtrack. The Stock Pavilion was one place among many that we scouted on campus. Autumn loved the site for many reasons, including its large scale and connection to the university and farming, which lent new elements to the performance.

Once locations were chosen, how did you and the team at KAM collaborate with Knight to bring her work to life?
Autumn came for several site visits, where we met with installation staff, faculty and student collaborators, and facilities managers. For An Experimental Freezing of a Room, Walter Wilson and his team of students constructed...
an apparatus that Autumn needed for the pool performance. It’s not something we do on a regular basis—constructing an object for a pool and then swimming out and installing it. It’s a real testament to the design and installation team here at KAM.

How does the setting play into the performance? With An Experimental Freezing of a Room, audience members sat on deck chairs. It’s a space of leisure and relaxation, but you’re watching something very intense and hearing a soundtrack focused on cases of racialized and gendered violence. Because of the architecture at the ARC, people walking by and working out could see it and hear the soundtrack disrupting their everyday routines.

Autumn first performed this work one week after George Zimmerman’s acquittal in Florida for the murder of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed Black teenager. She had already planned the performance, but then in 2013 the acquittal happened and that became the soundtrack. So she mapped a chilling texture and her movement onto current events. It’s an endurance piece: at the ARC she’s dipping her head under the water multiple times, she’s underneath the ice, she’s moving around the pool. We’re watching her do these things, but because of the sounds and the setting, we’re all implicated.

In Lament, the audio is Angela Davis speaking about Black women and institutions and survivability, and the performer is a dancer in a colorful flowing dress and mismatched thrift store garments, whose movements are both smooth and jerky. The choreography, which Autumn worked on with Rebecca A. Ferrell in Dance, was initially inspired by a woman Autumn saw in Houston’s Third Ward who was strung out on heroin and made jerky movements down the street. In the piece, the woman is never able to thrive as solely elegant—she’s always being pulled back. In the Stock Pavilion setting, the performance was strange and beautiful.

As editor of In Rehearsal, what guided your decision-making on materials to include? How does the book add to or alter the original performances? That is one of the main questions in performance art: is photo or video documentation also an artwork? And how do people who weren’t present at the performance experience it? As an artwork in itself, documentation does offer some of that live quality. In fact, we produced three videos based on Autumn’s performances at KAM—as a result, those can be used as works of art.

We intended the book to contribute to scholarship on women of color performance. It was important to include curator Ryan Dennis on Autumn’s work in Houston, Sandra Ruiz about pedagogy and the works’ transformational implications, Jennifer Doyle on Black women and institutions, and Autumn in conversation with Dance Professor Cynthia Oliver. The book is a document that contributes to many intersecting conversations and introduces wide audiences to Autumn Knight’s work.

What do you see as the value in bringing performance art like Knight’s to audiences at KAM? What has her work added to the form? There is a long history of live performance not just at KAM but at the University of Illinois.

Our work with Autumn becomes part of complex traditions, going back to experimental music, and John Cage and Lejaren Hiller’s happenings here in the 1960s (e.g., Cage’s Musicircus in the Stock Pavilion and HPSCHD in the Assembly Hall). More recently, a program called OPEN STUDIO, organized by Tumelo Mosaka and former museum director Kathleen Harleman, twice brought in Illinois Dance faculty—including Oliver, Tere O’Connor, and Jennifer Monson—to stage performances at KAM. And just last fall, Sandra Ruiz, faculty in the Departments of Latina/Latino Studies and English, brought Erica Gressman, a Latinx queer artist from Chicago, to perform new work at KAM.

There’s a long-held spirit here of interdisciplinarity and people working together across the arts. Autumn’s work participates in and adds to these histories. At the same time, it encourages us to think critically about the issues embodied in her performances—the roles of Black women in our institutional landscape and imaginaries.

The book Autumn Knight: In Rehearsal is available at go.illinois.edu/knight.

GIVING

IMPACT OF GIVING
THANK YOU to our generous donors! Your generosity is so important to the sustainability and support of our talented students, faculty, and innovative programs.

Because of you, this year we created

8 NEW STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS
20 NEW ENDOWMENTS
3 NEW ENDOWED CHAIRS

Scholarships are so important for recruiting and retaining great student talent. Every student’s story is different, but the financial gap in paying for college continues to grow. One donor can make a life-changing impact on a student!

Endowments allow us to set aside funds for today while providing a reliable source of income in perpetuity. The invested pool of money pays out a small percent from the generated income for specific needs the donor and college have determined as most impactful. Endowments can grow over time and through additional gifts from multiple donors.

An endowed chair and an endowed professorship reflect the highest honors the university can bestow upon a faculty member and are celebrated in an investiture ceremony. These positions are permanently paid for with the revenue from the endowment funds specifically established for that purpose.

MITCHELL INVESTITURE
Professor D. Fairchild Ruggles was invested as the first Debra L. Mitchell Chair in Landscape Architecture. Ruggles is the world’s foremost expert in the history of Islamic landscapes and is an affiliate faculty member in the School of Architecture, the Medieval Studies program, the Department of Gender and Women’s Studies, and the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. Ruggles is also currently serving as interim department head for Landscape Architecture. The chair is named after Debra L. Mitchell (MLA ’75), who was a longtime leader at SmithGroupJJR, an ASLA Fellow (1992), ASLA President (1992–93), and an active board member of the Landscape Architecture Foundation, for which she also served as president (2000–01).

ZIMMERMAN INVESTITURE
In February, Professor Janet Revell Barrett was invested as the Marilyn Pflederer Zimmerman Endowed Chair in Music Education. Barrett has published widely in music education, was past chair of the Society for Music Teacher Education, and was editor of the Bulletin for the Council of Research in Music Education. The chair is named after alumna Marilyn Pflederer Zimmerman (MS ’55 and EdD ’63, Music Education), who was widely regarded as one of the most influential scholars to contribute to the field of music education.

BANDS MARCH FORTH TO GIVING DAY SUCCESS
The university held its first ever one-day giving day dedicated to the Marching Illini on March 4, 2019. During that 24-hour period, more than 200 donors came together to raise $18,300. These dollars directly support band members, instruments and resources, and travel expenses. Thanks to everyone who gave, and watch for another March Forth event in 2020!

ISSA GIFT OF $1M TO SUPPORT DANCE, MUSIC
Motivated by a passion for the arts, Dr. Ahmad (BS ’62, MS ’63, PhD ’67 BUS) and Dulce Issa have established new endowed scholarships for talented dance and music students totaling $1 million—the largest gift received in the history of the dance department. Ahmad fondly remembers the support he received from former finance department chair, Paul Van Arsdell, while he was a student; the professor was instrumental in encouraging him to continue in the PhD program with tuition scholarships and fellowships.

“Professor Van Arsdell’s unwavering support, generosity, and encouragement opened an un-dreamed of academic career and professional future,” he said.
IVER NELSON ESTATE GIFT TO KAM

Longtime donor Iver M. Nelson, Jr. (BS ’51, JD ’53 LAW) has made significant gifts of art to Krannert Art Museum’s collection over the years and established the Iver M. Nelson, Jr. Art Acquisition and Conservation Fund, which enables KAM’s curatorial team to select and purchase works for the collection. He recently established an estate gift that will greatly enhance his fund and benefit KAM well into the future. Nelson is a trusted friend and consultant to KAM who focuses on works by American artists from 1912 to 1970, expressionist and surrealist art, works from the Vienna Succession period, as well as Chinese ceramics and bronzes, Japanese prints, and antique English or Irish silver, and old Sheffield plate. Krannert Art Museum donor and art collector Iver M. Nelson, Jr. at home in Chicago, 2018.

ACQUIRED TASTE EVENT NETS NEW WORKS

This May’s inaugural Acquired Taste Celebration was a rousing success. Through the combined efforts of 117 guests, Krannert Art Museum Council raised more than $24,000 toward the acquisition of important works of art. A set of eight linocut prints by 20th-century American artist Hale Woodruff put forward by Kathryn Koca Polite received the highest number of votes. The event also raised enough to acquire two Chinese ceramics, two objects by contemporary First Nations artist Sonny Assu, and a carved staff from the Swahili coast. All six objects will be accessioned into the KAM collection, and several of them are already on view. A guest views artwork by Hale Woodruff proposed for acquisition at the Acquired Taste Celebration at Krannert Art Museum, May 18, 2019. Photo by Della Perrone.

FAMILY AND MENTORS AT THE HEART OF JAPAN HOUSE ANNEX

Strong family and mentor relationships have laid the foundation for Japan House’s forthcoming annex project. Dr. George Ogura (pictured left), a loyal Japan House supporter who recently died at age 100, made a $1 million outright lead gift for an addition to this treasured campus jewel.

Professor Emeritus Shozo Sato, founder of Japan House, and his wife, Alice, also generously contributed. Shozo and Alice, who is Ogura’s sister, recently matched George’s lead gift in addition to their original donation, a charitable gift annuity established with the proceeds from the sale of the Ogura family home in Denver, Colorado, which will eventually support maintenance of the addition. In honor of these families’ strong ties to Japan House, the new wing will be named the Ogura-Sato Japan House Annex.

Actor and comedian Nick Offerman (BFA ’93 Theatre), who enrolled in classes taught by Professor Sato while a theatre student at Illinois, has remained close with his sensei and continues a valued friendship with Japan House. Offerman’s contribution to the annex, which includes all proceeds from his two recent performances in Champaign-Urbana, helped make the project a reality.

The 5,600-square-foot addition will provide much-needed meeting and library space for Japan House interns, calligraphy classes, offices, and storage space for growing collections. The addition will also offer improved accessibility for visitors with physical disabilities, supporting greater inclusion in tea ceremonies and other cultural activities. A groundbreaking is expected within the next year.

WHETHER THROUGH GIFTS OF TIME, ADVOCACY, OR MONETARY CONTRIBUTIONS, WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT. EVERY GIFT MAKES A TANGIBLE DIFFERENCE. GIVE ONLINE TODAY AT FAA.ILLINOIS.EDU/GIVING.

You may also call 217.333.1661 or email faa-advancement@illinois.edu.
ALUMNI ACCOLADES

Architect and founder of Studio Gang, Jeanne Gang (BSAS ’86) was named one of TIME’s 100 most influential people of 2019 in the category of “Titans.” Award-winning actress and playwright Anna Deavere Smith penned the entry, writing: “For Jeanne, architecture is not just a wondrous object. It’s a catalyst for change.” Additionally, a Studio Gang-led team, Studio ORD, won the international competition to design the first global alliance terminal in the United States at Chicago’s O’Hare Airport.

Carol Ross Barney (BArch ’71) received the School of Architecture’s Illinois Medal in May at the Annual Architecture Awards banquet. The Illinois Medal is the highest honor the school bestows upon alumni. Ross Barney has been a leader of the profession since the 70s. She was a founding member of Chicago Women in Architecture and received the Thomas Jefferson Award from the AIA for her distinguished portfolio of public buildings.

Abstract painter Louise Fishman (MFA ‘65) received Art and Design’s Distinguished Alumni Award in April. While she first gained national attention for her hand-sewn textile works, Fishman would go on to grapple with themes from nature and post-Holocaust Europe, calligraphic marks from Hebrew characters, and Chinese and Japanese calligraphy, reflecting her study of Buddhism. Krannert Art Museum (KAM) recently acquired Fishman’s 1995 large-scale “Blonde Ambition,” a seven feet tall and five feet long painting that was inspired by Madonna’s tour of the same name. The work was shown in a spring exhibition of large-scale 20th-century paintings. KAM is planning a retrospective of Fishman’s works on paper in 2021.


Jeanne Gang Lauded in Time

Carol Ross Barney Receives Illinois Medal

Louise Fishman Honored by Art & Design

18
Susan Jacobson (BLA ’78) was the 2019 recipient of the Alumni Medal from the Department of Landscape Architecture. The medal, which recognizes outstanding service to the department and the discipline of landscape architecture, was awarded to her at Sasaki Day in May. Jacobson is currently manager of planning and site design at the Morton Arboretum in Chicago. Prior to the arboretum, she founded and ran Bartells/Jacobson Design, a landscape architectural firm, and also served as president of the American Society of Landscape Architects in 2003–04.

JJ Smith (BSAS ’02) was named among Crain’s Chicago Business “40 Under 40.” In 2007, he was instrumental in creating a 24-story student resident building in Champaign. As the development’s project manager, Smith began a mentoring relationship that evolved a small student housing business into a real estate firm. Today, he serves as president of CA Student Living and principal of CA Ventures.

Hiba Bhatti (BSAS ’11) has been named to Crain’s “20 in their 20s.” Growing up with a brother who has cerebral palsy, she said, “I’ve seen firsthand how architecture can be enabling or non-accessible and kind of demeaning.” As an architect she works to create spaces that suit clients’ needs. This multitalented alumna also serves as a mentor, performs improv comedy around Chicago, and has a YouTube channel.

Sheila C. Johnson (BME ’70 Music) received a 2019 Order of Lincoln Award in Springfield on May 18. The Order of Lincoln is the highest honor bestowed by the state, recognizing distinguished Illinoisans whose leadership and achievements demonstrate the “spirit of Lincoln.” Johnson is CEO of Salamander Hotel and Resorts, which recently earned a coveted Five-Star rating from Forbes Travel Guide. Photo by David Blanchette © The Lincoln Academy of Illinois 2019. TheLincolnAcademy.org.

Landscaping Architecture Alumni Medal

Sheila C. Johnson receives Lincoln Laureate Award

FAA strong in Awards Season

Donald Nally (DMA ’95 Music) was honored with his second Grammy win for Best Choral Performance. Nally was the conductor for Lansing McCluskey: Zealot Canticles performed by The Crossing.

Alumna Colleen Daniel (BFA ’09 Theatre) worked on the special effects team for First Man, winner of this year’s Oscar for Best Visual Effects. First Man detailed the life of astronaut Neil Armstrong.

Composer Ellen Reid was awarded the 2019 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her new opera pr i s m, created with librettist Roxie Perkins. Lyric Theatre @ Illinois, in conjunction with Krannert Center, hosted Reid, Perkins, director James Darrah, and producer Beth Morrison for a workshop of pr i s m in April 2018. Under the guidance of Lyric Theatre codirector Julie Gunn, students in the Opera Scenes class worked on the piece with the pr i s m team. The professional artists also engaged songwriting students from the School of Music.

The Legacy Awards

In September 2018 the college celebrated its first class of Legacy Award recipients—alumni and friends who have demonstrated courage, curiosity, and extraordinary dedication in their work. It was an evening of gratitude and joy reflecting on the transformative power of the arts to change lives. Congratulations to our inaugural class of honorees: James Bier (MS ’57 LAS), Altaf Engineer (MArch ’05, PhD ’15 Architecture), Juan Salgado (MUP ’93 Urban and Regional Planning), Anton (Tony) Majeri Jr. (BFA ’67 Art and Design), Alexander Murray, Joan Murray, Michelle Boulé (BFA ’99 Dance), and Deborah Briggs (MS ’81 Music). Photos by Justine Bursoni.
FAA IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Leo Segedin Exhibition
Art and Design celebrated the life’s work of Painting alumnus Leo Segedin (BFA ‘49, MFA ‘50) with an exhibition: Leo Segedin’s Chicago: Games, Trains, and Planes. The work, which spanned more than eight decades, showcased Segedin’s propensity for capturing life’s moments and memories with incredible skill, grace, and feeling. In a closing reception, Segedin signed copies of his recently published book Leopold Segedin: A Habit of Art. Photo by Dora Segedin.

Art of the Matter Live
FAA put on its first “Art of the Matter Live” event in Chicago in March. At a lively gathering in Sunda New Asian Restaurant, alumni speakers brought to life their current arts-related passions. Speakers were Cody Chen (MFA ’11 Theatre), Lisa De Angelis (BME ’06 Music), Nick Brown (BS ’09, MArch ’11 Architecture), Tony Fiorentino (BFA ’02 Theatre, JD ’14 Law), Marie Tristan (BFA ’00 Art and Design), Adria Dawn (BFA ’96 Theatre, pictured above), John Maclay (MFA ’98 Theatre), and Siebel Center for Design Director Rachel Switzky (BFA ’93, MFA ’98 Art and Design). Sunda CEO and Illinois alumnus Billy Dec was in attendance to kick off the evening.

ELLNORA to Kick Off 50th Season
Krannert Center’s 50th season will kick off with the eighth biennial ELLNORA | The Guitar Festival from Thursday, September 5, to Saturday, September 7. The festival features “a prodigious array of the world’s most distinctive and influential guitarists” from around the globe (Premier Guitar). 2019 ELLNORA artists hail from Madagascar, Niger, Korea, Gambia, France, Bosnia, China, Brazil, Germany, and throughout the United States, representing diverse musical genres, instrumental traditions, and playing styles.

Art Festival Symposia
Over the spring semester, the college hosted a series of symposia and events designed to highlight and enhance research throughout the organization. The series was titled FAA Research: Festival of Arts, Design, and Planning, a reference to the Festival of Contemporary Arts that was a memorable part of college culture in the mid-twentieth century.

The festival brought together thought leaders and colleagues from across campus and peer institutions. Events included Resilient Urban Futures (February 2019), In Conversation: Text and Making (March 2019), Forum on the Future of Performing Arts in Higher Education (April 2019), and Methodologies (April 2019).

Stacey Robinson Receives Harvard Fellowship
Graphic Design Assistant Professor Stacey Robinson will receive a Nas Fellowship at the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research at Harvard University for the 2019–20 academic year. The fellowship, named in honor of rap artist Nas, funds scholars and artists who demonstrate exceptional scholarship and creativity in the arts in connection with hip-hop.

DURP in Colorado
Urban and Regional Planning Department Head Rolf Pendall was a panelist at Affordable Housing: Building Opportunity into Colorado Communities, presented by the APA Colorado Chapter at The Alliance Center in March. While in Denver, the department gathered with alumni for a reception.

DesignIllinois Career Fair
The Graphic Design and Industrial Design programs combined to host collective career fairs at the Haworth and Herman Miller Showrooms in Chicago in February. The event was a great success, thanks to the large number of alumni and firms who participated. Photo by Nathan Keay.

Women’s Reunion and Symposium
The School of Architecture will be holding a Women’s Reunion and Symposium September 26–28, 2019. This two-day event will examine, celebrate, and recognize our community of more than 2,000 alumnae around the world. Additionally, during the reunion there will be an exhibit featuring the work and stories of our alumnae at the Krannert Art Museum. Contact organizers Marci Uihlein and Sara Bartumeus at arch-women@illinois.edu, or visit arch.illinois.edu/arch-womens-symposium for more information and registration.
School of Music Director Announced

Dr. Jeffrey Sposato began as the next director of the School of Music, effective August 16, 2019. Jeff most recently was associate director of the Moores School of Music at the University of Houston, where he has served on the musicology faculty since 2007. His previous leadership roles include service as Director of Graduate Studies at the Moores School and as head of the music program at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg.

IN MEMORIAM

CESAR PELLI

Renowned architect and Illinois alumnus Cesar Pelli (MArch ‘54) died in July at age 92. Pelli was born October 12, 1926, in Tucumán, Argentina. He attended the Universidad Nacional de Tucumán and then in 1952 enrolled at the University of Illinois School of Architecture.

After his graduation from Illinois, Pelli worked for celebrated architect Eero Saarinen in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, for ten years. While with Saarinen, he worked on the TWA terminal at John F. Kennedy International Airport and the Morse and Stiles Colleges at Yale University.

In 1968 Pelli became partner for design at Gruen Associates in Los Angeles, where he designed the landmark first building at the Pacific Design Center in West Hollywood, California.

In 1977, Pelli was selected to be the dean of the Yale School of Architecture in New Haven, Connecticut. Shortly after Pelli arrived at Yale, he won the commission to design the expansion and renovation of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which resulted in the establishment of his own firm, Cesar Pelli & Associates. Under that firm, he completed the World Financial Center in New York, which includes the grand public space of the Winter Garden. The Petronas Towers were completed in 1997, sheathed in stainless steel and reflecting Islamic design motifs. The dual towers were the world’s tallest buildings until 2004 and earned Pelli the Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

Pelli was named one of the 10 most influential living American Architects by the American Institute of Architects in 1991. In 1995, he was awarded the American Institute of Architects Gold Medal.

In 2008, while completing work on the Business Instructional Facility at the University of Illinois, Pelli was awarded the Illinois Medal by the School of Architecture, the highest honor that the school can bestow upon alumni for excellence in Architecture.

CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN

Groundbreaking painter and performance artist Carolee Schneemann (MFA ‘62 Art and Design) died in March 2019 at age 79. Throughout her career, Schneemann used her body to examine the role of female sensuality in connection to the possibilities of political and personal liberation from predominantly oppressive social and aesthetic conventions. Drawing on the expressive possibilities of film, performance, photography, and installation, among other media, she explored themes of generation and goddess imagery, sexuality, and everyday erotics, as well as personal biography and loss. Although renowned for her work in performance and other media, Schneemann began her career as a painter, stating, “I’m a painter. I’m still a painter, and I will die a painter. Everything that I have developed has to do with extending visual principles off the canvas.” She has been acknowledged by many as progenitor of feminist art, as well as performance and multimedia art. Schneemann was a 2011 recipient of the School of Art and Design’s distinguished alumni award. Bio courtesy theartstory.org. Photo: © 2017 Carolee Schneemann. Courtesy the artist, P.P.O.W, and Galerie Lelong, New York. Photos: Erró. http://www.moma.org.

Sousa Event in Chicago

In early June, FAA cohosted an event in Chicago with the University Library and Spurlock Museum. Scott Schwartz of the Sousa Archives and Center for American Music, and Barry Houser, director of the Marching Illini, shared how John Philip Sousa and the University of Illinois became catalysts for the creation of university and school bands across the country. The presentation featured preserved materials, instruments, and performances from the late 19th century to the present, featuring historic instruments.

Robin McFarquhar Retirement

On April 12, alumni, colleagues, and friends gathered to celebrate the career of Professor Emeritus Robin McFarquhar. Tributes to Robin were shared by FAA Dean Hamilton, Professor JW Morrissette, and numerous other former students and colleagues. Songs and videos—and fittingly, a sword fight—were shared in honor of McFarquhar’s 35 years of distinguished service to Illinois Theatre. Photo by Darrell Hoemann.
Office of Advancement
210B Architecture Building, MC-622
608 East Lorado Taft Drive
Champaign, IL 61820

Watch the parade with us, take
Alma’s art walk, and join in other
exciting arts events.

Homecoming Week 2019
October 13–19

Check your email for more updates
this fall. Come home to FAA!