CFA

Music for Change

Kim Raver on *Grey's Anatomy* in a Pandemic

Celebrating Graphic Design Diversity

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

ON THE COVER: Cellist Kendall Ramseur ('12). Photo by Hannah Rose Osofsky

Published by Boston University College of Fine Arts
Produced by Boston University Marketing & Communications

Dean
Harvey Young
Assistant Dean, Development & Alumni Relations
Janna Schwartz
Senior Associate, Development & Alumni Relations
Denise Savino (CAS'11)
Director of Communications
Laurel Homer (CAS'98)
Assistant Director of Communications
Emily White

Editor
Mara Sassoon
Art Director
Lee Caulfield
Contributing Writers
Marc Chalufour
Taylor Mendoza (CAS'18)
Doug Most
Andrew Thurston

CFA ON INSTAGRAM

Did you know BU Bands turned 100 this year? #tbt to their final performance of their centennial year on Marsh Plaza in April! **@buband** offers music-making opportunities for all students of the @bostonu community, including Athletic Bands, Concert Ensembles, Jazz Ensembles, and Chorus. #ProudtoBU

Victoria Paspalas ('21)

Scan the QR code to check out a video about BU Bands

A NOTE FROM HARVEY

My grandfather—"CY" to his friends—was my favorite person when I was a kid. With his own hands, he built a house in South Carolina. Later, he rode the last wave of the Great Migration to the industrial North. Together, we fished in the summers and he'd share his old man wisdom. Best of all: he kept two freezers filled with ice cream of every flavor. A cape could not have made him more of a hero.

But flying was his kryptonite. Hospitalized after a heart attack, he shared a regret. He had never flown to Florida, where his brother had lived for more than 50 years. He confided, "Life is too short. Family is important." If his health improved, he promised that he finally would visit his brother's home. He would dine at his brother's table.

CY recovered. His laugh returned. His brush with death had given him a new outlook. He seemed to have a new lease on life.

I offered to fly with him. *Let's book that flight now.* My grandfather hesitated. Weeks later, he told me a story about a plane engine failing somewhere in the world. A few months after that, he decided that a car trip—nearly 24 hours—might be better despite his aching back. More months passed. Years. A bigger, more intense cardiac episode claimed his life. He never made it to Florida.

CY died 20 years ago. However, as the threat of the current pandemic ebbs, I find myself thinking about him more and more. It's not just those stories of vaccinated grandparents hugging their grandkids after a too-long separation. It's also the way people talk about the things that they will do after the pandemic.

I share this story because I hope that the perspectives gained and priorities newly realized over the past year will guide you forward. Reconnect with friends and loved ones. Volunteer. Donate. Apply for that job. Mentor. Bake a cake. Learn a new language. Go to the opera. Book that flight. Become the person you want to be.

I invite you to join me in rebuilding the fine and performing arts. The arts need our help more than ever. If you would like to share your goals for the future, please email me at **cfadean@bu.edu**.

Harvey Young, Dean of CFA

WRITE: Share your thoughts on this issue—and anything else CFA-related—at **cfaalum@bu.edu**.

ENGAGE:
facebook.com/BUArts
@BUArts
Search "Boston University College of Fine Arts"

Natasha Moustache

INSIDE

CFA Magazine
Spring 2021

2 SHOWCASE

PAINTING WITH PURPOSE
Josué Rojas ('15) represents his Latinx community in works that blend classic techniques with street art

8 COLLAGE

The World of CFA

16 CONVERSATION

Cellists Laura Metcalf ('04) and Kendall Ramseur ('12) discuss making music during the pandemic and balancing work and parenthood

32 PROCESS

Graphic designer Sarah Bassett's ('15) creative process includes a treasure chest of inspiration and the occasional cross-stitch

36 CLASS NOTES

You're painting, sculpting, directing, performing, writing, teaching, composing

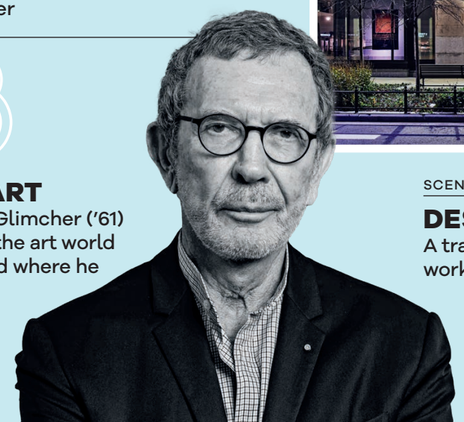
41 MUSE

Elvis inspires a short film about gender identity

TRUE LIFE DRAMA
Grey's Anatomy actor Kim Raver ('91) on the show's COVID-19 story line, filming scenes in PPE, and honoring healthcare workers

PLAY ON
US music education is in a fragile space, but it could emerge from COVID-19 more diverse, inclusive, and relevant than ever

STATE OF ART
Art dealer Arne Glimcher ('61) reflects on how the art world has changed, and where he sees it headed



SCENE

DESIGN DIVERSITY
A traveling exhibition highlights work of African American artists

Cēlyn Brazier; David Livingston/Getty Images; Tony Luong; Kevin Sturman

PAINTING WITH PURPOSE

Blending classic techniques with street art, Josué Rojas represents his Latinx community with a unique voice

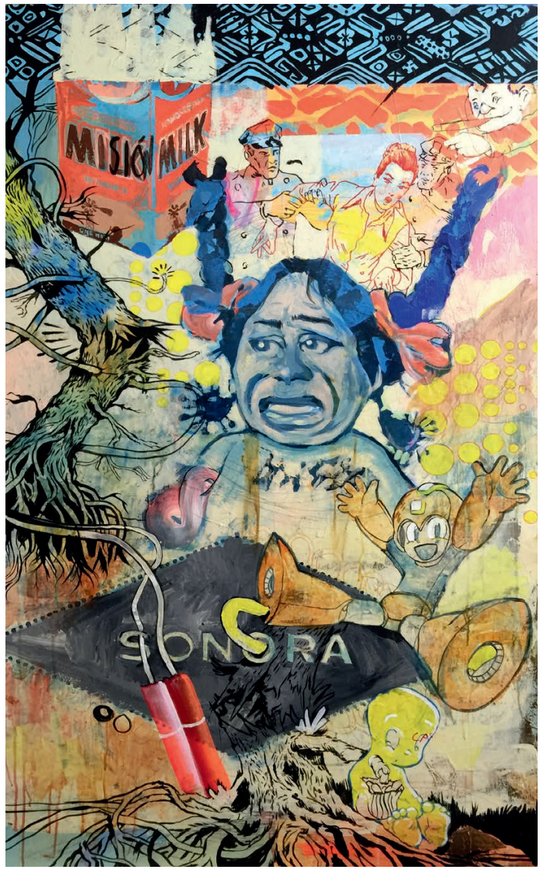
By Marc Chalufour

With a team of local street artists, Josué Rojas ('15) painted *Birds of the Americas* in San Francisco's Mission District.

Gabriela Hasbun

Below: ***Homogenized*** **(2016) Acrylic and mixed media on canvas, 36 x 60 in.**

Right: ***La Palabra y La Imagen*** **(2016) Acrylic on canvas, 80 x 40 in. Both pieces appeared in Rojas' show, *¡Gentromancer!*, which focused on the threat of gentrification to the Mission.**



Hundreds of murals illustrate the streets and alleys of San Francisco's Mission District where Josué Rojas works. They tell the stories of immigrants to the historically Latinx neighborhood. They honor women and LGBTQIA+ pioneers. And they give a voice to a community pushing back against police violence and gentrification. Graffiti and street art merge in this open-air gallery.

Rojas ('15) has lived or worked in the Mission since he was a toddler—his family settled here after fleeing El Salvador's civil war—only leaving to spend two years at CFA. Since first picking up a paintbrush as a teenager, Rojas has developed into one of the community's leading artistic voices, frequently exhibiting his work, painting murals, and encouraging other artists to tell their own stories.

"In this community, art is the glue," he says. The neighborhood that led him to art and continues to inspire him today has also given him the confidence to take a big leap: in 2021, he decided to strip away his other obligations—including running a local nonprofit—and focus full time on his art.

MASTERING THE LANGUAGE

Rojas says his life could've gone in a very different direction. His father died when he was 15, and he began acting out. "I started getting in trouble, writing graffiti." But he also got a part-time job at Precita Eyes Muralists, a nonprofit that has promoted art in the Mission since the 1970s. Soon, he was learning to paint.

"It was the first time I had found something that I was actually good at," he says. Small jobs followed: designing murals, illustrating stories for the Pacific News Service, a publisher of independent journalism. Rojas began writing for them as well, continuing to report while he studied painting as an undergrad at the California College of the Arts.

Reporting trips to Central America inspired his art and gave him the financial flexibility to pursue it. But when journalists began getting killed by gangs, Rojas reevaluated his plans. He learned about BU while attending the Institute for Recruitment of Teachers at Phillips Andover Academy in Andover, Mass., which promotes diversity in teaching and educational leadership. He liked the idea of stepping away from home to see what he could accomplish when focused entirely on his art.

Courtesy of Josué Rojas

Rojas speaks of art as a language and says his decision to study at CFA helped him expand his vocabulary. "I felt very comfortable with urban art and what's understood as Mexican heritage—classic murals inspired by Diego Rivera and then evolving into the Chicano movement of the 1960s," he says. Two years in Boston allowed him to develop classic techniques and styles, like abstract expressionism. "Now I feel very comfortable being bilingual—I can speak East Coast and West Coast within American art."

His thesis collection, *The Joy of Exile*, featured a series of paintings, but Rojas' vision extended well beyond the canvas. He

Gabriela Hasbun

continued the images onto the walls and mixed in stanzas from a friend's poem. In what is a Rojas trademark, cartoonish characters clashed with organic forms and familiar logos. The *Boston Globe* wrote that the installation "has the quality of a fever dream: roiling color and gesture. Violent imagery leavened with pop culture references."

Rojas returned to San Francisco as soon as he completed his MFA in painting. As one of his class' Kahn Award recipients, he received a grant that helped him set up a studio in the Mission and fund his next exhibit, *¡Gentromancer!* He also accepted a position as executive director of Acción Latina, an organization that promotes arts, community journalism, and civic engagement in Latinx communities in the Bay Area.

For *¡Gentromancer!*, which opened in 2016, he focused on the threat of gentrification to the Mission—and played with the styles used for his thesis. The 1980s cartoon robot Voltron frames one painting, *La Palabra y La Imagen* ("The word and the image"), looming over a canvas dense with images: a steaming volcano, a snapping tree trunk, blowing winds, two faces in silhouette. Voltron, which was formed by five smaller robots, symbolizes unity and a community's ability to be stronger than the sum of its parts, Rojas says. The overall effect is of a Mayan mural morphing into a comic book panel.

In another painting, *Amor: the Perfect Lotus*, the face of Alex Nieto, who was killed in 2014 by San Francisco police in a nearby neighborhood, is divided into quarters, each rendered in a different style, a charcoal sketch abutting a splash of Warholian color, above a cartoonish minimalism. Rojas also coordinated a special broadside—published by *El Tecolote*, a bilingual newspaper now produced by Acción Latina, where the exhibit took place—which included poems from 17 local writers. For Rojas, art and community are intertwined.

EXPANDING THE OUTDOOR GALLERY

Although the Latinx community has been particularly hard-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, Rojas decided to coordinate a large team project in fall 2020. *Birds of the Americas*, an 80-foot-wide and 25-foot-tall mural in the heart of the Mission, celebrates the lives of four men, each depicted as a Central American bird: El Salvador's torogoz for Andres Guardado, a toucan for Sean "Tucan" Monterrosa, and Guatemala's quetzal for Amilcar Perez-Lopez and Luis Gongora Pat. Guardado and Monterrosa were both shot by police in June 2020 while Perez-Lopez and Gongora Pat were killed by police in 2015 and 2016, respectively, within blocks of the new mural.

Rojas focused on painting the birds and assembled a team of local street artists and graffiti writers to complete the mural, assigning each a 20-foot section. The artists worked in shifts, to remain socially distanced, and over three weekends they gradually covered the massive wall with tropical yellows, greens, reds, and pinks. Vines, flowers, slices of guava, graffiti letters, and a mythical deity are entwined in the finished piece.

"Murals are an external expression of a community's internal values," Rojas told *Mission Local*, a neighborhood news organization. "For our community to see that a mural is going up, even during these conditions, during the fires and pandemic. For them to see we are coming together, making something beautiful during this time, [that is important]."

Though he'd designed the birds in advance, Rojas didn't know what the other artists would do with their space. "There's a lot of trust," he says, comparing the project to a jazz album. "Miles Davis wasn't simply a great trumpeter. He laid the groundwork for a group of people to shine, and they made the *Kind of Blue* album."

MORE TO SAY

The challenges of the pandemic, including illnesses in his family, helped Rojas realize where he wants to focus his energy. After four years as executive director, he stepped down from his role at Accíon Latina. For the first time since CFA, he's focused entirely on his art.

"It can be very daunting to stare at an empty calendar or stare at my bank account," he says. But he's taking comfort in the words of one of his professors at BU: "Take care of the art and the art will take care of you."

And he couldn't be in a better place to do so. Even as the Mission changes and longtime residents are priced out, Rojas sees positive signs. There are still more walls to paint and new galleries keep opening, allowing voices like his to continue to be heard. "It's a revolutionary act," he says, of his community's insistence that art is important.

Occasionally Rojas hears an old adage: "Painting is dead." He bristles at the suggestion. "It really is disrespectful, not only to the practice of painting, but also the people who are now able to speak. I really believe there's a lot more to be said."

Left: **Rojas' mural *Enrique's Journey* (2009) was inspired by Sonia Nazario's book of the same name and is located at Balmy Alley in San Francisco.**

Below: ***Joy of Exile: Mara Kid* (2013) Oil on canvas, 60 x 48 in., uses a cartoonish style to address the serious subject of gang violence.**

Courtesy of Josué Rojas

COLLAGE

THE WORLD OF CFA

RISING STAR

Acting Dreams

By Taylor Mendoza

Michael Tullberg/Getty Images

CAMARON ENGELS ('17) was 10—and watching a stage production of *The Lion King* with his grandmother—when he realized he wanted to be an actor. "I saw a little Black boy dancing and having fun on the stage that looked exactly like me," he says. "I almost got kicked out because I was literally jumping up and down in my seat saying, 'I can do that.'" Since graduating from CFA, he has been making his way in Hollywood, appearing in television shows and films like *Malibu Rescue: The Next Wave* and *American Pie Presents: Girls' Rules*. He will appear in the upcoming Netflix thriller miniseries, *Clickbait*, about the dark side of social media, and starred as Romeo in the modern-day adaptation of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, *R#J*, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival.

How did you train prior to coming to BU?
I started training at the age of 10. I attended the Lee Strasberg Institute for five years and learned about method acting while there, and I went to the Stella Adler Studio of Acting for about a year. I also did some acting programs at NYU for a couple of months. Once I got to BU, we learned every single technique. Their ideology was, "We'll give you everything you need, and then you decide what works best for you." My training at BU gave me more tools to put on my tool belt of techniques, and helped me dig deeper and be one with my character. CFA also taught me how to work with an ensemble, and how to handle high-stakes situations and still give a strong performance.

You really immerse yourself in your roles.
I like to dip into several techniques, but for the most part, I use method acting, specifically, substitution work. That's when you put someone that you know personally in the position of the character that you're playing with and do the scene with them in your head.

What's the most interesting character you've played?
I was actually thinking the other day that I want to play some weirder roles. I'm really interested in playing something that completely transforms me. I tend to get typecast as the boy next door. However, I think the most interesting role that I've played was this nerd named Kurt for a one-episode role for *Family Reunion* on Netflix. I got to wear glasses, a fedora, and a little sweater vest. He was so much fun to play.

What's your dream role?
I'd love to play Miles Morales, [the new Spider-Man]. We need more representation of color in superhero movies.

***R#J* was an official selection at Sundance.**
It still doesn't feel real. Of course, I'd have loved to be there physically, but I'm just honored to have been a part of it. I was very grateful and very nervous at the same time.

How has COVID-19 impacted your work?
When we first heard about COVID, I was filming *Clickbait* in Australia. We had to stop shooting and leave immediately, and for six months, it was just dead silent. I spent those months doing a lot of things for myself. I danced a lot, and I also got into making my own clothes.

SOUND BITES

"The stories I choose are often the stories of the missing. I don't mean that just from a historical point of view, I mean it as 'What story do I feel like I have not seen someone like myself [in]?'"

UZO ADUBA ('05)

Aduba joined actors Alfre Woodard ('74, Hon.'04) and Russell Hornsby ('96) for a Zoom panel discussion, "Black in the Entertainment Industry: Reflections on Courage, Challenge & Creativity," part of Alumni Weekend 2020. During the conversation, which was moderated by Dean Harvey Young, the actors discussed representation in film and television, their experiences in Hollywood, and their memories of life on Comm Ave.

James Daniel (Morrison); Stratton McCrady (Tanglewood); Kim Hedegaard von Holstein-Rathlou/Boston University Photography (Aduba)

AWARDS

BETH MORRISON NAMED *MUSICAL AMERICA*'S 2021 ARTIST OF THE YEAR

Since *Musical America* debuted its Artist of the Year award in 1961, it has counted Leonard Bernstein, Sarah Caldwell, and Yo-Yo Ma as recipients. Now, BETH MORRISON (BUTI'89, CFA'94) joins these musical luminaries as the 2021 Artist of the Year. Morrison currently leads Beth Morrison Projects, which commissions, develops, and produces operas, music theater, and multimedia productions. The publication called Morrison an "agent of change." Morrison told *Musical America*, "I'm somebody who doesn't take no for an answer, so if I set a goal for myself or my company, failure is not an option. Many, many times over the course of my career, it probably would have been easier for me to give up. But I just don't have it in me."

NEWS

$1,000,000 gift launches the Tanglewood Institute Young Artists Fund

LONGTIME Boston University Tanglewood Institute (BUTI) supporter, parent, and current advisory council chair Chester "Chet" W. Douglass and his wife, Joy, have pledged $1 million to launch the Tanglewood Institute Young Artists Fund. The new fund, established by the largest gift in the program's 54-year history, strengthens the partnership between BUTI and the Boston Symphony Orchestra by supporting costs associated with the BUTI student learning, concertizing, and concertgoing opportunities at Tanglewood that are core to their summer experience.

In recent years, BUTI has launched several new initiatives to better attract and support young artists, including visiting artist residencies, a robust community engagement program, health and wellness offerings, and extensive new instrumental programming, resulting in a more than 40 percent increase in enrollment since 2014.

FOR MORE NEWS AND EVENTS, VISIT BU.EDU/CFA.

Kim Raver ('91) has appeared in many award-winning television shows. She currently plays cardiothoracic surgeon Teddy Altman on the hit ABC show *Grey's Anatomy*.

David Livingston/Getty Images

GREY'S ANATOMY ACTOR KIM RAVER ON THE HIT SHOW'S COVID-19 STORY LINE, FILMING IN PPE, AND HONORING HEALTHCARE WORKERS

By Mara Sassoon

TRUE LIFE DRAMA

KIM RAVER stood on the *Grey's Anatomy* set for the first time since the medical drama halted production in March 2020. She was clad in full PPE—not just a mask and scrubs, but a heavy personal respirator hood.

The weight of the hood, the way it muffled the sounds around her, helped her immerse herself in her character's experience. It also compounded the emotional weight of the scenes she was about to start filming for the show's 17th season.

As her character on the Shonda Rhimes ABC medical drama, cardiothoracic surgeon Teddy Altman, she was about to embark on a story line in which the show's Seattle hospital was being ravaged by the virus.

By the time *Grey's Anatomy* began filming in September 2020—six months after production on its previous season abruptly shut down—the worldwide death toll from COVID-19 had climbed to almost 1 million. The show's writers felt it was their duty to incorporate the global pandemic into the new season's plot. As showrunner Krista Vernoff ('93) told *The Hollywood Reporter*, "To be the biggest medical show and ignore the biggest medical story of the century felt irresponsible."

Raver ('91) was struck by the experience of filming scenes that echoed what she had watched play out in the months the show was on break. The first episode of the new season found the *Grey's* doctors dealing with PPE shortages and navigating a hospital overcrowded with COVID patients.

"It's so strange to be telling a story that we're universally going through in the moment," she says. "I'll be doing a scene, and then after I take off whatever costume I'm wearing, there's this feeling of, 'Oh my gosh, we're still in it.' There's no separation. Usually, we're telling a medical story that people can understand emotionally, but that they aren't actually *going through*."

Raver says the cast and crew were united by a desire to use the show as a platform to honor the arduous efforts of healthcare workers during the pandemic.

"I just feel really grateful to be able to tell these stories, especially when I see what our frontline workers are actually having to go through," she says. "We're in a time where there's enormous loss and grief, and you feel like you have a purpose in telling them."

STORIES WITHIN STORIES

Grey's Anatomy was one of the first major network shows to announce it was pausing filming due to the spread of COVID-19, cutting its 16th season short by four episodes in March 2020.

"There was this shock of shutting down," says Raver. "Before, it felt like nothing could shut us down—we just kept going no matter what."

Raver in full PPE on *Grey's Anatomy*. She says the medical drama's cast and crew have viewed the show as a platform to showcase and honor the work of healthcare professionals during the pandemic.

But as the astonishment wore off, the show's cast and crew jumped into action to help real-life healthcare workers. The props department donated the gowns and gloves they had on hand for filming when PPE shortages were a major problem in hospitals around the country. On National Doctors' Day—March 30—Raver and other cast members appeared in a social media video to thank the medical professionals fighting the virus on the front lines.

The rallying effort reminded Raver of another striking moment in her career when her craft and the harsh reality of life merged. In 2001, she was filming the NBC drama *Third Watch*, about New York City firefighters, paramedics, and police officers, when the September 11 attacks occurred. Many of the first responders the show consulted with went to assist at Ground Zero. And, just as *Grey's Anatomy* donated PPE to hospitals, the show quickly organized to send equipment, including microphones, lights, and a working fire truck it used in scenes, to the emergency services in the days following the attack.

"We just wanted to help in any way we could," says Raver, who played paramedic Kim Zambrano on the show.

Third Watch opened its third season on October 15, 2001, with a two-hour special documentary featuring real-life first responders sharing their experiences in the aftermath of September 11. The season also went on to address the horrific events of that day and its impact.

In one episode, Raver's character runs to the fire station after she sees what has happened to the World Trade Center on TV, ready to help. In another, set weeks after the attack, the show's characters are still searching for the missing at Ground Zero. "There was a sense of community" in filming that season of *Third Watch*, with a story line that addressed a tragic event that affected the entire nation, says Raver. "It was that same feeling, addressing the pandemic on *Grey's*."

Raver (pictured with costar Bobby Cannavale) played paramedic Kim Zambrano on *Third Watch*, about New York City firefighters, paramedics, and police officers. The show's 2001–2002 season addressed the September 11 attacks and the tragic day's aftermath.

Many of *Grey's Anatomy*'s COVID-19 plotlines borrowed from real life: one character's mother dies after contracting the virus at an assisted living facility, while Raver's character tends to a colleague who suffers worsening COVID-19 symptoms and needs to be placed on a ventilator. Raver says she felt the pressure to accurately portray the physical and emotional toll the virus takes on healthcare workers, but Vernoff says she was well equipped to take on the challenge. "Kim is a total pro. She can take any direction you throw at her. She has real and easy emotional depth."

The show's writers also sought to honor the efforts of medical professionals by ensuring they did the proper research before starting to draft the season's episodes. "During our prewriting research time, we watched a lot of video diaries of doctors and read innumerable articles about what they are going through," Zoanne Clack, a doctor, writer, and executive producer on the show, told *The Hollywood Reporter*.

Also important to Raver and the rest of the *Grey's* cast and crew: not adding to the healthcare crisis by turning filming into a spreader event. The show has taken special measures to keep cast and crew safe during filming, says Raver, including constant testing, social distancing, and wearing masks in between scenes and during rehearsals. "I have to say, to this day, they're doing an incredible job at keeping all the safety protocols. There's also been a real coming together of our cast and crew to make sure that we're all safe in our daily lives so that we can keep everyone in our company on the show safe."

LEARNING THE CRAFT

Raver's experiences grappling with dark, difficult subjects are a long way from her first foray into showbiz. Before she was playing a paramedic on *Third Watch* or a heart surgeon on *Grey's Anatomy*, the New York City born and raised Raver appeared on *Sesame Street* as a young child. "I'd walk onto the sound stages and it was magical," she recalls. "There were all these Muppets everywhere."

But while she has fond memories of being on the *Sesame Street* set, Raver says it was her time at the First All Children's Theater that really sparked her desire to act. When she was 13, she joined the after-school theater program, where she counted actor Ben Stiller among her peers. The performers were all children, ages 6 through 17, and all of the productions were written especially for the theater company. The famed late writer and theater director Elizabeth Swados even penned one of the performances.

"I just loved it. There was something about performing and telling stories. I knew then I wanted to be an actor," says Raver. "It became a big part of my life because eventually I had to choose: do I want to be a regular teenager and hang out with my friends from school, or do I want to be a part of this company? It was a big time commitment. We weren't allowed to be even a minute late. I was at this theater every single day, right after school until the evening, and then I was doing homework. It definitely formed my self-discipline."

At BU, Raver says she met like-minded classmates—and still keeps in touch with many of them. "When I think about my experience at BU and the community that I had there—and that I carried on with me since graduating—I realize it's an important thing to have as an artist and as an individual. It's such a tricky business, and you need that kind of support," says Raver. "I tell young actors just getting out of school that your community when you get out—the people you went to school with—is so important."

When she was starting out in New York City just after graduating from BU, Raver gathered with fellow alumni and other creatives she met through her network to rent performance spaces and put on productions, "just to stay in working shape while we were auditioning." Finally, she landed her breakout role in the 1995 Broadway production of *Holiday* with Laura Linney and Tony Goldwyn. When she started rehearsing for the show, she couldn't help but reflect on her performance in *Twelfth Night* at the Huntington Theatre while at BU. "I remember thinking what incredible prep for *Holiday* I got from that experience, from being up onstage during the rehearsal time—practicing stage combat and doing vocal warmups—all the way to the performance. I owe a lot to my BU training."

FINDING BALANCE

While Raver has played a wide range of roles over her career, from Audrey Raines, a Department of Defense senior policy analyst, in the action-packed Fox series *24*, to Nico Reilly, the seductive editor-in-chief of a luxury magazine, in NBC's *Lipstick Jungle*, Altman might be her favorite part yet, she says. "I love and respect Teddy and the journey she's been on. She's an amazing, multifaceted character."

In fact, in 2012, Raver's respect for the character was part of her decision to step away from the role. Her series option was up, and she felt it was time to give Altman a break. The character left the show to accept a job with the United States Army Medical Command, but Raver noted that she wasn't opposed to returning to the show one day.

In the meantime, Raver explored other roles, including a recurring spot on the NBC sci-fi series *Revolution*. Then in 2017, Vernoff reached out to Raver to propose a new story line that would bring Altman back: a baby. In season 14, Altman returns, rekindling a friendship with a former colleague, Owen Hunt, which blossoms into something more—and, eventually, parenthood.

"A lot can be mined by returning to characters who were here before and are already beloved by the audience," Vernoff says of the decision to bring the character back. "And I think Kim has brought so much to recent seasons."

And Raver was game to come back. "I just loved the story that she wanted to tell. It made a lot of sense," says Raver. "There was just so much more to tell about Teddy. It's incredible to have a show that keeps evolving, and it's pretty amazing that after all these years, there are new and exciting story lines."

Even if some of them don't always show her character in the best light. When production on *Grey's Anatomy* halted in March 2020, season 16 inadvertently ended with a scandalous cliff-hanger. Raver's character leaves an accidental, and incriminating, voicemail for her now-fiancé Hunt on their wedding day, which indicates she's cheating on him. The show's devoted fans wasted no time taking to social media to express their disappointment with Altman—a quick glimpse at the comments on ABC's YouTube clip of Hunt listening to the voicemail, which has more than one million views, shows the full range of their discontent. "This scene crushed my soul and gave me anxiety," wrote one fan. "That was cruel and heartbreaking," said another. But the fans weren't the only ones who were disappointed in the character's actions.

"I'm upset with Teddy," Raver told *Entertainment Weekly*. "There's a universal thing of when you have what you want, the healthy people make it blossom, and the people that need work kind of blow it up. And I think we've all been there. . . the beautiful thing of the show is that [characters] have their shining moments and then they have their very ugly human moments."

Raver especially feels the importance of showing those very human moments in playing Altman this year, connecting with viewers during such a difficult time.

"*Grey's* has this really amazing gift of blending comedy and drama. As an actor, that's the place you want to be, to be able to tell those stories with that balance. I'm just so grateful to be on this show."

"When I think about my experience at BU and the community that I had there—and that I carried on with me since graduating—I realize it's an important thing to have as an artist and as an individual. It's such a tricky business, and you need that kind of support."

AF archive/Alamy Stock Photo

CONVERSATION

Hannah Rose Osofsky

Mamadi Doumbouya

CELLISTS KENDALL RAMSEUR AND LAURA METCALF DISCUSS MAKING MUSIC DURING THE PANDEMIC AND BALANCING WORK AND PARENTHOOD

Edited by Mara Sassoon

CELLIST KENDALL RAMSEUR had just stepped onstage at Madison Square Garden with his quartet, Sons of Serendip, to audition for season 9 of *America's Got Talent*. This would only be the second time the quartet—whose members, Ramseur ('12), harpist Mason Morton ('12,'15), pianist and guitarist Cordaro Rodriguez (LAW'12), and lead vocalist Micah Christian (STH'12), met at BU—performed together in front of an audience.

"We didn't know how the group would stand under pressure. I remember us walking out there, and I was terrified," says Ramseur. But the fear was unfounded. The group's performance of Keane's "Somewhere Only We Know" brought audience members to tears and left the program's celebrity judges in awe. Sons of Serendip wound up making it all the way to the 2014 finals, finishing in fourth place.

"Being on the show gave us a greater sense of purpose, like what we're doing as musicians is making a difference," says Ramseur, who is based in Cambridge, Mass. "We had no idea that stepping on that stage at Madison Square Garden was going to change the rest of our lives." Since their TV debut, they've made four albums, including the 2015 holiday album *Christmas: Beyond the Lights*, which the *New York Times* called "silky beyond reason."

Laura Metcalf ('04) is a New York–based cellist renowned for her solo and chamber music. She has performed with pop artists like Adele, John Legend, and Cher on late night programs and talk shows, and released her debut solo album, *First Day*, in 2016, which debuted at #7 on the Billboard classical chart. *AllMusic* called the album "sunny" and "energetic," adding that by the end, "the listener is likely to have to be restrained from taking off into the stratosphere." Metcalf is also part of multiple music projects, including the string quintet Sybarite5 and the cello and drum quartet Break of Reality, with whom she has toured worldwide, and the duo Boyd Meets Girl, with her husband, classical guitarist Rupert Boyd.

Ramseur and Metcalf spoke over Zoom in February about making music and balancing work and parenthood during the pandemic.

Laura Metcalf: So, tell me, who was your cello teacher at BU?
Kendall Ramseur: Marc Johnson, who was a member of the Vermeer Quartet. And yours?
LM: Mike Reynolds. He wrote me an email several months ago that he had listened to my debut solo album and we went back and forth.
KR: That's awesome. When did you release that album?
LM: 2016. I recorded it at a studio in Virginia in the middle of nowhere. The studio is a converted church, so it's got beautiful acoustics, and it's so resonant.
KR: That's really cool. I started working on my debut solo album in 2020, which I released in September. Believe it or not, because of the pandemic, I wound up recording everything at home. I went through courses and learned how to mix and master the album myself.
LM: Wow. What's the album called?
KR: It's called *Selah*. It's a Hebrew word that means "to pause." I felt like it was the perfect title based off of what we were experiencing globally. The album works its way through my emotions around the pandemic, systemic racism, police brutality. 2020 was just rough. This album is my dealing with all of those emotions and feelings that I couldn't quite put to words or articulate. Through music, I was able to just pour it all out.

How has it been for you through this pandemic with music and just life in general?
LM: I feel so lucky that I have a comfortable home, and I've been safe here with my family in New York. Before the pandemic, I was about to start this epic spring concert tour with the different groups that I'm involved in, I had a solo recital in the Caribbean planned, all these gigs I was looking forward to. But I feel proud that I've still been able to make music. I started a quartet with some of my colleagues who live in the neighborhood in early June 2020. We decided to only play music of Black composers and discovered some amazing quartet music. We were able to do a bunch of outdoor concerts over summer 2020. When it got colder, we were doing livestreams and recordings. It's a fulfilling project that kind of got us all through a weird year. How about you? What have you been up to?

"I didn't know what it would be like after I became a mom. Would I suddenly lose motivation?"
LAURA METCALF

KR: 2020 was looking like it was going to be Sons of Serendip's busiest, most lucrative year. Touring is how we live. We were so excited. But then we found out we were going to have to cancel our tour because of the virus. Literally, 50 or 60 shows cut overnight. That's 80 percent of our income gone. I came home to my wife and son, who is 16 months.

We had to figure out how to pivot from live performances to virtual. We were nervous about pivoting to virtual performances because our audience skews a little bit older, and we didn't know how they would take to it. But, when we got home, we planned a summer series, and each month we were giving virtual shows via Facebook and YouTube, and people loved it. We had beautiful comments coming in, which is something you don't really get during a live show—you're not able to hear what everyone is thinking. And we started working on an album that has now been released called *Mosaic*.

What really sparked my work as a solo artist was George Floyd. I had a lot of emotions—anger, frustration—that I was working through. I would say this has been my most creative season. I'm just writing music, getting it out there, hoping that it brings awareness to the atrocities that are going on around us. And then also bringing healing and comfort to those who are in need of it—that's been my focus.
LM: Can I ask a more personal question? How are you handling childcare and parenting? My son is two and a half, and we've sort of found a rhythm now. But I found it hard to just suddenly not have any childcare help or anything.
KR: Absolutely, it's not easy. My wife, Yolanda, and I have a schedule where we each take certain days of the week where one of us can focus on our work and one of us watches our son. And as a musician, there are times I'm kind of itching to get to my cello, but I remind myself, "Kendall, this is Yolanda's time. Your son is here. Please don't take this time for granted. This is going to fly by." It's been such a joy to have this time with my son. How have you been navigating parenthood and work?
LM: We don't do alternating days, but we do alternating hours basically every day. One tricky thing for us is the music we play together as a duo. So, we're limited to naptime and bedtime for when we can do that. But, like you said, if I had done all of the touring I would have done in 2020, I would have missed a lot of really amazing moments and milestones with him. It's a trade-off. The first year of our son's life was my quintet's busiest touring season. So my son came on tour with me everywhere. He went on the planes, slept in pack 'n' plays in the hotels, and went all over the country. It was just crazy.
KR: That's amazing. Kudos to you. Just wow.
LM: There was not a lot of sleep happening. I always knew I wanted to be a mom, but I was worried that becoming a mom would make me somehow less committed to being a musician. The cello was my baby for so long. I didn't know what it would be like after I became a mom. Would I suddenly lose motivation? But, no, I'm still committed to my career, and I also love being a mom so much—it's the best thing ever.
KR: It's finding that balance. I think having a kid has given my music a little bit more depth.
LM: You learn the art of efficiency, of making use of small chunks of time. I give master classes and talks to students, and I say even if you have only 11 minutes, you can get a lot done in those 11 minutes. I know from experience—11 minutes is like gold.
KR: It's so true. Now, I don't mean to completely pivot, but I'm curious because you've just done so much—what has been one of your most memorable performances?
LM: It was in the Philippines during a tour of Asia that I did four years ago. We were in a rural area, three hours outside of Manila, and we were staying at this really amazing music school. I was with my cello band. We had this big outdoor concert planned, but it started to rain really bad. There was an indoor art gallery space as part of the facility, and because we had to leave the next day and there was no chance of rescheduling, we decided to just play inside, all acoustic, no mics. We set up our cello quartet in the middle of the room. And there were hundreds of people crowding in to listen on this hot, rainy night in the Philippines. There was just this energy in the room. It was one of the most profound experiences I've ever had.

So, after you did *America's Got Talent*, what happened? Did you get a manager right after?
KR: We had an agency that was working with us right off the bat, which was great because we had no idea how to manage all of that, and we would have dropped a million balls.

"This album is my dealing with all of those emotions and feelings that I couldn't quite put to words or articulate. Through music, I was able to just pour it all out."
KENDALL RAMSEUR

LM: Yeah, self-booking your tours is not recommended. My husband and I self-managed our duo until we signed with a manager about a year and a half ago. Before that, we were organizing world tours on our own. You learn so much about how this industry works and how to create a sustainable career.
KR: Were there any classes at BU or when you did your master's that focused more on the entrepreneurial side of things?
LM: No. I think there's an element of figuring it out yourself. There's not really a substitute for being thrown into the world. But you have to have a sense of artistic identity. You can't package a product that's not formed.

I did get encouragement from my teacher in my master's program [at the Mannes School of Music], Tim Eddy. I told him that I don't want to be a soloist or play in an orchestra. I love to play chamber music. He empowered me to forge that type of career.
KR: It's great that you had a teacher who was supportive. At BU, I felt like I had a lot of stories to tell through my music. I remember sharing that with Marc Johnson. I started working on an album where the focus was vocals and cello, and he would allow me to bring these pieces in, and we would work on them together. It blew me away that a teacher who focuses on classical music was embracing this new thing. At that time, I didn't know of many cellists who were trying to sing simultaneously.
LM: It's so hard to sing and play cello too. Normally, I can sing pretty in tune, but when I do them both at the same time, I sing out of tune *and* I play out of tune.
KR: It's not easy. You're trying to hear both instruments at the same time and trying to keep them both in tune. It took me a while to get decent at it. I still haven't mastered it.
LM: There's a cellist, Mike Block, who lives and teaches in Boston. He does a full solo show where he is singing and playing. I've been running a concert series the past couple years. Mike did a show for my concert series, and it brought the house down. If you're ever in New York, you should come and play on the concert series.
KR: I'd love to once things open up more. And I have your contact info now, so we'll stay in touch after this. We can figure out a collaboration of some type maybe.
LM: I'd love that.

PLAY ON

Confined to Zoom, muffled by masks, and facing perilous budgets, US music education is in a fragile space, but it could emerge from COVID-19 more diverse, inclusive, and relevant than ever

By Andrew Thurston Illustration by Celyn Brazier

school bands have marched during the past year, it's been at a distance—and with special shields covering trombone and trumpet bells. The coronavirus pandemic has upended music education in other ways, too, cutting some students off from their school-based instruments, denting orchestra recruitment, and forcing teachers to grapple with virtual rehearsals. Music educators, normally concerned about funding new instruments, are now worried about airborne particles and students without laptops.

"It's been awful," says Dana Monteiro, a music teacher at Harlem's Frederick Douglass Academy. "I've been teaching in New York City for 20 years, and it's like all of those other 19 years have nothing to do with this year."

Some of Monteiro's kids don't have the technology—or the internet access—they need to join remote classes. Others have struggled by on cell phones. And it's not like New York City, even in its toniest enclaves, is known for sprawling apartments. You can't ask a student to start blasting tunes when their parents are working at the same kitchen table.

Rather than trying to re-create the classroom experience online, Monteiro ('16) has put his energy into sharing recordings of his playing—and encouraging his students to make their own.

"Then we can talk about the recordings back and forth, meeting one-on-one or in small groups."

Monteiro can't wait to get back into the classroom—he even misses walking the halls and redirecting the kids cutting class, "the things that used to drive me crazy." In his district, there aren't too many positives to glean from remote learning. "We're missing a key part of what's really important in studying ensemble-based music in schools and that is the social component, the working with others." And he worries about what comes next.

"We're missing a key part of what's really important in studying ensemble-based music in schools and that is the social component, the working with others."

DANA MONTEIRO

Taylor Hill/Getty Images for Kupferberg Center for the Arts at Queens College

Paul Zimmerman/WireImage/Getty

When state dollars start disappearing amid crunching postpandemic budgets, Monteiro fears arts programs might become soft targets for cuts. "Music programs in schools could find themselves at great risk," he says.

But Monteiro isn't completely pessimistic, in part because music education in the United States has come a long way in the past couple of decades.

"There are more schools across the country offering music today than there were 20 years ago," according to a December 2019 *Hechinger Report* article, "and more of those schools employ full-time music teachers."

And the pandemic, along with a renewed national focus on racism, has the potential to accelerate some of the changes that were pushing music education to a more inclusive, dynamic future. In recent years, teachers like Monteiro have been tackling some of the systemic problems facing the field, including a lack of access and limited playlists, opening it up to more students and different types of music.

Before COVID-19, Dana Monteiro ('16) and Harlem Samba performed at the 2017 Louis Armstrong's Wonderful World Festival in New York City (above) and the 2014 Clinton Global Citizen Awards (top right). He says he can't wait to return to live, in-person music.

"The way the country has been in the last four years or so, particularly the past year, represents a term of turbulence that is unprecedented," says André de Quadros, a CFA professor of music. "It's triggered a reckoning in all fields, and music education is starting to do much more self-examination."

"SCARY AND EXCITING"

For close to a century, learning music in school has felt a lot like being drilled for the army: a director stands at the front, shouts out the orders, and the students try to keep up. That's because after World War II, demobilized military band leaders frequently found jobs teaching music in public schools, says Karin S. Hendricks, chair of CFA's music education department. Their example set the standard for generations.

"We've been stuck in this director-centered model. We're still recovering from that," says Hendricks. School by Zoom—when it works—has presented a fresh way of instructing on a more personal level.

"When you rehearse a band of 50 kids all in one room, trying to hear them one at a time is a nightmare," says Heather Katz-Cote, K–12 director of performing arts in Westwood, Mass. As a remote teacher, she can selectively use the mute button to focus on one student or the whole class. "Now, I'm actually assessing them. I love that they're gaining confidence and taking that risk and letting me hear them."

Katz-Cote ('16) is trying to figure out how she'll capture that in the physical classroom. She'd already been pushing hard to move away from the sergeant major model—"I

don't want students to be sitting there with my throwing information at them"—but she's still reassessing everything about her teaching. The songs her students learn, the instruments she teaches, lesson plans, and concert cycles are all up for examination.

"We're stepping back a little bit and looking at what we're doing, how we're doing it, and what it means to be a music educator," says Katz-Cote. "We're in a place of change right now and that's scary and exciting at the same time."

Hendricks says that kind of self-assessment is necessary nationwide. More kids might be getting music education than 20 years ago, but school day options still tend to tail off as they hit adolescence, frequently becoming limited to those in the school band, choir, or orchestra. In districts that require music education, large class sizes can see children thrown into a survey class: lots of talking about music, but very little playing. Even affluent districts are constantly fundraising to plug budget shortfalls or buy new instruments.

And the music kids learn isn't particularly diverse or inclusive. Hendricks says many of the traditional folk songs heard in American classrooms, particularly in elementary schools, have racist origins, the offensive lyrics that made them a hit when they debuted in minstrel shows whitewashed out over generations. "Shortnin' Bread" has its roots on plantations, "Jimmy Crack Corn" was a popular blackface number.

"Often those songs aren't challenged or the historical context is not considered," says Hendricks. "We have a way still to go as far as being inclusive of music from other countries beyond Europe and America, too, as well as music that our students enjoy and listen to. It seems a no-brainer to start with students where they are and say, 'What music do you like? Let's talk about that. Let's unpack that. And now let me share with you what music I like and let's unpack that too.'"

"We're stepping back a little bit and looking at what we're doing, how we're doing it, and what it means to be a music educator. We're in a place of change right now and that's scary and exciting at the same time."

HEATHER KATZ-COTE

Heather Katz-Cote ('16) is bringing the work of more diverse composers into her teaching.

Courtesy of Heather Katz-Cote

ROCKING OUT

An instrumentalist who specializes in woodwind, Katz-Cote spent her childhood moving through the standards of classical music, playing the notes of long-dead European, male composers.

"This was my entire musical experience growing up," she says. "To look outside of that takes some effort, some work, some thoughtfulness. Only in the last few years have we really started to address that in music education and become more culturally relevant."

Katz-Cote is calling on the work of more diverse composers in her own teaching—she's even started a rock band.

Every summer, she runs a one-week intensive modern band course for her high schoolers, picking two pop songs to play with a group of 20 or so kids with little or no musical experience. By the end of the week, they drum and strum at an informal concert on the school's lawn. A guitar novice, Katz-Cote learns songs by bands like Black Eyed Peas right along with them.

"It's probably one of the most fun things that I have done in the last 10 years of my teaching career—it was so out of my comfort zone," she says. "The collaborative nature of the ensemble was so different than when I'm on the podium with a baton. It really was eye-opening and life changing for me in just finding different ways to access kids through music."

DRUMS OVER FLUTES

Like Katz-Cote, Monteiro was schooled in the classics, playing trumpet in his high school marching band. When he landed his first teaching gig in one of the rare New York City schools with a parking lot—"an outdoor space we could march around"—he dreamed of re-creating his suburban Rhode Island childhood experiences for his new inner-city charges.

"I was trying to make Providence in Harlem—and that's not possible," he says. "The kids were really musical, but I had all the challenges of teaching in the city: really large class sizes, the time with students was really small, and also kids come and go a lot—a kid may come for seventh grade and then they're gone."

He stumbled on a better alternative in Brazil. During a vacation tour of the country in the early 2000s, he visited a Samba school and watched as 250 drummers beat out an infectious, percussive rhythm. "Most of my students had gotten interested in drums," he says, "and I'm still trying to give them flutes. You've got to meet them where they're at." And with Samba, bigger bands were positively encouraged.

When he returned to the United States, Monteiro convinced his principal to pay for a few drums and shakers for an experimental Samba program. After that, he says, "it just kept growing and growing." Eventually, he acquired enough instruments for every child in his 50-person classes.

Instead of sitting through music survey classes, all of Monteiro's students get to taste the magic of Brazilian Carnival. If a child is new to the school, they can just pick up an instrument and play, while advanced players next to them can carry on perfecting more complicated parts. Monteiro also runs an after-school ensemble, Harlem Samba, and a community group for adults that includes many former pupils.

"Every single student in the school will learn to play an instrument," he says. "That's not a normal thing anywhere, but not a normal thing in New York City for sure."

According to the Grammy Music Education Coalition, 3.8 million American schoolchildren have no access to music education. Unsurprisingly, those heading for a tuneless future—or getting a less robust music education—are more likely to go to a public school in a low-income neighborhood. In New York City, the country's largest school district, more than half of high schools have no certified music teachers, according to a 2020 Education Through Music report.

"I'm trying to teach to the masses—it's an inclusive program that everyone has access to," says Monteiro. "The traditional program is more exclusive, where the students who had lessons, who may own an instrument or have the means to rent one, get that particular class."

CULTURAL AND SITUATIONAL RELEVANCY

In 2017, Monteiro launched a nonprofit to take his program into other schools. A Life with Drums, which helps fund instruments and professional development for teachers, has worked with 11 other schools in New York and Los Angeles.

But Monteiro cautions that just as he couldn't build a suburban marching band in Harlem, Samba might not take root everywhere. Although he pushes for more diversity and cultural relevance in music—and studied the benefits of multicultural, participatory music in diverse classrooms for his CFA doctoral dissertation—Monteiro advocates for programs to be situationally relevant too. It's a message he's passed on to future music educators when he's given Samba workshops at CFA.

"I wasn't trying to match cultural relevancy, because I don't have a single Brazilian student; I'm not Brazilian either, but it was relevant to our situation," says Monteiro, who's also written a book on his approach, *The Samba School: A Comprehensive Method for Learning, Playing, and Teaching Samba Percussion*. "If you're in a school where you have a successful music program, you shouldn't break it down to make a Samba program. But I do tell them that you do need to be flexible, you do need to understand that the way you make music is not the only way."

André de Quadros, a CFA professor of music, strives to use music to promote equity and justice, including through BU's Prison Education Program.

Cydney Scott

De Quadros also warns that diversity isn't a "corporate badge that people should wear."

A conductor, ethnomusicologist, and human rights activist, de Quadros is the coauthor of two forthcoming books on social justice and the arts, *Poking the Wasp Nest: Young People Challenge and Educate Race through Applied Theatre* and *Empowering Song: A Sustaining and Revitalizing Pedagogy*. For the past decade, he's also taught music classes to incarcerated people in BU's Prison Education Program, bringing in his CFA students as coteachers.

"It's not simply changing the color of representation, it's much more than that. It's understanding culture in its deepest sense and what people bring, as human beings, into this space, with trauma, with disabilities, with racial histories," he says. "Music and the arts have infinite possibilities, we just don't always use them in the cause of justice and equity, but we need to. It's our mission, certainly at CFA, to exercise art in this bigger way."

At CFA, which has undergraduate and graduate music education programs, students can take classes—like Arts Engagement as Active Hope and Empowering Song—that are tailored to this more inclusive future. Hendricks says the music education faculty aims to help current and future teachers "be vulnerable, to take risks, so that they can connect authentically with students."

As the incoming president of the Massachusetts Music Educators Association, Katz-Cote will soon be advocating for that kind of risk-taking at the state and national levels. It's a case she may have to make while also fighting budget cuts. She plans to persuade legislators and school committees that music classes—frequently shown to boost kids' academic performance—benefit "the whole person." Hendricks, Monteiro, and de Quadros all make the same argument, particularly after such a trying year.

"People have been making music for 70,000 years—we're hardwired to make music, just as we are to count, cook, and tell stories; it's part of who we are as humans," says de Quadros. "Music provides a space for inspiration, for consolation, for community cohesion, for mobilization, for personal meaning."

DESIGN

Traveling exhibition *As, Not For: Dethroning Our Absolutes* highlights work of African American artists

By Mara Sassoon. Photos by Tony Luong

The Stone Gallery show *As, Not For: Dethroning Our Absolutes* made use of the exhibition space's recent renovations, which include replacing the street-level concrete façade with floor-to-ceiling windows, and adding new walls and glass doors.

Frustrated by the underrepresentation of Black artists in his field, Richmond, Va.–based graphic designer and educator Jerome Harris decided to launch an extensive research project on African American figures in the history of the practice.

"I was mostly seeing white men as the faces of graphic design. I wanted to prove to myself that folks who looked like me had been here all along," he says.

That body of research became a traveling exhibition, *As, Not For: Dethroning Our Absolutes*, which came to BU's recently renovated Faye G., Jo, and James Stone Gallery for a three-month run this past winter.

Harris says the title is derived from the writings of Alain Locke, a leader of the Harlem Renaissance. The first part, *As, Not For*, comes from a passage in Locke's 1925 anthology, *The New Negro*, which Harris says "calls for the expression of Blackness as it exists, and not for anyone's approval." The second half is from Locke's later essay, "Values and Imperatives." "In the context of the show, it is a direct way to invite patrons to challenge what they have already accepted as 'design history'—'dethroning our absolutes.'"

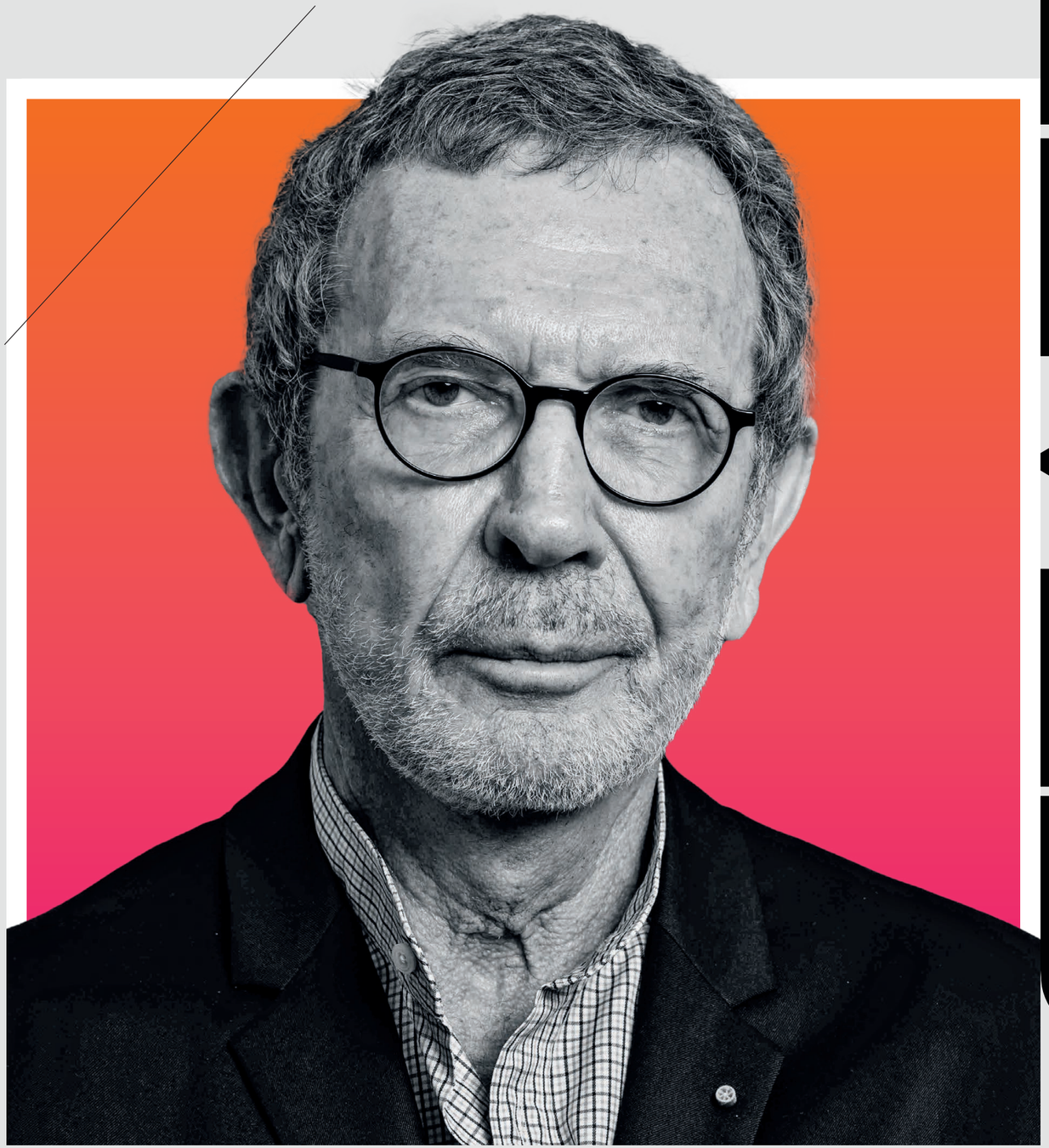
The exhibition includes work by African American graphic designers over the past century, such as Buddy Esquire, well known for creating early hip-hop concert flyers; Laini (Sylvia) Abernathy, who designed jazz album covers; and graffiti artist Phase 2. The artists' work is reproduced on posters of various sizes that fill gallery walls or stream down in long banners from the ceilings.

"There's still a lot of work that needs to be done in diversifying art and design education. The work by the African American designers featured in *As, Not For* reflects voices that were always there, but might not have been highlighted or discussed in the classroom," says Mary Yang, an assistant professor of art. Along with graphic design students Ashlie Dawkins ('22), Gabriela Ferrari ('22), Jay Li ('21), and Angela Lian ('21), she helped curate the show at the Stone Gallery. "It was important to bring this work to BU to form a conversation around the work: What has been neglected in design history? What work and who are we promoting and why?"

Yang and the student designers took advantage of the Stone Gallery's renovations—which saw floor-to-ceiling windows replace the street-level concrete façade—in planning the show. Some pieces were prominently placed on walls that faced the windows that open out to Comm Ave. At night, the prints were illuminated by purple light so passersby could clearly see the art.

"With the renovations, it seemed appropriate to give the work the space it deserves. I hope that those who saw the exhibition will remember the designers and their work and bring them into their own conversations," says Yang. "Most importantly, I hope visitors left inspired and with the desire to keep learning. We all play a role in shaping history and our designed world."

DIVERSITY



Kevin Sturman

PROFILE

ART LIFE

Art dealer Arne Glimcher on getting his start in Boston, how the art world has changed, and where he sees it headed in a postpandemic world

By Doug Most

Arne Glimcher, the founder of Pace Gallery—a contemporary art gallery with locations worldwide, from New York to Hong Kong—is one of America's most powerful art dealers. Even though it's been almost a decade since he turned over leadership of Pace to his son, Marc, his influence on the art world remains undeniable, and his opinion is still one of the most sought after in the industry. But when it comes to reflecting on getting his start in the world of fine art, and building his Pace empire, he isn't bashful about his time at Boston University. It was not great.

In April of 1960, while finishing his Bachelor of Fine Arts at the Massachusetts College of Art, and a few months before he would cross town to pursue his MFA at BU, Glimcher ('61) decided to open his own gallery on Newbury Street. With $2,800 from his family, he opened the space, which he named after his late father, Pace. At the start, the Pace Gallery showed the works of the only artists Glimcher knew—his art professors. In a video that Glimcher narrated in 2020 for the 60th anniversary of the Boston opening, he called it a time of "uncertainty, challenge, and hope."

A few months after the inaugural Pace Gallery opened, Glimcher, a 21-year-old artist with big ambitions for himself and his painting, and now a fledgling business manager, arrived at CFA. He came at the beginning of a cultural revolution, as post-war optimism and abstract expressionism gave way to the pop art phenomenon characterized by the work of Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg, Roy Lichtenstein, and David Hockney, among others. But at BU, he says, he felt stifled under the instruction of professors he viewed as too conservative for his own self-described "vanguard taste," and surrounded by students averse to risk-taking.

It was, to borrow an art metaphor, like mixing oil with water. He left BU before the end of his second year, and he turned his attention to his gallery.

Sixty years later, despite his frustrating period at BU, his time here has become an integral part of his own narrative. It helped him realize what he wanted to do with his life and how to pursue it. And it certainly didn't impede the success he would ultimately find, not only in the art world, where he's worked with the biggest names, from Chuck Close to David Hockney to Maya Lin to Alexander Calder to Julian Schnabel (to name only a few), but in Hollywood as well. In 1988 he produced the award-winning *Gorillas in the Mist*, and he also developed the important, award-winning documentary, *White Gold,* about the ivory trade in Africa, in association with the African Environmental Film Foundation.

In a wide-ranging conversation conducted over Zoom with Glimcher, who was staying at his home in East Hampton, he held little back. He acknowledges that society, culture, and the art world have changed dramatically over his lifetime, particularly so during the last 20 years. And he's at peace with that. "This is not my time," he says.

But he does have opinions on where the industry that he has given his life to, and that provided him with so much, is headed.

***CFA*: You were born in Duluth, Minnesota, right? Can you talk about how you came to BU in the first place?**

Glimcher: I was raised in Brookline, on St. Paul Street. I spent my youth at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and started to take classes there when I was eight years old. From the time I was four, I was only interested in art. In high school, I was writing English papers on Picasso's [large, 1937 oil painting] *Guernica*.

My time at BU was not long, but it was important for me. I went to school with [the artist] Brice Marden ('61, Hon.'07). We were there at the same time; it developed our relationship and years later, as I became a dealer, we both got married at the same time. He married Joan Baez's sister, and I married my wife, Milly.

Can you talk a little about your BU experience?

I came from Mass Art, a different side of the coin, where a lot of experimentation and the avant-garde was revered. At BU, figure painters were revered. Brice and I both had a lot of friction with the professors. He was not a classically talented draftsperson in life drawing classes, but his drawings were always interesting and inventive. I had more traditional ability.

And I had a studio and painted. But the students were much more conservative as well. I was a bit of a black sheep. Didn't get along with my professors, who thought that pop artists were a hoax, but it was a good thing. Then I realized the gallery was going to be a full-time job. I was much better at recognizing art than painting at my standards. I was a very good painter. But I wasn't good enough for me.

OK, let's pivot and talk about artists today and where you see the art world going. It has never been easy to be a successful artist.

It's a very good and important time for artists of color. And women. And LGBTQIA+ artists. Everything has sort of opened up in a political sense and that's great. But I do not think that it's opened up in any way significant in a structural sense.

What do you mean in a structural sense?

Right now, a great deal of art is heavily narrative, based on identity, race, and political movements. I think there is an important place for that. I think it's very significant, but my focus is still on abstraction and the modernist aesthetic, which I believe can still be a narrative about the artist's life through density and color, like Sam Gilliam's new paintings. Conveying emotion through pure color like Rothko did. Sam Gilliam's whole life is in his abstract paintings.

Why do you think that narrative art, as you say, based on identity and race and political movements, has taken off? Do you think in recent years, social media's played a role in how art is seen?

I think it contributes to it. Political awareness has extended the awareness of the human condition in a personal way—ideas and emotions.

How much of that is simply a function of the last 20 years and the internet? Online sales make up just 9 percent of global art sales, according to one study. But it's rising. Does it surprise you when people are willing to buy an expensive piece of art without seeing it in person? Would you do that?

It surprises me. I feel strongly that art needs to be experienced in person. However, having an online platform helped to connect our artists' work with audiences during the pandemic in this past year. So it is an important platform, even if it is different than what I have experienced and known.

Does that sadden you?

It doesn't break my heart, but it is a different way of collecting. But times change. I am a very old-fashioned man. This is not my time. It's my son's time, and he runs the gallery.

Let's talk about museums. Very few, with some exceptions like the Getty Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Museum of Modern Art, have large endowments to help them survive times like this. What will the museum business look like coming out of the pandemic?

I don't know. It's a very dangerous moment. It's a civic issue in many cities. Detroit [Institute of Arts] was going to sell a major part of its collection to keep its museum going. Finally the government of Michigan gave them the money they needed. There are going to have to be more rescue operations. I think Boston [Museum of Fine Arts] has a very good board, and will not let it sink.

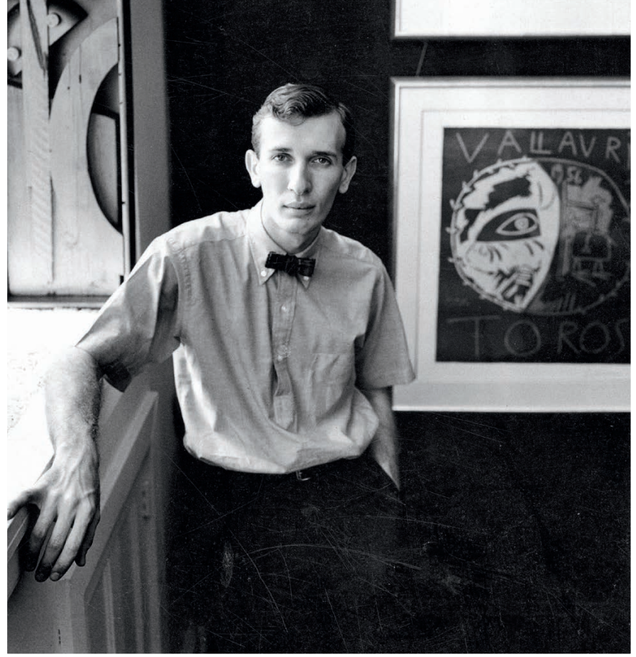
Museums are an integral part of the human experience; they have to survive. There are private museums that have opened, and that money could have gone to larger institutions to incorporate people's collections without building a vanity museum. That's unnecessary in the community.

Why did that start to happen? What changed?

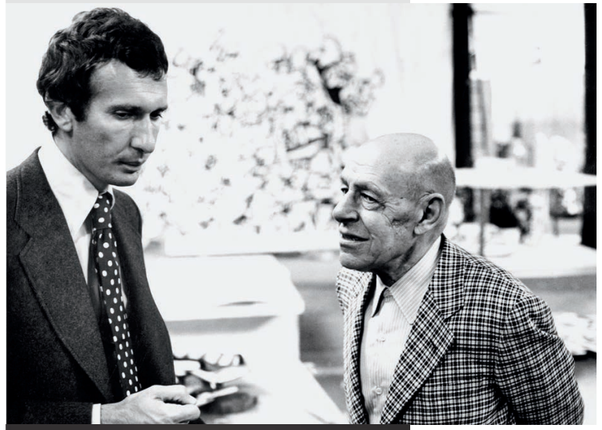
Ego is a much greater issue for collecting now than it was. In the '60s, '70s, and '80s, the coterie of collectors all knew each other and traveled the world and would go to each other's homes and see their collections. A lot of people kept collecting, but they didn't give to museums.

Do you have a story that helps explain this?

I remember the Tremaines [renowned art collectors Burton and Emily Hall Tremaine] owned Jasper Johns' *Three Flags*, which I sold to the Whitney Museum of American Art. I knew them very well, and they gave a lot to the National Gallery. They gave 70 works, all secondary pieces. But then Emily complained they were never on view.



Courtesy Pace Gallery



Courtesy Pace Gallery; Kevin Sturman

Clockwise, from left: Glimcher at the Pace Gallery on Newbury Street in 1961; Glimcher speaks to the French painter Jean Dubuffet; Glimcher with his son Marc, who is the president and CEO of Pace Gallery today.

"I go from gallery to gallery, and I see some wonderful things, but I want to be astonished and that's rare. Greatness is rare."

ARNE GLIMCHER

So I asked her, "What was your purpose in selling these things?" She said, "I don't think museums appreciate anything that they don't pay big money for." She was about to sell *Three Flags* to a great German collector, and I told her, "You can't let that go to Germany. It's the quintessential American painting. It has to go to the Whitney." I said, "If I can get you a million dollars, would you sell it to the Whitney?" She said, "Oh, sure a million would be fine." The Whitney raised the money and bought it for a million dollars. Things changed as art got valuable. At the time, *Three Flags* was the most expensive painting [by a living artist] ever sold at $1 million.

What role do you think art fairs play in the art market?

Art fairs are a way to meet dealers internationally. But the bad thing for dealers is that people used to come to New York or London to see exhibitions, and they'd come two or three times a year. Now dealers think they are seeing everything at the art fairs. They are not. They are seeing one example of the artist. But it's become a social situation, in a much broader sense, and less about the artworks.

I think that's what's happening. It's the same way people buy works of art on the screen. It's a social thing. Everything changes. I don't worry about any of it. Art is so powerful and has such an endemic role in human culture that you can't hurt that or stop that.

But it sounds like you do think art is suffering, that it's become more about a person's narrative, their own story?

I am not as interested in the artist's life as the artist's work. The danger with art fairs and this market is that dealers will ask their artists to create something for, say, Art Basel in Miami, because they need material to sell. I just ask the question: Is the creation of art something that comes from inspiration? Is the art fair a valid inspiration for making art? Maybe it is.

Any dissemination of art is valuable. But "any" doesn't necessarily interest me. [French painter] Jean Dubuffet said, "Beware of the newest art, for when it arrives you won't recognize it as art." Great art that broke boundaries was always in advance of the general public's perception.

Have you seen anything lately that excites you?

For me, all the newest art in general, with some exceptions, I have seen it all already. I go from gallery to gallery, and I see some wonderful things, but I want to be astonished and that's rare. Greatness is rare.

What would astonish you?

I have no idea. That's why it would astonish me. Something totally beyond my expectation. I have seen that a few times in my life, and it's really thrilling.

Do you think you'll experience that again?

I hope so. I will never stop looking. ●

Sarah Bassett ('15) sometimes turns to more physical crafts—like the cross-stitch pieces on the wall of her home studio here—to give her graphic design work a texture and depth, a tangibility, that Adobe software can't provide.

PROCESS

TACTILE MEDIA

Designer Sarah Bassett's creative process includes a treasure chest of inspiration, celebrity approvals, and the occasional cross-stitch

By Andrew Thurston

Photos by Patrick Strattner

Tapestry needles, embroidery floss, fabric canvas.

The essential tools of cross-stitch aren't exactly graphic design staples. But in an era when so much design lives on-screen, created with clicks and keystrokes, Sarah Bassett sometimes turns to more physical crafts—cross-stitch, printmaking, silk screen, collage—to give her graphic design work a texture and depth, a tangibility, that Adobe software can't provide.

Bassett ('15) made her first professional cross-stitch at Converse, which she joined as a CFA intern and left in 2020 after rising to senior designer. Curating an in-house gallery show celebrating design work and art by women at the footwear company, Bassett picked up a needle and thread for her own contribution: two cross-stitches emblazoned with "No" and "Nope."

"It was a traditional female-driven medium that I was taking ownership of," she says of her choice of cross-stitch for the show, *Ways to Go*, which coincided with International Women's Day 2019. It was also a way of pushing through her own fear of saying "no" to people. "Through the act of slowing down and focusing on each stitch, I was able to really ingrain those words ["No" and "Nope"] into my mind and meditate on that mantra as I created the piece."

Now a freelance designer and art director based in California, Bassett was most recently a senior designer of social and editorial at Hello Sunshine, the Reese Witherspoon–founded media company. She's created photo and video set designs, social media branding, packaging, and more. She's even produced another cross-stitch: a flower-framed two-word review, "Bloody Brilliant," for Lucy Foley's *The Guest List*, a summer 2020 pick for Hello Sunshine's Reese's Book Club. That combination of old-fashioned elegance and modern boldness became an Instagram promotion for the book.

"I've always looked at graphic design as a means of solving problems," says Bassett. "The first thing I ask myself is, 'What medium would serve this best?' In some instances, it's a cross-stitch; in some, an illustration; in some, it's tried-and-true graphic design."

A PRINTMAKER'S EYE

Many designers keep inspiration folders, others fill Pinterest boards. Bassett has an inspiration trunk. Originally her late uncle's, the dark wood and leather chest is edged with the dents and chips of frequent use.

"It's a treasure trove of clippings," says Bassett. "I collect small treasures in this trunk, hoping to bring new life to the bits I've found."

Among the paper gems: stacks of security tint envelopes, crosshatched with lines and swirls to keep prying eyes from looking at confidential mail. "All the patterns are so different. I love thinking about the secrets they keep." She last used them to inspire backgrounds on cards she silk-screened. The trunk also holds some unusual souvenirs from the part-time job Bassett had at CVS through high school and college.

"I worked in their photo department," she says. "They have photo machines where it trims the edges off prints." The offcuts are a bulky column of white edged by tiny slivers of photo. "They fascinate me. They create these beautiful patterns when stacked side by side."

Left and center: Bassett keeps a trunk filled with objects and patterns that she uses for design inspiration.

The "Bloody Brilliant" cross-stitch review was for Lucy Foley's *The Guest List*, a summer 2020 pick for Hello Sunshine's Reese's Book Club. It became an Instagram promotion for the book.

Top right: One of Bassett's recent personal projects outside of work is *The Way We Scroll*, a blog about minimizing her digital footprint, with tips for organizing photos and folders or ditching social media platforms.

Bottom right: Bassett collaborated with Hello Sunshine's video team on an August 2020 short film series called Book Shook, generating location inspiration boards and adding title text to the completed films.

Bassett traces her interest in patterns and textures back to printmaking classes at CFA. Although most of her design work isn't hand-crafted—Bassett leans on Adobe software as much as every other graphic designer—she encourages those starting in the industry to learn tactile, physical skills.

"In graphic design, Photoshop, we're working in layers," she says. "Printmaking really forces you to slow down and look, to consider layers in a meditative way: how are you building those fields of color, these textures on top of each other, to create the final image? It involves a lot of planning."

During the design process, Bassett mimics a printmaker's layering by combining computer-guided and more free-form design tools.

"I've been trying to bounce between my laptop and my iPad," says Bassett. She'll start by laying out type in InDesign, then export the file to her iPad where she'll use an Apple Pencil and the Procreate illustration app to add a hand-drawn element. "I juggle back and forth. It frees things up: when you're able to work with the Apple Pencil, it's a little less restricting."

It's a technique she recently used on a personal project, *The Way We Scroll*, a digital mindfulness and decluttering blog that Bassett says is "like Marie Kondo for the digital space."

"I first designed the logo in [Adobe] Illustrator and slightly stretched the script used in the word 'Way,'" she says. "I then imported the logo to Procreate and redrew the script and shifted the letters around until I was happy with it. I then brought it back into Illustrator to refine and finalize."

"IN GRAPHIC DESIGN, PHOTOSHOP, WE'RE WORKING IN LAYERS. PRINTMAKING REALLY FORCES YOU TO SLOW DOWN AND LOOK, TO CONSIDER LAYERS IN A MEDITATIVE WAY."

CELEBRITY PING-PONG

For many professional designers, the toughest part of the creative process is the pitch: steering their work past a creative director or client and incorporating—or pushing back on—everyone's suggestions. For most of Bassett's career, there's been another hurdle to navigate: winning celebrity approval.

At Converse, Bassett collaborated with singer Miley Cyrus and *Stranger Things* actor Millie Bobby Brown. Both have designed sneakers for the company and starred in its seasonal campaigns. Working with them on photo and video shoots required not just landing on a creative style that fit the Converse brand, says Bassett, but one that hit the mark for the celebrities—and the big-name photographers and filmmakers bringing the projects to life.

"Collaborating with celebrity talent is a really interesting challenge where you're trying to marry their brand with your brand," says Bassett.

When Brown designed a pair of Chucks, the brand's signature sneaker, Bassett art directed shoots in Boston and London with director and photographer Alexandra Gavillet. She created mood boards for locations, clothing, even lighting. Then came the refining and approvals.

"It's a constant pinball machine. Going out to the photographer to make sure they're feeling good about directing and photography, making sure the celebrity talent feels good, making sure my boss feels good—it's a lot of ping-ponging around making sure everybody's vision is on the same page."

Bassett says she aims to present three options for any project to help get her work through the approval process—and to allow herself some creative freedom.

"I always try to approach projects from a small, medium, large standpoint. The small solution is the one they asked for, the medium solution is what they asked for with a little bit of spice, and the large solution is my dream world," she says. "It really helps scratch that creative itch. In order to keep yourself excited, it's important to push yourself through that range. And sometimes, like 1 out of 10 times, they'll go with that larger, dreamy option."

BOOK CLUB

Mood boards and creative direction for celebrity shoots were also part of Bassett's job at Hello Sunshine, although the company's smaller size meant she was more hands on—dashing on set to move objects around and adding graphics packages to videos.

For an August 2020 short film series called Book Shook—celebrities like Witherspoon, *Black-ish*'s Yara Shahidi, and *The Good Place*'s Jameela Jamil talking about a book that changed their life—Bassett collaborated with the company's video team, generating location inspiration boards and adding title text to the films. For the latter, Bassett chose fonts (Origin Super Condensed and Archer Medium Italic, stretched and given extra heft with drop shadows) to complement the series' message.

"I wanted it to have this cinematic weight where the type itself is very large," she says. "The story is all about the book that really shook these women. The impact is something they'll never feel again, and I wanted that to come through in the typography."

Bassett only recently made the jump into freelance work, so she's now busy adding new clients to her roster. She's also starting a podcast, *At Your Own Risk*, with illustrator Dana Drew. In every episode, the pair will interview creatives and entrepreneurs, with a particular focus on imposter syndrome, the feeling of self-doubt that leads many to believe they're not cut out for their chosen field.

"I've found that since there is a stigma in carving a career path in the arts, I always skewed on the side of playing it safe: I used to define success as finding stability in my career, even if that meant, at times, compromising my passions," she says. "What I'm embracing moving forward is that taking risks that keep your priorities, values, and passions at the forefront will always be worth it." ●

CLASS NOTES

WRITE TO US!
We want to hear what you've been up to. Send us your stories and photos, and we'll share the highlights here. Email **cfaalum@bu.edu**.

1960s

Erica Miner ('67), an award-winning author and former Metropolitan Opera violinist, released *Staged for Murder* (Twilight Times Books, 2020), the newest installment in her popular Opera Mysteries novel series. The novel is set at the San Francisco Opera.

Larry Marsland ('68) performed during the 17th Annual Telethon for Hope, a daylong fundraising event that culminated with an evening of music to celebrate the work the Housing Assistance Corporation Cape Cod is doing to keep people safely housed throughout Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket, Mass.

Philip G. Simon ('69) retired from his position as director of bands and associate professor of music at Wilkes University in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. Simon was appointed professor emeritus in June 2019 and continues to teach part-time in the music program at Wilkes. He is active as a conductor, private teacher, arranger, music festival adjudicator, and performer in the northeastern Pennsylvania region.

1970s

Winifred McNeill ('72) presented her recent ceramic sculpture and charcoal drawings at the Art House Gallery in Jersey City, N.J. She completed the work shortly before the lockdown was issued during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nancy Hankin ('73) received a Henry Award from the Colorado Theatre Guild for costume design for the production of *The Great American Trailer Park Musical* at the Butte Theater, Cripple Creek, Colo. The Henry Awards honor outstanding achievements during the past season and serve as the Colorado Theatre Guild's annual fundraising event.

Robert Braczyk ('74) had his open form, wooden sculptures from his series *A Vocabulary of Trees* included in the exhibition *Moments in Time...* at Carter Burden Gallery in New York, N.Y. An environmentalist, Braczyk uses his work to call attention to climate change.

Katherine Austin ('75,'78) creates realistic oil paintings of classic and antique cars. You can see her work at katherineaustin.com.

Carol Barsha ('75,'77) had a solo exhibition of her art, *Within My Meadow*, at Gallery Neptune & Brown in Washington, D.C., in fall 2020. She also had her work featured in the exhibition *Landscape in an Eroded Field* at the American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center in winter 2020. Barsha's work explores nature through mixed media.

Jane Musky ('76) cochaired the Americares Airlift Benefit Livestream. The benefit raised $1.8 million for the health-focused relief and development organization's programs worldwide.

Anne Lucas' ('77) play, *Good Morning*, was streamed in January 2021 from the Warner Theatre in Torrington, Conn., as part of the virtual 9th Annual International Playwrights Festival.

Robert Stuart ('77) exhibited his paintings in two shows: *Linear Rhythms*, an exhibition by Garvey|Simon Gallery at the Artisan Lofts in New York, N.Y., and *#stillcontemporary* at Hodges Taylor in Charlotte, N.C., which celebrated the gallery's 40th anniversary.

Chris Byrne ('78), known as "The Toy Guy," appeared on *Live with Kelly and Ryan* in December 2020 to highlight the season's hottest toys.

Pat Walker ('78) was the juror for the Wellesley Society of Artists (WSA) annual exhibit in Wellesley, Mass., which featured works by 45 WSA artists, including paintings in oil, acrylic, watercolor, and mixed media. Walker is an artist, teacher, and arts administrator.

1980s

Ben Aronson ('80,'82) participated in a virtual conversation about his paintings with gallerist Karen Jenkins-Johnson in July 2020.

Peter Del Vecho ('80) produced the animated film *Raya and the Last Dragon*, which was released in March 2021 on Disney+ and in theaters.

Peter Krasinski ('80, STH'98), a world-renowned organist and silent film accompanist, became the house organist for the Providence Performing Arts Center in Providence, R.I. Krasinski is the theater's first house organist in 22 years.

Lynne Kwarcinski ('82, Wheelock'86) retired from her 38-year

Courtesy of the artist and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York

HOWARDENA PINDELL ('65) showed her work in an exhibition titled *Rope/Fire/Water* at The Shed in New York, N.Y., from October 16, 2020, through March 28, 2021. The museum billed it as "an exhibition about the brutality of racism and the healing power of art." Pictured here: *Four Little Girls* (2020) Mixed media on canvas, 108 x 120 in. The painting refers to the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham, Ala., in 1963.

career teaching music in Concord, Mass., public schools.

Julianne Moore ('83) participated in a virtual reading of Peter Hedges' play *Good as New* for the MCC Theater in New York, N.Y., in July 2020. Proceeds from the performance and a subsequent Q&A benefited the theater and its Be Our Light Campaign.

Michael Chiklis ('85) appeared in Adam Sandler's Netflix comedy *Hubie Halloween* as the preacher Father Dave. His show, *Coyote*, premiered on CBS All Access in January 2021. Also in January, he participated in a virtual conversation with CFA to discuss the series and his career. He is set to play former Boston Celtics coach Red Auerbach in an upcoming HBO series about the Los Angeles Lakers in the 1980s.

Dianne Betkowski ('86) is the cellist for Miguel Espinoza Flamenco Fusion, a Denver-based world music band. The band is working on its third CD and eighth music video.

1990s

Lourdes De La Mata Little ('90) is the vice president of marketing and communications for Goodwill South Florida. She served as the executive director of Goodwill South Florida's award-winning documentary, *For Once in My Life*, which "chronicles the struggles and triumphs of a unique and diverse band of singers and musicians, with a wide range of mental and physical disabilities." Goodwill South Florida celebrated the 10th anniversary of the film in September 2020.

Erik Blome ('92) created a bust of Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable, who is known as the "Founder of Chicago." The bust has been on the north side of the Michigan Avenue Bridge (DuSable Bridge) since 2009. Blome is now working on a similar sculpture of DuSable's wife, Kitihawa.

Anne Harley ('94,'96,'06) is an associate professor of music at Scripps College in Claremont, Calif. She is the founder and director of Voices of the Pearl, which commissions new contemporary classical music settings of texts by and about female esoteric practitioners from all world traditions from composers around the world. Voices of the Pearl recently released its third album, which includes two pieces that were awarded the National Endowment for the Arts Art Works grant.

Courtesy of the artist and Gaa Gallery, Provincetown

ERIKA WASTROM ('12), a portrait painter and 13th-generation Cape Codder, had her work featured in an exhibition at the Gaa Gallery in Provincetown, Mass. Above: ***Ways of Seeing Nature (Jed and the snake)*** **(2020) Mixed media on paper, 16.5 x 16.5 in.**

Tanya Saracho ('98) joined many Latinx show creators, showrunners, and writers in penning an open letter calling for systemic change in the entertainment industry and diversity in Latinx storytelling and hiring. It was inspired by Saracho's Untitled Latinx Project initiative, an advocacy group formed to increase Latinx representation in television, broadcast, cable, and streaming platforms through content created by Latinx writers.

Thea Lobo (BUTI'99,'00, CFA'09) and **Sam Nelson ('18)** created the Indictus Project, a nonprofit organization dedicated to amplifying the voices of underrepresented composers.

2000s

Kate Elliott ('00) recently left her 20-year career working in and around the New York City theater scene. She previously worked with RCI Theatricals as the general manager of Broadway's *Jagged Little Pill*, the national touring company of *Oklahoma!*, and the Huey Lewis–inspired musical *The Heart of Rock & Roll*.

Howard Tran ('00), a professor and chair of the art department at Lycoming College in Williamsport, Pa., exhibited his work at the school's 2020 studio art faculty show. Tran explores his Vietnamese/Chinese background through work that ranges from figurative sculpture to two-dimensional pieces.

Ginnifer Goodwin ('01) is one of many celebrity guests on the Disney+ series *Earth to Ned,* in which alien Ned hosts a late-night talk show.

Ashley Williams ('01) played Shanann Watts in Lifetime's *Chris Watts: Confessions of a Killer*, an adaptation of a true crime story. Williams also appeared in two Hallmark Christmas movies, *Christmas in Evergreen: Bells Are Ringing* and *Never Kiss a Man in a Christmas Sweater*.

Baron Vaughn ('03) was a guest on NPR's *Ask Me Another*. He spoke about his Comedy Central stand-up and sketch series *The New Negroes*, and his Funny or Die topical web series *Call and Response*.

Uzo Aduba ('05) won the 2020 Emmy for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Limited Series or Movie for her role as Shirley Chisholm in *Mrs. America*. Aduba, amongst many other celebrities, used the moment to spotlight the Black Lives Matter movement and chose her outfit to call attention to the murder of Breonna Taylor. Additionally, the Creative Coalition honored Aduba at its Television Humanitarian Awards Virtual Gala. The Emmy week event honors individuals from the television industry who have used their platform for social change.

Adam Kassim ('05,'21) is one of four recipients of the 2020 National Directors Fellowship, an 18-month program that connects early-career directors to new writers and provides professional support services.

Janos Stone ('07) launched a Kickstarter for his unique, foldable playhouse design for children called Haus. Stone hopes the playhouse engages young children in activity, exploration, and creativity at home.

Autumn Ahn ('08), Erik Grau ('10), Marc Schepens ('12), Julian Parikh (COM'15, CFA'20), Tyler Sorgman ('16), Joshua Duttweiler ('17), Ania Garcia Llorente ('20), Julian MacMillan ('20), Josh Richards ('20), Charles Suggs ('20), and **Madison Vander Ark ('20)** were featured in Area Code, the first art fair exclusively featuring contemporary artists with ties to New England, in August 2020.

Sarah Atwood (BUTI'08, CFA'14), the principal second violin in the Boston Lyric Opera and the Portland Symphony, created the "Pandemic Paganini Project," for which she learned and recorded all of Paganini's 24 Caprices. All videos were posted on YouTube.

Mario Arévalo ('09) is an opera tenor and Goodwill Ambassador for Culture and Fine Arts for The United Nations Association of El Salvador. Arévalo helped raise funds for the construction of a cultural center for poor families in San Vicente, El Salvador, the first of its kind in the area. Arévalo is also the founder of the organization Una Voz, Un Mundo (One Voice, One World), an arts initiative committed to humanitarian aid, arts advocacy, and the celebration of cultural openness and diversity. The organization focuses on the artistic contributions of women and people of color.

2010s

Paul dePoo ('10) and **Ellie Heyman ('12)** conceived *The Great Work Begins*, a benefit performance of scenes from Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*, in support of amfAR's Fund to Fight COVID-19. The cast included Glenn Close, Paul Dano, Patti LuPone, and Laura Linney. The 60-minute performance was livestreamed on Broadway.com's YouTube channel on October 8, 2020. DePoo served as the creative director and Heyman as the director.

Bryan Powell ('11) cowrote *Popular Music Pedagogies: A Practical Guide for Music Teachers* (Routledge, 2020). Powell is an assistant professor of music education and music technology at Montclair State University.

Carolyn Regula (BUTI'11, CFA'15,'18) was featured in the performance The Twelve Days of (a Cellist's) Christmas. The production, which mixed in some classical music humor, included Regula and 11 other cellists from around the world, and was created to provide holiday cheer and show the perseverance of musicians. It is available to watch on YouTube.

Marc Schepens ('12), a painting lecturer at CFA, received the 2020 Blanche E. Colman Award. The award grant, which was established in 1959 in honor of Colman, a former art instructor at BU, is given to New England artists who have completed their formal education and exhibit considerable talent in painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking, mixed media, or photography.

Gail Shalan ('12) is an actor, audiobook narrator, and puppeteer. She recently narrated Saadia Faruqi's middle grade fiction book *A Thousand Questions* for HarperAudio Kids, Alexandra Rowland's *Finding Faeries* for Simon & Schuster, and *Project Runway* judge Nina Garcia's *The Little Black Book of Style* for Tantor Audio. She also launched the *StoryLight* podcast, a serialized release of beloved childhood classics read by actors from around the world, in response to the pandemic.

Peter Archer ('14), a music educator and professional trumpet player, served as one of several music consultants on Pixar's *Soul*. Archer weighed in on the characters, animation, and script.

Jamie Hillman ('14) joined the faculty at Longy School of Music of Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y., in summer 2020. He teaches graduate conducting and various graduate music education courses.

Kyung-ah Kim ('14), who is on the piano faculties of the Seoul National University and the Seoul Middle School of the Arts, gave a

Curtis Brown

MICHAEL JUDSON BERRY ('09) gained a large following for his comedic content on TikTok. His impressions of Catherine O'Hara's *Schitt's Creek* character, Moira Rose, have amassed millions of views and drawn praise from O'Hara herself.

piano recital at the Seoul National Arts Center on October 20, 2020.

Jennifer Greene ('15), **Matt Kopernik ('15)**, **Laura Moates Stanley ('15)**, and **Heather Katz-Cote ('16)** had their article "A Foot in Both Worlds: Navigating the Landscapes of P–12 Education Postdoctorate" published in the *Journal of Music Teacher Education*. The piece is a report on their collective autoethnography, in which they explored their experiences teaching music in P–12 schools after completing an online doctorate at Boston University.

Kelley Hollis ('15) was featured in the October 2020 issue of *Gramophone* magazine for her work as a soprano.

Hannah Lynn Cohen (BUTI'16, CFA'19) performed with Jeremiah Blacklow as part of The Evolution of The Violin Duo at Bobbie's Fall Series with the Berkshire Theatre Group in Stockbridge, Mass., in September 2020. The performance included selections from the baroque era up to contemporary 20th-century duets.

Brian Robillard ('16), **Aja Jackson ('18)**, **Sarah Shin ('19)**, and **Micah Rosegrant ('21)** worked together on Central Square Theater's production of *The First Pineapple and Other Folktales*, which was part oral history, part play, and part concert. Rosegrant was the writer and performer, Shin was the director, Jackson was the lighting designer, and Robillard worked in management.

Erin Zaffini ('16) and **Nicholas Quigley ('19)** had articles published in the January 2021 issue of the *Massachusetts Music Educators Journal*.

Marcio Candido ('17), a violinist, released the album *Brazil x Argentina* with pianist Katia Balloussier in July 2020. It is available on all digital platforms.

Chengcheng Ma ('17,'23), a pianist, was the first prize award winner and recipient of the John Liu New York State Senator Award at the 2020 Manhattan International Music Competition.

Matt Scinto ('17) founded the Cape Cod Orchestra and has built collaborative programs around the Cape Cod area. The orchestra, which includes many BU alumni, has recorded several virtual concerts for this season.

Russell Wagoner ('17) participated in a livestream Christmas concert to raise money for mission outreach at Jesse Lee United Methodist Church in Easton, Conn.

DuWayne Dale ('18) was named the District 8 College/University Teacher of the Year by the Kentucky Music Educators Association. Dale is an assistant professor of music and director of bands at Morehead State University in Morehead, Ky.

Trevor Kowalski ('18) is a composer, pianist, arranger, and songwriter. After CFA, Kowalski took part in an internship at Hans Zimmer's studio in California. He has worked with award-winning filmmakers, game developers, singers and soloists, animators, orchestras, and theater directors, and is currently working on soundtracks and studio recordings.

Ashlee Lamar ('18,'20) received the Encouragement Award from the Connecticut District Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

Jin Yu ('18) has recently performed in major performance venues in China, including Changsha and Shenzhen Concert Halls; Hangzhou and Zhuhai Grand Theatres; and Suzhou Culture and Arts Center. Yu is an assistant professor at Jin'an University in China.

Emilie Faiella ('19) was a winner at the 2020–21 Utah District Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and competed at the Rocky Mountain Regionals.

Xiao Liu ('19) joined the Chinese Instrument Orchestra at the Xinghai Conservatory of Music in fall 2020. Liu writes that she is dedicated to creating a bridge between flute and Chinese music and hopes to present the traditions in a new way.

Logan Lower ('19) was the Super Bowl LV Halftime Show TAIT Towers project manager. TAIT Towers, the shop that built all of the scenery for the show, is the leader in "designing, constructing, and delivering world-class solutions for live experiences."

Michael Pfitzer ('19) is the director of choral studies at the State University of New York at Albany. He participated as a conductor in a drive-in a cappella performance in Stow, Mass., in fall 2020.

Alex Schneps (CGS'10, COM'12, CFA'19) is the events and programming manager at WBUR CitySpace. In 2020, Schneps was involved in WBUR's virtual series Black Boston, which featured transformative Black leaders from across the city.

Jack McGovern

JULIA NOULIN-MÉRAT (MET'06, CFA'08) was named the general director and CEO of Opera Columbus in Ohio in January 2021. Noulin-Mérat previously served as associate producer of the Boston Lyric Opera and co-artistic director of Guerilla Opera, also in Boston.

2020s

Megan Callahan ('20), a mezzo-soprano, was awarded an Encouragement Award at the North Carolina District Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

Caroline Corrales ('20,'22) was chosen as a finalist in the Artist Division of the Carolyn Bailey and Dominick Argento Vocal Competition hosted by the National Opera Association.

Julian Parikh (COM'15, CFA'20) was selected for AIGA NY's annual student showcase celebrating graduate education. In their graphic design work, Parikh explores narrative storytelling and how queer forms of experimentation can help us better communicate content and ideas.

Alex Harris

ELVIS INSPIRES A SHORT FILM ABOUT GENDER IDENTITY

By Taylor Mendoza

IN THE TRAILER for the short film *GraceLand*, a young child stands over a bathroom sink and determinedly snips off chunks of their hair. They plaster down what remains with a slick of dark shoe polish. Grace's mom thinks her child is just another cute 10-year-old girl; Grace knows different. They believe they are the reincarnation of rock 'n' roll legend Elvis Presley.

Bonnie Discepolo ('03), the cowriter and director of the film, says the idea for Grace came to them fully formed. "It was as if this boy just walked into my consciousness and was right there, fully realized, and saying, 'They think I'm a girl, but actually, I'm a boy and I'm Elvis.'"

GraceLand, which was released in August 2020, stars Katie Beth West as 10-year-old Grace/Elvis and *Pitch Perfect*'s Anna Camp as their mother, Prissy. The film focuses on Prissy's struggle to accept that Grace identifies as the King of Rock 'n' Roll.

GraceLand is close to Discepolo's heart. They grew up in South Carolina, where they participated in theater as a child with Camp and actress Monique Coleman, who plays a teacher in the film. They received a South Carolina Film Commission Indie Grant to shoot the film in Charleston. "Growing up in the South, it felt very personal to be misunderstood and misidentified," Discepolo says. "I was interested in rewriting what it would look like if the parents and the teachers, the authority figures, went on the emotional journey to do the changing, if the child was able to just say, 'This is who I am.'"

Discepolo thought of the film's premise while they were working on filmmaker Robert Rodriguez's television series *Rebel Without a Crew*. As part of the series, they were among five filmmakers tasked with making a film in 14 days with a $7,000 budget. They were in the middle of shooting a particularly gory scene when, Discepolo says, "I just thought, 'Gosh, that was really dark. The next movie I do, I want to bring joy into the world.' And immediately, little Elvis walked into my mind's eye." From that kernel of an idea, the rest of the film emerged. *GraceLand* took about a year and a half to finish.

So why Elvis? "I thought, 'What if a trans child showed up and wasn't just saying that they're a boy, but also that they were the reincarnation of a music icon that is revered specifically by the people who are not accepting?'" Discepolo says.

After wrapping up *GraceLand*, Discepolo has been juggling a few projects. They are hoping to get back into acting and have been writing a film about the first female cosmonaut. Discepolo is also collaborating with *GraceLand* cowriter Trevor Munson on a feature-length version of the film. "The pandemic has given me time to write, so I'm focusing on what I can do, so that when we get out of quarantine, I have material to film."

Boston University College of Fine Arts

855 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
bu.edu/cfa