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CFA Newsletter September 2020



Update on our 2020-2021 Season

The College has always been committed to providing the highest quality in arts programming. We recognize, however, that current circumstances necessitate changes in the presentation of this programming. Some may be live with limited audience participation, and some will be totally presented on virtual platforms.

Our promise is to keep you informed of these changes as we navigate this situation together – through our website, newsletters and social media. We appreciate your continued support and feedback.



Welcome message from Dean Rodney Miller

From the very beginning, the arts were a part of Fairmount, and when Fairmount became the University of Wichita in 1926, the College of Fine Arts was founded. That's why we are dedicating this 125th anniversary year to a celebration of significant and memorable events of both past and present. For now, however, COVID-19 has put most of our events, especially those involving an audience, on hold. What we are presenting instead is this newsletter, which will showcase the many wonderful happenings going on in our College despite our ever-changing circumstances.

Since its inception, the College of Fine Arts has proven its impact not only locally in Wichita and Kansas, but nationally and internationally as well. We have a storied legacy of hiring superb faculty and staff who mentor, teach, and train students that go on to change the world. Faculty and alumni from the College of Fine Arts have won or been nominated for just about every major arts award there is, and the seeds of those accomplishments can be found in every facet of the College today.

I have no doubt that faculty, staff, and students will continue to accomplish great things even during this time, and together with our community of supporters, we will persevere for the sake of what binds us together—a passion for and dedication to the arts.



WSU creates new School of Digital Arts

Two years after the successful launch of Wichita State University's Bachelor of Applied Arts (BAA) in Media Arts program, the university has created the new School of Digital Arts. The school will be the fourth school within WSU's College of Fine Arts and will encompass the BAA program, which includes concentrations in animation, audio production, filmmaking, game design and collaborative design.

[Read full story](#)

2020 Mickey and Pete Armstrong Faculty Excellence Awards



Excellence in Special Fine Arts Endeavor - Levente Sulyok

Levente Sulyok is Associate Professor and Associate Director of Painting and Applied Drawing for the School of Art, Design and Creative Industries. Levente was born and raised in Hungary and moved to the U.S. in 1991. His interest in philosophy - particularly the relationship between aesthetics, language, and the politics of resistance - can be seen throughout his work. Sulyok's career boasts numerous solo exhibitions, as well as more than 30 group exhibitions in Kansas, Texas, California, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey and Rhode Island.

Levente received the Excellence in Special Fine Arts Endeavor award for his commissioned installations of two site-specific, large-scale

public projects with 2-year durations. *Elements (Wind)* and *Elements (Sun)*, are important contributions to WSU's Innovation Campus, raising the visibility of the College of Fine Arts and establishing that the arts are not only relevant, but a driving force in innovation at Wichita State.



Excellence in Creative/Scholarly Activity - Ted Adler

Ted Adler is Associate Professor of Ceramics Media in the School of Art, Design and Creative Industries. Adler has exhibited work, conducted workshops, and served as a visiting artist at numerous ceramic centers and universities in the United States and internationally.

Last fall, Adler collaborated with Ksenya Gershtein, the Ulrich Museum Curator, and Brenda Lichman, a Wichita artist and teacher at East High School, to produce the exhibition *Clay Currents*. This exhibition drew together some of the most prominent and influential ceramic artists from across the nation and beyond. It received recognition in *Ceramics Monthly*, the most widely distributed periodical dedicated to ceramic art, which has a strong international readership. This was a professional consultancy as well as a collaborative creative project.

This summer, The Northern Clay Center opened an exhibition of work (online, due to COVID) produced by the six McKnight Artists-in-Residence and Artist Fellows from 2018 and 2019. As one of the two 2018 recipients, Adler was included in this exhibition, which was documented in a full color catalog.

Last spring, Adler's book review of *JB Blunk* was published in *Studio Potter*, a magazine with a large national readership, notable in that it is funded solely by subscriptions, rather than advertising. It is widely respected as a scholarly publication.



Dorothy Johansen Hauck Faculty Fellow - Amy Baker Schwiethale

Amy Baker Schwiethale, Associate Professor and Program Director of Musical Theatre for the School of Performing Arts, has been named the 2020 Dorothy Johansen Hauck Faculty Fellow.

Born and raised in the Heartland, Amy is happy to be back teaching at Wichita State University after a professional career in New York City. After performing professionally on shows such as the First National Broadway Tour of *42nd Street*, *The Radio City Christmas Spectacular*, and with other renowned regional theaters, Amy realized that her life's passion is teaching.

She has a remarkable way of connecting with students to help them cultivate the necessary techniques of their craft, challenging them to push past their limits while empowering them with confidence and synthesizing their unique talents, passions and interests into tangible career opportunities.



Excellence in Teaching - Jeannine Russell

Jeannine Russell is Instructor of Theatre in the School of Performing Arts, but has recently expanded into teaching more courses in her true area of expertise: Script Analysis and Scriptwriting. These courses not only benefit School of Performing Arts majors, but are required for those within the School of Digital Arts who pursue Animation, Filmmaking, and Game Design.

One graduate student who nominated Russell said "(She) makes classes fun. She challenges her students to understand why the script was written the way it was and how each character fits into the plot."

Current students describe Russell as having "abundant expertise and passion for her craft, excell(ing) in the art of educating. She made convoluted stories easier to understand."



Excellence in Teaching - Kelly Johnson

Kelly Johnson is Assistant Educator and Program Director of Game Design for the School of Digital Arts. Despite being the newest School within the College of Fine Arts, the School of Digital Arts continues to grow at a rapid rate, partially due to the dedication and hard work of faculty such as Johnson.

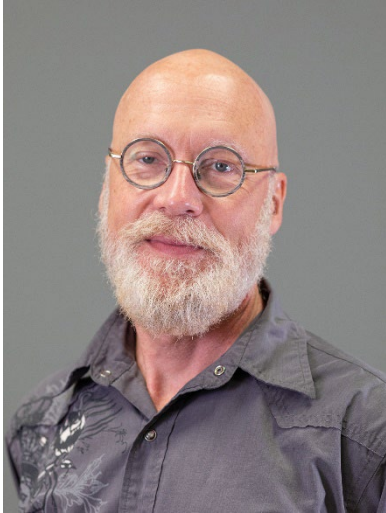
Students had many testimonials to share about Kelly's impact as an educator:

"He has encouraged and motivated me thought this tough times and I feel super lucky to have him as a teacher."

"Kelly Johnson has always been there to help me improve and work hard to achieve my goals. He has never given up on any decision, but instead encourages to further explore what could be done with it."

"Since taking his class I have viewed games in a substantially different light...By focusing his class on the how to think like a designer, rather than the cookie cutter steps of game design, he enables his students to flourish. Outside of class he's very dedicated to his students. I typically see him in the computer work room assisting students between classes or staying after to look at his student's work."

"Kelly Johnson has a way of setting the spirits of his students on fire...Sometimes all a student needs to succeed in life is to believe in themselves. Which, in today's world is severely lacking. (He) firmly roots them into the soils of hard work and a passion for learning."



Excellence in Teaching - Mark Foley

Mark Foley is Program Director of Audio Production for the School of Digital Arts. He also serves as Professor of Double Bass and Electric Bass and Coordinator of Contemporary Media for the School of Music.

Foley is Principal Double Bass of the Wichita Symphony Orchestra, and he spends his summers with the orchestra of the Colorado Music Festival in Boulder. A mainstay of the Wichita jazz scene, Mark is a first-call bassist for club dates and sessions with local and national players.

Mark is also the founder and musical director of the Knob Festival of New Music, an annual series of concerts presenting performances of wildly diverse new works by local, national and international artists.

Foley's passion for music is evident in the classroom and beyond. Students spoke highly of Foley in their nominations:

"He cares about your mental and physical health. And helps you to understand a concept to the fullest degree possible even if it takes the whole class."

"I was having so much trouble understanding Aural Skills concepts and he made it simple and he didn't make me feel stupid when I didn't understand something. I always appreciate that."

"As a Media Arts student, I am thankful that Mark has spent hours developing the digital and analog studios down at WSU South. I am also extremely grateful for the work he does with the music program. Mark is extremely inspiring and a fantastic person to have on campus."

"Mark Foley has my two favorite qualities in a professor- the ability to make every one of his students feel special and valid and a thirst for wanting to keep learning his whole life."



Excellence in Teaching - Denise Celestin

Denise Celestin is Professor of Dance in the School of Performing Arts, specializing in ballet. She has performed with the New Orleans Ballet, Fort Worth Ballet and BalletMet Columbus, and served on the faculties of BalletMet Academy, Otterbein College, and the Ohio State University. Celestin has participated as a coach in the USA International Ballet Competition, and has choreographed a wide range of works for Ballet and Opera.

In addition to her expertise in her craft, Denise excels as an educator. In one nomination, a Musical Theatre student said, "(Celestin) is not only an icon but an institution in the School of Performing Arts. She inspires everyone to be the best they can be. She went out of her way to make me feel like I was just as important as the already trained dancers (in her class) and I'm not a good dancer by

any means.

"Denise is so passionate about her work and passionate about making sure her students understand it. She has inspired me to pursue taking ballet as often and continuously as possible. I learned to love dance because of her. She changed my life as well as (those of) countless other students."

Music Associates inducted into College of Fine Arts Hall of Fame after reaching \$1 million in fundraising

At the end of December 2019, Music Associates passed the \$1 million milestone in donations received since 1993. For this notable achievement, the patron group was inducted into the 2020 College of Fine Arts Hall of Fame.

Music Associates was founded in 1993 to support the Wichita State University School of Music. Since then, community members have been pooling their financial resources into a single fund dedicated to aiding students within the School of Music. Members of the organization range from School of Music alumni who want to give back to the university that shaped them, to music enthusiasts who enjoy supporting musicians in the Wichita community.

Members of Music Associates share one common goal—enhancing opportunities for Wichita State University music students. Their gifts mainly fund scholarships, but they also fund trips to perform across the country, bringing guest artists to campus, and sending students to symposiums. Without Music Associates, students would not be able to partake in these experiences that prepare them for successful careers after graduation.

Below is a video of Joe Emery, President of Music Associates, accepting the 2020 Hall of Fame award.





Kansas African American museum exhibition spotlights women artists of color

(Original story by Emily Christensen)

The works in The Kansas African American Museum's exhibition "Shades of Strength and Beauty" portray women of color in all their complexity: defiant, nurturing, wise, proud, relaxed and celebratory.

"I looked for pieces that showed women of color in ways that they aren't necessarily conventionally shown," says Paris Cunningham, who is both the curator and an exhibiting artist.

Eight students and alumni from Wichita State's School of Art, Design and Creative Industries contributed work to the exhibition, a juried show of portraits of and by 20 women of color. A gallery of work from "Shades of Strength and Beauty" appears below this story.

Cunningham said she was attracted to work that portrayed softness and femininity as well as strength. One of her favorite pieces is "Boy, Bye!" a painting by Wichita State alumna Joanna Herman. "Boy, Bye!" reinterprets Roy Lichtenstein's "Ohhh ... Alright..." The iconic pop art painting depicts a white woman

cradling a phone, seemingly disappointed by (but resigned to) what the man on the other end just said. In contrast, Herman's Black subject has no time for passive agreement.

"I think there's great strength in how brash it is," says Cunningham, who first encountered Herman's work at R Coffeehouse in Riverside.

Cunningham is also inspired by the work of Lily Guillen, a third-year graduate student at Wichita State. She pauses in front of "Incepción," a large mixed media piece that includes an unfocused black and white photo of a woman. If you look a little closer, you can see the subject is blurred by movement; she seems to be looking downward and to the right, then left and quickly back again. The photo is affixed to canvas in part with lines of gold embroidery, which match the gold-painted matchsticks that criss-cross the photograph and embellish the canvas.

"It does what good art makes you do," Cunningham says. "It makes you look into it, but also past it, to the concepts behind the piece."

[Read full story](#)



"Hiding in Plain Sight" surfaces an artist's anxiety

(Original story by Emily Christensen)

Chuck Purviance's ceramic sculptures function as a visual representation of anxiety, a heightened state that interferes with how a person interacts with the world.

"No piece is a representation of a day, or an event, or an anxiety attack," Purviance said. "They all collectively represent different elements, imagined representations of my anxiety."

The brightly hued sculptures also represent how the artist has accepted anxiety as part of his identity.

"I see the work as a way to showcase and display these inner states, take ownership of them, and make the intangible tangible," he wrote in his terminal paper.

"Hiding in Plain Sight" is the result of Purviance's three years of graduate study at Wichita State.

The Pittsburgh native and alumnus of Edinboro University made functional pottery before he entered graduate school. At Wichita State, Purviance found himself drawn to sculptural and specifically figural ceramic work.

Purviance began cranking out figural sculptures after returning from the 2018 iteration of NCECA, the massive annual ceramic education conference.

Another major influence was Ted Adler, associate professor of ceramic media, who encouraged Purviance to take an intuitive approach to his work.

"Shut your brain down, stop thinking about critical writing, just start making stuff almost from your gut," Purviance said. "I really took that to heart."