Perspective Shifts

Pratt folio

The Magazine of Pratt Institute

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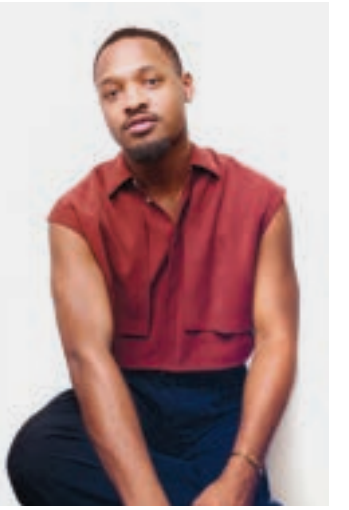

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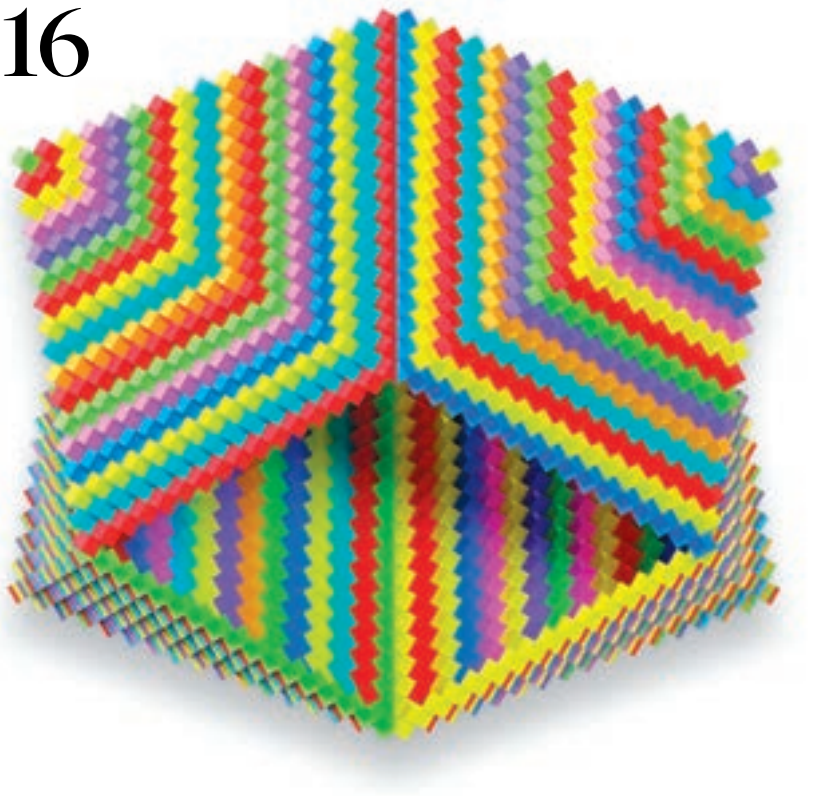

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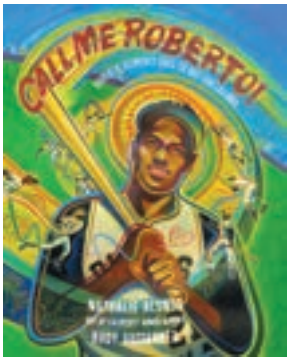

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Reflecting on Transition and Transformation

Photo by Megan Proctor, BFA Photography '25

Spring is always a time of culminating energy at Pratt, and it is also a time of transitions. Students become professionals, admitted students prepare to join Pratt's community, and at the cascade of end-of-year events that are underway as I write this, we take a moment to reflect on the promise of these pivotal stages. There is uncertainty, there may be doubt, but practice, experimentation, and collaboration with our people have prepared us to take those next steps into the different or unknown.

I must acknowledge the unpredictability we have collectively been facing and the caution and concern this has generated on all levels, from the institutional to the personal. In my conversations with our community, I have emphasized our guiding principles: Pratt continues to be committed to our values of excellence, community engagement, democratic practice, freedom of expression, and education open to all, equipping our emerging professionals with the skills and prowess to succeed and contribute, as flexible creators and leaders within a changing world.

Over the years, I have heard countless stories of Pratt graduates' adaptability, courage, and resourcefulness, some of which alumni have shared for this issue of *Prattfolio*. They have met moments of adversity, navigated shifting terrain, and in some cases redefined their lives and practices, drawing on the confidence they built at Pratt, anchored in their good work, their creativity, and their people. As the alumni stories in this issue reflect, our paths may be intricate and unexpected, but pivotal moments are when our creative vitality shines.

Experiences of uncertainty, tumult, or confusion can be creative moments. They are times to remember what we have made with our resources, and to channel our strengths into constructive work and connection.

This March, we mourned the loss of our friend and colleague Pratt Institute President Emeritus Thomas F. Schutte, whose extraordinary leadership gave us a foundation for the bold moves this community makes every day. He joined the Institute at a critical point in its history and during his 24-year tenure ushered in a new era, transforming Pratt into a global leader in art, design, and architecture education. We remember his indelible influence on page 58.

Under complex circumstances, communities come together. Our collective work as makers, planners, designers, and cultivators of the next generation of creative minds is more important than ever. These are times to work as colleagues, to find what is generative about the moment and what we are capable of building with one another.

President Frances Bronet

In Progress

What's happening at Pratt now, from recent events to projects, explorations, and student life.

The School of Architecture has been shaping the built environment for more than 70 years: This spring's exhibition *Pratt Works: Pratt School of Architecture's Bachelor of Architecture and Master of Architecture Recent Studio Projects* was among the events and exhibitions reflecting on the school's decades of accomplishment and looking forward to the possibilities ahead. Read more on Pratt's news page, pratt.edu/news, and check out more news page highlights on page 6.

Photo by Megan Proctor, BFA Photography '25

Updates from Pratt's News Page

Read more from these stories and keep up with the latest from campus and beyond at pratt.edu/news.

Photo by SCAPE & Ty Cole

Newly Transformed East Hall Plaza Opens

After years of planning and construction, the East Hall Plaza reopened ahead of the fall semester, creating a new space for the Pratt community to host events and foster dialogues across disciplines.

The redesign occurred as part of a larger sustainability project to replace the boilers located below the plaza and East Hall with high efficiency models that will reduce campus energy consumption. The extensive renovations culminated in the beautiful and spacious East Hall Plaza.

The landscape architecture firm SCAPE led the redesign and worked with local fabricators to select special brick, metal, and stone, while JRM Construction Management managed the construction of the plaza and central plant.

The East Hall Boiler and Plaza Project contributes to the Institute's efforts to reach the carbon reduction targets established in NYC Local Law 97 by improving energy efficiency across the Brooklyn campus. The upgrades earned $250,000 in energy efficiency rebates from National Grid.

Pratt Institute received a $100,000 implementation grant for the project from the Frankenthaler Climate Initiative, a grant-making program established by the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation in collaboration with Environment & Culture Partners and RMI to catalyze climate action in the visual arts.

Dock 72 Studios Debut in Style

Members and friends of the Pratt community gathered last fall to celebrate the opening of new facilities for Pratt Institute's Fine Arts and Photography MFA programs at Brooklyn Navy Yard's Dock 72. The new space offers 100 art studios, seminar and critique spaces, galleries, a computer lab, fabrication shops, Performance Lab, and sweeping views of both Brooklyn and Manhattan—all on the edge of Pratt's Brooklyn campus.

The move to Dock 72 marks an important milestone for the School of Art. The new location places the programs in the midst of bustling industry and manufacturing, among a vibrant creative community of working artists and professionals based in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The historic shipyard is now a dynamic hub for technology, design, manufacturing, and interdisciplinary innovation in New York.

A Decade of Impact in NYC: The Taconic Fellowship celebrated its 10th anniversary as a grantmaking program of the Pratt Center for Community Development during a special reception for past and current fellows, where it received an official proclamation honoring its achievements from NYC Council Member Crystal Hudson.

Bridging Cultures with Creativity: An interdisciplinary collaboration between Pratt Institute and the University of Coimbra in Portugal explores sustainable design, cultural heritage, and community-driven innovation for the (À D)eriv(A) Architecture, Design, and Arts Festival in July 2025.

Top left: Visitor with K Rawald, MFA Fine Arts '25, in their studio; photo by Megan Proctor, BFA Photography '25. Top right, left to right: Zabie Mustafa and Neda Kakhsaz, Emilio Sosa, and Little Wing Lee; courtesy of the alumni. Bottom left: Alexa Kasdan, executive director of the Pratt Center for Community Development (left), with New York City Council Member Crystal Hudson; photo by Dahlia Dandashi. Bottom center: Photo by Joe Vidich. Bottom right: Photo by Sthanlee B. Mirador/Sipa USA/Alamy Stock Photo

Pratt Honors Four Accomplished Graduates at 2025 Alumni Achievement Awards

On March 14, the Pratt Institute 2025 Alumni Achievement Awards were presented to four accomplished alumni at a luncheon held at Bryant Park Grill in Manhattan.

Emilio Sosa, Fashion Design '89, received the Lifetime Achievement Award, honoring a Pratt graduate whose work has challenged existing paradigms over the course of a prominent career.

Little Wing Lee, MS Interior Design '06, received the Impact Award, recognizing a Pratt graduate for contributions that have made a deep and meaningful positive impact.

Neda Kakhsaz, BArch '16, and Zabie Mustafa, BArch '13, received the Rising Star Award, recognizing a Pratt graduate for significant success and promise of sustained contributions to their creative industry.

The luncheon also honored the class of 1975 for their accomplishments spanning 50 years since graduation.

Alumnus Paul Tazewell Wins Academy Award for *Wicked*

Pratt alumnus Paul Tazewell's recent triumph at the Oscars makes him the first Black man to be presented with the award for Best Costume Design by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Tazewell's costumes for the feature film adaptation of the Broadway musical *Wicked* pay homage to the aesthetics of the beloved show and classic movie, while carving out a new sartorial direction for the well-known story.

Photo by Gerald Levy

Working Toward Climate Justice

Pratt Institute strives to empower students to build an equitable, sustainable world, and a key part of this work involves researching and developing ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, regenerate natural ecosystems, and support communities impacted by environmental harms. Within the context of New York City, this means promoting local climate resilience, engaging and educating diverse communities on climate issues, and advancing environmental policy goals. As Pratt President Frances Bronet recently wrote in a call to action for the Center for an Urban Future: "Every Brooklynite must be climate literate so that they can address the tremendous environmental challenges that confront us."

Pratt's commitment to sustainability is reflected through its role as a core partner of The New York Climate Exchange, a nonprofit world-class climate center on Governors Island that will become a hub for international research and collaboration on climate solutions, and community engagement on issues of climate justice and equity. This effort follows a long history of environmental action and advocacy and joins numerous ongoing efforts. In fact, Pratt is the only independent school of art and design to achieve a Gold rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. Here are a few other ways Pratt is supporting climate literacy and justice throughout New York City.

BlueBlock Gardens

The majority of New York City's 500 miles of coastline no longer have the natural ecological buffers that once characterized the archipelago, as marshland gradually gave way to concrete, stone, and steel. The BlueBlock Gardens installation is a partnership between Pratt faculty and the RETI Center in Red Hook to restore this ecological benefit through floating gardens that can support aquatic ecosystems, promote coastal resilience, and provide an opportunity for students and community members to learn about climate change. Taking inspiration from lily pads, the gardens feature modular blocks floating on platforms of recycled cork.

Decarbonizing the Built Environment

Through a partnership with Pratt, the District Council of Carpenters, the SUNY School of Forestry in Syracuse, and the Mayor's Office, the Mass Timber For Affordable Housing (MTAH) project is reviewing 800 city-owned sites to see if they can accommodate affordable housing built with mass timber, a sustainable alternative to concrete and steel. Mass timber both stores carbon emissions and can reduce construction-associated emissions by up to 26.5%. Pratt is also working with Mothers On The Move in the Bronx and the Economic Development Corporation to determine the efficacy of using hemp for building insulation, which could lead to the development of a hemp factory in the Bronx. On the Pratt Brooklyn campus, an effort to electrify buildings and improve their energy efficiency is underway as part of a larger decarbonization plan.

Reclaimed Textiles, Found Materials, and Sustainable Production

Moving toward a circular economy to cut carbon emissions will require training the next generation of designers, scientists, architects, planners, and advocates in principles of sustainability. Pratt Earth Action Week demonstrates the work being done year-round in Pratt classrooms, clubs, and centers to research, analyze, and develop sustainable solutions. The Center K–12 draws on the expertise of Pratt students and faculty to educate more than 2,000 local students each year. In one program, cohorts of students will learn about upcycling and product life-cycle analysis by working with a range of natural fibers, textiles, and reclaimed materials to build looms, sculptures, and greenhouses.

Pratt is weaving climate literacy and action throughout its teaching, operations, and engagement with local community members and institutions, and will continue to build on these and other efforts, including by working with the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design to share best practices and advance climate resilience.

A Legendary Night for Student Scholarships

On October 10, 2024, Pratt Institute presented Legends 2024. The annual event pays tribute to icons of art, design, and architecture and serves as a fundraiser for scholarships. Eighty percent of Pratt students rely on financial aid to pursue their educational aspirations, and contributions from events like Legends play a pivotal role in shaping the future of creative talent. This year, three distinguished individuals—award-winning filmmaker Charles Burnett; celebrated architect Toshiko Mori, FAIA, '22 (Hon.); and internationally renowned packaging designer Marc Rosen '70—were honored at Lavan Midtown in Manhattan.

Each honoree was presented with a Legend Award—a glass and metal sculpture designed by Arzu Oran, BID '25, and created under the mentorship of Dana D'Amico, adjunct associate professor of industrial design.

"I hope this scholarship will help to seed and support future librarians and archivists who are committed to social justice and change." — Alumna Mariame Kaba, MSLIS '22. Kaba created the Audre Lorde Justice Endowed Scholarship to support librarians and archivists who are working to democratize archives and preserve the histories of marginalized communities.

The winners of the fifth annual Material Lab Prize transformed local clay and gelatin into sustainable design alternatives: Cameron Brentlinger, BID '24, won for Community Gravestone, a design that facilitates community grieving, and Thanat Somwong, BID '25, received an honorable mention for BioShell, a ready-to-use biomaterial kit for prototyping alternatives to hard plastic.

Top left, left to right: Board of Trustees Chair Gary Hattem, Pratt President Frances Bronet, Charles Burnett, Toshiko Mori, and Marc Rosen at Legends 2024; photo by BFA. Top right: Model Coco Mitchell; photo by Anthony Artis. Bottom left: Photo by Gioncarlo Valentine. Bottom center: Cameron Brentlinger, BID '24; courtesy of the designer. Bottom right, left to right: President Frances Bronet, Laurie A. Cumbo, Lindsay Greene, and Mickalene Thomas; photo by Dahlia Dandashi

Celebrating a Decade of the Black Dress Project

For the last 10 years, Black Dress, an initiative led by Professor of Fashion Design Adrienne Jones, has celebrated, elevated, and documented the transformative influence of Black creatives in fashion. Commencing with a widely acclaimed exhibition of 10 Black designers at Pratt Manhattan Gallery in 2014, Black Dress evolved into a decade's worth of events, interviews, research, and connection-building. A new exhibition, *Black Dress II: Homage*, curated by Jones and Rachelle Etienne-Robinson, BFA Fashion Design '01, paid respect to the pioneers who continue to shape fashion history. The exhibition ran from January 31 to March 22 at Pratt Manhattan Gallery.

Exploring How Arts and Industry Shape Cities

The Design Equity initiative event Pratt Presents Transforming Cities Through the Arts and Industry, held on March 4 in Higgins Hall Auditorium, showcased the power of the arts and industry to collaboratively transform neighborhoods, drive creativity, and stimulate innovation. The panel discussion focused on the Brooklyn Navy Yard, which has become a unique creative engine, enhancing the city's economic development and supporting its artistic sector. Pratt President Frances Bronet facilitated the conversation with Commissioner of Cultural Affairs for the City of New York Laurie A. Cumbo, Brooklyn Navy Yard President Lindsay Greene, and artist and Pratt alumna Mickalene Thomas.

Where Laughing Matters

For Students Across Majors, a Stand-Up Comedy Class Delivers More Than Punchlines

Jay Raymond, BFA Digital Arts '25, has a brash, laugh-out-loud sense of humor that would naturally lend itself to stand-up comedy. But before last fall, he had never actually tried it. Raymond did, however, get a feel for what it might be like while hosting Pratt's annual drag show in 2023, where he had a chance to share jokes between performances. He found that experience exhilarating, so when he saw that Pratt's Writing Department offered a stand-up comedy course open to all majors, he felt compelled to sign up.

Raymond was unsure what to expect when he arrived at Stand Up Comedy for Writers. What he found in the class was a supportive group of peers as inexperienced as he was, eager to take on this challenging art form. He also found a new passion for comedy and confidence in himself as an artist.

Pratt students know that standing in front of a classroom and presenting their work in critique is not easy—it is a learned skill. Still, as the course's instructor, Department Manager of the Writing Department and Visiting Instructor Kath Barbadoro, says, public speaking "seems like child's play after you've had to be funny while doing it." Through weekly writers' workshops, Raymond and his classmates worked together on developing the craft as well as the emotional sensitivity and thick skin of a stand-up comedian.

"I want to calm down, so I'm not always yelling at the audience," Raymond shared with his classmates after one performance. "It'll be more fun if I'm calm for some parts and ready to race at others."

Jay Raymond, BFA Digital Arts ’25, performs at the course final for Stand Up Comedy for Writers, held at Brooklyn Art Haus last fall.

Photos by Megan Proctor, BFA Photography '25

Instructor Kath Barbadoro leads a writers' workshop with her students, who are majoring in a range of disciplines. Madds Dittmer, BFA Film '27, in the writers' workshop. Students try out their material at a midterm performance in Pratt's Textile Dye Garden.

"I'm glad you want to slow down," Barbadoro responded. "Let people be a little bit uncomfortable—so they're on the edge of their seat waiting for the punchline."

Barbadoro, who has worked evenings as a stand-up comedian and podcast host for over a decade, has also spent her days as department manager for Pratt's Writing Department since 2021. When the department offered her the opportunity to combine these roles and teach comedy in the program, she immediately understood she would be teaching students more than just how to tell jokes to a crowd. Stand-up is about staying cool under pressure, improvising when necessary, and developing a keen observational eye—all "infinitely transferable skills" that are helpful in most professions, says Barbadoro.

Barbadoro also understood that a stand-up comedy course would involve just as much craft and technique as any writing workshop at Pratt. First, she compiled a reading and viewing list that included influential comics such as Wanda Sykes, Mitch Hedberg, and John Mulaney. She diagrammed those comedians' jokes for their setups and punchlines and drew lessons from her experiences as a touring comedian. For homework, she would have students attend open mics across New York City's comedy circuit.

Barbadoro knows that there "aren't a whole lot of craft-based stand-up comedy classes taught at the college level," she says, and that students might be surprised to see a full-credit comedy-writing-intensive course offered at Pratt. One of those students was Madds Dittmer, BFA Film '27, who has been doing comedy since age 15. Dittmer had generally considered their peers a bit introverted. "I was anxious nobody was going to want to perform," says Dittmer. Instead, they noticed a lively mix of comedic tastes and personalities from the first day. "Art school played a part in how wildly different everyone's comedy is. It's been amazing to see everyone grow in confidence and skill while developing their style."

Over the semester, that confidence was sometimes challenged by what student Ben Tillinghast, BFA Film '26, identified as "the trouble with telling the same jokes over and over again."

"For me, when I did a joke enough times, I'd think, 'Oh, I don't want to do that again. I want to make a new joke now,'" says Tillinghast. "But the class would be like, 'No, no. Just keep with it.' You have to get comfortable with your own voice."

Dittmer also faced this head-on during their weekly workshops, where many students aired their self-doubt

This page and opening spread: photos by Dahlia Dandashi

The class and friends gather for the course final, a performance at Brooklyn Art Haus. Sam Carey, class of 2027, who is studying film and photography at Pratt. Last preparations for a set at the final.

and learned to commit to their artistic process. "It just doesn't feel interesting," Dittmer said during a workshop of their material. "I'll have these observations I find funny, but I find myself getting bored of me."

In moments like that one, classmates would offer feedback that was sometimes difficult, but always helpful. "I can see why you would be bored of you, because you're living you," classmate Flynn Rachford, BFA Digital Arts '25, told Dittmer during that workshop. "But we don't know these things about you until you tell them to us."

Barbadoro agreed and empathized. "I'm not bored of you," she said. "I feel the same about myself sometimes. But you have to remember that the audience is just meeting you."

For Barbadoro, these group discussions held the class together and propelled it forward. "Feeling supported and safe with each other—even in failure—is crucial to the development of comedians," she says. "This class has a good rapport with each other. [They have developed] mutual respect, assume good faith, and are encouraging."

Halfway through the semester, the class staged a performance for their midterm—a mock comedy show held outdoors in Pratt's Textile Dye Garden. That was a moment when Jay Raymond started to find himself with a larger-than-life stage persona, skewering themes from music streaming apps to overbearing Chihuahuas. Dittmer performed with a renewed confidence in their craft: "I really admire people who become stand-up comedians when they're older," they said during their set. "Because this was either the best decision of your life or things have seriously taken a turn for the worse."

For most students, that midterm was the first time they had ever performed their jokes as an act. By the end of the semester, the group's hard work and collaboration led to another event, an evening of stand-up comedy open to the public at Brooklyn Art Haus, a performance space and cafe in Williamsburg. That night, the efforts of their workshops and weeks of rehearsal culminated in a show filled with friends, family, and comedy lovers from throughout the city, coming together to laugh.

After his self-assured final performance, Raymond remembered how he would over-explain his jokes early on in the course, worried that no one would relate to his material. "But if I'm talking about something I feel passionate about, chances are someone else went through something similar," Raymond said. "It turns out, we are all more similar than we would like to admit." □

—NIKOLAS SLACKMAN

Golden Hours

Prattfolio stopped by Student Involvement's Fall Fest one sunny October Friday to snap Fuji Instax shots among inflatables, tarot readings, and treats. We asked students about their post-midterm weekend plans.

"*Rocky Horror* is tonight. Pratt Theatre Club is putting it on, in Memorial Hall, with the shadow cast, the whole thing."

Left to right: Hannah Freedman, Naomi Fuhrer, Lucy Clary, class of 2027; Jessica Thi, BFA Communications Design '25

"If you asked me next week, I'd say it's our game play."

Bee Wertheimer, with Drew Shapiro, both BFA Game Arts '25

Photos by Dahlia Dandashi

"Resting, because we had midterms this week. We're going to have a chill weekend. I'm going to see *Rocky Horror*, do some rendering, do a little homework—but, yeah, rest!"

Ana Tovar, class of 2027

"I'm going to Japan Village on Sunday—I just like going, it's like a grocery-store trip but with more fun."

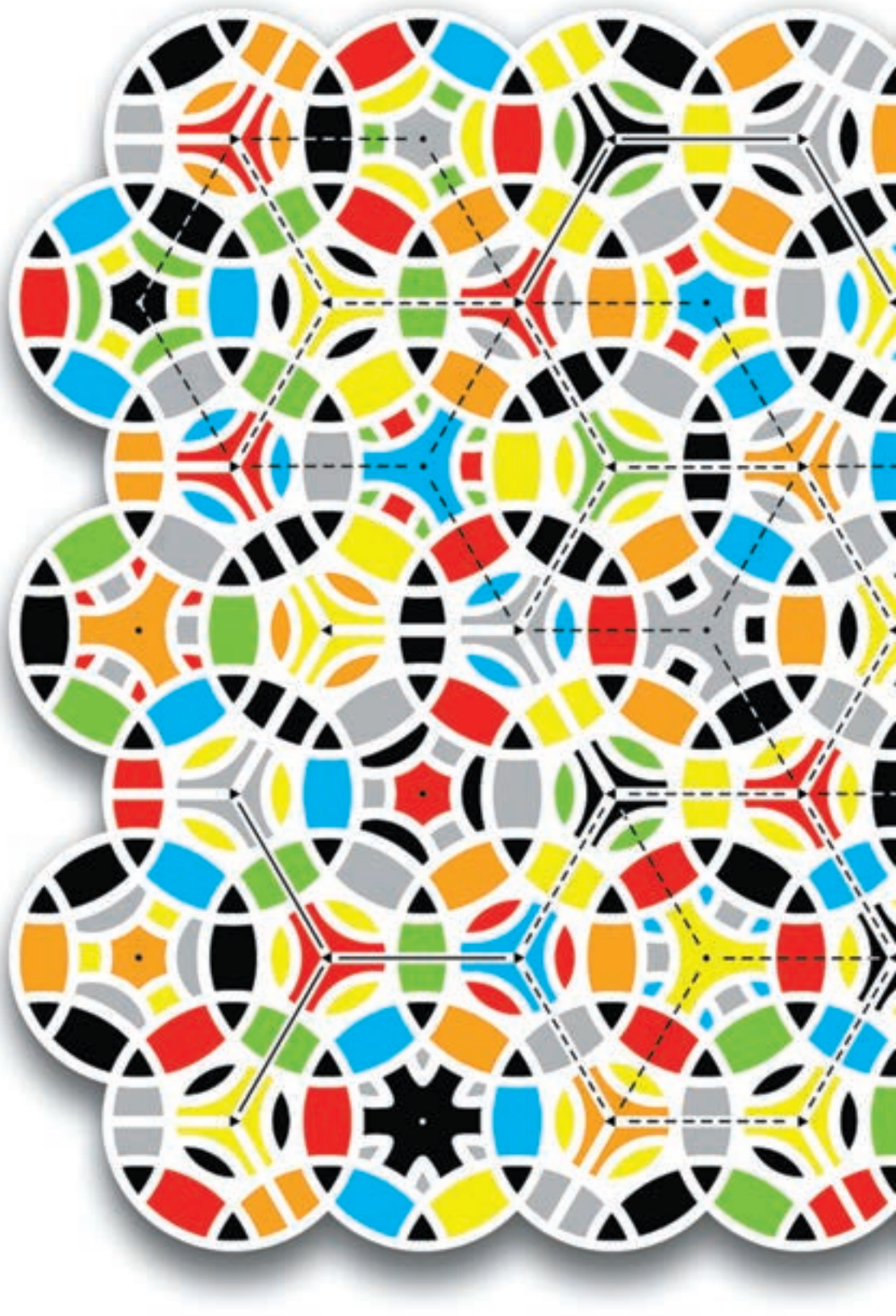
Jaleyna Lara,
BFA Communications Design
(Graphic Design) '25

Read more at pratt.edu/prattfolio.

PIVOT

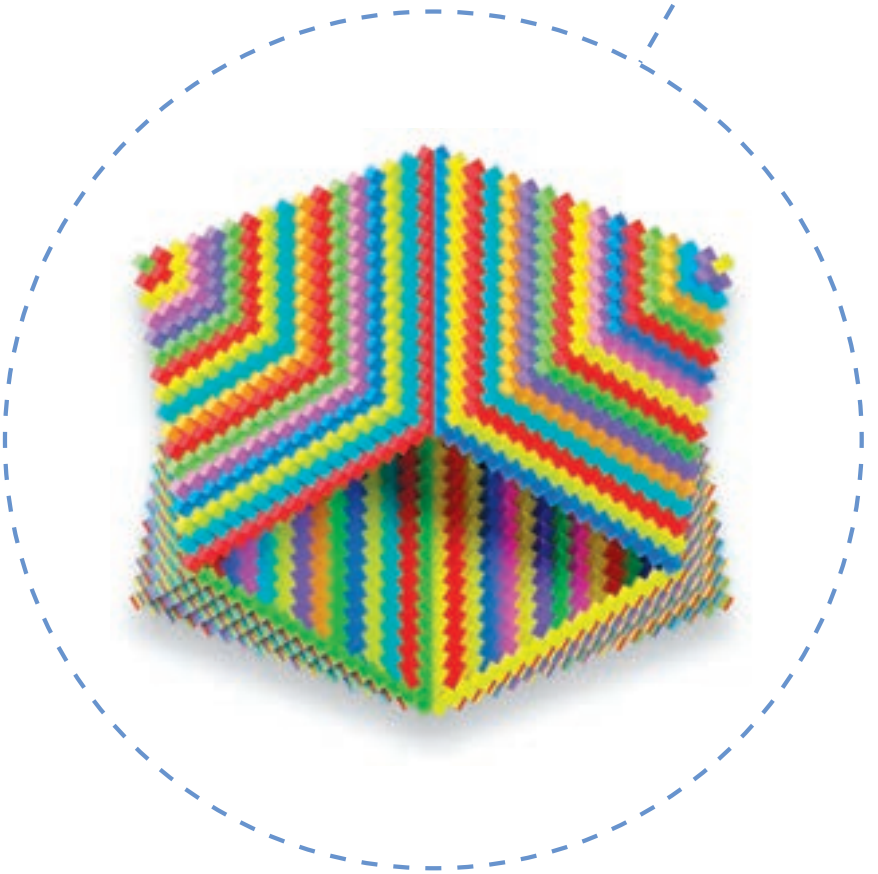
Pratt alumni on navigating moments of uncertainty, change, and transformation in their life and work

BY JEAN HARTIG



ARTWORK BY
ANDREW REACH, BARCH ’86

Points



Andrew Reach was at work on a once-in-a-lifetime project, the Smithsonian-affiliated Frost Art Museum at Florida International University, and suddenly he knew something wasn't right. In his office at the architecture firm HOK in Miami, he thought he was having a heart attack. It turned out to be a severe case of spondylolisthesis, a failure of a spinal disc segment that, in Reach's case, could have been catastrophic. (As his spine surgeon put it in lay terms: "Your head is falling off your spine.") A year and a half before this complication, he had been eager to get back into architecture practice after a back surgery fusing most of his spine, and jumped at the opportunity to work on the museum, but the long, focused hours he'd enthusiastically poured into the project, he thinks, brought everything to a head. This would be his last building.

From his art-filled office some 20 years later, Reach reflects on that experience with an optimism that belies the dark days that followed. "I don't regret it," he says. "Everything is meant to be. I had a productive career as an architect—I got the satisfaction of that—and I have this other side of myself that I don't know I ever would have discovered."

In this story, Reach and six fellow Pratt alumni share their experiences of transitional moments, meeting life's fluctuations, revelations, and challenges, and the perspective they've gained in the process.

Escaping Gravity

Andrew Reach, BArch '86
Artist working in digital media

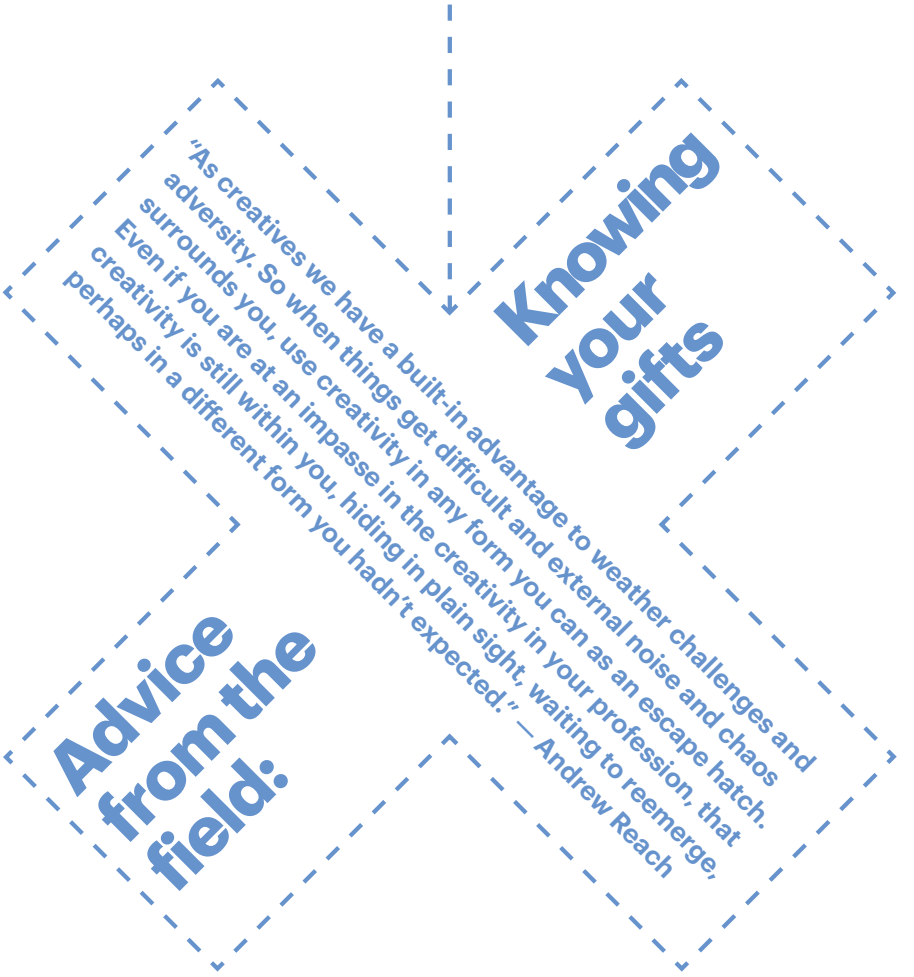
From an early age, Reach had been grappling with back pain from a condition called Scheuermann's disease. In his 20s, there were days he felt his back was breaking in two after a day at work. After spondylolisthesis and a second spinal surgery, the pain and immobility would be all encompassing, but a change was happening. Laid up in the Florida room of his and husband Bruce Baumwoll's home, looking out onto a lush palm tree hedge, surrounded by light and artwork and reading Jackson Pollack's biography on a book stand, Reach began to tap into creative reserves that would open a new chapter for him.

It was Baumwoll, he says, who initiated the first project—collaged greeting cards made using Photoshop, which Reach picked up easily given his experience with CAD as an architect. When Reach began to make small digital drawings, Baumwoll insisted he up the scale. They bought a 44-inch Epson printer, and Baumwoll would load the paper and pin up the drawings for Reach to look at from his bed. When a neighbor who spotted the work on a house visit connected Reach with a gallerist, he was quickly offered his first solo show. It featured digital works that riffed on forms like vertebrae and water, which as a swimmer and lover of the ocean from his childhood in Miami, had become a way of "escaping gravity," he says. The show was called *Beyond Pain*.

"I was really in so much pain," he says. "To this day, I deal with challenges with pain, and art continues to be art therapy for me. Especially then, it was like an escape hatch."

But more than therapy, for Reach, it has meant the reinvention of a career. His work, which includes digital drawings, 3D animations, and 3D-printed sculptural pieces, has been exhibited and installed in public spaces, particularly around his adopted home of Cleveland, with commissions for clients including Cleveland Clinic–Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine currently in progress.

Opening spread: Andrew Reach, *Hex Land II*, 2017. This page: *Pyramid Persona*, 3D Derivative Series, 2023



Lately in his artwork, he has also been reconnecting with architecture, and the sea. He remembers the encouragement he got at Pratt, from professors like Hanford Yang, to tap into relationships like these. "There was a side of me that felt the oppression of gravity, and there was a side of me that felt the freedom of the work—whether it was working on an architectural project or being in the pool, swimming," he says. "I liked that at Pratt, I was able to explore a more emotional aspect of form making. Hanford really pushed me to express—architecture was more than the function of a building. You could also tell a story, and evoke spiritual engagement."

Two of his student projects, included in the 1988 *Pratt Journal of Architecture: Form; Being; Absence* published by Rizzoli, were titled "House Held Captive" and "House That Wants to Fly."

It's funny how things come full circle, Reach reflects: "There was a lot of force behind needing to create, this explosion of creativity that I thought was coming out of nowhere—but I don't think it was coming out of nowhere. I think it was always inside me, and it was just waiting for the circumstances and technology to realize it."

A Pivot Mindset

D'angelo Thompson, Fashion Merchandising and Fine Arts alumnus
Makeup Artist, Educator, and Author, *The Art of Pivoting*

When he was a student at Pratt, D'angelo Thompson was looking for a job, something to help him earn a little extra money. He'd come to Pratt and New York City from Chicago's South Side, a young artist with a love of Parisian fashion and classic-film glamour that he says he didn't realize might translate into a career, until a high school counselor suggested art school and Pratt.

For a student side gig, a friend suggested makeup artistry: "You're always doing our makeup for the clubs or for a fashion show," Thompson recalls his friend saying, and he thought, why not, he'd give it a try. "I started at the bottom," he shares, working in retail with different brands—Fashion Fair, Bobbi Brown, Lancôme—and took every opportunity to learn the trade, knowing that he wanted to use everything he was learning to grow.

"What are you going to do with this knowledge, this fashion knowledge, this love of art history, this love of beauty?" he recalls asking himself. "Then I met a few mentors who took me under their wing. I would say to anyone, if you can find a mentor who will guide you, that's very important."

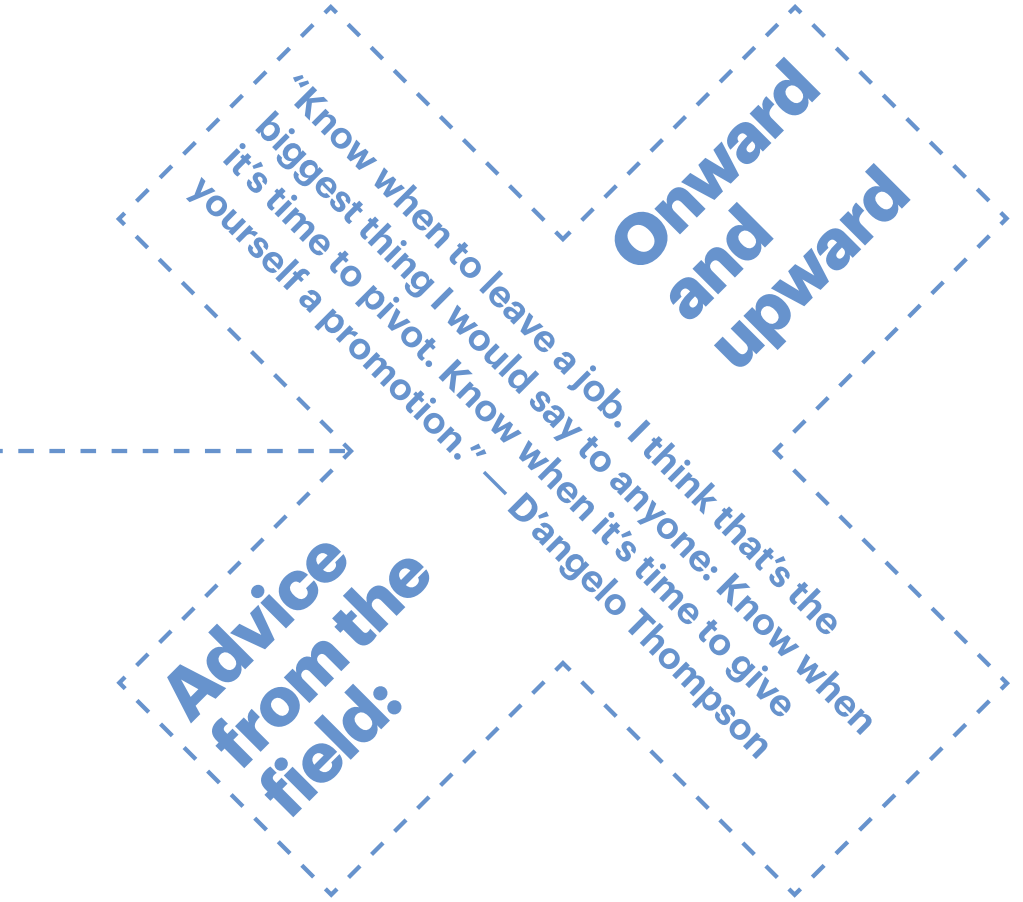
Incrementally, the work grew to photo shoots, commercials, press junkets, television, film—with honors along the way (three Daytime Emmy nominations and a Daytime Emmy Award, for *The Wendy Williams Show*)—and for Thompson, whose wide-ranging career now spans 34 years, there were always new avenues to explore.

"I would say to any artist, never think you can only do one thing," he says. "There was a time I thought I could only be in the world of sales training. And then someone said, 'Hey, you want to do this TV project? You want to do this film?' I always would say, 'Yes, why not?' And it has led me to expand my skill set."

It wasn't always opportunity calling that brought him to those doorways. In 2001, Thompson was successfully freelancing, booked and constantly busy with commercial shoots around the city. On 9/11, everything stopped. He was at home, watching the news from his sofa, "sitting there for hours, like everyone else around the world, trying to decipher what had just happened," he says. "I thought, the world has shifted. So it took about two days, and then I realized, oh, I don't have any work."

He took stock of his savings, how he could get by and for how long. "That's when your gifts come in as a creative," Thompson reflects. "I started to think, OK, I'm a makeup artist. What else can I do with my makeup artistry that's going to bring in income? I was like, you're watching TV. Everyone's still in hair and makeup, even though they're talking about this horrific thing that has happened . . . somebody's back there working. I said, OK, I'm going to pivot."

Then, almost literally, opportunity did knock: "At that moment, I got a call from a woman who owned a salon. She said, 'I know it's an awkward time, but my client is still getting married. Their family is all here, and they're having



their wedding. Would you be interested in doing the makeup for the wedding?'"

Thompson said yes, and through this moment of personal and collective grief, found not only a path forward but a beam of clarity. "It was all of a sudden—I thought, you have to not have all your eggs in one basket. You have to have many rivers of opportunity coming to you," he says. "That was the answer I got during that time, and that's how I operate now. Again, I would say to any artist: You have many skills. You're not one-dimensional. I've learned over the years, I'm not just a makeup artist. I'm a creative, and what does that mean?"

In Thompson's case, it has meant working with all kinds of people in a whole range of contexts, and also teaching in the fashion department of Kent State's New York City campus, studying psychology (he starts graduate school this fall), writing, and career coaching, particularly on the subject of pivoting.

When asked about what's been essential to him through his career, Thompson says, unequivocally, relationships. "It's all the people that I met over 34 years ago at Pratt," like Professor of Fashion Design Adrienne Jones and fellow alum Jelani Bandele, alumni engagement manager for The Black Alumni of Pratt. "No matter where I travel in the world, I know someone, because I took the time and the energy to stay in touch and check in on people. I think my key to success is really cultivating and maintaining those relationships, and helping others get ahead as well."

"I Finally Found What I Loved"

Sofia Dumery, MID '98
SVP of Design, Melissa & Doug

Action oriented—that's how Sofia Dumery describes herself, and one thing that led her to study economics as an undergrad. It had a multidisciplinary scope that toggled among her interests, from the historical and political angles to marketing, with good prospects for work right out of college. While those prospects quickly panned out, Dumery's trajectory was anything but determined.

Her first job was with Kearney, the management consulting firm, in their financial institutions group in New York City. The projects were interesting and so were the people, and there was a lot to learn. "I call it my mini MBA," she says.

After two years, though, Dumery knew something was missing. "In management consulting, you're advising people, but they can take your advice or not take it, and [the consulting firm] charges a lot of money," she says. "I just felt like, am I really creating that worth? Am I expanding the pie?"

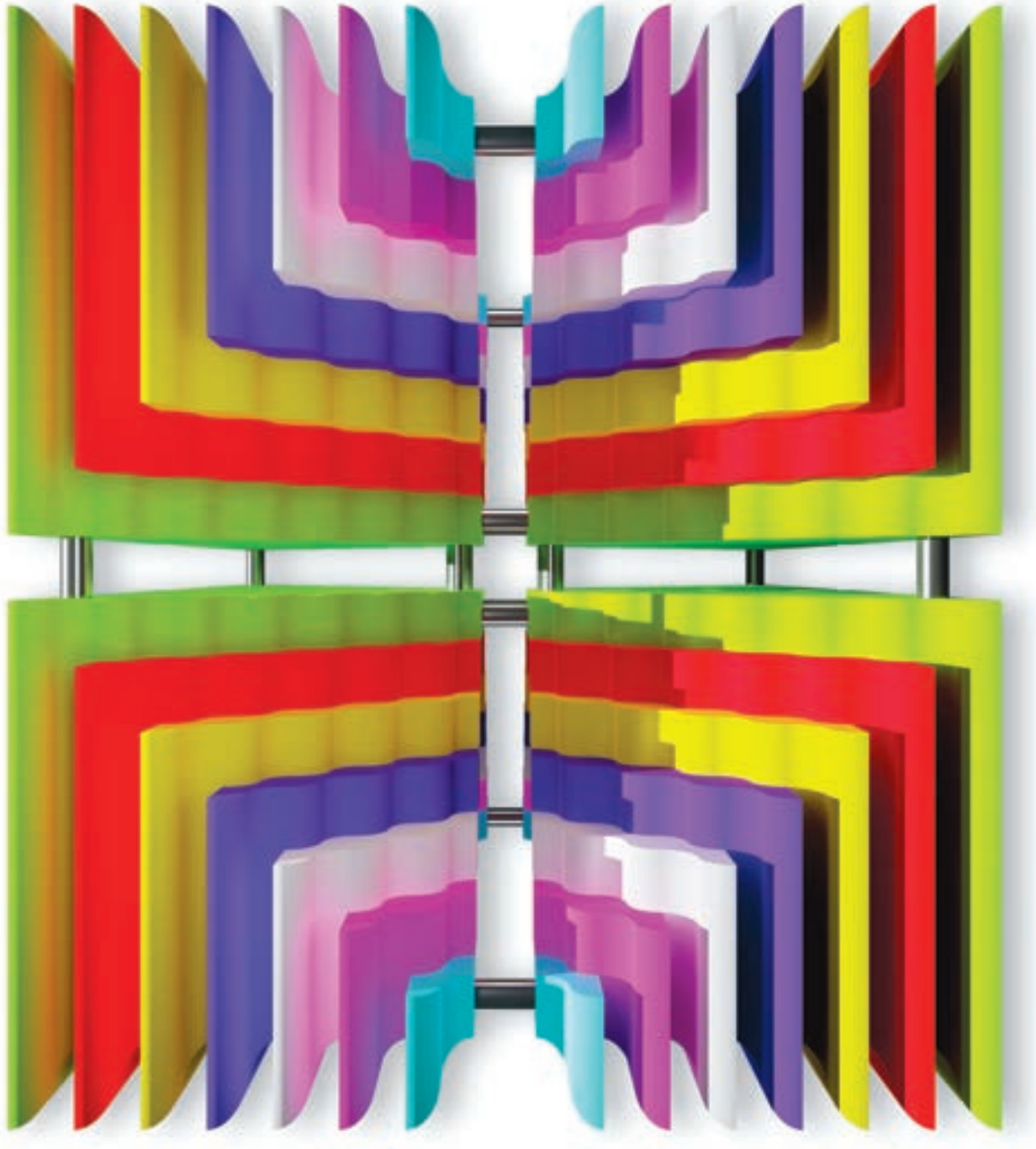
Dumery thought back to an article she'd read in college, about people in developing countries who created wheelchairs using repurposed materials like bike parts, training a local workforce, selling the product, and boosting the local economy. "I just thought that was beautiful," she says. "I thought, that's what I want to do. I want to do that kind of development."

Knowing just how was a bit murkier. But when a friend who was studying engineering told Dumery about a class in ergonomics she was taking, it piqued Dumery's interest. "She said, we design things like an iron—you figure out how to hold it and how it's balanced in your hand," Dumery remembers. "It applies to anything. Your toothbrush, your car. I was like, wow. I don't even know what this field is."

The way design could quickly become reality was also attractive. "You could design something that's out in the market next year. I thought I'd like the fast pace of that, and then I started exploring," Dumery says, and then she found Pratt. "What attracted me to Pratt was they seemed open to taking people with different backgrounds—there was an openness that I thought was exciting."

Dumery had always been drawing and making (before economics, she was studying architecture), and she built a portfolio with work she'd made in college and at evening drawing classes she was taking at the Art Students League on 57th Street.

In the graduate industrial design program at Pratt, she saw parallels to her previous experience and also new opportunities: "Economics was multidisciplinary. Design is even more so. You have the visuals, and you can think about the marketing angle, and you can think about innovation and material science. It



Andrew Reach, *Anticube I*, 3D Derivative Series, 2024

opened up this beautiful world, and the more you put into it, the more connections you can make. You were given the breadth, the area to explore." Also, she says, "Pratt was fun. . . . It was hard, but it was like I finally found what I loved."

The year she graduated, 1998, it was a tough market, but "the career center was phenomenal," she says. Dumery also made connections, "talking to anyone and everyone." It brought her to some spaces where she gradually uncovered what she wanted to do. She did a stint in medical equipment, where she discovered she wanted to be working more with color and visuals. She worked for a housewares consultancy, with a few other Pratt alumni, but while it helped hone her design skills, she found a similar remove to that she'd felt in her first job—with clients who might take or leave a design.

The next pivot came as a bit of a fluke, the result of Dumery's networking combined with being in the right place at the right time. It was around the holidays after 9/11, and her design consulting hours had been reduced in the economic downturn. She called on her network from Pratt. Then, at a New Year's Eve party, a Pratt friend who was working at Crayola met an editor from a publishing house. When she mentioned

she was a designer, the editor said, "We need a designer!" And fast—the publisher had landed a deal to sell a line of children's products based on an author's work at a major retailer, and now needed the specs to make it happen. The friend recommended Dumery, and she almost instantly got the job.

This would be Dumery's entry to toys, which has been her focus now for more than 20 years, 14 with her current company, a household name for caregivers of young children: Melissa & Doug. Dumery joined the company at a pivotal moment and played a key role in driving its expansion by leading the design team—contributions that have propelled her to her current role as senior vice president of design.

The company was recently acquired by Spin Master, the fourth largest toy company in the world after Lego, Hasbro, and Mattel, and Dumery is in the midst of another, more subtle transition: "I feel like I've changed jobs without changing jobs," she says. "It's a much bigger company, more exposure, different matrix. They have a huge inventor network that we've been able to tap into. It's been learning from their deep marketing knowhow, their incredible engineering/manufacturing base, and their vast talent network, all the while staying true to Melissa & Doug's mission of creating open-ended toys. As the head of design, it's to make sure that that carries through."

When asked what's inspiring her this year, Dumery says it's the inventors, and also the mentee that she connected with through Pratt's Young Alumni Mentorship Program: "She's amazing, just the new thinking and what's going on now in design that's very cutting-edge."

It all reinforces what Dumery has learned along the way: "There are so many variables within design, and so many different design jobs," she says. "Whether you are working for a manufacturer that has a vision that you're executing, or you're creating a vision, or you're working on some niche innovation. You don't know where that path is going to go, so be open. It's OK to explore."

Andrew Reach, *Quadramid V*, 3D Derivative Series, 2023

Galvanizing a Community

Matthew Ferraro, MArch '07
Principal, Weiss/Manfredi

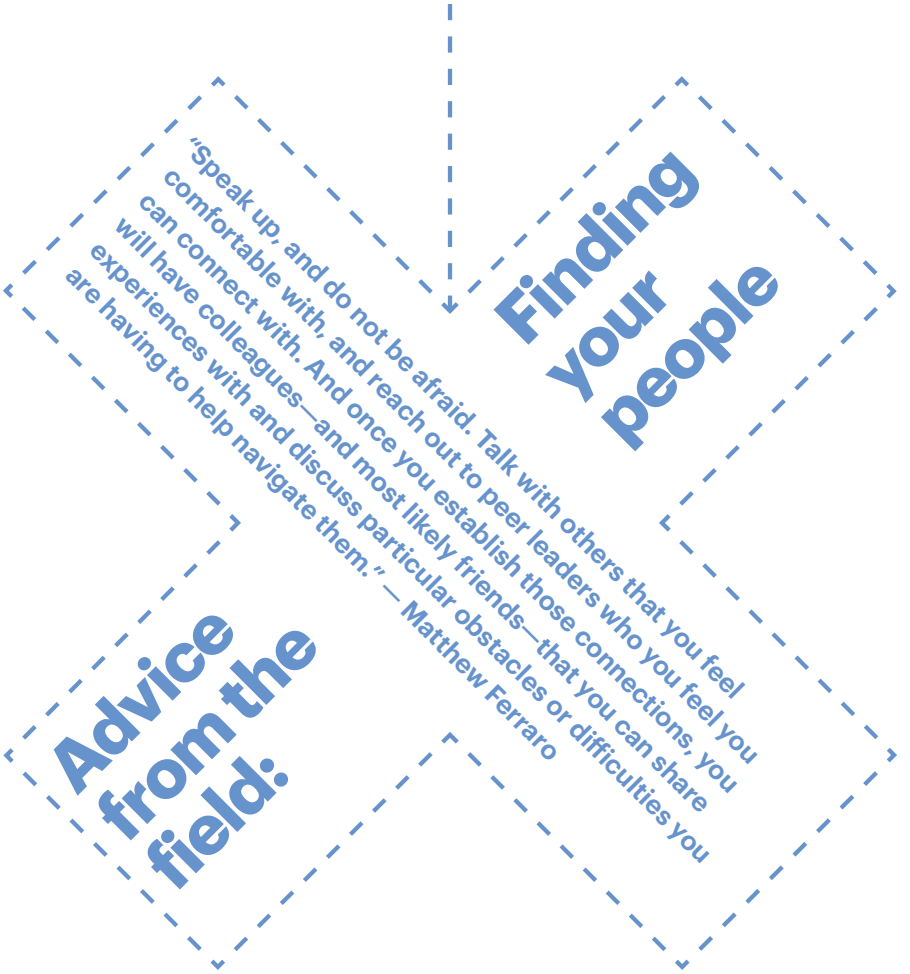
Matthew Ferraro grew up in Queens, one of the most culturally diverse places in not only New York City but the world. From street to street, community to community, residents' connections to place create a unique tapestry that inspired the architect from a young age. "It was always exciting to experience a new neighborhood within the borough and the city to gain both an appreciation for how people came together, as well as how the homes and businesses reflected the individuals that lived there," Ferraro says.

The way people, and their backgrounds, experiences, needs, and desires, were reflected in place would weave through his work in more ways than one.

While he began his undergraduate studies in biology, imagining he would pursue a career in ecology, it was in an independent study in architecture suggested by a friend where Ferraro felt truly activated: "I was so excited by how my love for environments could be realized through design." He completed his graduate studies in architecture at Pratt in 2007, going on to practice at the New York City firm Weiss/Manfredi, where last year he was promoted to principal.

The time around the pandemic would bring a sea change. "I had just been reunited with my birth parents before the world shut down, and shortly thereafter I came out," Ferraro shares. "It was a very dynamic moment for me, as I was reflecting on the various aspects of my life, some of which were more gradual and others, like coming out, which were more spontaneous."

This was all against the backdrop of a moment charged with ideas and action around representation and visibility. In



Ferraro's professional world, work was underway among organizations like the American Institute of Architects (AIA) to lift up different communities that were underrepresented in architecture. He saw, though, that there wasn't much conversation around the LGBTQIA+ community and the unique issues its members face. "Being LGBTQIA+ is not a 'visible' identity," Ferraro says. "We are called to 'come out' and identify ourselves to be able to acknowledge unique concerns or experiences that are shaped by the design of the buildings and cities we live in. We unfortunately also face very real concerns regarding safety due to the hyper-politicization of our community."

Ferraro got in touch with AIA National and AIA New York. "I took a chance, I wrote some emails, I spoke up, and it turned into such a wonderful experience and opportunity for myself and others," he says. "AIA NY was very supportive from the onset. Ben Prosky, the former director, Jesse Lazar, the current director, and Matthew Bremer, the first openly gay president of AIA NY, put their heads together with me and other AIA New York members to help formulate the Alliance"— AIA New York's LGBTQIA+ Alliance, which launched in 2023.

On the national level, things were happening too: The LGBTQIA+ Affinity Member Group launched on the AIA website, and in 2024, for the first time, the AIA National Conference included LGBTQIA+ programming.

As architecture professionals come together around LGBTQIA+ experiences, perspectives, and advocacy, it can only benefit the field and the people it serves, Ferraro says: "I firmly believe that the broader the perspectives you bring to the table, the more inviting and accessible architecture becomes to everyone. . . . By now bringing some of the issues that are not immediately apparent to these forums for conversation, it will help to evolve the way we design to be more inclusive not only for LGBTQIA+ individuals, but for all."

For Ferraro, the process has been as rewarding as the result, introducing him "to so many people whose stories have helped shape my perspective of both the challenges and the celebrations of being part of the community. I have said to the group since day one, if nothing else, I was just happy to be able to create the visibility for us to have a platform for advocacy. How well received, and how much this was needed, greatly exceeded my expectations."

The experience has also been healing. "I was so self-critical since childhood that I hid a very important part of myself from the world for several decades. Personally, I never want someone to feel like they cannot be who they are—or to struggle alone—simply because they are not reflected in the established group," Ferraro says. "Architecture is a collective, and the more we share with one another, the better the profession and our work will be for all."

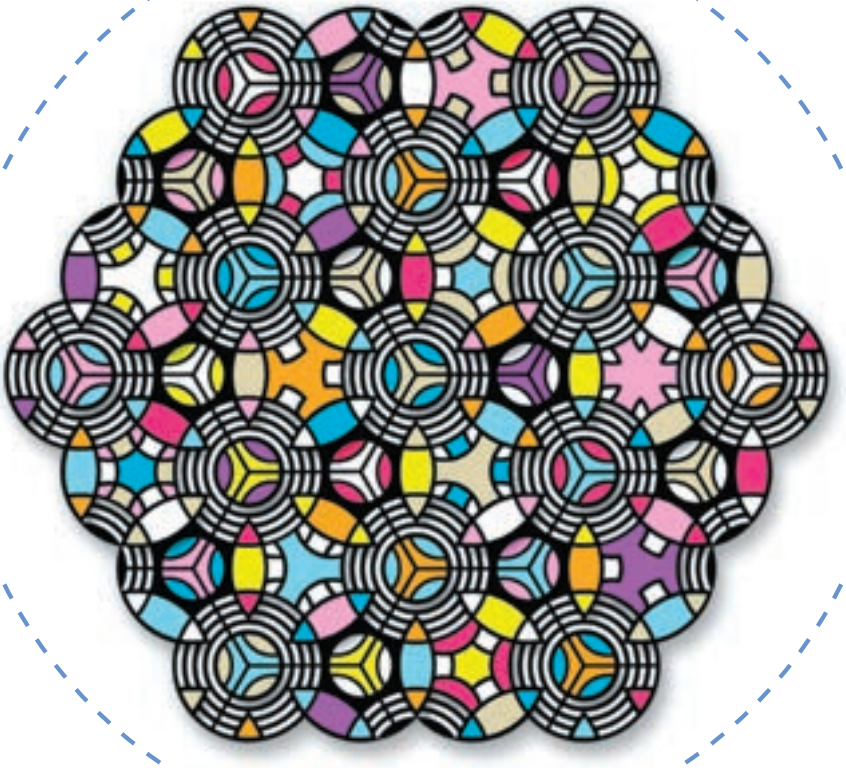
Design as a Launchpad

Elle Liu, BID '15; MFA Interior Design '19
Founder, THEORÓ

Elle Liu was having a crisis of identity. "I hope this doesn't sound too cliché," says the interior designer–turned–founder, reflecting back to the months after she'd decided to start her own business. "It's honestly a little silly how strongly we tie ourselves to a sense of who we are—at least, I did. For me, that identity was being a designer. From a very young age, it was the path I set for myself, and I never really questioned it."

Before she launched THEORÓ, her tea company, last year, Liu's trajectory had taken her from the art program at Tsinghua University Middle School in Beijing, to writing columns on global design trends at her high school magazine and devouring international design magazines at the newsstand every weekend, to discovering her love of product design via Droog, the vanguard Dutch design collective. Then it brought her to Pratt's School of Design, first the undergraduate Industrial Design program and later graduate Interior Design.

While she was still an undergraduate, she took the first step into what she thinks might have been the best job of her life: an internship at AERIN, a luxury lifestyle brand founded by Aerin Lauder, which led to a role on its small design team. It was one of those charmed instances where colleagues click and the



Andrew Reach, *Circulux II*, 2022

work is expansive and interesting. "We had such great chemistry," she says. "I got to work directly with the EVP and VP of design—who, fun fact, is also a Pratt Industrial Design alumna—and they were both the kindest, most inspiring people. I was able to contribute to so many things—decorative objects, lighting fixtures, showroom vignettes—you name it. Plus, the office had this incredible design book collection that I had full access to. I spent so much time just flipping through those books and soaking it all in."

With all she was learning and doing, her ideas about design were transforming, from objects to environments, or as Liu puts it, "the endless possibilities of what a space could be."

She returned to Pratt to study interior design as a graduate student, and went on to work at Rockwell Group, the architecture and design firm, with a portfolio of high-end hotels. Liu also dived into the subject of spatial design among fellow practitioners with her podcast, *The Right Angle*, which aimed to broaden the conversation beyond the conventional understanding of interior design and architecture, involving professionals from across industries.

When she saw an opportunity to explore another avenue, this time from the founder's seat, she says she didn't hesitate. "I've always been deeply interested in traditional Chinese culture—especially TCM [Traditional Chinese Medicine], tea, and various forms of craftsmanship," she shares. "I saw an opportunity and felt the timing was right to create a luxury tea brand focused exclusively on Chinese tea."

While a lot has been new, her background in design has been a launchpad. "I once saw a quote at a design event that said, 'MFA is the new MBA,' and honestly, I think there's some truth to that," she says. "My training at Pratt and my experience as a designer gave me the skills to handle so many different aspects of this process, almost effortlessly."

One thing she learned stands out: "Understanding the idea of a concept—how to form one and use it to guide the design process—has been a huge asset for me personally," she says.

For THEORÓ, Liu worked on tea curation with a tea master in Beijing who is also a family friend, but when it came to the brand, she built it from scratch. "From the website and brand positioning to the language, packaging, and social media content, I've been hands-on with every aspect of the business."

While she didn't skip a beat creating the business, realizing the shift within herself happened more slowly. "When people would ask me, 'What do you do?' For a while, I wasn't sure how to answer. It took a few months to embrace this new chapter and feel comfortable saying I'm a founder rather than an interior designer," Liu says. "What really helped me personally was focusing on authenticity. . . . It was about being honest with myself about what I care about and allowing that to guide me forward."

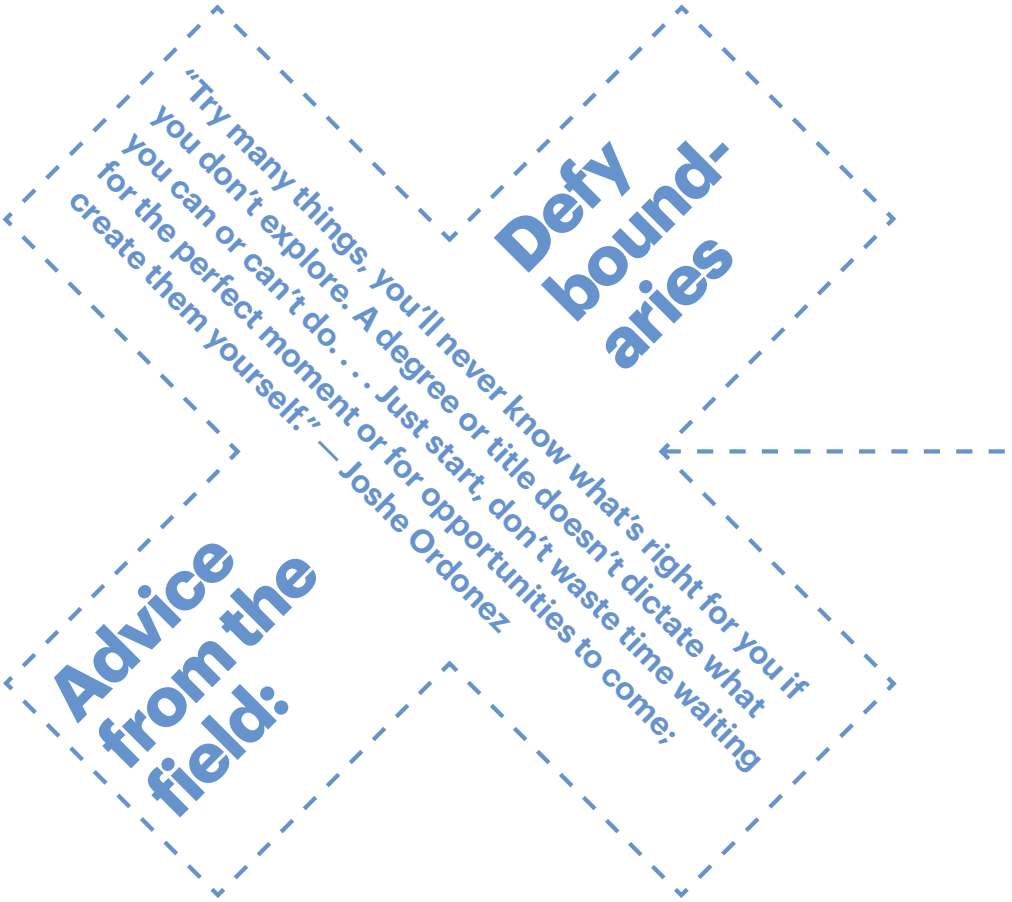
Don't Wait, Just Start

Joshe Ordonez, MPS Design Management '18
Founder and CEO, Airpals

As founder of a logistics startup, Joshe Ordonez knows a thing or two about getting things from point A to point B. When it comes to her career, which has taken her from fashion design and production to the multihyphenate creative hustle to Google-funded entrepreneurship, the path hasn't exactly been linear.

Ordonez grew up in Cuenca, Ecuador, where she was steeped in the history of textiles and artisanal craft and stories of how Indigenous tradition and Spanish influence had shaped the clothing of the region. Surrounded by making and design—from the traditions of sewing, knitting, and weaving in her family and her town to the global catwalks broadcast into her home on E! Fashion—it's no wonder Ordonez made her way first to fashion, as a student and a professional.

"What I love about fashion is its role as a form of cultural expression and its flexibility as a discipline," Ordonez says. "It allows you to pull inspiration from so many areas—art, architecture, history,



and culture, making it a constantly evolving creative space."

But her working experience added another dimension: "What I don't love is the waste and overconsumption the industry generates," she adds. "It's through hands-on work that I really learned about how things are made, from supply chains to industrial processes."

When she found out about Pratt's Design Management program, part of Creative Enterprise Leadership within the School of Art, she saw an opportunity to address some of the issues she'd come face to face with: "I was immediately drawn to the curriculum," she says. "It covered so many of my interests—business, financial reporting, intellectual property, UX design—all while being deeply rooted in sustainability and using design as a driver for progress and innovation."

For Ordonez, digging into these areas as a student was ripe with opportunity, even if she wasn't sure where her exploration would take her: "You don't know what you don't know, so the biggest challenge was always the learning curve. Every time I took on a new job or project, I had to dive into things I'd never even heard of before," she says. "But I never saw school as a way to avoid the unknown; to me, it was more of a sandbox, a place to experiment, test ideas, and build confidence in navigating uncertainty. That mindset worked really well for me."

In Pratt's Design Management program, she began to think like an entrepreneur, developing commercial projects that would give her a foundation for launching her business. But before she arrived there, Ordonez had wanted to experience a role in the corporate world, at one of her "dream companies (which was a long list)." It would be a whole new challenge: "The imposter syndrome of applying to hundreds of jobs, going through interviews, and facing rejection was a humbling experience."

"I've never been one to over-plan," Ordonez says. "Business plans, career plans—things rarely go as expected. I've always been action-driven, and I approached this phase the same way I approach software or product development: throwing a bunch of things at the wall and seeing what sticks."

Meanwhile, she was determined to make a living in New York City, and for Ordonez, that meant working on a lot of different projects with the creative and business skills she had in her toolkit. She did graphic design, photo and video production, social media management, manufacturing of wearables, and more—and she was also building websites, managing ecommerce, and working on system integrations. The pieces started to come together.

There was a common problem she'd experienced in her various roles, and she had the tools to address it: how to get things from one place to another. "Wasting my creative and strategic energy on tedious shipping tasks inspired me to build Airpals," she says, and her business was born.

Ordonez went on to secure venture backing, and in 2022, a year after launching the company, she received support from Google's Founders Fund to grow the business.

The nuance to her experience has turned out to be her superpower. "One challenge I faced was telling a clear, concise story about my career since I had worn many hats, from product design to production," Ordonez says. "But in the end, that adaptability worked in my favor. Moving fast allowed me to learn rapidly and connect with incredible professionals across different industries."

Though speed and action have brought Ordonez to where she is today, among the guiding principles she's learned along the way are the value of patience, how overnight success is an illusion, the power of collaborating on others' projects—and having those collaborators show up for you too—and that sometimes, "the only way out is through."

In her role now, staying curious is also essential, whether it's about advancements in AI or different perspectives on creativity and leadership. "At the end of the day, learning never really stops," she says. "I believe we should all push ourselves to pick up something new every day."

First Moves

Grace Hopkins

MFA Communications Design '21
Graphic Designer at The New School

First job after Pratt:

My first role was as a "creative content studio extern" at LVMH-Moët Hennessy. The title "extern" placed me above an intern, but on a temporary contract. This opportunity was particularly exciting because it exposed me to a wide array of creative work—including graphic design, art direction, project management, and event coordination—requiring me to wear many hats. It was also great to experience working in-house while collaborating with multiple brands, each with its own distinct history and culture.

Favorite part of your work today:

Using my creativity and skills to support a cause I truly believe in. I'm passionate about education, knowledge, and creative institutions, so working for a university gives my work a deep sense of purpose. Since becoming a designer, I've realized that what fuels my creativity and drive isn't just the act of designing itself, but the mission behind it. The greater purpose of what I'm designing for is just as important as the design itself.

Current inspiration:

This might seem unrelated to design, but over the past year, I've gotten into rock climbing. Surprisingly, I've found that tackling a rock wall isn't so different from approaching a creative problem. You start with a clear goal, but the path to reaching it requires a blend of problem-solving, strategy, and learned skill. I love how creativity extends beyond traditional design work—it's everywhere, even in places you wouldn't expect.

Shane Davis

BArch '17
Senior Project Manager at a NYC Architecture Firm

First job after Pratt:

My first job after graduation was total serendipity, the result of putting myself in the place to create opportunity, and the combination of experiences and interests aligning in a way that I hadn't believed possible. Working as an event planner for Program Board while studying architecture didn't seem like a likely avenue to full-time employment, but you never know what exists unless you at least take the steps toward discovery. For me, that was simply attending the career fair in the ARC and putting myself out there. Never did I think that special-event architecture existed, but it's become my career after a fateful meeting with a small firm on that early, cold morning that I debated skipping for an extra bit of sleep.

Favorite part of your work today:

Almost eight years later, after many ups and downs, I am still at that small firm that took a chance on me. Every day I get to work on something new: sometimes elaborate things like massive festivals and fashion shows, other times something as small as an opening party or a simple art installation. I get to experience the full journey of a project, from inception to iteration, permitting to build and removal, hundreds of times a year, which is something very few others can claim.

Advice for new grads:

Don't give up. Don't forget who you are, and that when you are hired, it's always for a reason. Don't be afraid to zig when others tell you to zag . . . sometimes the bend in the river is the right way even if you can't see the other side.

Sebastian Torrens

BFA Communications Design (Illustration) '23
Illustrator

First job after Pratt:

The first position I had after Pratt was interning with comic book publisher Somos Arte LLC. What excited me the most about the opportunity was being part of a team that championed social action with the artistic medium of sequential art. For those unfamiliar, Somos Arte publishes the La Borinqueña graphic novel series. The story follows a Nuyorican college student, Marisol Rios De La Luz, who is gifted incredible superpowers by the Puerto Rican deities. With these powers, she aims to solve the island's environmental issues.

Favorite part of your work today:

I have been mostly freelancing: I have worked on several projects such as fashion merchandise, album covers, and movie art. I am currently drawing and coloring a comic book with a self-published author. In addition to that, I am developing a portfolio to pursue a career in concept art. My favorite part about the work I do is using my artistic vision to inspire others. That's honestly the main reason why I pursued this career.

Advice for students:

I'd tell them to build their network while they're at school. Junior year is the best time to start. Go to any networking events for any industry you're interested in. Email art directors or industry professionals too. You can get their advice on your work or perhaps even obtain a job or an internship. Make sure you maintain those relationships too. You never know where they might lead in the future.

Pratt's Young Alumni Leadership Group on Navigating Their Early Careers

Prattfolio connected with the members of Pratt's Young Alumni Leadership Group, a program of Pratt Alumni Engagement, to talk about where they landed after Pratt, changing paths, and what's energizing them now. The quotes here are edited and condensed from their Q&As.

Read the expanded Q&As at pratt.edu/prattfolio/first-moves.

Sydney Barton

BFA Communications Design '18
Art Director at Amplify Education

First job after Pratt:

My first job after graduation was as a junior graphic designer at Bareburger, a sustainability-focused restaurant group known for its high-quality, organic, and eco-friendly offerings that accommodate a wide range of dietary needs. I was thrilled to learn from my incredibly talented manager, creative director and illustrator Zach McCurdy, and to contribute to real-world design projects—creating menus, signage, and digital marketing assets—that had a tangible impact.

Favorite part of your work today:

In 2021, I decided to pivot into the education industry, driven by my long-standing interest in creating children's books and designing for kids. When Amplify Education—a leader in K–12 curriculum and assessment—had an opening for a freelance designer, I took the opportunity to make the transition. Roughly one year later, I moved into a senior designer role on their marketing team, and I'm now an art director.

A Pratt experience that prepared you for your career:

I originally started at Pratt as a photography major, but the Foundation courses during my freshman year—especially Light, Color, and Design and Drawing—opened my eyes to my love for color theory, illustration, and composition. Those classes helped me realize how much I enjoyed crafting visual narratives and designing with intention, which ultimately led me to switch my major to communications design with a concentration in graphic design. Throughout the following years, several courses deepened my passion for design, particularly my Senior Project classes, where I had the opportunity to develop brand identities for various types of companies. That experience set the stage for my professional career, where I've been heavily involved in rebranding efforts.

Ziqi Wang

MS Data Analytics and Visualization '23
GIS Developer at TSCG

First job after Pratt:

Being a GIS developer at a retail real estate company in the city. With a very small GIS team, I was given the opportunity to create new products from scratch, which is something a newly graduated student can only hope for.

Favorite part of your work today:

One of my favorite parts of the job is the freedom and support that I have. This is something that I never thought I would be doing, since I come from a journalism background. [This is my first time] being a full-stack developer, and even for a medium-sized company, the pressure is still immense. I am glad that I have a lot of control over what kind of work I do and how I do it. I work with a team of women who are young and bright, and the work environment that we create is supportive.

I don't really see this as a pivot per se. I'd like to think this is part of a journey. From how I see it, everyone starts somewhere and wants to reach a destination. However, the road is not always straight and the future is not always clear—you don't always get to pick where you walk. But that is OK, because every step you take will eventually connect, and when you look back, that's when your path will show and you will gain clarity.

Current inspiration:

My friends. I made some of the best friends while I was at Pratt, and to this day, the bond we share is still strong. The love and support I get from them is amazing.

Deepa Shanbhag

BFA Communications Design '13
Creative Director

First job after Pratt:

My first professional job after graduating was as a freelance designer in the marketing department of LOFT. I had struggled for over a year to get a design job (I wanted to work at a magazine) so I was excited to be in the industry, putting my degree to use in a way I didn't predict but was ultimately prepared for, thanks to Pratt.

Favorite part of your work today:

My work now is centered around joy vs. leveling up a specific career track. I'm still a creative within marketing, but after an unforeseen layoff a couple of years ago from a job I loved, I decided to reprioritize and protect things I really care about. This has led to freelancing as a designer, returning to teaching, and making time to study a new industry with the aim to pivot at some point. I still have career goals, but I've let go of the idea that there's only one way to achieve them.

Current inspiration:

For the past year I've been learning about the film and TV industry through one-off workshops, courses, and discussions with professionals in the industry. I love being a student again. I'm energized, and instead of seeing what I'm doing and what I'm studying as separate things, I view it all as part of being creative.

Learn more about Pratt Alumni Engagement's activities and connect at pratt.edu/alumni.

CHANGE YOUR GAZE

By Jean Hartig

An MFA Communications Design Class Explores New Ways of Thinking and Making, Finding Collaborators in the Natural World

One way to stop seeing trees, or rivers, or hills, only as 'natural resources,' is to class them as fellow beings—kinfolk," Ursula K. Le Guin writes in the preface to her poetry collection *Late in the Day*. "I guess I'm trying to subjectify the universe because look where objectifying it has gotten us."

Le Guin's proposal for reorienting perspective is one of the entry points that Adjunct Professor (CCE) Jean Brennan and Adjunct Assistant Professor Maria Gracia Echeverria share with their students in the MFA Communications Design Cross-Disciplinary Studio—Symbiotic Futures, a class that calls them to examine their relationship with the world through new ecological lenses. In the studio, communications design connects with a range of other creative practices and areas of study, creative research moves away from the screen and into the field and extends across the senses, and, uniquely, nonhuman beings become collaborators.

The course is derived from curricula that Brennan and Echeverria developed separately, in 2020 and 2021. The realization of their shared interest in forming a cross-disciplinary curriculum that integrates environmental art and the humanities with design led to Symbiotic Futures. As they looked at big-picture themes that thread through the work happening at Pratt, like sustainability and climate change, Brennan and Echeverria wanted to create a space that wasn't so much about identifying and fixing a problem but prompting a "leap of imagination," as Echeverria puts it, and "reconnecting to who we are as animals, and who lives with us, our neighbors—and allowing them to change you."

It is a more philosophical angle on ecology, Brennan says, than the approach students take in courses like Sustainability and Design, which she also teaches. Moving through three exploratory phases, or modules, of the class, students in the Cross-Disciplinary Studio

will tune into their own place in nature and then research a specific being—moss, a mushroom, an octopus, a tree—learning its origins, habits, relationships, and ultimately co-create something with them. The idea is not about mimicking another living thing, Brennan emphasizes, but "becoming inspired by their way of being as a point of reference for making." For students, it's an opportunity to focus attention on other ways of living and creating, practice new modes of working, and open up to ways of seeing the world that could carry into any kind of future work.

WE ARE PART OF NATURE EVERYWHERE

The first module of the course, called Entanglement, grounds students in the experience of place, as they embark on field research in their urban environs around Pratt. A vacant lot, a sidewalk tree plot, or their apartment backyard might contain a "novel ecosystem," a term from the book *Rambunctious Garden* by Emma Marris that refers to new ecosystems that come about due to human intervention. The students look at their environs through the eyes of a researcher, engaging other senses as well to notice and connect to their surroundings. "Field work" is how Brennan describes the process, which includes collecting, drawing, writing, and collage.

Meanwhile, students are considering Indigenous thinking about land and kinship, looking at artwork like Cy Twombly's *Natural History, Part I, Mushrooms* and Uta Barth's photography exhibition *to walk without destination and to see only to see*, and learning about composer Pauline Olivaros's practice of "deep listening." An embodiment workshop has students interact with just some of the guest artists and thinkers the studio faculty host throughout the semester, to do awareness-building exercises.

The culmination of the module is what the professors call "a polyphonic assemblage," a reference to a concept by anthropologist Anna Tsing related to how human- and nonhuman-made worlds intertwine. All eight sections of the studio put up their work, artifacts, and observations from the field research for everyone to see—many students experimenting with form, with video, installations, printed matter, and other mediums appealing to all the senses to build a story.

A NEW COLLEAGUE

In the Ontology module of the class, students choose a being to research and ultimately collaborate with, something they've connected with on an intuitive level. Over the several years the course has run, students have looked at species they live with every day, reached back into family history, and found organisms with unique adaptations or cultural significance. The aim is, as Echeverria says, "to go deep into the universe of this being, so you can have a thoughtful conversation with it."

Students research the behavioral, relational, visual, and formal qualities or characteristics that define their organism, as well as the cultural and mythical narratives attributed to it. These are visually recorded and mapped in a class Miro board. The module ends with a 2D installation project that asks the students to translate a particular aspect of their organism into a visual form, to be presented at an all-cohort gathering.

This is the point, Brennan says, where the umwelt of the being—the way it experiences the world—begins to emerge for the students, and "how this way of being might suggest a methodology that they can carry into their making."

CREATING TOGETHER

The final weeks of the class are all about process, with a series of short making exercises in different mediums, from language to speculative design to performance, wrapping up with a final project (three examples of which are featured in this story). Done in collaboration with their being of choice, this module is called Sympoiesis, or "making with," a term the students come across in their reading from scholar Donna Haraway's *Staying with the Trouble*. ("It is a word for worlding-with, in company," Haraway writes.) "For some students, their organism is a jumping-off point for new ways of seeing, for others it provides content for speculative storytelling, and still others find methods to 'invite' their organism into a kind of collaboration as a fellow design colleague," says Brennan. Encouraging them to explore the complexities of those relationships and less obvious conceptual pathways, Brennan and Echeverria have seen their students start to experiment more, to broaden their creative boundaries.

One student in 2024, Frieja White, MFA Communications Design '25, who chose a fly for her final video-installation project, reflects on how those investigations reoriented her practice: "[The class] helped me see how seemingly ordinary subjects, like house flies or the sounds of nature, can reveal deeper insights when explored through a creative lens," she says. "This project also taught me to embrace interdisciplinary approaches, using concepts like cymatics to bridge sound, motion, and material in new ways, ultimately transforming how I approach both design and the creative process."

As Echeverria says, "The class wants to show you how much you can learn from these different perspectives, to expand your vision of the world."

A READING AND LISTENING LIST FOR NOTICING DIFFERENTLY

Explore just some of the readings and references from the MFA Communications Design Cross Disciplinary Studio

Braiding Sweetgrass
by Robin Wall Kimmerer

Entangled Life
by Merlin Sheldrake

The Mushroom at the End of the World
by Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing

Staying with the Trouble
by Donna J. Haraway

A Psalm for the Wild Built
(Monk and Robot Series)
by Becky Chambers

Rambunctious Garden
by Emma Marris

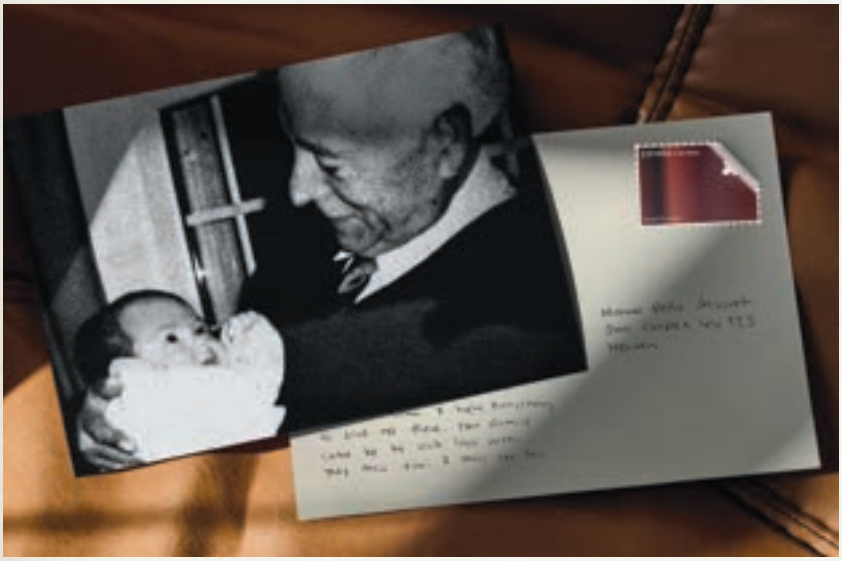
Emergent Strategy
by Adrienne Maree Brown

Late in the Day: Poems 2010–2014
by Ursula K. Le Guin

A Forest Walk,
a guided practice podcast
with Kimberly Ruffin from
Emergence Magazine,
emergencemagazine.org

Courtesy of Jose Inclán

"In 1960, my granddad planted 30 walnut trees in Spain. He showed me the passion to live with and for nature."



WALNUT, *JUGLANS REGIA*

Jose Inclán,
MFA Communications Design '25

Jose Inclán's Cross-Disciplinary project delved into family history, with the walnut tree as collaborator. The walnut holds a deep connection to his grandfather, who grew up in the hills of northern Spain, in Asturias, "colloquially called 'the natural paradise' of Spain, as it is full of forests, beaches, and mountains," Inclán says. "His village was composed entirely of walnut trees."

In his project proposal, Inclán remembers how his grandfather, who was a shepherd and then tended trees across the country for the Spanish government, acted as caretaker for a plot of land in a small village in Spain. In that plot, he planted and cultivated numerous species of trees where the native growth had previously been cut down for lumber. During a summer visit, on one of their daily walks to the plot, he brought Inclán to his favorite tree: the walnut. It was a symbol of sturdiness as well as nourishment and care—"juglone, an allelopathic compound that inhibits the growth of species around the tree, makes it a very robust and vigorous species, but at the same time very gentle, giving us shade and an edible seed to eat," Inclán says.

After his grandfather passed away in 2015, his family buried him on that plot of land—"a land created by nature but replanted by him to give back to the planet," Inclán reflects in his project proposal—and they planted a walnut in that spot. "He will forever be connected to us in symbiosis with the tree. He will give us shade, nuts in the fall, and a memory of how we are one within nature."

Inclán's project centered on the heart of the tree, looking at the color profile of a crossection of the trunk. With colors derived from a zoomed-in view of a walnut tree core sample, he created postage stamps for postcards he made with old family photographs. Written on the back were messages to his grandfather, in a walnut ink Inclán developed, bringing the project full circle: "The tree sends memories in postcard form to my granddad in heaven."

Professor: Jean Brennan

THE FLY BOOK: THE ESSENCE OF A HOUSEFLY

Frieja White,
MFA Communications Design '25

Batting, buzz, breakdown, hovering, resting, transitory, vibration—these were some of the words Frieja White came up with in her exploration of the housefly, a being she chose to work with for both how we perceive it and how it perceives.

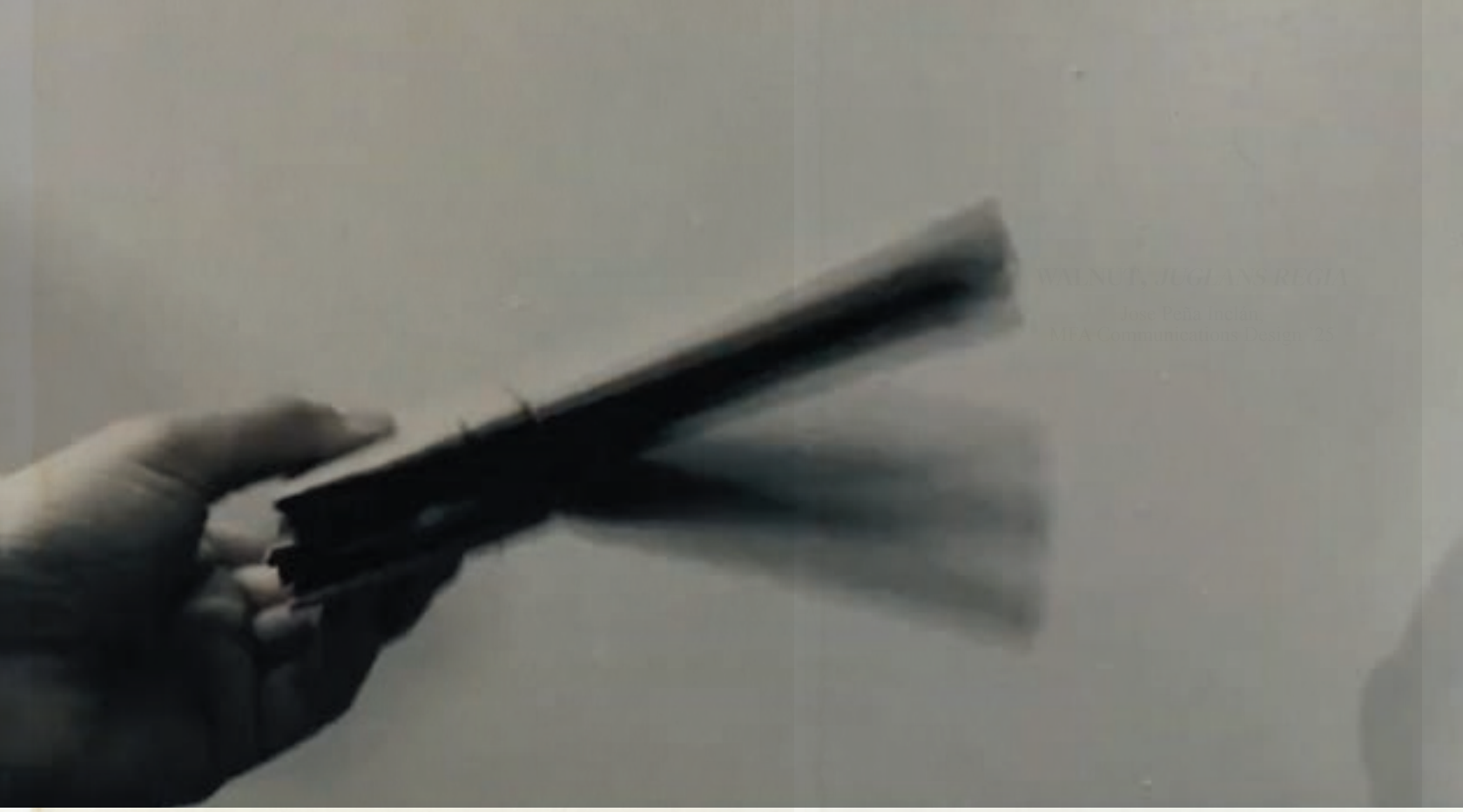
"What drew me to the housefly was its status as a creature often dismissed or overlooked," White says. "Despite being seen as an annoyance, the housefly has complex behaviors and ecological roles worth examining. Its ability to thrive in human-altered environments, coupled with its unique communication through wingbeat frequency, piqued my curiosity."

The wingbeat would become central to White's final project. White created a video projection showing a mirror image of bound cardboard booklets with wood panels at the center, shaken in the air in a wing-flap motion. The batting—the concept White ultimately focused on in her explorations—creates a strong sound when the pages strike against the board. (The books were displayed along with the projection.) Sped up as the video progresses, the audio brings to mind the zipping sound of a housefly.

But White was also interested in the way the fly senses the world: "I was fascinated by its extraordinary vision, with compound eyes that provide nearly 360-degree panoramic views and process approximately 250 frames per second—far surpassing the human perception of 24 frames per second for a smooth movie experience. This vision allows flies to detect motion with incredible speed, offering a mosaic-like view of the world through thousands of tiny visual receptors called ommatidia."

"Their intricate sensory world and misunderstood ecological contributions inspired me to explore how something so common could provoke deeper thought about our relationship with nature."

Professor: Matt Martin

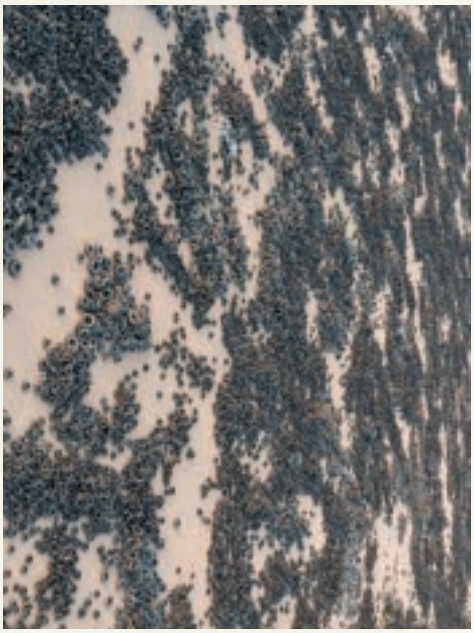


Courtesy of Frieja White

"This project connects sound, motion, and material."

GENESIS: A BACTERIAL TAXONOMY

Yasmeen Abdal,
MFA Communications Design '25

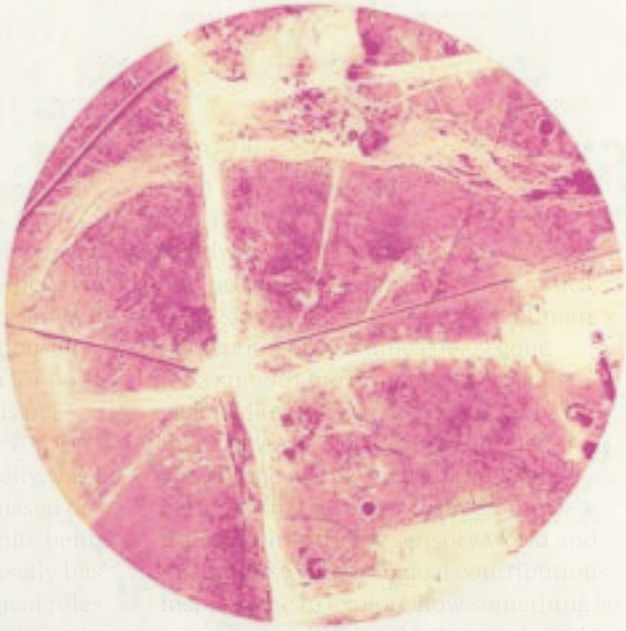


"Elements of beauty emerge from unexpected sources, blurring the lines between contamination and nature."

28°51'56.43"N 47°46'20.78"E

Domain: Petrobacteria
Phylum: Hydrocarbonia
Class: Crudimicrobia
Order: Oilslicales
Family: Tarballaceae
Genus: Oilya
Species: Oilya crudea

28°52'04"N 47°45'55'E



Domain: Petrobacteria
Phylum: Hydrocarbonia
Class: Fieldimicrobia
Order: Oilswellales
Family: Reservoiraceae
Genus: Drillia
Species: Drillia petropatchensis

It began with a butterfly—the brimstone, *Gonepteryx rhamni*, a small vibrant-green species whose leaf-shaped, vein-patterned wings bear a remarkable resemblance to the foliage it lives and eats among. For the brimstone, mimesis, or mimicry, is a means of protection and survival, of hiding—but as Yasmeen Abdal found, imitation might function another way as well, to help us see.

In her final project for the Cross-Disciplinary course last year, Abdal took inspiration from the brimstone to explore the idea of mimesis: "I examined the uncanny—the tension between the familiar and the unfamiliar. How does deception or imitation reshape our perception of the world? How can contamination mimic natural beauty, blurring the line between the artificial and the organic?"

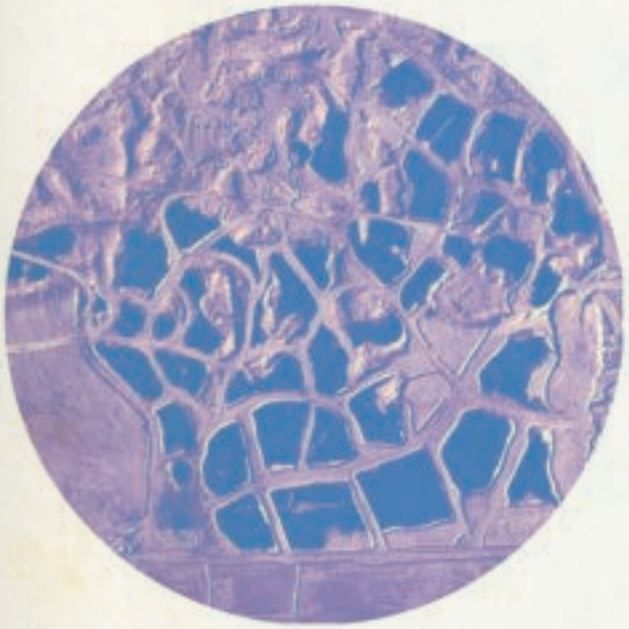
For the project "Genesis: A Bacterial Taxonomy," Abdal, who grew up in Kuwait, looked at contaminated sites in the country—"oil fields, camping grounds, and the world's largest tire graveyard" from a vantage that zoomed out far from the familiar. From an aerial view, sprawling fields of tires resemble bacterial clusters in a petri dish, uniform dots heaped and radiating out on a flat, pale surface. "By analyzing these environments on both micro and macro scales," she observes, "I revealed how their spatial presence deceives perception."

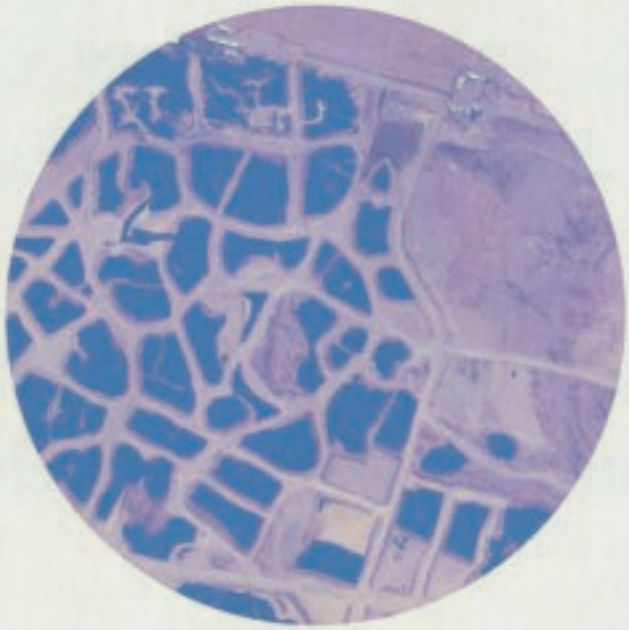
She developed a hypothetical guide to new species of bacteria whose taxonomy derives from the reality of its composition—like *Rubberus tireus* and *Drillia petropatchensis*. Accompanying it is what Abdal calls a "National Geographic-style parody video," another take on mimicry and deception.

"The project serves as an allegory," she says. "It introduces a speculative bacterial family that embodies the modern ecological paradox—where beauty emerges from contamination, reshaping our understanding of nature's transformations."

Professor: Maria Gracia Echeverria

Courtesy of Yasmeen Abdal





Domain: Rubberbacteria
Phylum: Elasticae
Class: Tireobacteria
Order: Treadales
Family: Sidewallaceae
Genus: Rubberus
Species: Rubberus tireus

29°15'31"N 47°40'51"E

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Network

Inside looks at work, practice, and collaborations with Pratt alumni.

Eco-entrepreneur Lauren Gropper, MS City and Regional Planning '04, and her brand, Repurpose, are working to bring "composting infrastructure into the mainstream." Read more on page 42.

Design for the World

Aaron Nesser, MID '17, Helps Build Products and Companies with the Earth in Mind

Photo courtesy of Aaron Nesser

Aaron Nesser's career in technology and entrepreneurship, with a focus on Earth-positive innovation, is built on his background in biology and industrial design. While a student at Pratt, in 2016, he cofounded the biomaterial company Keel Labs, which has been featured on the Stella McCartney runway and in product drops by designer Mr. Bailey. Nesser then launched Keep Earth Company, his own studio where he collaborates with businesses to develop planet-minded solutions, such as clothing repair patches and seaweed-paper packaging. His most recent work, a bioactive planter pot created in partnership with Fun Stuff Design (Julian Goldman, MID '17, and Dierdre Shea, MID '18), was recently launched by Ocean Made. Nesser spoke with *Prattfolio* about his design origins, what's keeping him energized, and a simple tactic he uses for getting unstuck.

Who's the first designer you saw yourself in/connected with?
Without a doubt, my father. For my entire childhood and still today, he has been a corporate identity designer. It meant that design legends like Eames and Vignelli, and contemporary masters like Erik Spiekermann and Michael Bierut were household names.

Who or what is a major influence for you today in your work?
Victor Papanek and his book *Design for the Real World*. It introduced me to the idea that design could be a force for good. His critical view on industry and the designer's role as a changemaker still resonates with me today.

What's a chance you're glad you took?
Starting Keel Labs (f.k.a. AlgiKnit). It seemed crazy for someone trained in biology and design to start a material science company, but it showed me how incredibly valuable design is to the entrepreneurship process. As a discipline, design excels at bringing people together across different disciplines.

Is there a "failure" that turned into a breakthrough?
Raising money is failure after failure until you succeed. The one time I really missed the mark led me to learn and develop the best practices that I use with my clients to build their pitch and support them through the fundraising process.

What question or mantra has helped guide you through your career?
"Never stop." It's one of my favorite songs of all time by The Bad Plus and it's been a mantra for me in those high-intensity times when pushing through does make all the difference.

What's your favorite part of your job today?
Getting to meet founders who are tackling huge (sometimes wicked) problems, and developing technologies that will help keep Earth comfortable for the future.

What's a daily practice that prepares you for your work?
Time blocking time at the end of the day—especially when things are busy, it helps dissipate the energy of work so I can go into the evening without distraction.

When you hit a roadblock, what's your tactic for getting unstuck?
Change the medium. If I'm on the computer, I'll try paper and pen. If I'm writing, I'll talk it out. In a conversation, start sketching.

Where do you creatively recharge?
Prospect Park and Green-Wood Cemetery are my go-to green spaces to walk and talk. And the Hudson River School paintings at the Brooklyn Museum.

Being based in NYC, what's the most inspiring place in the city for you?
The Garment District—the access to so many different types of materials and parts. The possibilities are always inspiring.

What piece of advice would you give a young designer looking for their place to make a difference?
Be patient—making a difference doesn't happen on day one. For most people, it takes an entire career.

If you have mentees, is there a question you always ask them?
"Can you say that again, but simpler?" Simple doesn't mean dumbing it down—it means opening the door for others to get excited about your vision. It's a question I also ask every founder I work with (often many times). It's the start of transforming how they pitch their companies. Founders live and breathe their innovations, diving deep into details that most people don't appreciate. But that first spark of understanding is what turns skeptics into believers.

Is there a piece of advice you're glad you didn't take?
"Try harder." What I've found is that when something isn't working, it's usually the approach that's at issue, not the level of effort.

What's the best advice you've received, or words of wisdom that come up again and again for you?
Lean toward discomfort rather than protecting yourself from it. Pema Chödrön talks about it best in *When Things Fall Apart* . . . when you're at the edge of your comfort, that's where the most learning and growth happens. □

The Indie Ethos of Filmmaking Duo Ozu Was Right

Ozu Was Right's Eileen Yoon (left) and Grace Zhang, both BFA Film '20, on set.

Images courtesy of Ozu Was Right

When Eileen Yoon and Grace Zhang, both BFA Film '20, attended a screening of Japanese filmmaker Yasujirō Ozu's feature *Late Spring* as part of a course at Pratt, they had no idea it would alter the path of their careers. The screening was part of Ways of Seeing Cinema taught by Deborah Meehan, professor of film/video, who shared that the director of this slow, measured film was often considered "too rebellious for Japan and too Japanese for the West." It was a sentiment that deeply resonated with them as Asian American filmmakers.

After graduating from Pratt and entering the fast-paced film industry, it was Ozu's endurance in both his art and his creative process that stuck with them—the duo has said that they found particular inspiration in how he "strictly scouted locations on foot" and would "walk for miles until eventually passing out from exhaustion." Yoon and Zhang wanted to take on this considered approach to filmmaking. "We kept saying to each other that we should make a production company because we could do things better ourselves," they said in a joint interview with *Prattfolio* over email. And so they did.

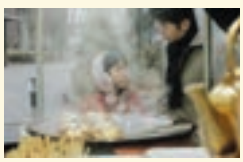
In 2021, Yoon and Zhang launched Ozu Was Right. Applying their namesake Ozu's deliberate approach to filmmaking, the two set out with their new production company to "contribute to an independent film ecosystem that responds to [the] present time we live in." Putting their shared principles into practice, both have actively centered care for each other and their collaborators as well as their respective voices as artists. "We make an effort to hire crew members who are queer, trans, creatives of color," the duo said. "Not to check off diversity boxes but because that's what our community looks like, and our work is about growing horizontally and uplifting the people around us, not only ourselves."

When it came to company roles, Yoon and Zhang agreed to remain flexible: they would both direct, produce, shoot, and be in other production roles along the way. That approach has yielded a body of work that spans from branded content to music videos to narrative short films, with clients that have included athletic brands Yonex and Arc'teryx and musicians like OHYUNG and Bubble Tea and Cigarettes and HUNJIYA. For each film, their creative process—developed during their time at Pratt—combines grounded, empathetic storytelling with a flexible approach on set. "People will often tell us we have to choose one thing and stick to it," said Zhang. "But I think our generation understands that you have to be flexible and do a bit of everything."

Now, their hands-on, DIY ethos has set the groundwork for their company. Zhang, who had felt frustrated as an early-career filmmaker by the lack of grant-funded options for producing their narrative short, turned to community support to make the movie a reality. Their successful fundraiser for the forthcoming film, *the sun's coming up, good night*, was a lesson in working independently, without reliance on typical funding streams to support a project. "Doing it all ourselves without any institution was the best learning experience ever," Zhang says.

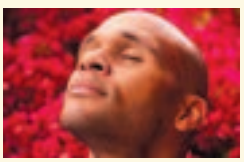
In the patient spirit of Yasujirō Ozu, the duo continues to engage their craft at their own pace. "Something we remind ourselves is that there is no right or wrong path in filmmaking," they shared. "It's a marathon, not a sprint. Every decision can be the right decision, and as long as you're motivated, you will get it done."

— CARSON STACHURA, MSLIS '25



Chimera
This narrative short, directed by Yoon, weaves between present-day New York and the past in Korea, reflecting on the upbringing of a "third culture kid." Through her journey from Korea to the US, the film explores her experiences with both given and chosen families, "redefining her idea of home."

the sun's coming up, good night
This atmospheric short film, directed by Zhang, tells the coming-of-age story of a queer, Chinese American painter exploring the "power dynamics of race and class in the suburbs."



ON x 48 FOR CHANGE
Codirected by Yoon and Zhang, this promotional video for social justice nonprofit 48 For Change panoramically tracks the organization's founder as he runs through Southern California, sharing his mission to raise awareness on social issues through running.

What's Giving Director-Cinematographer Mylo Butler '21 Creative Fuel

Music, fashion, and their attendant aesthetics, moods, and expression have been central to Mylo Butler, BFA Film '21, as he has built his body of work—but also stories, particularly those of BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and other communities whose voices and experiences might be overlooked. A director and cinematographer with a specialization in color grading, Butler began his studies as a photography major at Pratt Munson before joining Pratt's film program in Brooklyn, culminating in a thesis film—*Sundown Town*, an all-too-real horror short about two boyfriends and an ill-fated road trip pit stop—that made the rounds and picked up accolades at more than 20 festivals. Since then, Butler has captured runways from Tory Burch to Toteme; worked on campaigns for fashion brands like Levi's and Diesel and magazines including *Ebony*, *Paper*, and *Out*; and made dance and music videos with performers like voguing star Honey Balenciaga, singer-songwriter Teyana Taylor, and drag diva Selma Nilla.

Fresh from a project highlighting SZA before her halftime performance at Super Bowl LIX, and in the early stages of shooting his first feature film, Butler shared a bit about what's been essential to his work, how he stays grounded, and what's been inspiring him this year.

1.

As a creative/artist in the industry, it can be really hard to create a routine and stick with it, but I try my best to find things to do that keep me grounded that aren't always flexing my creative muscles but more feeding the logical side of my brain. I go roller skating [pictured here is Bushwick skating hotspot Xanadu Roller Arts], sometimes I practice building my camera configurations, or even doing something as simple as having a coffee and watching the news.

2.

Right now with my busy schedule, it's hard to find things to do other than work, but I really enjoy consuming content—music videos, horror movies—and even reading Marvel comic books. It allows me to absorb certain references and stay connected to things that I enjoy, and use elements of them as inspiration in my work, which ultimately makes it feel more like me. I've been reading some of the Young Avengers comics recently and The Avengers Children's Crusade, Agatha Harkness, and Captain Marvel.

3.

. . . for horror movies, *The Substance*—and it's not a horror movie, but I have been enjoying *Wicked* so much!

1: Photo by Santiago Elliott, courtesy of Xanadu Roller Arts. 2: Marvel.
3: *The Substance*, Demi Moore, 2024. © MUBI / Courtesy Everett Collection

5.

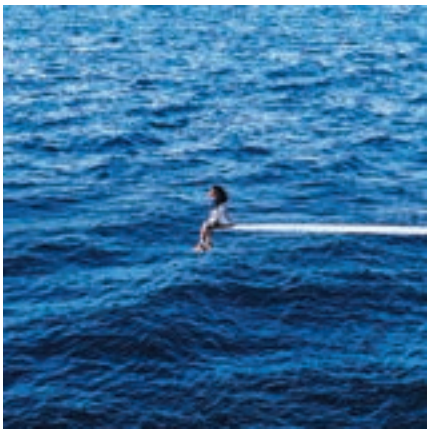
My camera is my most essential tool. I feel very close to it, and that it fuels my brain in a way that marries both the logical and creative sides of it. A camera system that I have been familiarizing myself with is the Sony FX3 Camera, building unique camera configurations for each shoot. I like using different cameras for everything depending on what I'm shooting, but I really enjoy the versatility of the Sony Camera system.

6.

All throughout my time at Pratt and even today, an object that always inspired me was prisms. The way they refract and interpret white rays of light into different wavelengths of color is just so inspiring to me!

4.

I love music . . . but I think it's the melodies and ballads of artists like Ariana Grande, Daniel Caesar, SZA, and even Beyoncé that really influence and inspire me and my work.



7.

One thing I have recently discovered about myself, which I had never really thought about until now, is how important your instincts are to your work and basically everything you do. I feel most centered with myself and my work when I'm able to trust myself when it comes to the many important decisions I face every day. You will never make a bad decision if it comes from trusting yourself and your ability to see things only you can see.

4: SZA, photo by Daniel Sannwald / RCA. 5: Sony Electronics. 6: jared (Flickr). 7: Courtesy of Mylo Butler.

Films, Decor, and More from Alumni

Pratt graduates' recent products and publications include wallpaper, home goods, and a history of the skateboard.

1

1. **Camellias Wallpaper**
Evan Paul English, MFA Fine Arts '16
To create this baroque floral wallpaper for Flavor Paper, artist Evan Paul English drew from his background as both a painter and a tattoo artist. Reimagining designs from his personal work into mural-scale decor, English hand-drew a nonrepeating pattern, which was then digitized for installation. Originally developed for a Charleston champagne bar, the design was covered in an *Architectural Digest* story on actress Sutton Foster's home. Camellias is part of Flavor Paper's Wild Life collection of unexpected and playful designs and is available alongside its colorful sister style, Petite Camellias. Available at flavorpaper.com.

2. **Detour T-Shirt**
Akiva Listman, BFA Fine Arts (Painting) '21
This screen-printed graphic black T-shirt is painter Akiva Listman's first collaboration with OnlyNY, a streetwear brand he says he has admired since he visited their store in 2017, when he first arrived at Pratt. The shirt features an arrangement of city street signs, adding to Listman's body of work focused on everyday New York City objects, including subway seats (featured on MTA's Instagram last year), MetroCards, and Yankees hats. Available at onlyny.com.book.

1: Flavor Paper. 3: Artistcolette. 4 and p. 37: Repurpose. 5: Criterion Collection. 6: Phaidon. 7: RBW. Other images courtesy of the alumni

5

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6

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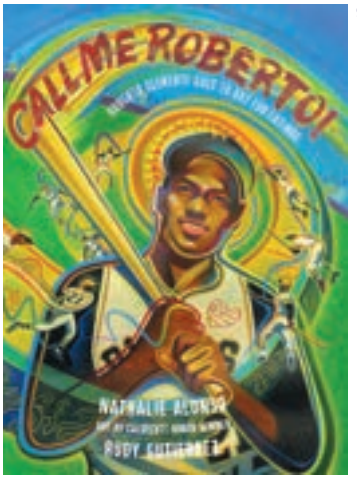
3. **Hair Accessories by Artistcolette**
Colette Bernard, BFA Fine Arts (Sculpture and Integrated Practices) '21
Artist and entrepreneur Colette Bernard embraced her interest in "internet culture and object-making" to create this series of sculptural, multicolored hair claws and clips. Her eclectic collection includes Career Claws—a work-themed line in shapes that range from wisdom teeth for dental professionals to safety cones for construction workers—and designs of everyday objects, including strawberries and love letters. Bernard writes that these durable, eco-friendly bioacetate accessories feel "like the lovechild between sculpture, graphic design, and fashion." Available at artistcolette.com.

4. **Compostable Small Bin Bag**
Lauren Gropper, MS City and Regional Planning '04
The latest from trailblazing eco-entrepreneur Lauren Gropper's sustainability brand, Repurpose, is a 3-gallon, plant-based bag for handling food, pet, and yard waste. As the brand's founder and CEO, Gropper told *Forbes* that her education at Pratt helped her bring "composting infrastructure into the mainstream" with Repurpose. These bags—derived from cornstarch with a leakproof design—are certified compostable, commercially and at home. Available at repurpose.com.

5. **Three Short Films by Mackie Mallison on The Criterion Channel**
Mackie Mallison, BFA Film '23
After making the rounds at international film festivals, three of filmmaker Mackie Mallison's experimental shorts are now available to stream through The Criterion Channel. The films include portraits of Mallison's family members (*Live From the Clouds, Chuu Chuu*) and an exploration of Asian American identity featuring fellow Pratt graduate Ada Chen, BFA Fine Arts (Jewelry) '18 (*It Smells Like Springtime*). His 16mm shorts interweave personal and global concerns with bursts of animation, landing him a spot in *Filmmaker Magazine* as a "filmmaker to watch." Available at criterionchannel.com.

6. ***Skateboard*** **(Phaidon)**
Jonathan Olivares, BID '04
Industrial designer Jonathan Olivares's new monograph, developed in collaboration with the footwear brand Converse, uncovers the history of skateboarding through studio shots, archival images, and hundreds of illustrations. These images are paired with Oliveras's illuminating text on more than 100 skateboards, highlighting the materials and designs that have shaped this enduring cultural phenomenon. Available at phaidon.com.



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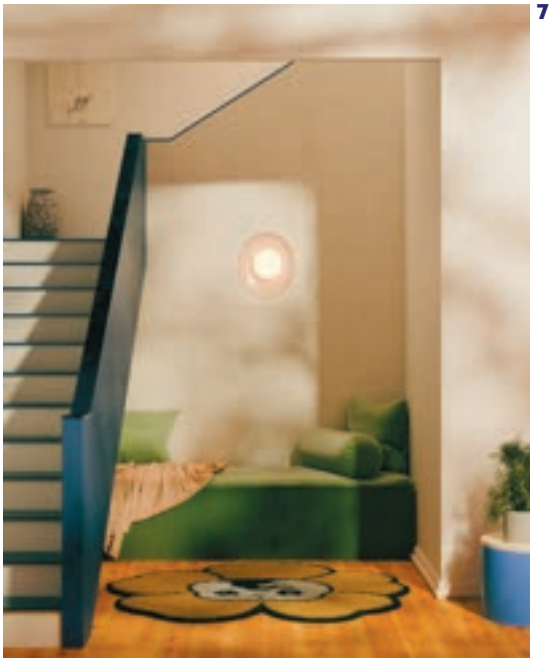

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7. **Crepe Sconce**
Little Wing Lee, MS Interior Design '06
This classic globe sconce, a collaboration between designer Little Wing Lee's company, Studio & Projects, and leading LED-lighting manufacturer RBW, was selected by *Domino* as one of the "Best New Lighting and Appliances of 2024." Lee told *Azure* that the fixture, which is made entirely of glass, was inspired by a love of the material and exploring its "different perceptions and textures" with light. The sconce is available in three sizes—9, 15, and 19 inch—with customizable color temperature and dimming controls, at rbw.com.

8. **The Spot**
Brad Ascalon, MID '05
One recent release from award-winning furniture and product designer Brad Ascalon is a versatile shower add-on that organizes go-to items. Designed for the Brooklyn-founded bathroom decor brand Quiet Town, this modular system combines the brand's bright and sharp aesthetic with Ascalon's self-described "uncomplicated, rational" sensibility. Built to hang over the showerhead, in durable powder-coated aluminum with an adjustable strap, The Spot could also be handy for storage around the house or in the garden. Learn more at bradascalon.com.

9. ***Call Me Roberto!***
(Calkins Creek)
Rudy Gutierrez, BFA Communications Design '79
In this illustrated children's picture book, artist Rudy Gutierrez (a Pratt alumnus and professor of undergraduate communications design) illuminates the story of Roberto Clemente, the baseball player from Puerto Rico who made history as a member of the Pittsburgh Pirates. Gutierrez brings his vibrant style to author and journalist Nathalie Alonso's bilingual Spanish-English text, which explores Clemente's fight against racism and his quest to become one of the greatest players of all time. Available at penguinrandomhouse.com.

10. **Perfect Little Pill Pouch**
Julie Mollo, BFA Fashion Design '10
This travel-size pouch from designer and self-proclaimed "bag lady" Julie Mollo is a sparkly, colorful take on an everyday accessory. Designs can be personalized and previewed on Mollo's site, which offers customization for the two-toned-pill and clutch colors in a spectrum of glittery and clear shades. Pouches are handmade in Mollo's Brooklyn-based studio and include her signature XOXO brass zipper "for a secure and stylish closure." Available at juliemollo.com.

LEGENDS 2025

LEGENDS 2025

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Legends proceeds provide student scholarships that support and foster artists, designers, architects, and creative thinkers of all backgrounds.

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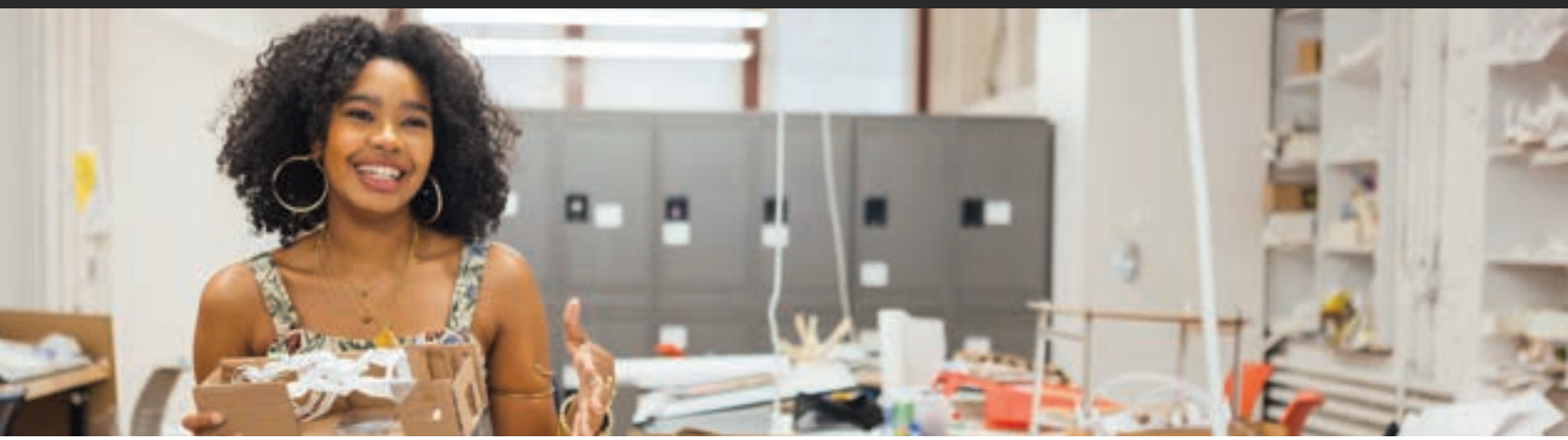

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Alumni Notes

Alumni Notes is Pratt alumni news highlights compiled from class notes submissions, newsletters, items shared by faculty and staff, and media mentions.

Tom Leytham, BArch ‘67, started a new career at age 72 as a watercolorist, and his award-winning work has been acquired for collections including that of the Vermont Statehouse. Read more inside.

Group Highlights

Lisa Corinne Davis, BFA Fine Arts '80; **Alanna Fields**, MFA Fine Arts '20; **Nancy Grossman**, BFA Graphic Arts and Illustration '62; **Jamaal Peterman**, MFA Fine Arts '19; **Hiba Schahbaz**, MFA Fine Arts (Painting) '12; **Monica Srivastava**, MFA Fine Arts (Painting) '23; and **Michelle Wen**, BFA Fine Arts (Painting) '18, were included in a major group show celebrating the Brooklyn Museum's 200th anniversary, which was coorganized by Mickalene Thomas, BFA Fine Arts '00. A press release for the exhibition—*The Brooklyn Artists Exhibition*—notes that all the work comes from "artists who have lived or maintained a studio in Brooklyn during the last five years." Alumni showed their work alongside faculty members including Jazmine Catasús, Fay Ku, and Yaw Owusu, Chair of Fine Arts Jane South, and Professor Emerita Leslie Roberts. The show ran from October 4, 2024, to January 26, 2025. (Brooklyn Museum)

Henry Crawley, BFA Photography '23; **Brandon Foushée**, BFA Photography '21; **alyssa kazew**, BFA Communications Design (Illustration) '12; **Xi Li**, BID '17; **Sadie Sanders**, BFA Photography '22; and **Noor Shoresh**, BFA Photography '25 were featured in *EXCITING PHOTOGRAPHY NOW!*, a 480-page survey of current American photography, highlighting artists from *MATTE Magazine*'s first-ever open call in its decade-long history of supporting emerging artists. The magazine was coedited by MATTE Editions founder and Pratt faculty member Matthew Leifheit, adjunct associate professor of photography, to create what he defines as a magazine "about where American photography is today, and how these artists are building on the history of American photography." (*AnOther Magazine*)

Rebecca Gillman Crimmins, MS City and Regional Planning '15, and **Elizabeth Crowley**, MS City and Regional Planning '08, were featured in *City & State New York*'s 2024 Trailblazers in Building and Real Estate. The media organization specializes in New York media coverage and writes that its annual list "features a range of stakeholders who are finding ways to create more space and make the city more affordable." The honorees include faculty member Jerrod Delaine, visiting assistant professor of construction management, facilities management, and real estate. (*City & State New York*)

1940s

Barbara Golub, Certificate, Costume Design '48, and **Adele Yeiser**, Certificate, Costume Design '48, share that they are "still kicking" and have been friends since attending Pratt. Golub, who was a children's dress designer, is currently working on her memoir.

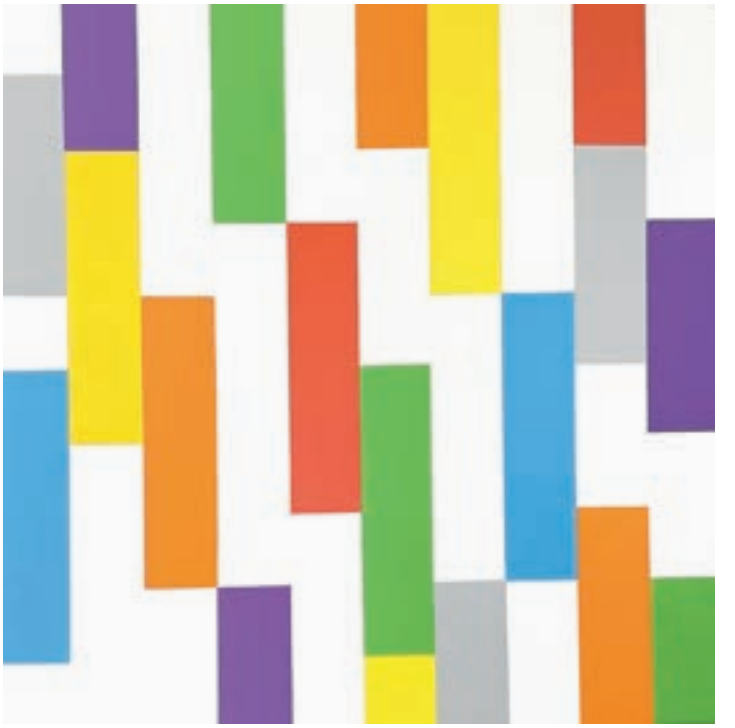
1950s

John Morning, BFA Advertising Design '55, Trustee Emeritus, shared two recent paintings, *Toccata* (2024) and *Opus 1* (2024).

1960s

Cynthia Tilkin, BFA Fine Arts '61, had an interior design and clothing business for nearly 40 years in Whidbey Island, north of Seattle, Washington. Tilkin writes, "We loved our life of water, mountains, and memories of Pratt, Brooklyn, and New York! Pratt was why my career was so successful!"

Cynthia Mailman, BS Art Education '64, had her solo exhibition of mixed media painting on paper, *Origins of God*, shown at Carter Burden Gallery in Manhattan from



April 18 to May 15, 2024. The Rowan University Art Gallery and Museum in Glassboro, New Jersey, had previously shown the exhibition, from October 19 to December 20, 2023.

William T. Williams, BFA Fine Arts '66, received the 2024 Murray Reich Distinguished Artist Award from The New York Foundation for the Arts, along with Shari Mendelson and Stephen Westfall. Williams's gallery shared his remarks in a press release: "Receiving this prize is a generous acknowledgment of my lifelong commitment to being an artist; I wake every day with the desire to make art and it is my hope that my art speaks truths to others." (Michael Rosenfeld Gallery)

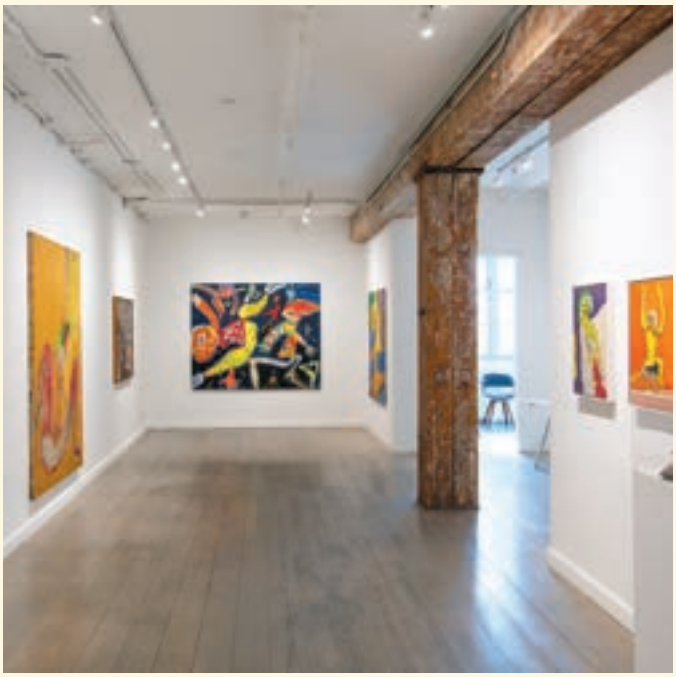
Tom Leytham, BArch '67, started a new career at age 72 as a watercolorist. His work has been shown at the Salmagundi Club, the Bennington Museum, and the Agora Gallery. Leytham has won prizes for his watercolors, which are in private collections. The Vermont Statehouse recently acquired his work for its permanent collection.

Marc Mannheimer, BID '67, exhibited artwork at the EuropArtFair in Amsterdam, on view from September 6 to September 8, 2024. Mannheimer was also recently interviewed for *Artistcloseup*.

Fern Tiger, BFA Art Education '67; MS Art Education '68, had a new book, *Creative Instigation: The Art & Strategy of Authentic Community Engagement*, published in October 2024 by New Village Press. The book collects case stories

Images courtesy of the artists

— John Morning '55, *Toccata*, 2024 — Robert Stanley '69, *The State of Being*, acrylic on canvas, 36 × 48 inches — Everardo Jefferson '68 and Sara Caples — Tom Zetterstrom, *Maine Woods*, 1983



Installation view of *Discos and Dancers*, an exhibition of George McNeil's *Disco Series*, at Picture Theory in Chelsea

George McNeil (1908–1995), fine arts alumnus and former faculty member, had his *Disco Series* paintings presented in a solo exhibition titled *Discos and Dancers*, which ran at the Chelsea, New York, gallery Picture Theory from March 15 to May 11, 2024. Early in his career, McNeil became a founding member of the American Abstract Artists group, in 1936, and was one of the few abstract artists whose work was selected for exhibition in the 1939 New York World's Fair. He began painting his *Disco Series* in 1981 and continued the project up until his passing in 1995. The series, which took inspiration from the physical movements of Balanchine and Afro-Cuban dance and the sounds and sights of '80s and '90s pop culture, signaled a shift in McNeil's practice with the introduction of what Picture Theory describes as "bold, colorful outlines to sharpen [figures'] distinction from their painterly surroundings." (Picture Theory)

Clockwise from top: Courtesy of Picture Theory. Image courtesy of the artist. Photo by Andrew Popper

of community engagement and policymaking in western US cities, highlighting "engagement that is authentic, outreach that is expansive, and research that uncovers the soul of a community."

Tom Zetterstrom, a graduate fine arts alumnus who attended in the fall of 1967, received the Leslie J. Mehrhoff Award at the University of Connecticut last October. The award recognizes his efforts in advancing public awareness of trees through his photography series *Portraits of Trees* and his lectures and advocacy about invasive plants' impact on forest sustainability. Additionally, the Farnsworth Museum acquired his photograph *Maine Woods*, and the Smithsonian Anacostia Museum recently showed his early street photography.

Joan Jacobus, BFA Graphic Arts '68, received a master of arts in studio art from the Florence Academy of Art in 2023. Jacobus writes, "Having learned how to set type with a composing stick and California job case as well as making lithographs on stone at Pratt, I decided to learn a more practical skill: painting like a Renaissance artist in Florence. Michelangelo and da Vinci have nothing to fear." She works as a book designer/director and an inner-city art teacher.

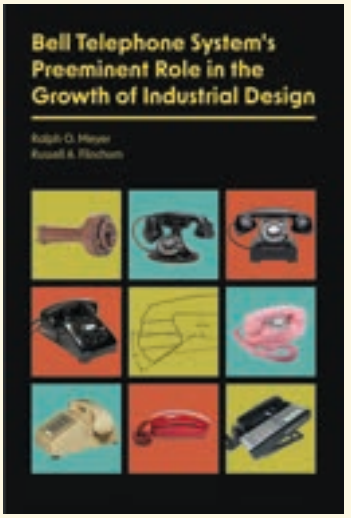
Everardo Jefferson, BID '68, and his wife, Sara Caples—cofounders and principals of Caples Jefferson Architects—have been elected academicians by the National Academy of Design. Caples and Jefferson have joined 26 other electees recognized for their contributions to contemporary American art and architecture. They officially joined the Academy at an induction ceremony on October 22, 2024.

Harriet Millman Reed, BFA Graphic Arts '68, is a volunteer educator at the Renee and Chaim Gross Foundation in New York City. Chaim Gross was a modern American sculptor working in New York City from 1921 until his death in 1991. Reed writes that she hopes "all Pratt students, especially majors with an emphasis in sculpture, visit this hidden treasure."

Catherine Murphy, BFA Art Education '67, and **Harry Roseman**, BFA Graphic Arts '68, are the subjects of a new film, *Cathy & Harry*. The film, directed by Marta Renzi and Daniel Wolff, was screened at The Moviehouse in Millerton, New York on November 2, 2024. A Q&A with the filmmakers and the subjects, moderated by poet and art critic John Yau, followed the screening. Additionally, Roseman's film *Grocery Shopping* recently won Best Experimental Video at the online film festival WILDsound Festival TV.

Claire Jeanine Satin, MFA Fine Arts (Sculpture) '68, held a solo exhibition, *Art Typing: Typewriter Books by Claire Jeanine Satin*, which ran from February 1 to April 17 at Main Library in Miami. Three of her books were acquired by a book collector and shown at the Bodleian Library at Oxford University: *Alphabook: Cherokee, A Portfolio* (1998/9), *The Hebrew Alphabet Expressing the Celestial Constellations* (2017), and *Alphabet Cordenons* paper book (2020). The library previously featured Satin's books in the exhibition *Alphabets Alive*.

David Miles Ziskind, BArch '68, was recognized with the 2024 Henry Hobson Richardson Award for



Donald Genaro, BID '57, has his work highlighted in a new book, *Bell Telephone System's Preeminent Role in the Growth of Industrial Design*, by Ralph O. Meyer and Russell A. Flinchum, published by Purdue University Press in May 2025. With trailblazing industrial designer Henry Dreyfuss's firm, which designed Bell System's phones, Genaro made numerous contributions detailed in the book—including the final design of the Trimline telephone, part of the Museum of Modern Art's collection. **Arthur Shilstone** (1922–2020), Certificate, Illustration '47, also had a connection with Bell System. In the 1960s, Shilstone designed a Christmas card for Western Electric Co., Bell Telephone System's manufacturing arm. The illustration features a freight train bound for Western Electric's Hawthorne Works, a telephone-manufacturing facility near Chicago that at the time was the largest in the world. (Read more at pratt.edu/prattfolio)

his contributions to New York State public architecture. (AIA NYS)

Robert Stanley, BS Art Education '69, writes of *Prattfolio*'s Looking at Us issue (Fall 2024): "[It] plunged me back in time. The faces and actions of the young artists were different from those of my day, but the same in spirit. Pratt was/is abuzz with the desire to make art and, yes, have it recognized. Now I'm in the Smithsonian Archives of American Art, and still making art."

1970s

Lillian Benson, BFA Art Education '70, received the 2025 Black Public Media Trailblazer Award at the PitchBLACK Awards on May 1, 2025. She writes that this award is given to African American filmmakers "in recognition of their remarkable, collaborative work on films that enlarge our understanding of race, class, and gender in America." Benson is a film editor of documentaries and contemporary fiction.

Constance Smith, BFA Fine Arts '71; MID '73, writes, "GM is the only auto company with a female CEO." In an effort to elevate the female forces driving the company, Smith interviewed senior executives of General Motors for *Behind Every Great Woman*, a video series on the company's website. Created for Women's History Month, the series is "a celebration of women at General Motors and their influence on the automotive industry." The series is available to watch online at gm.com/stories.

George Ranalli, BArch '72, was included in the Italian architectural and design journal *The Plan*, and published his firm's Wellington Arts Complex Master Plan for a commission in Palm Beach County, Florida.

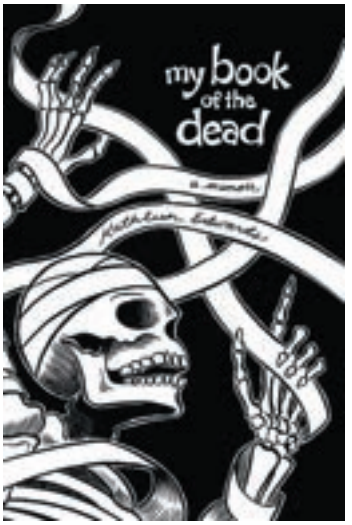
Howard Spielman, MFA Fine Arts '74, has had varied careers over the last three decades. After serving for 28 years as an art educator, he began creating and producing award-winning TV shows, including the Showtime original series *Dead Man's Gun*. At age 82, he works as a fine artist and is currently creating digital paintings. His art, as well as his memoir, *A Good Day: Confessions of a Reformed Pessimist*, can be found on his website, howard-spielman.com.

Top: Courtesy of Purdue University Press. Images center and bottom courtesy of the alumni

Tucker Viemeister, BID '74, has joined the digital design studio Multiplayer to develop its industrial design capabilities. The studio emphasizes collaboration and flexibility through both embedded and remote work approaches. It has worked in robotics and logistics, focusing on solutions that improve worker experiences while driving business results. Viemeister writes that Multiplayer's work follows the principle that "form follows happiness" and that its motto, "Happiness is good business," resonates with his design philosophy.

John A. Calabrese, MFA Fine Arts (Painting and Drawing) '75, is a professor emeritus at Texas Woman's University, where he taught art history, aesthetics, history of film noir, and the art of Alfred Hitchcock. He initiated the university's study abroad program in art history in 1994. Calabrese continues to submit his drawings to national juried exhibits and galleries, and he has documented his drawings, exhibitions, and publications on his website, johncalabreseart.com.

Elaine Smollin, BFA Fine Arts (Painting) '75; MFA Fine Arts (Painting) '81, exhibited six drawings in a group show, *Variations in Monochrome*. The show, which Patricia Everett curated at Available Potential Enterprises, Ltd. Gallery, in Northampton, Massachusetts, ran from November through December, 2024. In January 2025, Smollin held her annual show of life-size figure paintings, *Dawn at Acheron*, at her Rhode Island studio.



Stephen Fay, BFA Fine Arts '76, was profiled for his toy-making practice and his bestselling model train designs available at the New York City Transit Museum. (*Shelter Island Reporter*)

Lynn Saville, MFA Photography '76, held a solo exhibition of photography, *Elevated*, at Yancey Richardson from April 4 to May 18, 2024. In November, she won a Julia Margaret Cameron Award, for which she had her work featured in a show at Gallery Valid Foto in Barcelona. This year, she had an exhibition, ***Solitude in Cities***, at the Griffin Museum of Photography's Lafayette Gallery in Boston. The exhibition, with the photographer Jeff Larason, ran from December 30, 2024, to March 23, 2025.

Xenobia Bailey, BID '77, had her first New York City solo show in more than two decades, *Paradise Under Reconstruction in the Aesthetic of Funk: The Second Coming*, on view from May 15 to June 15, 2024, at Venus Over Manhattan. (*Colossal*)

Steven Bleicher, BFA Fine Arts '77; MFA Fine Arts '79, was hired as the color-expert witness by Lewis Roca and Womble Bond Dickinson in the case of CMT v. Apex regarding color and trademark infringement.

Phoebe Farris, PhD, MPS Art Therapy '77, published a review in *Cultural Survival Quarterly* about painter and sculptor Jeffrey Gibson's installation at the Venice Biennale in 2024. Gibson is the first Native American to represent the US at the Biennale. Farris also curated the exhibition *Still Here: The Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape and Powhatan-Renape Nations of Southern New Jersey* at the Noyes Arts Garage of Stockton University and exhibited four photographs as part of *Indigenous Approaches, Sustainable Futures* at the Stockton University Art Gallery.

Akel Ismail Kahera, BArch '77, edited the book *Strategic Rebuilding and Affordable Housing in the Muslim World*, published by Rowman and Littlefield in February 2025.

Mariella Bisson, BFA Fine Arts (Drawing) '78, will have a solo show at Momentum Gallery in Asheville, North Carolina, from July 2 to September 1, 2025. Bisson has won three years of support from the Pollock Krasner Foundation and the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) Fellowship in painting. Bisson writes that she credits her strict training in drawing for her love for placing shapes into space.

Kathleen Edwards, BFA Communications Design '78, published her second graphic novel, a memoir titled *My Book of the Dead*, which explores grief, spirituality, and the creative process.

Susan Wacker-Donle, BFA Communications Design '78, was profiled on her perfume bottle designs in the new monograph *American Legends: The Evolution of American Fragrances*. The book covers her designs for Elizabeth Taylor Fragrances' White Diamonds bottle in 1991 and Bond No. 9's bottle in 2005.

Peggy Cyphers, MFA Fine Arts (Painting) '79, held a solo exhibition, *Passages*, at Front Room Gallery in Hudson, New York. *Whitehot Magazine* described Cypher's work in the show as "vibrantly alive," and *Art Spiel* described it as "a majestic and wondrous realm where weightlessness and kinetic energy co-inhabit the canvas." Cyphers also received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Towson University in Baltimore, Maryland.

Mary Rieser Heintjes, BFA Fine Arts '79; MFA Fine Arts '85, was invited to participate in an outdoor exhibition, *Oh Sit*, as a member of the arts group 14 Sculptors, Inc. The ongoing exhibition was organized by public art nonprofit Sculpture for Leonia in Leonia, New Jersey. Heintjes writes that her kinetic sculpture, *Oh Sit, Still*, was created in the metal shop at Pratt with the "invaluable guidance of Adam Apostolos," sculpture technician, visiting instructor, and SCPS lecturer. A reception will be held in spring 2025.

Images courtesy of the alumni

Elaine Smollin,'75; '81, *The Planets: Earth*, 2024, charcoal on Arches paper, 22 × 30 inches Kathleen Edwards '78 Mariella Bisson '78, *Tree Growing, Brook Flowing*, 2024, oil and mixed media on linen, 47½ × 47½ inches Constance Smith '71; '73 (right), hosting the GM series *Behind Every Great Woman*

1980s

Mary Christ, BCE '80, was appointed secretary of the Musk Foundation, a nonprofit organization headed by Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla and SpaceX. Her most recent endeavors with the company include helping the victims of Hurricane Helene.

Bernard Hallstein, BFA Fine Arts (Painting) '80, is the design director of Carnegie Hall. He recently completed the building's scrim installation as part of ongoing restoration efforts. Hallstein writes that this scrim, based on 19th-century architectural renderings, is the largest project he has worked on in his position. Carnegie Hall has used excess scrim material to create limited-edition tote bags for sale on their website.

Randi Shalit Wolf, MS Communications Design '80, is a mosaic artist who created a custom mosaic kitchen backsplash with her family after moving to Fort Myers, Florida. Wolf writes that she "wanted it to reflect our new life here in paradise." The artist has sold thousands of pieces, and 650 through her Etsy shop, Second Look Mosaics.

Frank Ippolito, BFA Communication Design '81, showed a solo exhibition of mixed-media works, *TransLucid*, at Arthouse Productions Gallery in Jersey City from April 15 to April 30, 2023. Afterward, his illuminated photograph, *Passage 739*, was included in the 2024 NJ Arts Annual, *Exploring our Connections*, at the Montclair Art Museum. Ippolito began his multidisciplinary art practice after retiring from his position as a senior artist at the American Museum of Natural History 10 years ago.

Barbara Wallace, BFA Fine Arts (Painting) '81, held a solo exhibition of figurative sculptures of recycled materials, *Barbara Wallace: Sculpture*, at the Center for Contemporary Art in Bedminster, New Jersey.

In January 2026, a solo exhibition of her work will open at the Alchemy of Art Gallery in Baltimore.

Robert Reynolds Condon, BArch '82, self-published his book *History of French Paneling* in May 2024. The book is a chronological series of 42 interior design vignettes displaying the style changes of four centuries of French wood paneling from 1527 to 1889.

Peter Kuper, BFA Fine Arts (Painting and Drawing) '82, won the 2024 Kennedy Award for editorial cartooning. His graphic novel, *Insectopolis: A Natural History*, explores insects and the people who have studied them. It was published by W. W. Norton in May 2025. A regular contributor to *The Nation* and *The New Yorker*, Kuper teaches cartooning at Harvard University.

Noel MacNeal, Theatre, class of 1983, debuted his cabaret show, *Hey, This Was Really Fun*, at 54 Below in Manhattan on March 24, 2025. MacNeal writes: "It's based on my life and everything I've learned as a puppeteer, writer, director, producer, husband, father, son, and friend."

Moses Ros-Suárez, BArch '83, participated in the exhibition *¡Printing the Revolution!*, on display at the Frist Art Museum in Nashville as part of the Smithsonian American Art Museum's traveling exhibition.

Mark Lewis Wagner, BFA Communications Design '83, released a graphic novel, *Graffiti Wars: When Art Saved the World*, in April 2023. He is the founder and creative director of the creative arts nonprofit Drawing on Earth.

Lynn D. Bobowick (1956–2020), MFA Fine Arts '84, had her works acquired and catalogued as The Bobowick Collection.

Anthony Freda, BFA Communications Design '84, has had his award-winning illustration work featured in *Time*, *The New Yorker*, and *The New York Times*. Freda worked as a creative art director on national advertising campaigns for his company, Redline Inc., and has original work in the permanent collection of the National September 11th Museum and Memorial. He is a founding board member of the antiwar organization Occupy Peace and a permanent Fashion Institute of Technology faculty member.

Suzanne Revy, BFA Fine Arts (Photography) '84, had a solo show at the Danforth Museum of Art in Framingham, Massachusetts, on view from October 12, 2024, to January 26, 2025. Revy says the show, titled *A Murmur in the Tree*, was "a visual and spiritual contemplation on the landscapes in and around historic Concord, Massachusetts." She published an accompanying monograph for the show featuring fragments of Henry David Thoreau's writing and fold-out pages of her imagery.

Jay Sylvester, BFA Communication Design '85, was featured in the November/December 2024 issue of *New York Cottages & Gardens*. The article covered the artist's sculptural wall assemblages made from "foraged bittersweet, honeysuckle, and black elder vines."

Deborah Lanino, BFA Fine Arts (Painting) '86, had a solo show, *Reimagining: Faith, Hope and Love*, at Blackfriars Gallery, in Berkeley, California, on view from September 22 to December 12, 2024. *Catholic Herald* reviewed the show, writing that Lanino's use of color adds "a different dimension of light reminiscent of Impressionist art to her canvases." Lanino states that the show was partially inspired by her semester abroad in Florence as a junior at Pratt. Lanino's art can be found online at deborahlanino.com.

Andrew Reach, BArch '86, is included in an exhibition for the online platform The Museum of Wild and Newfangled Art (mowna). The online exhibition, *mowna x TS - Wild and Newfangled Techspressionism Exhibition*, ran from October 3, 2024, to January 26, 2025. The artist describes his featured 3D animation, *QUADRAMID*, as uncovering "unexpected three-dimensional patterns, forms, and dynamics."

Francis (Frank) Sheehan, BFA Fine Arts (Painting) '86, was awarded his third fellowship at Jentel Artists' Residency in Wyoming in fall 2024, parallel to a show featuring his abstracted sumi ink landscapes at SAGE Arts in Sheridan, Wyoming. The show, *Conversations of the Thousand Acres*, ran from October to November 2024. He will be teaching a master class in sumi ink painting at SAGE Arts in the summer.

Elaine Angelopoulos, BFA Fine Arts (Painting) '87, culminated her extensive field study of urban renewal

Images courtesy of the artists

Elaine Angelopoulos '87, *Yiayia Efrosini Reveals Entanglement at St. Irene's Square, Athens*, 2007, performance portrait, printed edition in 2010 — Jason Fulford '96 — Francis (Frank) Sheehan '86, *A Red Sky in the Morning #2022-044*, 2022, iridescent acrylic on book cover board, 8 × 10 inches

Johannes Knoops '87 with Enzo Dal Molin, the owner of the building that was the original location of the Aldine Press, in Venice

Johannes Knoops, BArch '87, culminated his research into the original location of the Aldine Press, a Renaissance-era print shop. The press—whose true first location has been in contention ever since a commemorative plaque was erroneously placed in Vienna in 1828—is credited with many foundational publishing achievements, including the invention of the Italic font, the creation of the first paperbacks, the codification of the semicolon, and the preservation of numerous Latin and Greek classics. Knoops, an architect and professor of interior design at Fashion Institute of Technology, began his research in 2016, writing that "[it] required skills beyond the humanities, such as mappings, architectural reconstructions, and digital walk-throughs." His research culminated on June 5, 2024, when a new plaque and inscription were unveiled by Knoops, clarifying the shop's authentic first location on the Calle del Pistor in Venice. This work has afforded him residencies at the Emily Harvey Foundation, the Cini Foundation, and the American Academy in Rome.

Images courtesy of the alumni

into a performance called *Brooklyn Dreams*, funded by Franklin Furnace in 2023. Select works were shown in an inaugural group exhibition, *Home Is You, Right Now*, curated by Hannah Studnick at the art gallery Ruby/Dakota in New York City in 2024. Angelopoulos's work was included in *Focus Group*, a group exhibition that ran from September 2024 to January 2025 at Ronald Feldman Gallery.

Randy Richards, BFA Communications Design '87, is the leading creative force behind RRDG/Randy Richards Design Group. The company was featured in the 2024 *Graphic Design USA* magazine 61st Annual "People to Watch" issue. Previous iterations of the issue included designers such as Milton Glazer, Saul Bass, and Pratt alumnus George Lois. Marking the accomplishment, Richards writes, "My Pratt education has helped me succeed."

Stefan Sagmeister, MS Communications Design '88, was named a 2024 Society for Experiential Graphic Design Fellow. (Blooloop)

Peter Colquhoun, BFA Fine Arts '89, showed his paintings at the Westbeth Gallery's Visual Artists Winter Show 2024 from November 23 to December 28, 2024. He also exhibited work at a group exhibition, *Unseen Vision*, at Revolving Store, which opened on December 6, 2024. Tribeca Community on Display held a solo show of Colquhoun's work in its window display on West Broadway.

1990s

Sook Jin Jo, MFA Fine Arts '91, recently completed an outdoor installation, *Color of Life—Full Bloom*, in Gulupdo, an island off the coast of South Korea. While there, she also renovated the Catholic Secondary Station, the island's only historical building.

Andrew E. Thompson, AIA, BArch '91, was inaugurated as the 2025 President of the AIA New Jersey.

Andrew Davidson, BFA Film '92, launched a casual fashion line featuring customizable shirts inspired by the iconic "I (Heart) NY" logo, where customers can instead select from over 676 letter combinations for the phrase's final two initials. Davidson's shirts are available online from a multilingual landing page, http://initials.love, in seven international markets, including Japan, the United Kingdom, the US, and most of Europe.

Peter Wachtel, MID '92, received a Grow the Trades grant from the tool manufacturer DeWalt on September 20, 2024. Wachtel received the honor for his efforts to enhance Career Technical Education (CTE) in architecture, product innovation, and design.

Maya Kopytman, MFA Computer Graphics '95, served as creative director and lead designer for the TRO Essex Music Group Anniversary Booklet, earning silver in the Graphis Design Awards 2025. Kopytman also led the design of the Robert Lehman Foundation's new website and served as creative director and art director for *Beautiful Biology*, an immersive online resource with imagery sourced from bioscience research institutions. Kopytman writes that this online platform "aims to become a trusted resource for the scientific community and beyond."

Jason Fulford, BFA Communications Design '96, was included in a book and exhibition of photographs, *47 Fotos*, by him and legendary Italian artist and designer Bruno Munari (1907–1988). The book, edited and designed by Fulford, was published by Corraini Edizioni. Fulford writes: "In Munari's books, I found a kindred spirit who blurs the line between work and play. I wondered if it might be possible to talk with him now, in the medium where we met. [*47 Fotos*] is the result."

Claire Lieberman, MFA Fine Arts (Sculpture and Printmaking) '96, showed sculpture and cast paper pieces in a duo exhibition, *Oleander, the sweetly scented killer*, at Project: ARTspace from July to September 2024. In August, she debuted *GUNPOPS*, a popsicle-gun

event on a sidewalk in New York City's Lower East Side. Presented by 601Artspace, *GUNPOPS* also received support from the Puffin Foundation and the Foundation for Contemporary Art. Recently, Lieberman received a sculpture award from the Illinois Arts Council.

Jason Tranchida, BArch '96; MFA Fine Arts '97, and partner Matthew Lawrence premiered *Scandalous Conduct: A Fairy Extravaganza* in Newport, Rhode Island, this fall. The film is a three-channel musical documentary reconstructing the Newport Navy Sex Scandal of 1919. The Public's Radio interviewed Tranchida about the film, and it was reviewed in *Boston Art Review* by Marcus Civin, assistant dean of the School of Art. Tranchida's installation will be traveling throughout the US in 2025.

Colleen Ho, MFA Fine Arts (Painting) '97, showed her visual art at a solo exhibition, *Interverse*, at The Shirley Project Space—a Brooklyn-based gallery run by Sarah Shirley, MFA Fine Arts (Painting) '01. Ho writes: "The show comprised two series of works on paper that featured a precise and immersive process of mark-making, tearing, scoring, and manipulating the paper surface with a thumbtack and razor. The subtle textural contrasts reveal wide-ranging abstract compositions alluding to patterns and forces in nature."

Adele Rossetti Morosini, MFA Fine Arts (Painting); MS Theory, Criticism, and History of Art, Design, and Architecture '97, documented the Brazilian Araucaria Forest as a Fulbright US Scholar. She documented the flora of the Araucaria Forest through photography, video, and botanical illustration. The first phase of her documentation was from October to November 2024, and the second was from April to May 2025. Morosini sent her information to the Rio de Janeiro Botanical Garden, an agency of the Brazilian Ministry of the Environment.

Sarah Vollmann, MPS Art Therapy '97, coauthored the book *Born Into Loss: Shadows of a Deceased Sibling and Family Journeys of Grief* with Joann M. O'Leary. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers released the book in December 2024.

2000s

Jason Hoelscher, MFA (Painting) '00, recently showed his paintings in two solo exhibitions: *ArtCube* at Lamasco Gallery and *Surface Tension: Recent Picture Planes* at Sleeth Gallery. His book, *Art as Information Ecology: Artworks, Artworlds, and Complex Systems Aesthetics*, was published as a hardcover, paperback, and ebook by Duke University Press in 2021 and as an audiobook by Redwood Studios/Audible in 2024. Georgia Southern University in Savannah has promoted Hoelscher to tenured full-time professor.

Shawn M. Capizzi, BFA Communications Design '01, has crafted digital experiences in New York City for over a decade. As founder of UserOne.AI, Capizzi writes that he now provides flexible, on-demand UX, product design, and strategic marketing services. Capizzi also writes that his company "merges human-centered design expertise with AI innovation, delivering digital healthcare solutions and enterprise systems for CPG and FinTech clients." His recent work includes developing AI-powered UX tools, voice-activated healthcare trackers, and platforms to empower diverse communities.

Kyle Browne, BFA Communications Design '03, directed her first short film, *Spirit Sensing: Anima of the Quarry*. The film was based on an intuitive performance between Browne and musician Stan Strickland, filmed and performed when she was an artist-in-residence at the Manship Artists Residency in Gloucester, Massachusetts. Browne writes that her "belief in anima—that all nature has a spirit" influenced the film. It premiered at the Vienna Independent Film Festival in September 2024 and won nine national and international awards.

Gaby Heit, MS Communications Design '03, opened Philadelphia's Box Spring Gallery in June 2024. The gallery puts on curated exhibitions of contemporary art and design.

Laine Justice, BFA Fine Arts (Painting) '03, recently exhibited her work in a group show at the di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art in Sonoma, California. The show, *True North*, is a biennial exhibition featuring North Bay artists.

Bianca Alexis, BFA Photography '05, was featured in the group exhibition *Kinesics* at 72 Warren Street in New York City. The show, which ran from December 10 to December 14, 2024, included work inspired by ideas on gestures and identity she first explored in her Pratt thesis. Alexis writes that her photography in the show celebrates "the power of hands . . . featuring intricate manicures in everyday yet symbolic moments." The show can be viewed on Alexis's website, biancaalexis.com.

Chrissy Angliker, BID '06, had a solo show, *Post Liminal*, which ran from September 7 to October 19, 2024, at Massey Klein Gallery in New York City.

Jason Culler, BID '06, a staff product designer for CNN mobile apps, helped develop a version of CNN's "Magic Wall"—a large digital map of the US used on television to describe election results in real-time—for its mobile app. Culler writes that the app allows users to navigate the same real-time data they see on TV in an interactive, easy-to-use format.

Tracy Llewellyn, BID '06, designed TikTok's brand pop-up at the 2024 Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity in Cannes, France. The pop-up was inside The Carlton Hotel's open-air central garden and welcomed guests and advertisers to learn about TikTok's advertising platform while engaging interac-

Images courtesy of the alumni

Laura Kim for Crate & Barrel

Laura Kim, BFA Fashion Design '04, co-creative director of Oscar de la Renta and Monse, launched the home goods collection Laura Kim for Crate & Barrel in June 2024. The line features 100 pieces, including an oak dining table set, marble serving boards, earthenware ceramic planters, and fluted glasses. "Cooking is very similar to my job as a designer—I'm gathering raw materials that are right for the season. I'm writing and sketching what I'm going to create, and then I showcase," Kim said in a *Vogue* story on the collection's launch. (*Vogue*)

Top: Courtesy of Crate & Barrel. Bottom: Courtesy of the artist

tive elements, meeting creators, and attending talks and live performances.

Matthew Ferraro, MArch '07, was promoted to principal at Weiss/Manfredi.

Drew Seskunas, MArch '08, completed a public sculpture, *What Is the Opposite of a Black Hole?*, with the NYC Parks Department. The sculpture, located adjacent to the New York Hall of Science in Corona, Queens, is a prismatic ring that features the names and stories of scientists from the borough. The artist says, "This sculpture celebrates the rich history of science in Queens by highlighting residents who worked to expand our understanding of the universe, casting light where before there was darkness."

Alaina Claire Feldman, BA Critical and Visual Studies '09, was appointed chief curator at the University of California, Irvine's Jack and Shanaz Langson Institute and Museum of California Art.

David Nuñez, BFA Communication Design '09, and **Amelia Golini**, BArch '10, welcomed their son, Mateo Jorge, in October 2024.

2010s

Rodrigo Albir, MID '10, was featured in *Elle Decor*'s November 2024 issue.

Cody Winchester, MArch '10, gave a presentation titled *Creating a Culture of Digital Literacy* at Autodesk University in San Diego, California, on October 15, 2024.

Anthony Cudahy, BFA Communications Design '11, had his first solo exhibition in the US, a museum survey at the Ogunquit Museum of American Art. The show, *Anthony Cudahy: Spinneret*, ran from April 12 to July 21, 2024. (*T Magazine*)

Taezoo Park, MFA Digital Arts '12, opened his exhibition *Digital Being: Radio Row* in Manhattan's Financial District. (artist's newsletter)

Maria de Los Angeles, BFA Fine Arts '13, was appointed critic and interim director of graduate studies for the painting and printmaking program at Yale School of Art for the 2024–2025 academic year. She completed a mural at Harmon Guest House in Healdsburg, California, and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art acquired the artist's hand-stitched garment, *Citizen Dress*. Her work will be featured in a group exhibition at Sun Valley Museum of Art, opening late June 2025. Her Instagram handle is @delosangelesart.

Juan Sebastian Restrepo, BFA Fine Arts (Painting) '13, had an exhibition of paintings and drawings at [NAME] Publications in Miami. The exhibition, which ran from October 12 to December 14, 2024, was made possible by the Teiger Foundation and The Jorge M. Pérez Family Foundation at The

Bianca Alexis '05, work featured in *Kinesics* — Taezoo Park '12, *Digital Being: Radio Row* — Drew Seskunas '08, *What Is the Opposite of a Black Hole?* — Gaby Heit '03

Miami Foundation. Restrepo is an adjunct faculty member at Florida International University and Miami Dade College.

Rachel Jane Wittmann, MSLIS '13, coauthored a new book *The High-Impact Digital Library: Innovative Approaches for Outreach and Instruction*, for ALA Editions, an imprint of the American Library Association.

Bryan Yates, MS Interior Design '13, launched a new studio for his firm, Yates Desygn, in Dallas's Design District. (Paper City)

Karen Codd, MPS Art Therapy and Creative Development '14, completed her doctorate of art therapy at Mount Mary University in Milwaukee in August 2024. Her research focused on using art therapy with resident physicians to prevent and mitigate burnout. She is also on the faculty of several medical residency programs and leads the employee and learner wellness program at Jamaica Hospital Medical Center in Queens.

Elena Conte, MS City and Regional Planning '14, is the executive director of the environmental protection nonprofit Bronx River Alliance. Gothamist interviewed her about cleanup efforts following Con Edison's oil spill in the Bronx River. (*Gothamist*)

Caroline Matthews, MS Communications Design '14, is an assistant professor in Pratt's Graduate Communications Design Department.

Kevin Kraft, MS City and Regional Planning '14, was appointed director of urban planning and development for Portland, Maine. (*Portland Press Herald*)

Ana Karina Quiroz, MPS Arts and Cultural Management '14, was recently named head of startup audience and content marketing at Amazon Web Services.

Haley Kattner Allen, MFA Photography '15, acted as producer for *East Village Cookbook*, designed by Champions Design. Compiled by chef and author Will Horowitz, the book includes over 200 recipes from chefs, artists, galleries, grandmas, and other friends of the East Village. The book was created to benefit Trinity's Services and Food for the Homeless (SAFH, pronounced "safe"), on Ninth Street and Avenue B.

Amanda Phingbodhipakkiya, MFA Communications Design '15, unveiled two new installations last spring. Her work, *Rest Is a Place for Wild Things*, debuted at the South Street Seaport show *The Golden Thread: A Fiber Art Exhibition* in New York City, and *the primitive sign of wanting* was exhibited at *New Worlds: Women to Watch 2024* at the National Museum of Women Artists in Washington, DC. Phingbodhipakkiya is also a recipient of a 2024 New York City Artadia Award. (*The New York Times*)

Lea Patrice Fales, MFA Fine Arts '16, published her debut as an author and illustrator of a children's book, *Oxette*, with Pasture Pine Press.

Mallory Zondag, BFA Fashion Design '16, was commissioned by the artist Amalia-Mesa Bains to create a moss rug for her installation *Cihuateotl with Mirror in Private Landscapes and Public Territories*. The Whitney Museum of American Art currently features Bains's artwork in the group show *Shifting Landscapes*, which runs from November 2024 to January 2026. The museum also acquired the piece for its permanent collection.

Megan Basaldua, BFA Digital Arts (2D Animation) '17, launched an after-school program with the education organization New York Edge, in her role as codirector of New York Edge Animation Studios, teaching stop-motion animation to New York City students between kindergarten and eighth grade. Basaldua writes: "As an animation major, I saw the essential skills of teamwork, and perseverance to

be gained by kids as they try this medium!"

Xiaoyi Chen, MS Communications Design '17, founded the light-art festival brand LuminoCity, which transforms urban spaces through large-scale light installations. Collaborating with parks, commercial properties, museums, and artists, the brand engages audiences with millions of LED lights. With annual events across the US, the brand "creates unique experiences that inspire wonder and foster community engagement," Chen writes.

Shikha Subramaniam, MFA Communications Design '17, writes that a Pratt professor inspired her to work as a UX designer. In 2020, she joined *The Washington Post*'s innovation lab, The Lede Lab, which eventually merged with the newsroom's design and graphics team. With that team, Subramaniam worked on the story "Terror on Repeat," part of a more extensive investigative series on AR-15 violence in America. Last year, *The Washington Post* won a Pulitzer Prize in National Reporting for the series and that story.

Jeremy Martin, MPS Art Therapy '18, had three sculptures featured in *The New York Times*, in a story on the new hybrid gallery Studio S II (cofounded by **Jeremy Silberberg**, MFA Interior Design '19). Martin

Top: Courtesy of the artist. Bottom: Photo by Ryan Jenq

Juan Sebastian Restrepo '13, *Swimming Laps*, 2023, acrylic on canvas, 40 × 40½ inches — Lea Patrice Fales '16 — Brandon Foushée '21, *hiding places 2*, 2024, archival pigment print, 10 × 10 inches — Jeremy Martin '18, sculptures for *Dancing to the Music of You* — Haley Kattner Allen '15, *East Village Cookbook*

exhibited sculptures at the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community Center (The Center) in New York City in May 2024 in a multidisciplinary collaboration called *Dancing to the Music of You* as part of InfraSound's 2023–2024 season.

Xuechen Chen, BArch '19, recently received an Architizer A+Award for her conceptual architectural project, *The Museum of Uncertainty*. The project has also received prizes from the London Design Awards and the International Design Awards, among others. Additionally, Chen received a Silver A' Idea Design Award for her design, *The Folding Boat*.

2020s

Safiye Senturk, MA Art History; MSLIS '20, produced and acted as a production designer on her first feature film, *Fantasy A Gets a Mattress*. The dark comedy follows a rapper with autism, Fantasy A—playing himself—after his group home for disabled adults kicks him out. The film has won six awards along the festival circuit at the time of this writing, sold out indie cinemas in the UK and the USA, and Sir Mix-a-Lot has deemed it "Funny A.F."

Nicole Marconi, MSLIS '21, writes that she has "had many changes this past year!" In July 2023, she started a new position as the central collections project manager at the Brooklyn Public Library. Marconi is handling the Central Library's adult collections. Marconi also got engaged on October 27, 2024, when her boyfriend of over two years proposed at The Strand bookstore. Marconi writes that it was "a dream literary proposal!"

Brandon Foushée, BFA Photography '21, had a solo exhibition, *Y'all don't wanna hear me, you just wanna dance*, at Baxter Street Camera Club of New York, on view from September 11 to October 30, 2024. (Photography Department newsletter)

Hoda Ramy, MFA Digital Arts '21, was recently featured in *CanvasRebel* magazine, where she spoke about her journey as an artist, filmmaker, and educator. Ramy writes that she "wanted to share this milestone with the Pratt community, as it's a testament to the incredible foundation the Institute provides its students."

Olivia Gorman, MID '22, currently works with the Harleysville, Pennsylvania-based design firm Olive and Melon Design. Gorman joined in 2022 and has applied her background in carpentry to resolve clients' design challenges in-house. Olive and Melon Design's founder, Mel McDaniel, writes that she is "so grateful Olivia came along to partner with me on this journey. My whole world has improved with the daily infusion of her creative spirit."

Mariame Kaba, MSLIS '22, has a new children's book, *Prisons Must Fall*, from Haymarket Books. The book, coauthored with Jane Ball and illustrated by Olly Costello, was released in April 2025.

Rob Redding, MFA Fine Arts (Painting and Drawing) '22, held a solo art exhibition, *Black & White*, at the Morningside Heights Library in New York City in September 2024. The artist presented *Dirty Little Drawings*, a collection of 10 images, at the Soho Project Space in New York in June 2024. He also published a book, *Ritual*, described as an "investigation into the complex relationship between organized religion and societal norms" in a profile of the artist in *Consciousness Magazine*.

Isik Erturk, MS Information Experience Design '23, is part of the design team at New Jersey-based snackfood company Cibo Vita. In her role as user experience designer, Erturk recently spearheaded a website initiative for the company's flagship brand Nature's Garden, inspired by the playful, colorful packaging design for its newly launched product, FruiChias. She reconceived the Cibo Vita visual identity and raised brand assets and awareness through the brand-consistent website redesign.

Jae Young Kim, MFA Communications Design '23, was awarded first place in the 2024 PRINT Awards Handlettering and Type Design category and Data Visualization and Information Design category for his thesis projects *Street Gum Dots Marching Symphony* and *Up In The Air Gonggi Typography*. (*PRINT*)

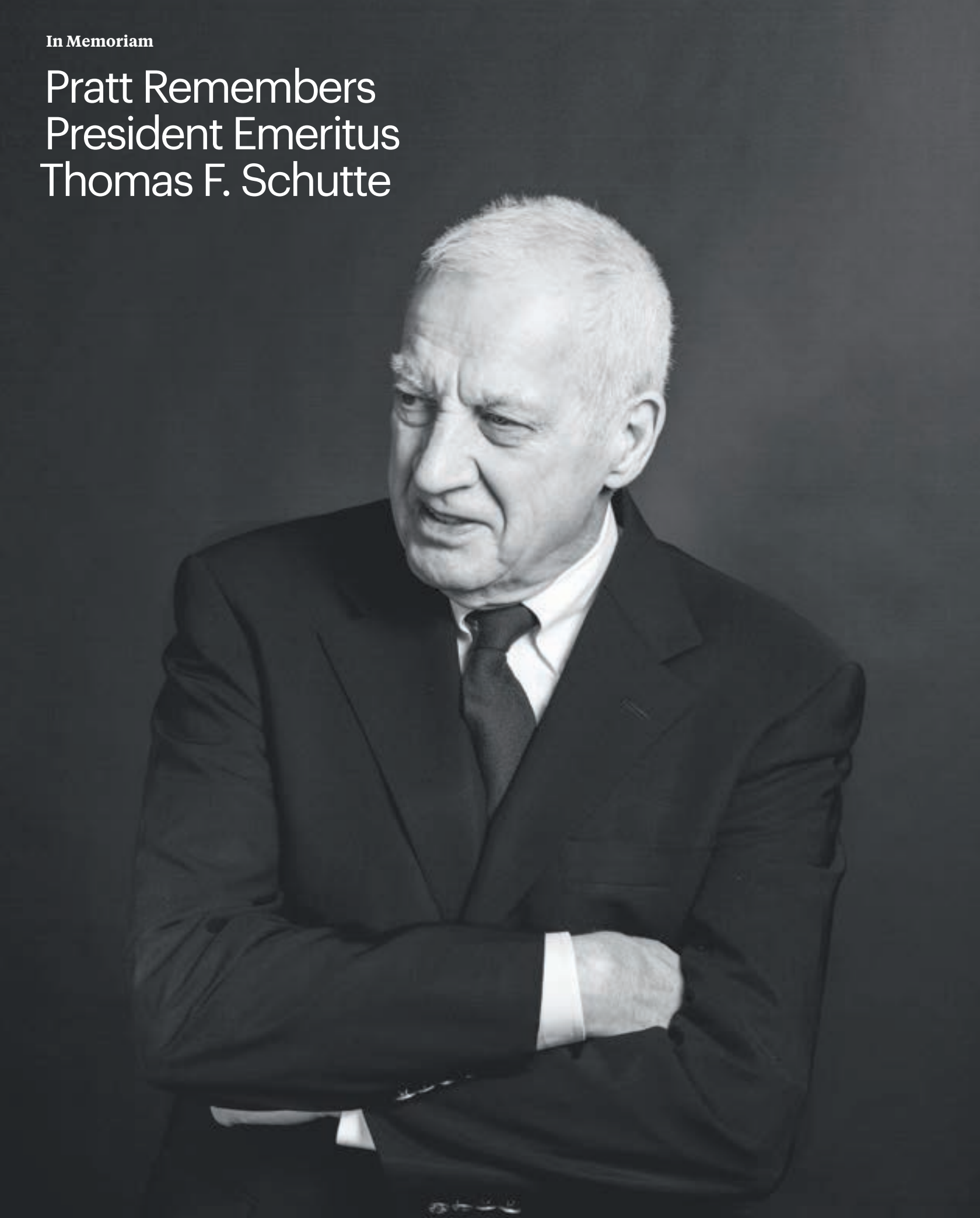
Yihang (Edward) Xu, BID '25, received a Red Dot Award for his design concept AirFarm, a sustainable travel trailer. (*RedDot*)

Submission guidelines: Pratt alumni, we want to know what you're up to, and so do your fellow graduates. Send your updates on work and life to classnotes@pratt.edu. Notes may be up to 75 words in length. Please include your full name, degree or program, and graduation year. Submissions will be edited for length, clarity, and style. Image submissions should be high resolution (300 dpi at 5 × 7 inches).

Top: © Brandon Foushée. Courtesy of the artist. Bottom: Photo by Matt Josephson; courtesy of the artist

In Memoriam

Pratt Remembers President Emeritus Thomas F. Schutte



The Pratt community remembers the life and legacy of Dr. Thomas F. Schutte, who served as the 11th president of Pratt Institute from 1993 to 2017. He passed away on March 26, 2025, at the age of 89.

Schutte's 24-year tenure as president was transformative for the Institute. From more than doubling enrollment and improving the physical campus to instilling a prescient focus on sustainability and interdisciplinary studies, he bolstered the Institute's reputation as one of the world's most competitive schools of art, design, and architecture. With a vision to the future, he brought a holistic approach to the Institute, where everything from the grounds to the technology of the campus was essential in providing the foundation for a diverse student body to succeed. After stepping down following the 2016–2017 academic year, he was named President Emeritus on July 1, 2017.

"Tom transformed the Institute into a world leader among art and design colleges," says Pratt President Frances Bronet. "We mourn the loss of an enthusiastic leader and community giant who was Pratt's strongest champion for a significant period of the Institute's prestigious history. His incredible passion for education, dedication to innovation, and care for and commitment to the Pratt community, Clinton Hill, Brooklyn, and New York City are a tremendous legacy that will continue to resonate for years to come, inspiring all of us at Pratt as we work together to forge the future of the Institute he loved so much."

Before arriving at Pratt in 1993, Schutte was the president of Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) for nearly a decade and, prior to that role, was president of Philadelphia College of Art (later University of the Arts) and the assistant dean of The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. He earned a bachelor's degree in economics and geography from Valparaiso University, an MBA from Indiana University, and a PhD in business administration from the University of Colorado. He later received honorary degrees from St. Thomas Aquinas College (Doctor of Fine Arts) and Pratt (Doctor of Humane Letters, presented at his final Commencement as Pratt president).

While at RISD, he was instrumental in organizing a collective of art and design college presidents that would lead to the establishment of the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD). It was through this involvement that he came to know Pratt.

As Pratt's 11th president, Dr. Thomas F. Schutte ushered in an era of transformation for the Institute.

When Schutte arrived at Pratt in the early 1990s, it was a critical time for the Institute; Pratt's facilities had deteriorated, enrollment had waned, and vacant storefronts and crime were high in the surrounding neighborhood. The Institute was facing a deficit after years of budget shortfalls. Schutte, with optimism that would define his presidency, recognized that to cultivate the creativity of its talented students and support its gifted faculty and staff, Pratt needed a learning environment to match. Through his tireless efforts and spirited collaboration, he worked to make the campus and its surrounding neighborhood thrive.

As he told *Prattfolio* in a 2017 feature, "I thought, Pratt is in a big city. Pratt can be a big school. Pratt had potential with some new vision, some new energy, and some new strength and leadership."

After his first year as president, he had eliminated the deficit and put Pratt on a new track that would pick up momentum in the following years as he grew the Institute's endowment, scholarships, and grants. This helped to change Pratt from a mostly local commuter school to a residential campus that attracts students from around the world. In 1999, Stabile Hall was completed with a donation from engineering graduate Vincent A. Stabile, the largest gift to date from an alumnus. In 2011, he led the restoration of 27 historic townhouses on Willoughby Avenue to bolster student housing. One of his culminating projects was the groundbreaking of Emerson Place Residence, a living-learning residence hall for first-year students that opened in 2019.

In 1999, under Schutte's leadership, Pratt established the Pratt Sculpture Park. The lawns and rotating artworks, open to the public during the day, became a community oasis and the largest sculpture park of its kind in New York City. The grounds were further enhanced by gifts he shepherded, including the landscaping of Newman Mall, the redesign of the Engineering Quadrangle, and other improvements to the gardens and greenspaces. In 2022, Schutte was honored with the naming of the Schutte Plaza on the Brooklyn campus, a tribute to his impact on Pratt and Brooklyn made possible through a generous gift by Trustee Emeritus Bruce Newman.

This consideration for campus resources also involved preserving and elevating Pratt's architectural heritage through adaptive reuse in a multi-million-dollar master plan. Schutte spearheaded fundraising for the 1998 renovation and refurbishment of the landmarked Memorial Hall as well as the 1996 restoration of Higgins Hall after a fire. A design by architect Steven Holl joined the School of Architecture's north and south buildings, an attention to

This page and opposite: photos by Daniel Terna

academic and architectural cohesion that would continue with the Juliana Curran Terian Design Center, finished in 2007. It unified two previously separate buildings to allow for collaboration across design disciplines. With an orientation to the interior campus lawns—many of the historic buildings faced the former sites of local streets—it also reinforced Pratt's campus as a place for gathering and community.

"Design was not getting as much visibility at Pratt as it should, and Pratt was so famous in fields of design," Schutte said in a 2007 interview. "What we did was to say that we will take all the design departments at Pratt, we will find a way to put them into the building, we'll have interaction among and between the departments . . . so they'll meet one another and see one another, and there could be a lot of innovation and imagination taking place."

That unification contributed to the interdisciplinary focus in education at Pratt, where across design departments and throughout schools, students, faculty, and staff have opportunities to work together beyond their specific fields. In 2017, he was presented with the Rowena Reed Kostellow Award as a lifelong champion of design.

One of his final additions to the Brooklyn campus was the transformation of a new Student Union, which rejuvenated a 19th-century structure and gave it a 21st-century interior. Completed in 2018, it brought together three levels of flexible spaces for student organization meetings, events, and exhibitions.

This renewal of Pratt's campus and resources spurred a major growth of the student body, from 2,992 in 1993 to 4,668 in 2017. The faculty increased to 153 full-time and 1,173 part-time members. The undergraduate and graduate degree offerings almost doubled, including new programs in cutting-edge areas like information experience design, performance and performance studies, placemaking, and game design, as well as minors in social practice and sustainability in art and design. Schutte also identified an opportunity to advance access to a Pratt education with the 1999 formation of PrattMWP College of Art and Design (now Pratt Munson) in Utica, New York, in partnership with Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute.

"Year after year I am awed by the talent and ingenuity of our faculty and students," Schutte said in the 2012 issue of *Prattfolio* that commemorated Pratt's 125th anniversary. "Pratt is already known as a world leader in art and design higher education, but I also see the Institute becoming a global force in addressing societal problems and challenges through the work we do. We've already seen this through our efforts with regard to sustainability design education. Tackling issues of sustainability is paramount to many of the artists, designers, library scientists, and other scholars working here today. And I would hope that Pratt would continue to be a place that applies its creativity and knowledge to helping find solutions to the problems of the day."

Dr. Schutte left a legacy "that will continue to resonate for years to come," says Pratt President Frances Bronet, "inspiring all of us at Pratt as we work together to forge the future of the Institute he loved so much."

Under his tenure, the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences launched its first degree-granting undergraduate and graduate programs, a rare offering from an AICAD school. He led the establishment of specialized centers, including the Design Incubator for Sustainable Innovation, the Center for Sustainable Design Strategies, the Brooklyn Fashion and Design Accelerator, the Consortium for Research and Robotics, the Spatial Analysis and Visualization Initiative, and the Center for Equity and Inclusion, all adding to an inspiring interdisciplinary environment.

He oversaw the establishment of Pratt's Information Technology division to provide the technological infrastructure necessary for a competitive education. With the acquisition of a historic seven-story building on 14th Street inaugurated as Pratt Manhattan in 2001, he established a new hub for this creative

thinking that would include the School of Information, Arts and Cultural Management, Associate Degree Programs, Construction Management, Design Management, and the School of Continuing and Professional Studies.

As a founding member, trustee, and chair of the Myrtle Avenue Revitalization Project (MARP, now the Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership) in 1999, he was a major contributor to the community-based revival of the stretch of Myrtle Avenue that runs alongside Pratt's campus and through Clinton Hill and Fort Greene. It had experienced a decline by the time he became Pratt's president, and MARP focused first on small measures like cleaning graffiti and then sought retailers to fill the empty storefronts. Civic engagement and making the gates of the campus more porous were both central to Schutte's work with local community partners.

"We always used the Pratt campus as a place to meet because I wanted them to know that it was a friendly place," Schutte said of MARP and their discussions with local leaders. "We were here to help, and we were interested in the neighborhood."

When Myrtle Hall was opened in 2010 on Myrtle Avenue as Brooklyn's first LEED Gold-certified building of higher education, it declared Pratt's commitment to the vitality of the neighborhood. As *The New York Times* noted in 2011, the building's broad windows "put Myrtle Avenue on display. Prospective students on their way to the second-floor admissions office pass through a large, light-filled gallery where they can see works by Pratt students and recent alumni." The Film/Video Building, which opened on Myrtle Avenue in 2015, enriched that relationship.

"The resurgence of Brooklyn is a boon to the arts and a draw for aspiring artists and designers," Schutte wrote in a 2012 "love letter" to Brooklyn for *The Huffington Post*, in which he emphasized that he was not just invested in making Pratt a dynamic center for arts and design but radiating that energy into Brooklyn itself and celebrating the borough's cultural influence. The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce honored Schutte in 2008 for his leadership in fostering a positive image of Brooklyn. That same year, he was recognized with the National Arts Club Medal of Honor for his promotion of the arts at Pratt and in Brooklyn.

In addition to his work at Pratt, Schutte served as chair of the Brooklyn Arts Council, on the board of advisors of the Historic Districts Council, on the board of the New York Landmarks Preservation Foundation, and on the selection committee for the Byrd Hoffman Water Mill Foundation.

Even after stepping down as president, his groundwork for Pratt as a world-class institution, whether through endowments or acquisitions of land for the future growth of Pratt, endured in shaping the Institute in the years that followed. His commitment to sustainability, too, had a lasting legacy, such as the long-term plan launched in 2016 to divest from fossil fuels. He also put Pratt's current diversity, equity, and inclusion plan in motion, which continues to make the Institute a vibrant place of learning.

Beyond the many demands of his life's work and leadership, Schutte found time for personal pursuits. He was an avid collector of early American antiques, a passionate preservationist, an enthusiastic gardener, and a dedicated swimmer.

For many at Pratt, his kindness and compassion for everyone around him were his greatest gifts. "He never looked past anyone," notes Joseph Hemway, vice president for technology and CIO at Pratt. "All were in his orbit. He believed in dialogue and being curious, and it was those elements that helped him accomplish things and build community at Pratt and in the neighborhood."

Schutte's wife, Tess Lansing Schutte, also played a significant role at Pratt during his presidency. As alumni relations associate in Pratt's Institutional Advancement office for many years, Mrs. Schutte was beloved by the alumni, ensuring a warm connection with the president of their alma mater, particularly in her work with the 50th anniversary classes and the Class Notes section of *Prattfolio*. She was also a gracious host, opening their home at the Caroline Ladd Pratt House for key Institute events. Sharing her husband's passion for many initiatives, Mrs. Schutte is remembered as always being at his side for civic and cultural events, and continuing their support and legacy to this day.

In 2013, the Thomas F. and Tess L. Schutte Endowed Scholarship Fund at Pratt Institute was announced, commemorating Schutte's 20th anniversary at the Institute. The family kindly requests that donations be made to the Schutte Endowed Scholarship Fund. Your generosity will help continue Dr. Schutte's legacy and support for a cause that was dear to him and to Mrs. Schutte. Contributions may be made at giving.pratt.edu/SchutteScholarshipFund.

Born on December 19, 1935, Schutte was the son of Lindsley R. and Marion Healy Schutte of Rochester, New York. He is survived by his loving wife of 66 years, Tess Lansing Schutte; their two sons, Douglas and David; seven grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and Schutte's sister, Caroline Chandler.

His funeral was held on Sunday, March 30, at the First Presbyterian Church in Jamestown, New York, followed by a private burial at White Haven Memorial Park in Pittsford, New York. A memorial service will be held later this spring at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn.

"Year after year I am awed by the talent and ingenuity of our faculty and students. Pratt is already known as a world leader in art and design higher education, but I also see the Institute becoming a global force in addressing societal problems and challenges through the work we do."
—Dr. Thomas F. Schutte

Those We Have Recently Lost

Alumni

Winifred Giddens
Certificate, Costume Construction ’42

Ruth Friedson
BS Home Economics ’44

Arthur J. Henriksen
BCE ’44

Anthony Z. Thorne
BME ’44

Mary Bell Hosie Kolischak
Certificate, Dietetics ’46

Lawrence Bocksel
BME ’48

Jules Feiffer
Illustration (1947–1948)

Seymour Nussenbaum
BA Illustration ’48

Delores Miscavage Parry
Certificate, Costume Design ’48

Vincent James DePalo
BEE ’49

Robert Holtz
Certificate, Leather and Tanning Technology ’49

Anne DeSantis
Certificate, Illustration ’51

Alan Van Bergen
BFA Advertising Design ’53

Thomas J. Doyle III
BFA Illustration ’55

Carol J. Norwood
Certificate, Costume Design ’55

Walter W. Frey
BEE ’56

Rosemary Littman
Certificate, Advertising Design ’56

Eugene C. Orientale
BArch ’56

Wallace Littman
BFA Graphic Arts and Illustration ’58

Edward Miller
BEE ’58

Louis Nelson
BID ’58; MID ’64, chair emeritus of the Rowena Reed Kostellow Scholarship Fund

Robert Vuolo
BFA Advertising Design ’58

Carmela Lembo Hedger
BFA Graphic Arts and Illustration ’60

Ronald Donato Travisano
BFA Advertising Design ’60

James A. Holt Jr.
BArch ’61; Master of Architecture ’62

Karen Buzzell Frey
BS Chemistry ’63

Alan Casden
BEE ’63

Vincent John Glinsk
BEE ’64

Robert D. Ascione
BArch ’65

Peter John Goldhammer
BArch ’65

Thomas Morrison
BEE ’65

Nancy Yberg
BS Art Education ’65

Jerome Tauber
BS Mathematics ’66

Lloyd Ziff
BFA Graphic Arts ’67, Trustee 1999–2002

John S. Obarowski
BArch ’68

Carol Wenz
BFA Fashion ’68

Catherine Kalweit Fine
MLS ’69

Frantz R. Price
BECE ’72

Peter J. Wendrychowicz
MLS ’73

Robert P. Kalish
Master of Architecture ’74

John D. Moser
BS Construction Management ’74

Abby Robinson
MFA Fine Arts ’74

Mark F. Carlos
BEEE ’75

Bruce Degen
MFA Fine Arts ’75

John J. Fromer
BFA Fashion ’75

Kathleen Richards Babcock
Certificate; AOS Textile Design ’78

Timothy P. Dale
BArch ’78

Saverio Quaranta
AAS Building Construction ’78; BPS Construction Management ’80

Jung Lee Sanders
MS Interior Design ’81

Michelle M. French
BFA Fine Arts ’82

Sandra A. Brannon
MS Communications Design ’84

Johnny F. Monrose
BArch ’99; MS Real Estate Practice ’20

Susanne H. Holloran
MPS Art Therapy and Creativity Development ’00

Marilyn J. Gayle
MSLIS ’05

Levana Bienstock
BFA Fashion Design ’08

Chris Riley
MS Urban Placemaking & Management ’17

Faculty and Staff

I. M. Ecks
Retired longtime assistant to the provost

Yechiam Gal
Former adjunct professor CCE of Foundation

Earl E. Hoyt Jr., BID ’60
Former visiting assistant professor

Warren Frederick Ilchman
10th president of Pratt Institute (1990–1993)

Naomi J. Johnson
Retired longtime staff member of Pratt Center for Community Development

Erich Kuersten
Academic advisor and former assistant to the chair of Humanities and Media Studies

Anna Marie Magagna
Former visiting instructor of Fashion

Paul McDonough
Adjunct associate professor emeritus of Photography

Robert C. Morgan
Longtime adjunct professor of Fine Arts

pratt.edu/those-we-have-lost

Prompt

Change Your Mind

You're faced with a blank page, a problem, a roadblock—and the way to move through it seems murky, uninspiring, maybe impossible. How do you get unstuck?

Taking cues from Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt's card deck *Oblique Strategies,* and George Brecht's performance "event" instructions in his artist book *Water Yam*, one class of Pratt students came up with a tool for a creative shakeup.

In the Pratt Integrative Course titled Games, Glitches, and Creativity, the students devised *A Deck of Cards Always Will*, a set of suggestions and instructions "to promote creativity and foster new avenues of exploration and inquiry."

On the next page, you'll find a selection of prompts from their deck, plus space for your own—in a folded-paper fortune teller you can cut out and make. What will you add?

A Deck of Cards Always Will was created by: Luke Degnan, visiting instructor, with Dingfan Cao, Anthony Cavieles, Jairo Gomez, Wan Hua Hsieh, Dean Liaw, Ashley Liu, Marcus Nicolois, Samantha Redman, Kiana Senke, Rachel Shanley, Nelson Wirstrom, and Menghan Xiao.

Find more creative prompts from *A Deck of Cards Always Will* and tell us yours at pratt.edu/get-unstuck.

Turn the page to play.

Prompt

Change Your Mind

INSTRUCTIONS:

[1]

[2]

[3]

[4]

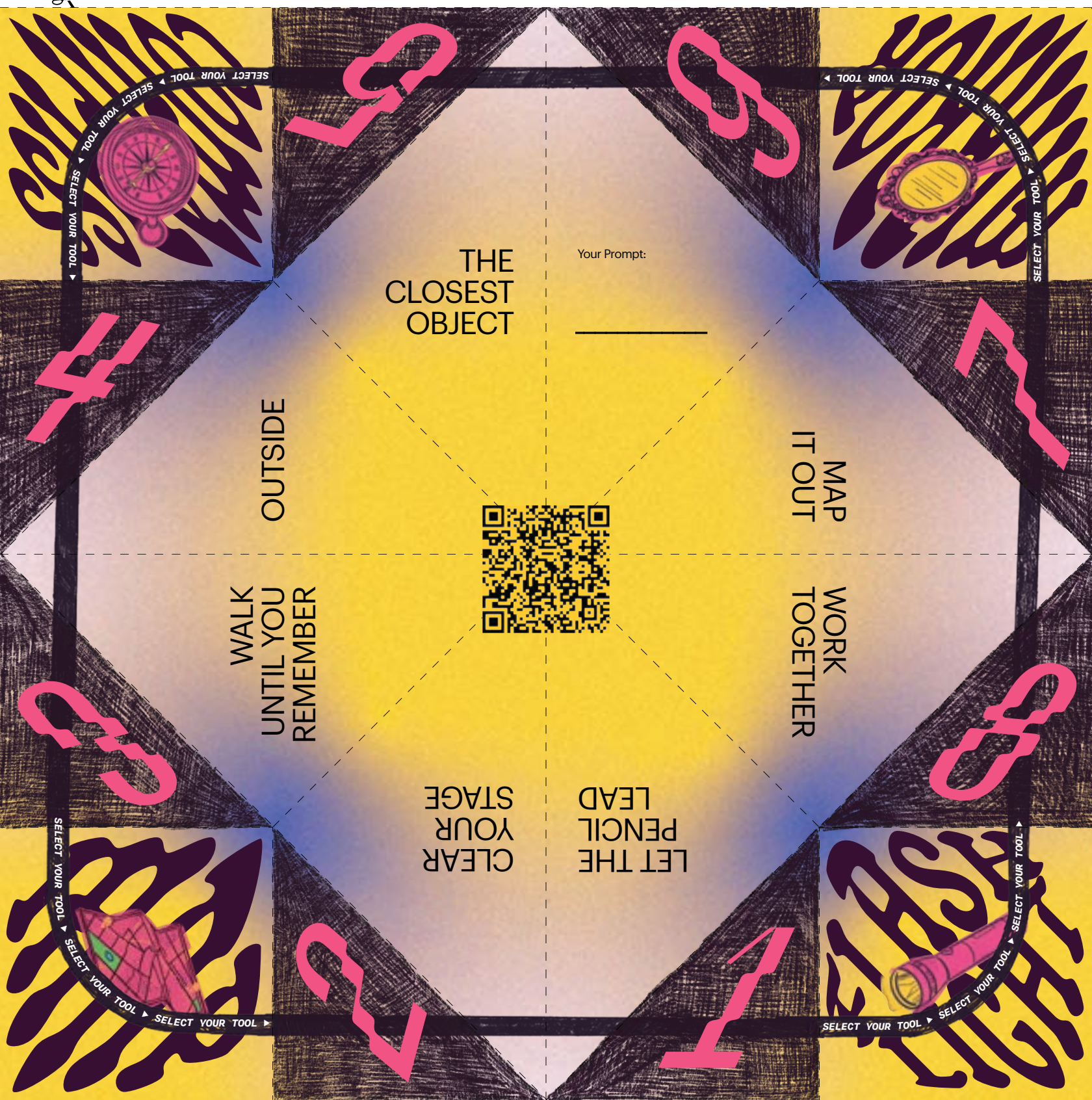
[5]

[6]

[7]

[8]

Use the fortune teller to generate an instruction at random. Read the story behind the prompts on page 63.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Pratt alumni, tell us what matters most.

Our Office of Alumni Engagement is creating future programming, and we want to learn what matters to you!

The survey closes on **July 7, 2025**. Complete it for a chance to receive one of 10 bags of exclusive Pratt alumni swag.*

2025 ALUMNI SURVEY

Access the survey at **pratt.edu/alumni-survey-2025** or use the QR code.

Questions? Email us at alumni@pratt.edu.

**To enter, you can also email us at alumni@pratt.edu by July 7, 2025. Include your name, class year and program(s), and preferred mailing address. All Pratt alumni are eligible to participate.*

Pratt

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About the Cover

Artwork by Anya Gupta, class of 2028

Foundation student Anya Gupta made this painting in Adjunct Assistant Professor Giulia Livi's Light, Color, and Design (LCD) Studio during a unit on luminosity, part of the class's studies of light and volume. Livi's students prepared to create their own luminous spaces in isometric perspective by reading chapters of Italo Calvino's prismatic novel-in-vignettes *Invisible Cities*, and Gupta also found inspiration in a podcast about the high-contrast, perception-bending TV series *Severance*. LCD Studio is part of Foundation at Pratt, an experience of reorientation and transformation, when new ways of seeing, thinking, and making emerge, laying the groundwork for art and design explorations to come.

Photo by Dahlia Dandashi

Opening spread:
Spring blooms on Pratt's Brooklyn campus, with students and the community enjoying the green space around Schutte Plaza. Pratt remembers President Emeritus Thomas F. Schutte, who passed away in March of this year, on page 58.

Photo by Megan Proctor, BFA Photography '25

Pratt