

**LIGHTS  
CAMERA  
ACTION!**

RUTGERS FILM PROGRAM  
IS ON THE RISE

**MASON  
GROSS**

SCHOOL OF  
THE ARTS

**RUTGERS**  
Mason Gross School  
of the Arts

OUR ENTERING  
FALL 2018 CLASS,

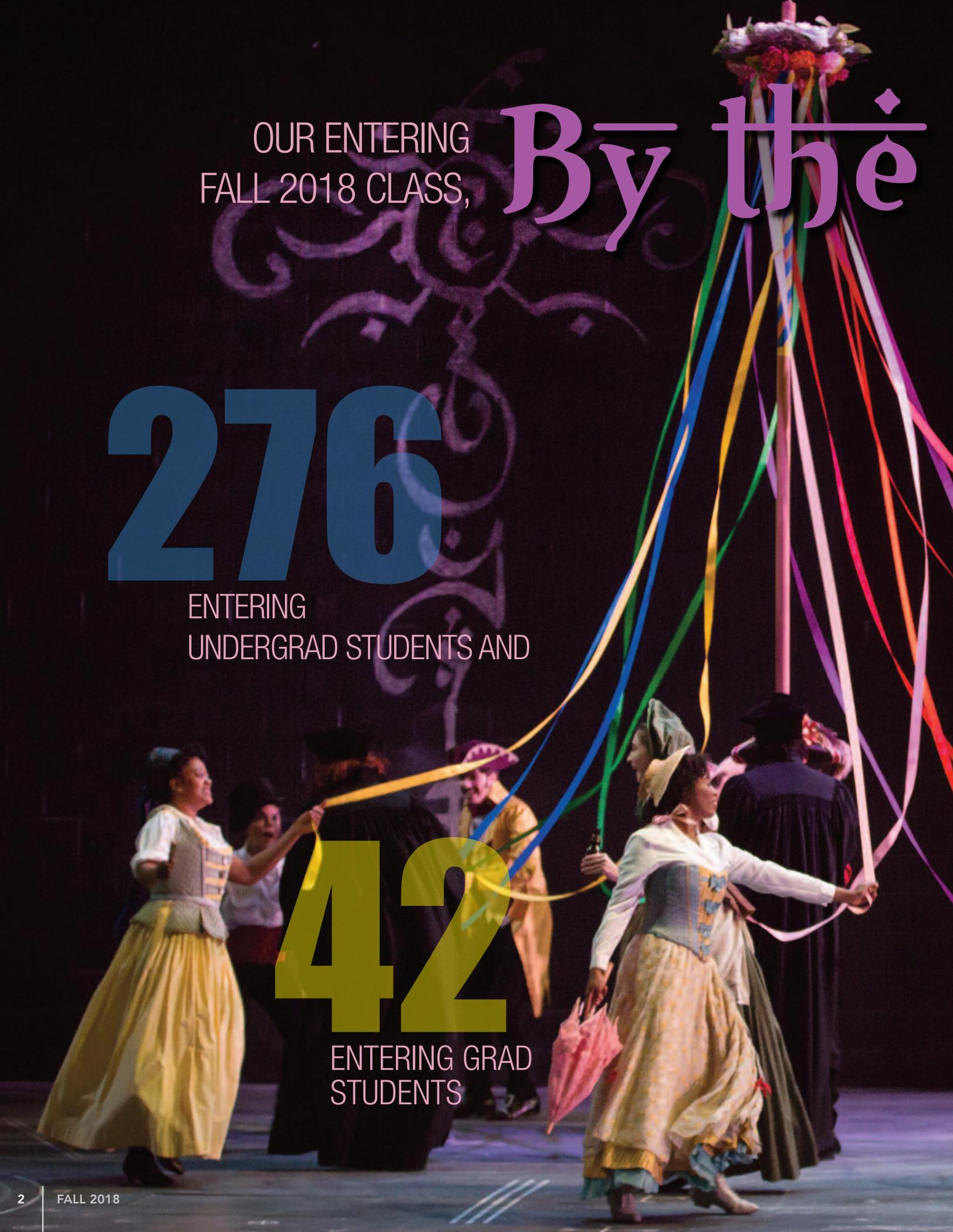
By the

276

ENTERING  
UNDERGRAD STUDENTS AND

42

ENTERING GRAD  
STUDENTS



# Numbers

FROM **6** COUNTRIES  
AND **22**  
STATES AND U.S. TERRITORIES



Rutgers Theater Company's production  
of *Faust*, March 2018.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



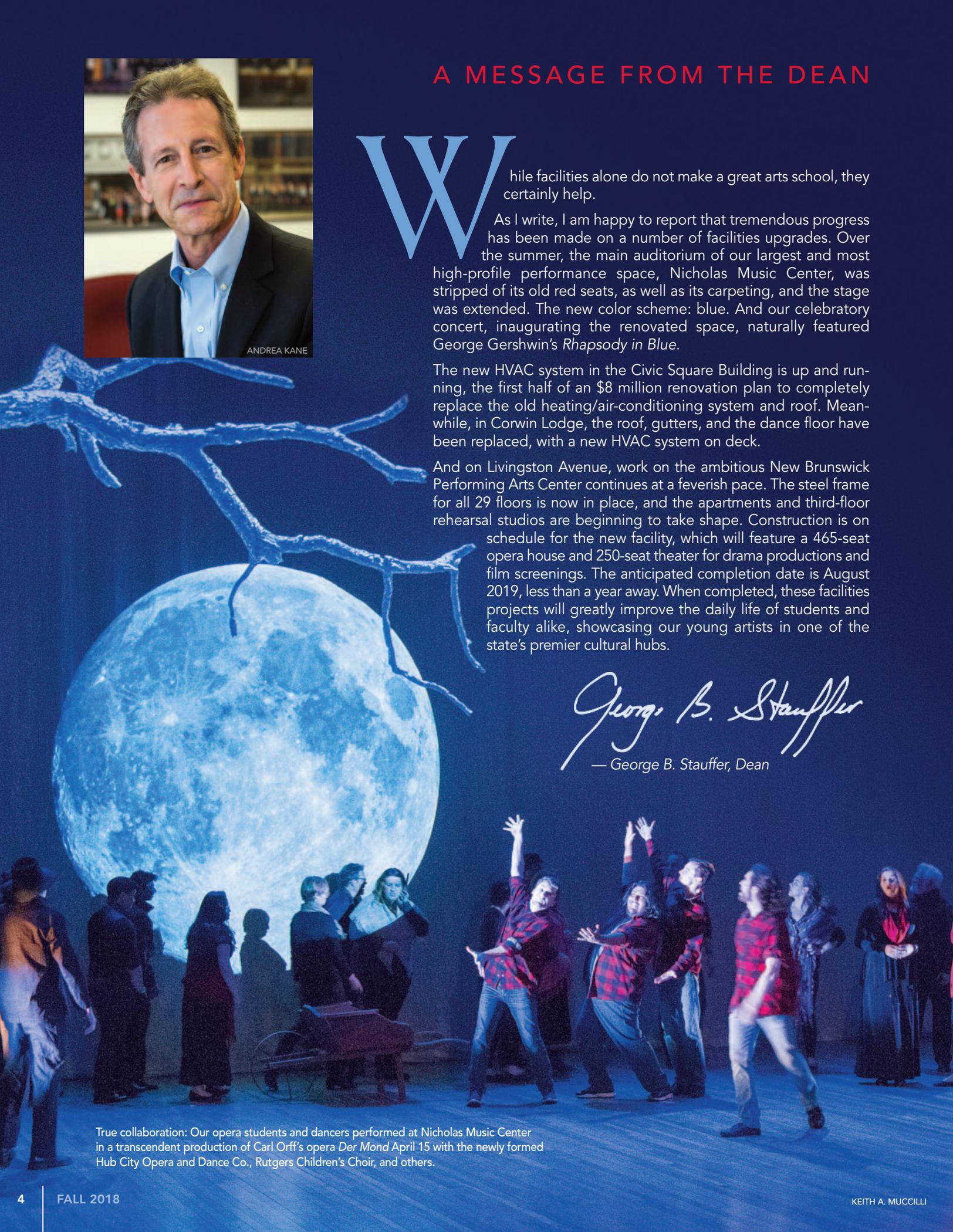
While facilities alone do not make a great arts school, they certainly help.

As I write, I am happy to report that tremendous progress has been made on a number of facilities upgrades. Over the summer, the main auditorium of our largest and most high-profile performance space, Nicholas Music Center, was stripped of its old red seats, as well as its carpeting, and the stage was extended. The new color scheme: blue. And our celebratory concert, inaugurating the renovated space, naturally featured George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*.

The new HVAC system in the Civic Square Building is up and running, the first half of an \$8 million renovation plan to completely replace the old heating/air-conditioning system and roof. Meanwhile, in Corwin Lodge, the roof, gutters, and the dance floor have been replaced, with a new HVAC system on deck.

And on Livingston Avenue, work on the ambitious New Brunswick Performing Arts Center continues at a feverish pace. The steel frame for all 29 floors is now in place, and the apartments and third-floor rehearsal studios are beginning to take shape. Construction is on schedule for the new facility, which will feature a 465-seat opera house and 250-seat theater for drama productions and film screenings. The anticipated completion date is August 2019, less than a year away. When completed, these facilities projects will greatly improve the daily life of students and faculty alike, showcasing our young artists in one of the state's premier cultural hubs.

*George B. Stauffer*  
— George B. Stauffer, Dean



True collaboration: Our opera students and dancers performed at Nicholas Music Center in a transcendent production of Carl Orff's opera *Der Mond* April 15 with the newly formed Hub City Opera and Dance Co., Rutgers Children's Choir, and others.

“At Rutgers, the students are really engaged, they’re really hungry, and they actually want to go out and work in the industry.”

— *Choreographer Maxine Doyle, who worked with our dancers earlier this year. View a video of their collaboration on the Rutgers Today YouTube page.*

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KEITH A. MUCCILLI

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KEITH A. MUCCILLI

## MAKING HISTORY

Student Valerie Suter paints female presidential candidates into history—and earns an Eagleton Fellowship.

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### ON THE COVER

A Rutgers Filmmaking Center Advanced Cinematography class.  
 Photo by Keith A. Muccilli.

### STAFF

**EDITOR:** Laurie Granieri  
**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:** Risa Barisch, Rhonette Smith  
**DESIGNER:** Cara Bufanio, BFA '85



### MASON GROSS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

848-932-9360

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THE MASON GROSS FILMMAKING PROGRAM CONTINUES TO GROW,  
SEEKING NATIONAL RECOGNITION

# LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

BY RISA BARISCH

R

**OBERT RACKMIL CHOSE TO STUDY FILMMAKING BECAUSE "IT SEEMS LIKE THE MOST DIRECT AND INTERESTING WAY TO STUDY HUMAN LIFE," HE SAYS. "I LIKE BEING ABLE TO THEN RELAY WHAT I FIND IN AN EMOTIONAL WAY TO AN AUDIENCE."**

Rackmil is a second-year BFA major at the Rutgers Film-making Center, which this fall continues its growth as the home of the interdisciplinary film production program at Mason Gross School of the Arts. On the agenda: a change in leadership, a focus on industry experience for students, and expanded opportunities for students to show their work.

Faculty member Patrick Stettner has seen the film program evolve from a certificate program to a full-fledged degree, a 121-credit BFA major that trains students in the many facets of filmmaking: research and treatments, cinematography, lighting, field production, directing, script writing and story boarding, editing, and postproduction. The program will graduate its first class of BFA majors in the spring.

Stettner has been named the new director of the Rutgers Filmmaking Center, succeeding Nicolás Pereda, a 2018 Guggenheim Fellow who returns to the Mason Gross faculty.

The filmmaking BFA has become increasingly competitive since its introduction in 2015, with an application

pool that grows about 30% each year. But one thing that hasn't changed is the program's equal emphasis on fiction and documentary filmmaking as well as collaborative projects with Rutgers artists, researchers, and scientists.

"We're continuing the vision we've always had, to help students discover their unique creative voice as filmmakers," says Stettner. "One of the things that distinguishes us from other filmmaking programs is that we don't silo our students—we want them to do every aspect of filmmaking."

## REACHING OUT

Students have opportunities to gain professional experience and production credits through the Rutgers Film Bureau, the documentary arm of the program that has produced research-based films in locations including Thailand, Mexico, and Antarctica.

Thomas Lennon, an Academy Award-winning documentary filmmaker, joins the bureau as its head this fall, bringing commitment to Rutgers-based productions and "a lot of energy" to the film program, says Stettner,

who adds that Lennon has already reached out to potential university collaborators in search of grants and projects.

Lennon takes over for faculty member Danielle Lessovitz, who last spring offered a “larger-than-life” project, says Rackmil, with an independent study class through the bureau.

Lessovitz’s script for *Port Authority*, a feature-length film then in an early draft stage, provided the framework of an exercise in the fundamentals of directing. The film was subsequently picked up by Martin Scorsese’s Sikelia Productions and is being produced this fall.

In the independent study, students analyzed scenes and then had the opportunity to try their hand at directing, using classmates as actors. The experience provided an inside look at the preparatory work required by a director before shooting begins.

“I was surprised at the range of interpretations we each had from scene to scene,” Rackmil says. “This exercise taught me a lot about the role of the director, and the kind of invisible agency they exert between script and filming. Not to mention, working with a script that was about to be produced was exciting.”

The class opened the door to a fall internship on *Port Authority* for Rackmil and classmate Finley King, among other students, to learn even more about how production works on a narrative feature.

“ WE DON’T  
SILO OUR STUDENTS—  
WE WANT THEM TO  
DO EVERY ASPECT OF  
FILMMAKING. ”

“Growing up in a small town in New Jersey, I never had the opportunity to be on the set of a feature film,” says King. “With this internship, I’m working in New York City—without Rutgers, I would’ve never had this amazing opportunity.”

Other internships this year include the *Rachael Ray Show*, *Saturday Night Live*, Panasonic, NBC, and at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Los Angeles, where junior Kirsten Pasewaldt spent the summer assisting in the preparation of events and screenings.

Pasewaldt also participated in the Academy Gold Internship Enhancement program, an eight-week educational initiative that offers panels, hands-on technical production



PHOTOS BY KEITH A. MUCCILLI

Facing page: a course in advanced cinematography; above: a film editing class.

workshops, access to membership screenings, and networking opportunities.

Experiences like these are invaluable to a filmmaker just starting out, when making connections can be imperative to success after graduation.

“In the film industry, it is all about who you know,” Pasewaldt says. “By getting this internship, I have made connections with industry professionals who would normally be completely untouchable. I now have a better chance at making sure my résumé gets seen wherever it is I apply to next.”

### SCREEN TIME

Connecting students to national film festivals is another way to get industry exposure—and to achieve national recognition for the film program, says Stettner.

The challenge is to match “the right kinds of films with the right kinds of festivals,” Stettner says, so the Rutgers Filmmaking Center created an initiative to help students navigate the submission process. Faculty members, all of whom are working filmmakers, have been guiding the winners of last spring’s New Lens Film Festival, an annual on-campus showcase of student work, to submit their pieces across the country.

The center also continues to add to its cutting-edge facilities, which includes a film studio, by increasing its collection of professional-grade equipment. Recent purchases include both sound-mixing and color-timing stations, and digital cameras with the capability to shoot in 4.6k cinematic-quality resolution.

These upgrades contribute to the quality of films—and filmmakers—getting better every year, Stettner says.

“They’re taking risks and challenging themselves, and within that we’re seeing a broad range of films,” says Stettner. “We’re really proud of where the students are going.”

## FALL 2018 VISITING FILMMAKER SERIES

The Rutgers Filmmaking Center presents a variety of documentary and narrative features, followed by Q&As with directors, at free public screenings at Rutgers Cinema, 105 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, on the Livingston Campus in Piscataway.

***The Strange Ones* (2017)**  
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 10 A.M.

Mysterious events surround two brothers traveling across America on a vacation that soon gives way to dark and complex truths. Q&A with co-director Lauren Wolkstein.

***Patti Cake\$* (2017)**  
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 10 A.M.

Fed up with life in New Jersey, Patricia Dombrowski, aka Patti Cake\$, leads the charge against an army of haters, unpaid bills, and the broken dreams that are holding her back from achieving stardom as a rapper. Q&A with director Jeremy Jasper.

***Quest* (2017)**  
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7, 10 A.M.

Filmed over nearly a decade, this documentary set in North Philadelphia chronicles the Rainey family as they nurture a community of hip-hop artists in their home music studio. Q&A with director Jonathan Olshefski.

THESE EVENTS ARE UNDERWRITTEN BY THE BLANCHE & IRVING LAURIE FOUNDATION.



# FACULTY & STAFF NEWS

**Nicolás Pereda** of the Rutgers Filmmaking Center has been awarded a Guggenheim fellowship in the Film-Video category.

**John Yau** of the art & design faculty is the winner of the Jackson Poetry Prize, awarded annually by Poets & Writers to “an American poet of exceptional talent who deserves wider recognition.” The judges praised his “dazzling imagination,” and so do we.

Alastair Macaulay, chief dance critic for *The New York Times*, called dance faculty **Pam Tanowitz’s** staging of T.S. Eliot’s *Four Quartets* “the greatest creation of dance theater so far this century.” The piece was performed in early July at Bard College’s Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts in Annandale-On-Hudson, NY.

Congrats to theater faculty member **Don Holder**, nominated for a Tony Award for Best Lighting Design of a Musical for this year’s revival of *My Fair Lady* at Lincoln Center’s Vivian Beaumont Theater. Holder won Tony Awards in 1998 and 2008, for *The Lion King* and *South Pacific*, respectively. *My Fair Lady* director Bartlett Sher calls Holder “probably the best lighting designer on the planet.” We’d agree—except for the “probably.”

In May, at the Cannes Film Festival in France, *Diamantino*, a satire co-directed by Rutgers Filmmaking Center faculty **Daniel Schmidt**, won the annual Critics Week sidebar. Variety dubbed the film “one of the year’s most singular debuts.”

The New York City Subway’s 30th Avenue station (N, W) on the Astoria Line in Queens now features a three-part glass mural installation by art & design faculty **Stephen Westfall**. According to the MTA’s media release, the geometrically patterned *Dappleganger* is a “frieze-like” piece that “replaced deteriorating windowless wooden wall panels, bringing color and natural light to the previously dark station waiting area.” Several panels can be seen from the street.

Dance faculty **Frederick Curry** led a Movement Choir as part of the opening event at the Laban 2018 LIMS (Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies) 40th Anniversary Conference in New York City on May 31.

Music faculty member **Fred Hersch** was named 2018’s Pianist of the Year by the Jazz Journalists Association.

Kudos to **Miranda Lichtenstein** and **Marc Handelman** of the Department of Art & Design, who received the Presidential Fellowship for Teaching Excellence. The awards were distributed in early May.

Rutgers Filmmaking Center faculty **Alan McIntyre Smith** served as director of photography on Olivia Wilde’s new feature, *A Vigilante*. The film will be released in theaters early next year.

Faculty Stephen Westfall’s *Dappleganger* is installed in the New York City Subway’s 30th Avenue Station in Queens.



## FIVE QUESTIONS FOR STEFANIE BATTEN BLAND

Dance professor **Stefanie Batten Bland** is busier than ever: In January, American Ballet Theatre will stage her work at Duke University in North Carolina as part of the A.B.T. Women's Movement initiative supporting female choreographers; in the spring, she'll be a resident fellow at New York University's Center for Ballet and the Arts. Here, Batten Bland discusses her bohemian childhood in New York City's SoHo, her years working in Paris, and the music she not only adores, but needs.



JC DHIEEN

### How did you end up working as a dancer in Paris?

I'm Creole on my father's side, and I grew up with French because of my mother's work with the Cousteau Society, so French is my second language. France was the most comfortable of European countries for me to navigate as a performer of colors as well as lifestyle wise. I was deeply in love with a Parisian (isn't it always the case?), and I auditioned for the Paris Opéra Comique's *Joséphine* musical as a performer and left as head choreographer. The next six years were of such importance artistically: Being a part of the Paris Opéra system was a major validating move for a foreigner.

### You've been known to mix seemingly disparate musical genres in your work—classical with soul with Louisiana Creole music, etc. Name the top five songs on your ultimate playlist.

"Excursions," by A Tribe Called Quest; "Me Revoilà Paris," by Josephine Baker; "MLK," by U2; "Flôr di nha esperanza," by Cesária Évora; "Me and Your Mama," by Childish Gambino.

### Your mother is a science writer, and your father was musician and composer Ed Bland, who wrote arrangements for Lionel Hampton, Dizzy Gillespie, and Sun Ra. How did their interests shape you as an artist?

I grew up in a very specific place due to the artists who created SoHo. This type of childhood resulted in a comfort with what's different. I saw weird, long-haired women walking sideways in harnesses at parties and big-bellied men who sang and be-bopped. I also, though, had a very country summer life, racially and radically different from New York. Virginia, where my mom is originally from, was still *slowly* exiting segregation and bias, and that left a stamp on me of being an "other." My childhood memories, I think, explain why I'm so comfortable in so many different spaces, genres, and in global places. This is reflected in my work through my interdisciplinary approach to telling stories.

### What is particularly "New York" about your work?

This is a place where one dives in the pool in the deep end, head first. The fact that I create spaces where my pieces take place is unique to the loft upbringing I had. That is essential New York. I'd also say what is very American about how and what I do is the desire to give to others—to pass the torch of opportunity down to the next generation; to help make people who will be around once I'm no longer around better than me. That is found only in the relationship that we have between artists and institutions like Rutgers, for example. We don't have state theaters that align with creators. Our universities do this. That type of intergenerational dialogue helps me ask questions of my process, what and why I'm making, and how I'm communicating.

### What's the last piece of art that rearranged the furniture in your mind?

Yinka Shonibare's *Wind Sculpture* in Central Park this spring threw a wrench in my thinking, living, and seeing. I'm a fan of how he threads historical context into the contemporary. He does this with colors, with form patterns. His work makes me see history, feel history, and see how it is part of the fabric of today.



# STUDENT & ALUMNI NEWS

Alumnus Peter Martin, far right, is part of the Grammy-winning quartet Third Coast Percussion.

In April, graduating MFA artist **Julian Gilbert-Davis** was awarded an AAF/Seebacher Prize for Fine Arts, a fellowship to study at the Salzburg International Summer Academy of Fine Arts in Austria. This is a rare opportunity: Up to four Seebachers are awarded annually.

Our **theater students'** performance of *Richard II* at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London pleasantly surprised critic Peter Kirwan: "I was not expecting something outstanding...I didn't anticipate it being a fantastic performance in its own right and something that changed my perspective on the value of Shakespeare in the 21st century."

Congrats to 2007 MFA art & design alumna **Amy Feldman**, who was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship in the Fine Art category.

Theater alumna **Dierdre Friel** was part of the cast of *Our Lady of 121st Street*, directed by Tony-winner Phylicia Rashad at off-Broadway's Signature Theatre. The show ran from May 1 through June 17.

In the spring, graduating BFA design student **Libby Groden** was named one of 14 semifinalists for the American Athletic, Inc. Award, given to the most outstanding senior female gymnast in the United States. The award is considered "the Heisman Trophy of the sport," and Groden was the first Scarlet Knight to earn this honor.

Dance alumnus **Kyle Marshall** is the recipient of the 2018 Juried Bessie Award. His work, according to the Bessie citation, is notable "for exploring important ideas around race and sexuality in dances that embody rather than illustrate complicated issues," and "for drawing on a variety of movement styles."

**Camila Canó-Flaviá** was a theater alumna for all of two months, and she landed a job performing in the world premiere, off-Broadway production of Obie Award-winner Clare Barron's *Dance Nation*, which opened in previews on April 13 at Playwrights Horizons's Peter Jay Sharp Theater and closed on July 1.

In May, music alumnus **Peter Martin** and his Grammy-winning Chicago-based ensemble, Third Coast Percussion, performed as part of NPR's Tiny Desk concert series, intimate performances recorded live at the desk of *All Songs Considered* host Bob Boilen.

Theater alumnus and three-time Tony nominee **Kevin Chamberlin** joined the cast of Broadway's *Wicked* as the Wizard on May 22.

Art & design alumna **Nell Painter's** newest book, released in June, is *Old in Art School: A Memoir of Starting Over*, which details the esteemed Princeton University history professor's return to school at age 64. Painter earned a BFA from Rutgers in 2009 and an MFA from RISD in 2011. *The New York Times Book Review* describes *Old in Art School* as "candid and cheerfully irreverent," while novelist Tayari Jones calls *Old in Art School* "a cup of courage for everyone who wants to change their lives." In the memoir, Painter says of her experience: "Rutgers isn't like those lame Midwestern universities that need Photoshop to multiculturalize their image. Rutgers in its multifariousness is lovable, multicultural New Jersey. Rutgers is in New Jersey, with everyone from everywhere."

Dance alumna **Shakira Barrera** has joined Season 2 of the Netflix '80s wrestling comedy *GLOW*, produced by *Orange Is the New Black's* Jenji Kohan and Tara Herrmann. Barrera attributes her dance training to helping her navigate scenes on the wrestling mat.

In June, Tony-nominated director and theater alumnus **Moritz von Stuelpnagel's** staging of *Teenage Dick*, a modern-day take on *Richard III*, featuring disabled actors, was named a *New York Times* Critic's Pick. "Often in theater when we talk about disability it becomes a metaphor for overcoming obstacles, and it's all from the perspective of a privileged, able-bodied audience, not necessarily the perspective of people with disabilities," von Stuelpnagel tells *Playbill.com*. He says he hopes, with *Teenage Dick*, "to examine from the inside what that life experience is like." The show ran off-Broadway at the Public Theater's Shiva Theater from June 12 through July 29.

Music alumnus **Jonathan Dinklage** serves as concertmaster and first violin on the Broadway smash *Hamilton: An American Musical*. "I knew I had to be part of it," he says of the Tony-winning musical in the July issue of *New Jersey Monthly*. The article mentions that Dinklage has played on several of Rod Stewart's *Songbook* albums, on two Barbra Streisand tours, alongside Tony Bennett and Lady Gaga, and in the string section for a 2001 performance by Michael Jackson at Madison Square Garden. In addition, he toured with the rock band Rush in 2013 and 2015.

# Horse play

*Mason Gross alumnae join a dance company focused on equine artistry*

BY RISA BARISCH

**K**at Reese began riding horses at age 8, entering the world of dressage competitions and enjoying a decade-long career as an equestrian. Then, her other passion—dance—took the lead and she enrolled at Mason Gross School of the Arts as a BFA major. Studio and class time ate up the daylight hours, and Reese, who graduated in 2014, accepted that her “barn life,” as she fondly calls it, was over.

After all, Reese says, “Dance and horses felt really separate.”



RACHEL KEANE

Enter The Equus Projects, a dance company that creates site-specific works combining performance with equestrian artistry. Reese was introduced to the company's founder and artistic director, JoAnna Mendl Shaw, by fellow Mason Gross BFA/EdM alumna Maddie Warriner, who had met Shaw at the Bates Dance Festival in Lewiston, Maine, in 2017.

Reese, however, was hesitant about the idea of dancing with horses.

“I was a little bit unsure of how they used horses in the works, and I didn't want it to be something where we were teaching the horses circus tricks,” says Reese. “I didn't want it to feel gimmicky.”

After attending a workshop with Shaw and then observing a performance with a horse, Reese determined that Equus pieces were “done in a really responsible way that show a lot of care for the horse as its own being.”

## ADVANCED BODY LANGUAGE

She and Warriner joined the company in October 2017, and went through training for basic ground handling and horsemanship. Dancers also train in Physical Listening, a technique developed by Shaw that includes practicing observation of and reaction to body cues, as well as non-verbal communication methods.

The horses are trained, too, but there's plenty of room for improvisation. To actually create move-

ment with an equine partner (not just “dancing at a horse, or next to a horse,” says Reese), performers must develop a dialogue that flows with the animal's behavior and mood, relying on their training to intuit feelings of anxiousness, comfort, playfulness, and even anger.

“I learned how to make a horse turn in a circle without touching it, without making any signals, simply by looking at it and cocking my head in a certain direction,” explains Warriner, who had little experience with horses prior to joining The Equus Projects. “It's all about intention. Horses are pack animals, so they can read your body language really well. It's literally like being a psychic with an animal.”

One tactic Reese uses is called “creating passwords,” in which she observes the horse's movement—a tail swish, a head turn to the left—and then assigns a choreographed reaction. Her physicality grabs the horse's attention, prompting another reaction by the horse.

The result is an improvised exchange between the dancer and the horse that results in “beautiful duets,” says Warriner.

When working with a partner that can weigh up to a ton, an intense amount of awareness is required to create a safe and comfortable environment—dancers must be fully present with the horse at all times.

“You're both safe as long as you're not doing anything to scare the horse or freak it out, or you're not getting too pompous or egotistical or getting into your own performance and not paying attention to the horse anymore, because you can get hurt that way,” explains Warriner.

“Ideally, we're creating a relationship in real time in front of the audience,” adds Reese. “It's a creature that you can't talk to, first of all, so all of the communication is physical, and second, it's an animal that's 10 times our size. So it doesn't work for me to just come in with all of my ideas and slap them on that horse, because they could easily say no and that's it.”

Warriner and Reese agree that their Rutgers

dance training translated surprisingly well to performing with horses.

“Learning how to respond to other bodies, learning how to listen and be able to react, being able to sponge off of other people, or dance with them, dance against them—I like to call it ‘advanced body language,’ where you're understanding what the other person is doing and being able to take that and run with it,” says Warriner.

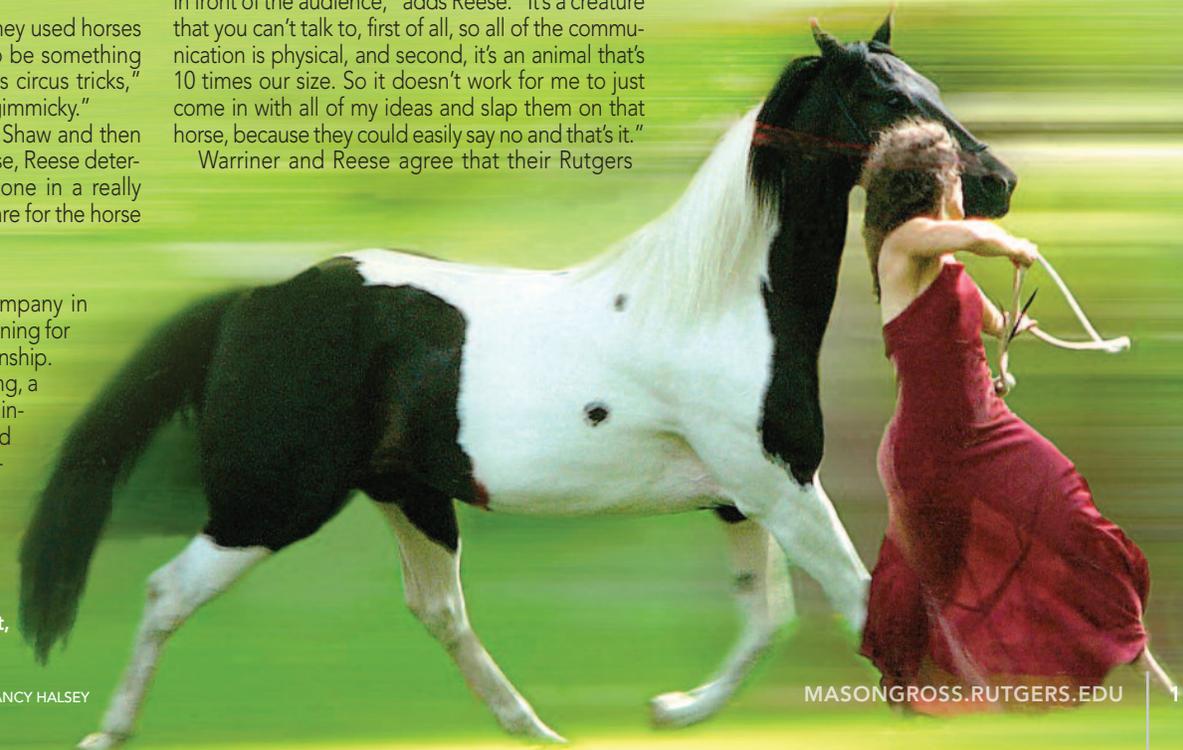
For Reese, the complexities of simultaneously improvising and choreographing is challenging, given her equestrian roots.

“I came from a place where it was very matter-of-fact, where I needed the horse to do a job, so I asked it and figured it out and made it happen, and then rewarded it when it was done and moved on,” Reese says. “Now I have a much wider spectrum, where it's not just getting from A to B, it's about creating a dance with that horse.”

While not all Equus performances involve horses, the equestrian aesthetic of careful reaction and real-time decision making is apparent in all of their work. The company's latest project focuses on bringing the arts to rural America, and took members on tour to five cities in Wisconsin in March to perform, collaborate, and teach.

As Reese discovered, there are valuable lessons to be learned from creating choreography with a horse.

“There's a level of having to find a middle ground, or a common space, that I think transcends all animals and all people,” Reese says. “Especially in the world we're in today, seeing an example of not just using muscle and power and hard-headedness to get an outcome of some kind is important.”



Inset, dance alumna Kat Reese; at right, a performance by The Equus Projects.

NANCY HALSEY

# RECLAIMING HISTORY

## Print grapples with university's slaveholding roots

BY LAURIE GRANIERI AND RISA BARISCH

In Nona Faustine's acclaimed photographic series *White Shoes*, she poses nude, except for a pair of white pumps, at former slave-trading sites scattered around New York City—among them, City Hall and Wall Street.

The imagery, undeniably bold, simultaneously probes history and present-day perceptions of black bodies.

However, according to Faustine, who calls herself a "loner artist," allowing one of those images to serve as the basis for a print produced in collaboration with nine Rutgers MFA students in a seminar class felt, in some ways, even riskier.

The print features a full-length nude portrait of Faustine standing against what appears to be an opaque red silkscreen background. On second glance, however, the background reveals a succession of names printed in a transparent gloss ink. The names represent a slave simply referred to as "Will," who helped lay the foundation of the Old Queens building in Downtown New Brunswick, as well as the names of certain slaves owned by some of the university's founders. Among them: Abolitionist and women's rights activist Sojourner Truth. She and her parents were owned by the family of Rutgers University's first president, Jacob Hardenbergh.

"Rutgers is the only school [where] I'd allow my body to be utilized in that way, in solidarity with those who built this school," Faustine says. "The *White Shoes* series was about solidarity with enslaved people and the way they were objectified, but also me as a free black woman in the 21st century reclaiming that history and reclaiming the power of the body as mine. I feel that the names



A first look at a print made by a Rutgers graduate print seminar featuring a self-portrait of photographer Nona Faustine. The silkscreen is 26½-by-38 inches and bears a partial list of names of slaves owned by some of the university's founders.

has the wrong idea about this—Oooh, titillation—they'll see the names."

Each year, faculty member Barbara Madsen invites an outside artist to collaborate with her graduate print seminar students. She says she selected Faustine because "She impressed me with her candid, straightforward attitude. Since her work throws racial and female body representation on its head with dignity, I thought she would be a good fit for the class. She brings a profound honesty to her work that pulls back the veneer of society."

Besides, Madsen says, she wants her Rutgers artists to grapple with events unfolding outside the print studio.

Faustine loved the idea. When she visited campus to discuss the project, she says, the idea emerged as "the students and I talked about healing and bringing forth things into the light."

When *Scarlet and Black* was published, Richard L. Edwards, then the Rutgers–New Brunswick chancellor, said: "This work shows that we are not afraid to look at ourselves and our early history. We are a large public university that is one of the most diverse in the country, and we think we need to understand our history and not be ashamed of it, but to be able to face it in a forthright way."

Faustine says she appreciates that candor.

"Rutgers University, despite its history, was open enough about it to not only write a book detailing it, but also to allow their professors in this class in the MFA program to focus on it even more," she says. "Not to say that we had to seek permission, but just that we didn't have to shy away from it, and they didn't censor us."

"Artists operate with our hearts and souls, so we're going to do whatever we need to do, and talk about what's important to us," Faustine adds. "But when you have an institution that supports that—that's impressive."

The names cited on the print are: Nanna, Cetty, Cay, Ginna, Luck, Sam, Betty, Tudd, Ezebel, Robe, Henry, Judge, Pegga, Caty, Silver, Simon, Jet, Ruth, Alfred, Jerima, Mark, Lewis, Grace, Jine, Tom, Jane, Flora, Ann, Tony, Bekky, Sylvia, Quash, Jacob, Caesar, Betsey, Phillis, Sojourner Truth/Isabella Baumfree, Baumfree & Mau-Mau Bet, Ukasaw Gronniosaw, John Annin, Galloway, Benjamin, Charlotte, Sampson, Rozenah, Edward, Dorcas, Toney, Dick, Will, June, Dinah, Daniel, Rachel, Hannah, Anthony, Margaret, Abraham, Glasgow, Susanna, Herman, Samuel, Brook, Isabel, Harry, Claus, Pattie, Mary, Peter, Rode, Jude, Jack, Ben, Eve, Peg.

**I LOVE THE SYMBOLISM OF THE NAMES. AND I LIKE THAT IF SOMEONE HAS THE WRONG IDEA ABOUT THIS—OOOH, TITILLATION—THEY'LL SEE THE NAMES.**

of the slaves—as many as we could fit on the print—makes it better for me to [have my naked body shown there]."

The graduate seminar class opted to create a print in response to Rutgers University Press's 2016 publication *Scarlet and Black, Volume 1: Slavery and Dispossession in Rutgers History*. The book, published in concert with the university's 250th anniversary, delves into the history of some of the university's founders as slave owners and the displacement of Native Americans who once lived on land that was transferred to the college.

Faustine points to the succession of names cascading around her body, saying that they ultimately function "like a cloak. I love the symbolism of the names. And I like that if someone

"The Black Lives Matter movement has brought greater attention to violence against blacks and is a conversation that belongs in the classroom," says Madsen. "I love that the print is of a powerful black woman."

MFA student Enrique Figueredo pitched the concept of creating the print in response to the publication of *Scarlet and Black*. The print took five months to complete.

"I thought, how can we take Nona's work and apply it to the history of Rutgers and New Jersey?" Figueredo says. "There is an obvious relationship between Nona's work and every state in the country, but how do we make her work unique to New Brunswick? I appreciated her openness to tackling the history of Rutgers with her photography."



# Historias de Tango

On March 23 at Nicholas Music Center, the school presented *Historias de Tango* (*Stories of Tango*), featuring compositions by Astor Piazzolla, Alfredo Gobbi, Francisco Canaro, and others, as well as performances by several professional tango dance duos. Faculty member Eduardo Herrera delivered a pre-concert lecture on the genre, with demonstrations of instrumental techniques. Faculty member Elena Chernova-Davis organized the event, and the university's Center for Latino Arts and Culture and Center for Latin American Studies served as co-sponsors.

# The Sky Was Never the Limit

## GEOFFREY HENDRICKS, IN MEMORIAM

Professor Emeritus Geoffrey Hendricks, a member of the Department Art & Design from 1956 to 2004, died on May 12 in his Manhattan home. He was 86. Hendricks was a seminal figure in the experimental performances of the Fluxus movement at Rutgers and beyond. His work often was provocative, as was his presence in the classroom.

"There was an ongoing flow between the classroom and the outside world," Hendricks wrote of his time at Rutgers during the Fluxus movement. ". . . We were all learning together. And the classroom was not so much a physical place as a state of mind, instilled with a curiosity to investigate new possibilities."

Below are remembrances of Hendricks from faculty, staff, and alumni:



Hendricks's Sky Boots, in the collection of the Galerie Inge Baecker, Bad Münstereifel, Germany.

“Growing up outside of Oslo, I once saw a work by Geoffrey Hendricks in a large Fluxus exhibition at the Henie-Onstad art museum. It was an unwieldy installation that included a dividing curtain and a fully operational hospital bed, both of which had been painted over with sky and clouds, including the mattress and bed sheets. Both serious and playful, both lumbering and buoyantly atmospheric, I later recognized its effect on me in Geoffrey's gift as a teacher: rather than issuing judgment, he would make his mind twice as wide when faced with contradiction. He made short shrift of grandstanding or snark, which is sometimes the go-to currency for a put-upon critic. Instead, he very gradually let you see the transgressive thinker, the compassionate nihilist who made you feel safe even as the bottom fell out of your argument.

— Hanneline Røgeberg (Faculty)

“Geoff always brought a great energy to the department, because he was such an unabashed individualist. I still have memories of Geoff occasionally coming into the building wearing a leather WWI-era pilot's helmet, cape, and boots as if he was some sort of extremely gentle version of the Red Baron! Geoff was always the ringleader of spontaneous performance events that would pop up at any time in the building...

In 2011, the department had a performance event at the Zimmerli. When I entered the event with my students, Geoff walked over to me with that great smile and greeted me by smearing shaving cream on my face. I walked around that event with the shaving cream on my face as if it was a badge of honor. There was NO WAY that I was wiping that off.

— Damian Catera (Staff)

“Geoff was a complex person who would talk about his experiences as a queer man that spanned a marriage, having children, surviving and mourning through the AIDS crisis, and ultimately spending many years with his long-time partner, Sur Rodney Sur. He wasn't at all limited by so many of the normal borders while being an artist and living in the world. I am very grateful for his example and unending kindness and support.

— Jeanine Oleson ('00)



Above: Geoffrey Hendricks in his *Sky Car* (1979), which is in the collection of the Lehmbrock Museum in Duisburg, Germany.

Background: *Sky Sheet* from the series *Sky Painting*, c. 1966. Acrylic on fabric, rope (56<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 81<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches). Collection of Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University, Gift of Bernard and Florence Galkin.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS ARCHIVE

I met Geoffrey Hendricks for the first time in the fall of 1990, the night he dunked his head into a big bucket of blue paint. He placed his dripping blue head down on a long roll of paper and painted a fat blue line by crawling backwards to the paper's end. I had never seen anything like this before, and I knew I was in the right place. Geoff's rendition of Nam June Paik's Flux piece *Zen for Head* was my ticket to making any kind of art I wanted. I was so happy to be Geoff's grad student at Rutgers University. He opened up Fluxus possibilities of artistic play and joy to me and I've never taken art too seriously since, even as I've dedicated my life to being an artist.

— Elizabeth Stephens ('92),  
from *In Memoriam: Geoffrey Hendricks*,  
June 7, 2018, at [visualaids.org/blog](http://visualaids.org/blog)

I watched Geoff perform one of his iconic headstands after the Flux Mass at Amherst College in 2003. I remember holding back tears, unsuccessfully, as I watched him raise his legs to reveal a sign that simply read "Peace," a notion poignant at the time with our recent invasion of Iraq. I remember thinking of the absurdity of the moment. Here was this man doing a headstand with a sign tied from toe to toe, and here I was tearing up over it. But in that moment I felt that Geoff was holding the world up, bracing it upon his hands and head. He wasn't upside down, the moment was upside down. We were upside down.

— Lucas Kelly ('04)

—Compiled by Rhonette Smith

VISUAL ARTS DEPARTMENT RENAMED

# Department of Art & Design

It's official: The Visual Arts Department is now the Department of Art & Design.

Department Chair Gerry Beegan (at right) notes: "Contemporary artists and designers create experiences that encompass much more than the visual, so this is a more meaningful description of what we do, and who we are in the 21st century."

Since its inception, the department has been at the forefront of new artistic genres. Sound art, computer art, performance art, happenings, Fluxus

“ CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS AND DESIGNERS CREATE EXPERIENCES THAT ENCOMPASS MUCH MORE THAN THE VISUAL... ”

events, film, video, media art, interactive art, and installation have all been embraced by faculty and students. Studio arts such as painting, drawing, sculpture, printmaking, and photography have flourished alongside new practices and technologies.

The department's MFA in Visual Arts, founded in the 1960s, was the first graduate program in the United States to be non-discipline specific, and this approach continues to inform the department's educational philosophy—ever expansive.

Over recent decades, design has carved a place within the interdisciplinary mix. An MFA in design is scheduled for launch in the fall of 2019, following the department's recent BFA in design. These new degree offerings create a space for artists wishing to focus more singularly on design while constantly immersed in—and engaging with—an intimate community of interdisciplinary collaborators.

SOME MEMBERS OF THE ENTERING CLASS OF 2022 TELL US WHY THEY CHOSE MASON GROSS

## WHY I CAME TO MASON GROSS

“ I visited a lot of colleges, mostly on the East Coast and the Midwest, but when I got to Rutgers, it felt right. I also love the idea of being so close to NYC! I can't wait for my first visit! ”

– DANCE STUDENT  
CRISTINA PINEL

“ I chose Rutgers because of how amazing the theater program is, and the opportunities it has to offer—the teaching faculty are all top-notch and concerned with your well-being and growth. ”

– THEATER STUDENT  
CHRISTOPHER AIMONE

“ Coming to a university that features jazz and many other arts is fantastic. I'm also excited to meet others outside Mason Gross. Rutgers is a big place with lots of chances to meet people who are different from me. ”

– JAZZ BASS STUDENT GRAHAM KOZACK

# SONDHEIM

## COMES TO RUTGERS

The Mason Gross Summer Series kicked off June 1 at Nicholas Music Center with an appearance by Broadway legend Stephen Sondheim, winner of an Academy Award, eight Tony Awards, eight Grammy Awards, a Pulitzer Prize, and a 2015 Presidential Medal of Freedom.

“

**IT'S NOT ABOUT WAITING  
FOR INSPIRATION.  
IT'S NOT ABOUT TALENT.  
IT'S ABOUT HARD WORK.**

”

Sondheim, 88, whose credits include *A Little Night Music*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, and *Into the Woods*, sat down with NPR's David Bianculli for an extensive conversation as well as a Q&A with the audience.

"It's not about waiting for inspiration. It's not about talent. It's about hard work," Sondheim said, dispelling the myth of the "genius."

The Sondheim event also served as the kick-off to the Rutgers–New Brunswick Writers' Conference and was co-sponsored by the Rutgers–New Brunswick Office of Summer and Winter Sessions and the Mason Gross School of the Arts.

Broadway icon Stephen Sondheim appeared onstage at Nicholas Music Center in June.

# MAKING HISTORY



Valerie Suter alongside her painting *A Presidential Campaign of 1872: Victoria Woodhull for President, Frederick Douglass for Vice President* (acrylic, watercolor, gouache, pencil on paper, 10 feet-by-7 feet, 7 inches, 2017). The work is part of her portrait series featuring women who have made a run for the U.S. presidency.

KEITH A. MUCCILLI

## STUDENT ARTIST PAINTS FEMALE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES INTO HISTORY— AND EARNS AN EAGLETON FELLOWSHIP

alerie Suter was raised in New York City and Washington, D.C., on a steady diet of politics and art. She continues to thrive on both.

Her father, a sculptor and a painter, worked as a political illustrator for publications such as *The New York Times*, *TIME* magazine, and *The Washington Post*, and her mother is a painter with a career in book publishing. As the MFA student tells it, “creative work as well as an awareness and engagement with writing and politics was ever-present when I was young.”

This semester, Suter plunges even deeper into her inquiry of the ways government and art inform one another as she enters the Rutgers University Eagleton Fellowship Program. The one-year, interdisciplinary fellowship is awarded to select graduate students. Suter, who earned a bachelor’s degree in history at Montreal’s McGill University before studying art for a year at Central St. Martins in London, is only the second Mason Gross student—and the first from the Department of Art & Design—to receive this honor. As part of the program, Suter is taking a course on American politics this semester, and in the spring will complete an internship in a government department or agency.

Art and politics intersect in Suter’s latest project, a series of painted portraits of women who have made a run for the U.S. presidency. Suter says the idea began gestating in the months leading up to the 2016 presidential election. She combed newspaper and campaign archives, read widely, and picked through images in print and online to secure reference material. It wasn’t easy.

“When I began researching the history of these women, it was jarring to realize how many have run—over 75—and how little-known most of them are,” says Suter. She notes that Victoria Woodhull was the first female U.S. presidential candidate. Woodhull ran in 1872 against incumbent Republican Ulysses S. Grant and Democrat Horace Greeley, before women even had the right to vote.

As painful as the research was—and that’s the word Suter uses to describe the process, as she was confronted with the reality of how women and other groups were excluded from public office—she also admits that “learning about anyone who succeeds in trying to do something of this magnitude in the face of almost-certain failure is always inspiring and gives me hope and faith in the human spirit.”

Suter’s goal, among others: paint these women back into history. “It felt imperative to try to bring them to life by painting them and introducing them to viewers,” says Suter.

She says she hopes to exhibit her completed series in 2020 to mark the centennial of the passage of the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote.

And the past is never past for Suter. Her project isn’t merely about saluting historical subjects, but about getting up close and personal with these women.

“I’m interested in portraiture because I’m interested in people,” Suter says. “Painting individuals who fascinate and/or inspire me has been a way for me to reflect on something about their presence... It’s a way to spend time with them.”

It’s tempting to label Suter a “political” artist. But she tiptoes around the characterization. Yes, Suter clearly believes in the power of art to change people’s minds and, to that end, affect public policy. But the last thing she seems interested in is wielding her paintbrush in the service of didacticism.

“I gravitate towards work that offers a slow read and evokes empathy by showing or questioning something and letting the viewer find his or her own way to a point of view,” she says.

In some ways, she views her work as a kind of excavation, a means of holding up to the light long-buried stories.

And in doing so, Suter says, she hopes that the events of the past might even impact the future, that viewers of her work might understand that “the world we live in has been invented by people, and that we as individuals should all feel that we have power, both personally and politically, to shape our worlds and realities.”



Suter’s watercolor study for Margaret Chase Smith, the first woman to win election to both the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate. Smith was a candidate for the Republican nomination in the 1964 presidential election and the first woman to actively seek the presidential nomination from a major political party.



LEARNING ABOUT ANYONE WHO SUCCEEDS IN TRYING TO DO SOMETHING OF THIS MAGNITUDE IN THE FACE OF ALMOST-CERTAIN FAILURE IS ALWAYS INSPIRING AND GIVES ME HOPE AND FAITH IN THE HUMAN SPIRIT.



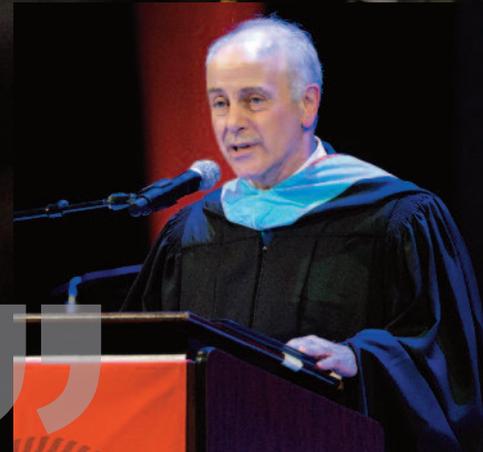
Watercolor study for Shirley Chisholm, the first African American woman in Congress and, in 1972, the first woman to seek the nomination for president of the United States from the Democratic Party.

# COMMENCEMENT 2018

APPROXIMATELY 280 STUDENTS GRADUATED ON MAY 10 AT THE STATE THEATRE IN DOWNTOWN NEW BRUNSWICK. AS ALWAYS, OUR GRADS DANCED AND PRANCED ACROSS THE STAGE, SAVORING THE PAST, GREETING THE FUTURE.

“ IN YOUR LIVES AS ARTISTS, YOUR TALENT WILL DRIVE YOUR HEART, WHICH WILL DRIVE YOUR ART. YOU WILL TELL STORIES. WHETHER ONSTAGE, FACING THE PROVERBIAL BLANK CANVAS, OR COMPOSING OR WRITING, HOW YOU TELL THE STORY WILL BE MEANINGFUL. IT WILL CAUSE CONTEMPLATION, IT WILL HELP SHAPE OPINION, AND IT WILL DRIVE EMOTION.

—Commencement speaker Joseph Benincasa, president and CEO of The Actors Fund.



“

WHERE WILL WE LEAVE OUR MARKS? AS ARTISTS AND GRADUATES, HOW WILL WE LEAVE OUR LEGACY? OUR LEGACY IS THE CONTENT OF OUR CHARACTER. MY MESSAGE TO YOU, THE READY, AMBITIOUS CLASS OF 2018, IS A QUOTE FROM DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING:

‘KEEP FEELING THE NEED FOR BEING FIRST. BUT I WANT YOU TO BE THE FIRST IN LOVE, FIRST IN MORAL EXCELLENCE, AND FIRST IN GENEROSITY.’

—Student speaker Nia Akilah Robinson of the Theater Department, for the commencement win.



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PHOTOS BY JODY SOMERS



# SPARKED



LARRY LEVANTI

Ellen Bredehoft, head of costume technology, has worked as a costume shop manager for Glimmerglass Festival in Cooperstown, New York, and for Barrington Stage Company in Massachusetts. As an independent contractor, she has draped and built for several companies including the Norwegian National Opera and Ballet, Manhattan School of Music, Gotham Chamber Opera, George Street Playhouse, and the Curtis Institute of Music. Here, she discusses the elements that fuel her work.

### World Cultures and Dress

As a costume historian, I was trained in identifying and constructing western clothing, but after a while I began looking at how other cultures and tribes clothe and adorn themselves. I especially love the traditional dress of Norway—called the *bunad*—where my husband's family is from. Asian dress is also of particular interest to me, from the traditional robes of China to the *hanbok* of Korea, and the *kimono* of Japan. It is not only the beauty of these garments that inspires me, but also how the costume is reflective of the culture and the people.

### Traditional Crafts

There has been a recent revival of crafts traditionally known as "women's work." When looking at quilts that were constructed by our ancestors, they have a story that is told much like reading a book. Is it a story of celebration, such as a wedding or birth, or is it a story of hardship? The same is true with embroidery, lace, crochet, and other decorative arts. I love looking at these and using them to create my own stories through these traditional crafts.

### Contemporary Crafts

Museums such as the Renwick in Washington, D.C., and fairs such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art Contemporary Craft Show provide endless inspiration for me. To see the amazing objects that are formed by the hands of artists—anything from furniture to wearable art to jewelry to ceramics—gives me new energy to create with my hands.

### Nature

I grew up in rural Wyoming, surrounded by more animals than people. I have a strong need to surround myself with nature whenever possible. It helps me reset and gives me peace to find who I am. It is not just the landscapes that are inspirational, but also taking time to examine the myriad small elements that combine to form a landscape. Then, I take a moment to be still and allow the natural world to envelop me.

“ THERE IS ALWAYS A NEW WAY TO INTERPRET WHAT WE ALL PUT ON OURSELVES EVERY DAY. ”

### Historical Clothing

I can never spend too much time looking at historical garments and how they are constructed. Museums now have so many exhibits that showcase vintage costumes and the internet helps bring these exhibits into reach even if they are far away and impossible for me to see in person. My recent favorite are videos posted by the Museum of London fashion curator Timothy Long on social media where he takes the viewer on a "backstage" tour viewing historical clothing. Also, webzines like *Foundations Revealed* and *Your Wardrobe Unlock'd* connect me with other costume technicians around the world who share this passion.

### Innovative Fashion Designers

Throughout the history of fashion, there have been designers who are the innovators. From Madeleine Vionnet, who is the master of the 1930s bias dress, to Charles James of the 1950s and his highly engineered gowns, to origami garments of Issey Miyake today, there is always a new way to interpret what we all put on ourselves every day.

### Kaffe Fassett: "I create in palettes of color because that is my main obsession."

A couple of years ago I saw an exhibit of the textile artist Kaffe Fassett. I find endless inspiration in how he uses color to tell a story. Often, he uses traditional arts such as quilting, needlepoint, and knitting to communicate his vision. I respond similarly to the work of knitters Arne and Carlos who also use color to create their knitted creations.

# THE LAST WORD

“TWO NIGHTS BEFORE  
OPENING NIGHT OF ANY SHOW,  
RIGHT BEFORE BED I GO THROUGH  
ALL MY LINES AND STAGING.  
I USE THE 3-BY-3-FOOT SPACE IN MY  
ROOM AND DO A MINI VERSION OF  
THE OPERA OR SHOW JUST TO MAKE  
SURE I FEEL IT IN MY WHOLE BODY  
WITHOUT THE COSTUMES, PROPS,  
AND OTHER CAST MATES. I FEEL LIKE  
A CRAZY PERSON WHEN I DO IT,  
BUT IT KEEPS ME SANE WHEN  
OPENING NIGHT COMES AROUND.”

—MM opera student Andrew Moore.

During the summer, Moore participated in the acclaimed Merola Opera program in San Francisco. Merola has served as a launchpad for the careers of Anna Netrebko, Deborah Voigt, and others.



KEITH A. MUCCILLI

## In Memoriam

The Mason Gross School of the Arts community reports with great sadness the loss of alumni and friends of the school. We extend our condolences to each of their families and classmates.

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**Kayleigh M. Galante**, Student Coordinator at Mason Gross, August 10, 2018

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**Daniel G. Niccum**, Theater Arts, 1981, MFA, Date Unknown, 2018

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**Sidney C. Pitts**, Theater Arts, 1983, MFA, January 27, 2018

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**Tharyle J. Prather**, Theater Arts, 1979, MFA, August 13, 2018

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**Mildred Zeidler**, Art, 1977, MFA, March 20, 2017

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*All death notifications included in this issue of our magazine were submitted to the university after our last issue in the spring of 2018 and before going to press on this issue. We apologize for any omissions and ask that loved ones of deceased alumni, friends, donors to the school, faculty, and staff notify us by emailing [records@ruf.rutgers.edu](mailto:records@ruf.rutgers.edu). Please be sure to include the full name of the deceased (and name as a student), death date, class year, and major. Thank you.*



## The Last Look

The Rutgers Scarlet Knight contemplating Sedrick Chisom's painting at the opening for *Leap Century*, a show of work by second-year MFA artists last spring at New York City's Abrons Art Center.