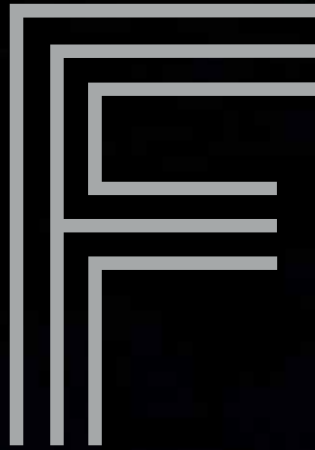




Feld
Entertainment
Studios' Stage
Magic

**A Hollywood
Career Inspires
Alum's Cinematic
Photography**

Sedrick Huckaby
Paints His Family
8 Feet Tall





ON THE COVER: *Ophelia*
No. 5 by Elisabeth Caren ('96)

Dean
Harvey Young
**Assistant Dean,
Development & Alumni Relations**
Christopher Marrion ('94)
**Senior Associate, Development
& Alumni Relations**
Denise Savino (CAS'11)
Director of Communications
Laurel Homer (CAS'98)

Editor
Lara Ehrlich (UNI'03)
Art Director
Lee Caulfield
Contributing Writers
Joel Brown
Marc Chalufour
Geoffrey Line
Mara Sassoon
Andrew Thurston
Megan Woolhouse

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

 **CFA ON INSTAGRAM**



@buarts Whether you are on campus or studying abroad, we hope you get a chance to explore your city this weekend! #myCFA #TerrierTown #ProudtoBU

@morganmoscinski.art



A NOTE FROM HARVEY

Over the past few years, I have noticed an alarming trend in the way mainstream media describe the pursuit of a college education. Rather than focus on the importance of learning or having a social impact, coverage often centers on the anticipated starting salaries of select career paths. There are two problems with this approach.

The first is that it conflates career significance with salary. Obviously, this is not true. Schoolteachers, social workers, and, yes, artists play a major role in our society. Can you imagine your life or our world without them? It would be a bleak place: uneducated, overwhelmed with problems, and deprived of culture.

The second is, it presents a narrow view of the types of careers available to arts majors. CFA alumni regularly tell me that their BU education taught them how to innovate, pitch an idea, work within a team, raise money for and promote a venture. These skills inform their daily work not only as painters, musicians, and theatre makers but also as investors in emerging markets, lawyers, entrepreneurs, and advertising executives.

Needless to say (*but I'll say it*), the fine and performing arts matter. They define our lives.

Within CFA, we champion the arts at every stage of life. Through our collaboration with Boston Medical Center, we help expectant and new mothers create lullabies for their children. We are the teachers of teachers, equipping educators of youth with strategies to assist students in realizing their potential. Our high school programs bring together the best of the best—think *Top Gun* for music, theatre, and visual arts—and make them better.




Every day, we mentor the most promising, academically talented undergraduate and graduate students and help launch them into careers of their choosing. Along the way, we forge the bonds of community, uniting a college campus as well as a city.

The expansive reach of the arts is truly staggering: the power of a laugh inspired by the comedic genius of actor Michaela Watkins ('94); the deep storytelling of a single image created by photographer Elisabeth Caren ('96); the lived experiences captured in a painting by Sedrick Huckaby (BUTI'95, CFA'97); the joy and delight of family time inspired by the incredible artistry of Feld Entertainment.

If you have the time, send me an email at cfadean@bu.edu and let me know why the fine and performing arts matter to you.

Harvey Young, Dean of CFA

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

ENGAGE:
 facebook.com/BUArts
 [@BUArts](https://twitter.com/BUArts)
 Search "Boston University College of Fine Arts"

INSIDE

CFA
Magazine
Fall 2019

2 SHOWCASE

SNAPSHOT OF THE PHOTOGRAPHER

Elisabeth Caren ('96) draws inspiration for her cinematic photography from her Hollywood career

8 COLLAGE

The World of CFA

10 CONVERSATION

QUEENS OF FUNNY-SAD

Actor-writers Michaela Watkins ('94) and Boo Killbrew ('03) talk creative hang-ups, funny tragedies, and bold writing

34 CLASS NOTES

You're directing, producing, performing, painting, writing, teaching, sculpting, sketching, composing—creating a whole world of art

39 MUSE

Sam West's ('19) poster for a made-up movie inspires a real-life film



STAGE MAGIC

Live family entertainment introduces new audiences to the arts

PROCESS

PAINTING LETITIA

Painter Sedrick Huckaby (BUTI'95, CFA'97) treats everyday people like celebrities



ACCURATE ART

Medical illustrations by CFA students show surgeons exactly where to place their scalpels



STAY WELL, PLAY WELL

BUTI's Health & Wellness Program helps student musicians avoid injury, cope with anxiety

Justin Clemmons (Huckaby); Jeff Kavanaugh/Courtesy of Field Entertainment (Disney); Jackie Ricciardi (BUTI); Olivia James (skull)



SHOWCASE

SNAPSHOT OF THE PHOTOGRAPHER

Elisabeth
Caren's
Hollywood
career
inspires her
cinematic
photography

By Mara Sassoon

Photos by Elisabeth Caren



The Invisible Wall (2016) is part of Caren's *Double Identity* series of photographs inspired by film noir. They play with the rigid gender roles of the films of that era.

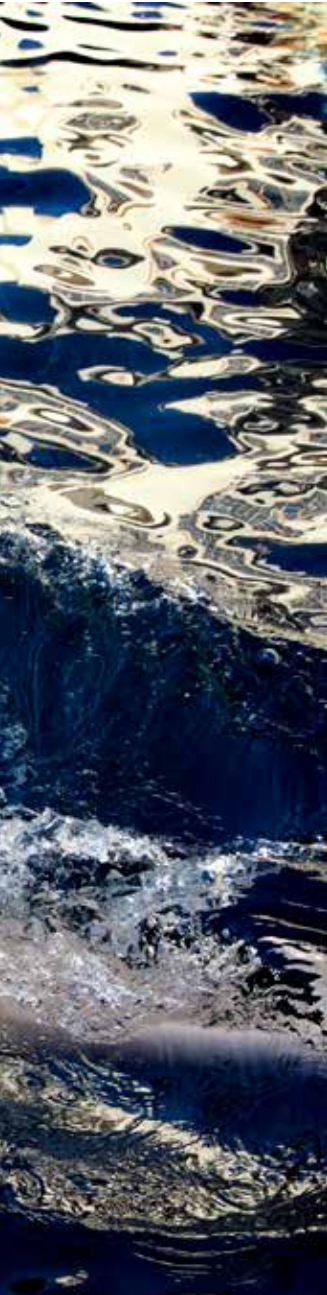


Elisabeth Caren has snapped countless celebrities, including Nicole Kidman, Serena Williams, and Willem Dafoe. She rarely takes a straight portrait, instead pushing stars to reveal something about themselves: In a photo for the entertainment news website *TheWrap*, actor Darren Criss lurks in the doorway of an elegant room, channeling the serial killer he portrays in the FX crime show *The Assassination of Gianni Versace: American Crime Story*. In another shoot for *TheWrap*, Kidman gives the camera a knowing smirk, hinting at the self-destructive cop she plays in the thriller *Destroyer*.

Caren ('96) always expected to be in the film business—but not photographing it. She started out as an actor. Caren says being onstage, then in the movie business, taught her

how to talk with star entertainers and get their commitment to an artistic vision. Even her advertising and fine art photography share a dramatic, cinematic flair.

At CFA, Caren studied acting and costume design, before realizing she no longer wanted to become an actor. She switched to a major in theatre arts, but after taking a few classes at COM, decided she was most interested in film production. After BU, she made a career in behind-the-scenes movie roles, working in talent agencies and literary management and production companies and trying her hand at production, public relations, and licensing and marketing. She worked with the hottest talent in Hollywood, including directors Mike Newell (*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*) and Kathryn Bigelow (*The Hurt Locker*).



Ophelia No. 4 (2013) (left) and *Ophelia No. 5* (2013) are part of *The Feminine Mystique* series reimagining female protagonists from classic literature.



In one of her jobs, Caren would often hire event photographers, but a keen amateur photographer, she soon realized that she preferred to photograph the events herself. In 2006, she switched to photography full time, and “my PR and marketing contacts and friends started hiring me,” she says.

THE DRAMA OF PORTRAITURE

In 2007, Caren’s friend, producer Josh Gummersall, asked her to shoot production stills for the pilot of his web series, *Quarterlife*. She learned on the job, shooting for 12-hour days on set and editing the photos at night. “I learned how to stay out of the way, because as a still photographer you are not making the film—you are capturing everyone else making the film and you have to stay as hidden and unobtrusive as possible.”

Caren’s experiences in PR and marketing informed this new role; she knew what the publicists and marketing executives were looking for, and her photos eventually appeared in the *New York Times*. When the series got picked up by NBC and went union, “that gave me the opportunity to join the International Cinematographers Guild,” she says. She also got to know the actors on the show and conducted editorial photo shoots with them.

“I came up with the ideas, which were primarily narrative-type portraits, and the actors were extremely

collaborative. These shoots built my portfolio and I started pursuing magazine work.”

“I know it can sometimes be a challenge to just be yourself, to be bare in front of the camera,” she says. “Actors are used to being in character, having lines, having an intention, seeing the world through the lens of their character. It can be a wonderful escape from yourself. So, when you are photographed as yourself, you are, in a way, more vulnerable and it can be uncomfortable.”

For a 2018 shoot with actor Terry Crews (*Brooklyn Nine-Nine*) for *Bust* magazine, Caren envisioned the entertainer as a literal Renaissance man. “Terry Crews is an athlete, actor, visual artist, designer, author, and activist,” so, in a tongue-in-cheek nod to his versatility, Caren photographed Crews in a classic Renaissance portrait.

“He was so enthusiastic, playful, and inspiring. He really understood what I envisioned and was an incredible collaborator,” Caren says. Crews went all in, posing with a regal expression that complemented his feathered cap, ruffled collar, and black velvet waistcoat. Caren heightened the drama with a Renaissance-esque chiaroscuro style, with its strong contrast between light and dark.

“We were in a studio, so we used a soft strobe light to mimic window light. The intention was for the photo to resemble a Renaissance painting but still look like a



For *Terry Crews: Renaissance Man* (2018), Caren photographed the actor-athlete-visual artist-designer-author-activist in a classic Renaissance portrait to highlight his versatility.

photograph,” Caren says. “I like the tension between recognizing and honoring the past but using modern technology to bring the past and present together.”

ART OF PHOTOGRAPHY

In commercial work, Caren cedes some of her creative control to the client, she says, but “my fine art photography comes completely from me.”

Caren has made a breadth of stunning fine art photography informed by her longtime fascination with classical paintings and her passion for the dramatic and cinematic arts. Her work has been exhibited in galleries both nationally and internationally.

“At any given time, I have at least a dozen ideas of projects I want to do. Some are a decade old or older—they are

always in my mind somewhere and kind of rest on my shoulders in an uncomfortable way until I can get them out.”

Many of her fine art series have a feminist bent and explore a struggle for equality. Her ongoing series *The Feminine Mystique*, a titular homage to Betty Friedan’s 1963 book, comprises reimaginings of female protagonists from classic literature. Some photos in the series center around Ophelia, the main love interest from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, who is driven mad with grief and drowns. In *Ophelia No. 4* (2013), a woman falls into deep blue water, her face obscured by a splash, only a hint of her silky dress visible. The dynamic shot features beads of water jumping out of the composition.

In other artistic interpretations of Ophelia, “this tragic figure seems to always be depicted as floating peacefully,” Caren says. “I was curious as to why we’ve never seen the moments *before* she was in the water, falling, and wanted to explore the possibility that it may have been a tempestuous moment for her. I questioned how we would feel about the iconic ingénue given our knowledge and perspective of women and mental illness today.”

Another series, *Pygmalion and Galatea*, references the Greek myth of the same name in which sculptor Pygmalion creates an ivory statue of a woman and falls in love with it. In the myth, the Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite, grants his wish to animate the statue, and he marries her.

“In my interpretation, what Pygmalion thought of as a ‘perfect’ woman was not actually a human being—she had no voice, no emotion, no desires,” Caren says. “She was whatever Pygmalion projected onto her, and when she becomes flesh and blood, the couple faces conflicts and disappointments and the reality that no human is perfect.”

In *Pygmalion and Galatea No. 1* (2014), Pygmalion strains to grasp the statue on the pedestal in front of him. In four successive photos, the couple transitions from passion to anguish.

BREAKING OUT OF BLACK AND WHITE

Caren’s personal photography is also influenced by the film industry she knows so well. Her series *Double Identity*, for instance, is inspired by film noir, but plays with the rigid gender roles of the films of that era, aiming to “examine realities of humanity that were excluded from these films.”

The series depicts men and women interacting with each other in purposely vague contexts. Caren shot each photo as if it were a production still and titled each one after a classic 1940s noir film.

In those films, “the leading female usually fell into two character types: the femme fatale, who uses her sexual attractiveness and cunning to manipulate men, as it’s her only option to gain power and independence, and the conventional devoted wife and mother, typically portrayed as dull, who has no autonomy.”



The Last Mile (2016) (above) belongs to Caren's *Double Identity* series. *Pygmalion and Galatea No. 1* (2014) is part of her series, *Pygmalion and Galatea*, based on the Greek myth of the same name.

Caren flips these archetypes in a photo from the series titled *The Invisible Wall* (2016), a lush image of a red-lipped woman tending roses in an overgrown garden. She wears a look of intense concern, but the viewer is not permitted access to the object of her gaze. Though she is in the midst of a household chore, she is anything but dull, dressed in an elegant coral satin gown.

“Meanwhile, the leading man in film noir is either a tough guy who cannot show emotion,” says Caren, “or the socially alienated man who is thrust into a confusing situation where he is vulnerable, especially when encountering the femme fatale.”

In *The Last Mile* (2016), Caren portrays a glamorous man and woman sitting in a 1940s-era car. As they gaze off into the distance, the windshield creates a visual divide between them and a dramatic red light glows behind them. Caren’s use of vivid color in this series “represents that we, as a society, have come a long way in our acknowledgment and acceptance of contrast and diversity in relationships and identity, and that life is not as black and white as Hollywood had wanted us to believe.” ●

COLLAGE

THE WORLD OF CFA

RISING STAR

Trombone Maestro

By Marc Chalufour

SINCE PICKING UP A TROMBONE at 10, Alexis Smith ('22) hasn't considered any other occupation. The doctoral student has devoted her career to the instrument. She's the principal trombonist for the Southwest Florida Symphony Orchestra, plays with the Boston Trombone Project (which she cofounded), and is a sales associate for S. E. Shires Company where she helps world-class musicians customize brass instruments. Oh, and she toured with Adele.

First trombone encounter

I went to band camp—it was like an instrument petting zoo. When I told my mother that I really liked trombone, she said it wasn't very ladylike and that I should try flute. I thought, "Well, if it annoys my mother, I would like to play this instrument."

The trombone sounds like...

We grow up hearing "bom-bom-bom," like it's the buffoon of the orchestra. But, actually, the

trombone has beautiful, lyrical capabilities. It's probably the closest instrument to the human voice because it can emulate all of these small notes.

Trombone's orchestral role

I think of it as a field goal kicker. We don't do anything for a long time—and then, at the most exciting part, we come in and everyone gets super excited.

Favorite piece of music

Mahler's second symphony. There's a beautiful trombone choral in it. The New York Philharmonic did a 9/11 remembrance concert and they played Mahler 2, the resurrection symphony. Everybody was sobbing.

What you do as trombone sales associate

Every part of the trombone is customized from alloy to weight to tapers. We have musicians fly in from all over the world and they play for me. Then I fit them for a horn. It's a sound puzzle.

Playlist right now

I'm listening to a Balkan brass band. But my favorites are later Beatles and Led Zeppelin.

Strangest performance venue

I did a cabaret show at Joe's Pub in New York. They put me in a costume and I was like, "What is happening?" The night before, I was playing Elgar at Juilliard.

Wait, we heard you played on a viking ship. Surely that's stranger than a pub...

I forgot about that! The Icelandic rock band Sigur Rós wrote

a piece for a brass quintet. We would get on a viking ship in Central Park's Harlem Meer and just drift around all day playing.

Best Adele moment

She would start off the show with "Hello," which I didn't play on. I'd listen to the scream of the crowd, the excitement, and people would be crying. It was amazing.

Reaction when people hear what you do

They share that they played recorder as kids. It's like me going up to a surgeon and being like, "When I was in fifth grade, I played the game Operation."

What you would be doing without trombone

I've thought about this a lot. I have no idea.



SOUND BITES

“Be brave, but smart. Provocative, but precise. Inappropriate, even, but with intent.”

Emmy Award–winning writer and producer **ABRAHAM HIGGINBOTHAM ('92)** (best known for the ABC sitcom *Modern Family*) told graduates at the 2019 CFA Convocation, “You have shown yourselves to be people who care about what you create and how you create it.”

Listen to his speech at bu.edu/cfa-magazine.



Gregory Melchor-Barz



Dana Clancy



Susan Mickey

FACULTY

New Directions

CFA HAS APPOINTED new directors in its schools of music and theatre. Ethnomusicologist Gregory Melchor-Barz joins the School of Music from Vanderbilt University. An author and former opera singer, Melchor-Barz was nominated for a Grammy in 2007 for his work on *Singing for Life: Songs of Hope, Healing, and HIV/AIDS in Uganda* (Smithsonian Folkways Recordings). The new director of the School of Theatre is award-winning costume designer and educator Susan Mickey. She’s worked with Lyric Opera Chicago, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Huntington Theatre, the Alliance Theatre, Atlanta, Ga., and HBO. Dana Clancy ('99), an accomplished and widely exhibited painter, was appointed director of the School of Visual Arts in fall 2018.

THE RED CARPET

BEST OF CFA

Distinguished Alumni Awards honor three exceptional alums.



Warner Horizon Television executive **BROOKE KARZEN ('84)** helps bring the nation’s most popular unscripted shows, from *The Bachelor* to *The Voice*, to the small screen.



Operatic bass **MORRIS ROBINSON ('01)** has taken to the stage at Carnegie Hall, La Scala, Italy, and other renowned opera houses.



Paintings by artist **JOE WARDWELL ('99)** can be seen at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, in Lincoln, Mass.

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

Natasha Moustache (Higginbotham), John Russell (Melchor-Barz), JEQ (Robinson)

CONVER SATION



Michaela Watkins



Boo Killebrew

**ACTOR-
WRITERS
MICHAELA
WATKINS AND
BOO KILLEBREW
TALK CREATIVE
HANG-UPS,
BOLD WRITING,
AND FUNNY
TRAGEDIES**

Edited by Lara Ehrlich

Photos by Maggie West

VALERIE, A FRESHLY DIVORCED single mother on Hulu's show *Casual*, is waiting for her much younger one-night stand to text her back. In a bold move, she takes matters into her own hands and shows up uninvited at his apartment. He's not happy to see her. Valerie, portrayed by Michaela Watkins, flees to the elevator. She begins laughing at the absurdity of the encounter and ends up sobbing. The doors open. Valerie collects herself, smiles at the bewildered couple waiting for the elevator, and pushes past them into the lobby.

In this short scene, Watkins ('94) gives "a remarkable, simple, honest piece of acting, encompassing much more than the sting of suddenly feeling unwanted by a person whose bed you were in just that morning," says *The A.V. Club*. "It encompasses the failure of a marriage, aging, fear, foolishness." The scene exemplifies Watkins' mastery of small but vital moments of tragicomedy. "It's perfect. It's vast, and still tiny."

A *Saturday Night Live* alumna, Watkins is known as much for her comedy chops (she has portrayed Joan Rivers, Barbara Walters, and Arianna Huffington on the show) as for her tragicomic roles in *Casual* (in which she is also credited as a writer) and other series, like ABC's *Trophy Wife* and Amazon's *Transparent*. As fellow writer and actor Boo Killebrew says, Watkins does "funny-sad really well."

Killebrew ('03) is a connoisseur of funny-sad. The playwright, actress, and cofounder of CollaborationTown theater company is best known for her plays, in which she demonstrates an "ability to find the humor as well as the underlying love in her characters," *Variety* says. She has won numerous awards, including a NYFA fellowship for playwriting and the 2018 Joseph Jefferson Equity Award for New Work for *Lettie*, about a woman returning to her family after incarceration. As an actress, she has appeared in the web series *Whatever this is*, which *USA Today*, *The Guardian*, and *Indiewire* named to their best of 2013 lists.

Watkins and Killebrew connected by phone to talk about their shared love for dark comedy, and how early acting challenges sent their careers along unexpected trajectories.

Boo Killebrew: I'm always looking for role models. You've had this really varied and

awesome career and are so versatile. What did you do at CFA?

Michaela Watkins: I was an acting major. I'm from Syracuse, New York, so the idea of going into film and television was like saying, "I'm going to go to space camp." It just was not something that was available. We had a really good theater, and that was what turned me on so much. I felt like theater was an achievable goal. I was cut from the acting program after my sophomore year. I was devastated.

I think I was so blocked by what I thought I *should* be. I was so self-conscious, and I was always aware of what my voice was doing and how I was walking and talking. I was so deeply hidden unless I was doing outright comedy. But I didn't really show that side of myself, and the rest of the time I was just trying to be right, to be good, and I was failing miserably at it. I felt really hemmed in.

BK: I always ended up doing some weird standard American accent.

"CFA doesn't say, 'Hey, welcome to your freshman year, go be on Broadway!' I think CFA says, 'Hey, this is a car; let's take all the parts and name them, so that if you're out in the world and your car breaks down, you know how to put it back together.'"

MICHAELA WATKINS ('94)

MW: I do the exact same thing! I didn't blossom until probably two years later.

BK: What do you think happened? Because I'm not there yet, and I would love to get to that point one day.

MW: I've taught improv for a long time, and the whole point is to tell people to just be bad, because out of that bad comes great.

I think that's what CFA is, right? CFA doesn't say, "Hey, welcome to your freshman year, go be on Broadway!" I think CFA says, "Hey, this is a car; let's take all the parts and name them, so that if you're out in the world and your car breaks down, you know how to put it back together."

BK: That's a great metaphor. I wish I could have had that perspective when I was in school. I put so much pressure on myself, and I think that also carried over when I got out of school. I was auditioning a lot as an actor, and I was just a terrible auditioner. And I think it's that same mind-set of wanting to please and to hit the marks. But the really good stuff comes when I'm writing. When I'm making things, somehow that judgment just goes away.

MW: Tell me about writing your first play. Did you find a freedom in it?

BK: Yes. It felt like for the first time I was actually truly honest with myself. When I wrote, I felt truly vulnerable. I felt scared in the best possible way. I just never had that feeling when I was thinking about how I was standing, how I was talking.

I was writing, and then I met a group of people in the program, and we started making ensemble pieces that were totally brilliant! No, I'm just kidding; they were college art school, for sure. It was like, "Oh! I can have fun when I do this!" I had put all this pressure on myself and acting was so serious and emotionally taxing. But these people cracked me up, and we couldn't stop laughing.

MW: You just reminded me that when I was a senior in theatre studies, I started an improv group because there'd never really been one. We were just flying by the seat of our pants. We'd meet once or twice a week in a classroom and do improv and crack each other up. Why did you start acting in the first place?

BK: I'm also from a small town—in Mississippi—and I knew I wanted to be involved in theater, but the only way to do that was to act, because I didn't have exposure

to playwrights, designers, and all that kind of stuff. So it took me a long time to wrap my head around the fact that you could make things.

MW: Do you act in most of your plays?

BK: No, I rarely act in my plays. That's hard for me to do.

MW: What are you working on now?

BK: I was just a writer on an FX show called *Mrs. America*.

MW: You're a writer on that show? I read for the part of Betty Friedan!

BK: Shut up! That's my episode! Wait, Michaela, you're perfect for that. I'll actually call them right now!

MW: You do funny-sad really well. I was really excited about it. How was the process of putting on a show like that, about our great feminist leaders? What was your way into that show? Did you make something that caught someone's attention, and they said, "You're our gal"?

BK: I write about women. I wrote a show about a woman who runs a gun distribution and manufacturing company in the American South. She's a capitalist and a Republican. She has to shift her views, and takes on the NRA. It's a comedy. I was really excited about it, but it was also such a tricky issue. That's why I wanted to write it. I wanted to make it so that we could all have a conversation.

What are you working on right now?

MW: I just finished writing a pilot for Hulu. It's kind of my first time writing by myself. I always write with a partner, even on my show *Casual*; I wrote an episode with Tommy Dewey, who played my brother on it.

BK: God, I love that show, it's such a beautiful show. It pierces my heart. How was writing by yourself?

MW: It was absolutely miserable. But then I went to a readthrough of *Transparent*, the movie, and there was not a dry eye in the house; everybody was a total mess. I got in the car and just started writing because I was so inspired. I had been trying to follow the rules, but I suddenly realized: as a writer you make all your rules. So I threw everything out and started over from zero, with my central idea of why I wanted to write this show. I want to write something romantic.

BK: Can you say what it's about?

MW: It's a sliding doors anthology series

"I don't have a strategy to approach a project like, 'Oh, I'm going to write this in a comical way, or I'm going to write this in a totally serious way.' I just try to be as honest as possible."

BOO KILLEBREW ('03)

where, in the first season, we follow a couple four to eight weeks into a pregnancy. On one path, there's a heartbeat, and on the other there's a miscarriage. It's a little meditation on the idea that we wonder what our sister life looks like.

I picked something I was worried was a little overly ambitious. And then once I fell in love with the character, it didn't matter anymore, you know?

BK: Were you freaked out about scrapping the first thing or was it exhilarating? **MW:** It was this moment of freedom. What's your process when starting a new project?

BK: I don't have a strategy to approach a project like, "Oh, I'm going to write this in a comical way, or I'm going to write this in a totally serious way." I just try to be as honest as possible. And when I strip everything away and I'm able to be honest, truly honest, everything is really heartbreaking, and really hilarious, at the same time. In everything that's hilarious, there's a little bit of darkness or grief. And in everything truly sad, there's always something that makes me laugh.

When people ask me what kind of show I want to make, I say something like *Enlightened*, because it was the first dramedy. And people were like, "I'm just not sure Laura Dern is really likable in that role."

Why does everything have to be so goddamn aspirational? I have so many complex feelings watching her. I root for her, I want to punch her. And it is exactly how we move through the world. The polarity that we have to either like somebody, or dislike somebody, is how we get into so much trouble.

MW: I feel like film, television, theater is this nexus of how we start to examine our world around us. And if we can change who our heroes are, who the central characters are, maybe we can start to change how we relate in our lives and get over this really immature idea that everything is all good or all bad. ●

FEATURE

STAGE

From *Disney On Ice* to *Monster Jam*, how Feld Entertainment has revolutionized live family entertainment



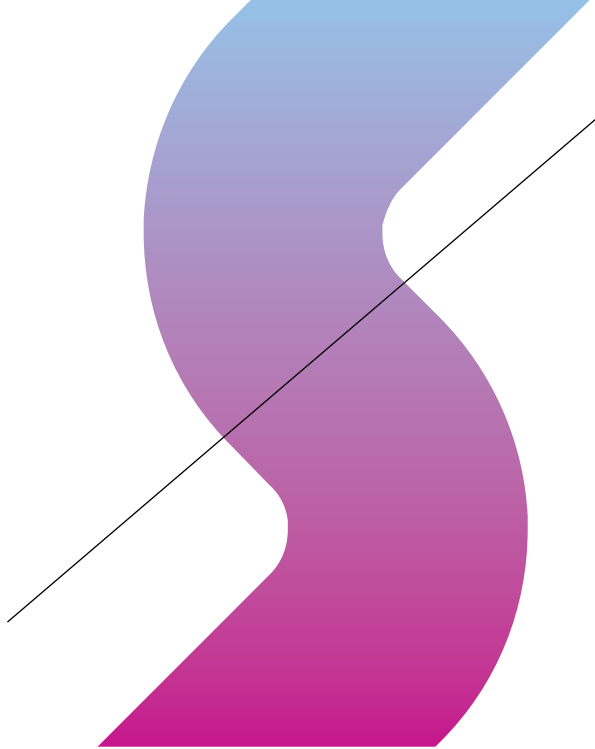
MAGIC

By Lara Ehrlich



Feld Entertainment shows, like *Disney On Ice* performances, have elements of Broadway musicals, stage productions, and Hollywood films. But they must do something else, says CEO and chairman Kenneth Feld (Questrom '70): "All entertainment, first and foremost, tells a story."

Jeff Kavenaugh/Courtesy of Feld Entertainment



Security guards usher my car through a gated enclosure, and I pull up to a concrete warehouse on Florida’s Gulf Coast. I’m greeted by another security guard in a lobby packed with scale models of dinosaurs and *Sesame Street* characters, photos of the Beatles, and Marvel superhero costumes. With a visitor’s pass around my neck, I’m afforded entry through employee-only doors, into a network of warehouses.

It’s like stepping into a fantasy world.

There’s an ice rink where figure skaters practice lifts and spins. An auto shop with *Monster Jam* trucks in various stages of development, their wheels taller than the technicians. A sculpting studio dominated by the 43-foot-long *Tyrannosaurus rex* from *Jurassic World*, its animatronic eyes glaring at the two artists painting its teeth. A stockroom shimmering with 50 years’ worth of original Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus costumes—more than 12,000 of them.



This 580,000-square-foot facility is Feld Entertainment Studios, one of the largest entertainment production studios in the world. The company stages more than 3,500 performances a year, from *Disney On Ice* to *Monster Jam*, in 75 countries on 6 continents. I was advised to wear comfortable closed-toed shoes for my tour of this vast enterprise.

My guide is Kenneth Feld, chairman and CEO of Feld Entertainment. Slim and bespectacled, Feld (Questrom ’70) leads a company that—and this is not hyperbole—pioneered live family entertainment: shows, typically for children, performed in the same giant arenas and stadiums that host sold-out pop and rock concerts and raucous sporting events. Today, Feld Entertainment Studios employs a touring cast, crew, and staff of more than 2,500. They produce shows licensed from some of the biggest names in entertainment, like *Disney On Ice*, *Jurassic World Live Tour*,

Marvel Universe Live!, and *Sesame Street Live*, along with brands that Feld Entertainment solely owns, such as *Monster Jam*, *Supercross*, and *Supercross Futures*. Combined, these shows attract millions of fans a year. All this

from a business that traces its roots to a humble record store.

CFA Dean Harvey Young visited the studio last winter. He was struck not only by the sheer size of it, but also by the work of the artists—painters, designers, sculptors—who bring each Feld Entertainment show to life. Audiences at these shows, he says, must also look beyond the spectacle.

“People tend to overlook the artistry of these shows,” he says. “However, their magic emerges from skillful, high artistry. I cannot imagine a better introduction to live performance.”

Not just any live performance. Feld’s shows are a high-wire act that have elements of Broadway musicals, stage productions, and even Hollywood films. “In a way, when

Kenneth Feld (Questrom ’70), chairman and CEO of Feld Entertainment, with his daughters, Juliette, Nicole, and Alana (COM ’02), who work in offices down the hall from their father. Feld Entertainment Studios, in Florida, employs more than 2,500 people and produces shows licensed from some of the biggest names in entertainment, like *Disney On Ice*. It also houses 50 years’ worth of original Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus costumes.



creating the *Jurassic World Live Tour* or *Marvel Universe Live!*, we're really creating a movie *live* that we're going to show 10 times a week," Feld says. Unlike in film, however, "we don't have 8 or 10 takes on something. We've got to be right every time."

FIRE-EATERS AND POLAR BEARS

Even before he arrived at BU, Feld had a front-row seat in the entertainment business. His father, Irvin, was a born entrepreneur. In 1945, he opened a drugstore in Washington, D.C., that he expanded into a record store, then a music production company. He went on to produce live concerts in arenas and attracted the biggest musicians of the time, including Frank Sinatra, the Beatles, and Paul Anka.

In 1957, Irvin Feld began promoting a different kind of show: Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. Founded in 1871, it was the archetypal family entertainment, bringing exotic attractions to cities across the United States. Feld used his experience touring musical acts in arenas to bring the circus out from under the big top and create a more profitable business model by performing in these new, modern indoor facilities. By 1967, Feld decided that he needed to own The Greatest Show On Earth in order to improve the overall quality of the performance. That year, he negotiated the purchase of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey from John Ringling North, one of the last surviving relatives of the original Ringling Brothers, and turned the show into a juggernaut.

"In my opinion, the genesis in the US of live family entertainment was Ringling Bros.," says Kenneth Feld,

who is also chair of BU's Board of Trustees. "Every show and event we have produced over the past 50 years has been inspired by the work my father and my family have done with Ringling Bros. We like to say, 'Nothing is impossible.'"

Feld joined his father in the business while still a BU student; during the summers, he'd travel around the world scouting talent. "If you needed somebody to come out of a cannon, I could find one," he says.

"The craziest act I ever hired was a five-foot-tall woman from East Germany who came onstage with 11 polar bears," he told *Inc. Magazine* in 2007. "I also once hired a fire-eater who always smelled like liquor. He used it instead of lighter fluid."

The circus was shuttered in 2017 because of high costs associated primarily with transporting two units of Ringling Bros. by train, along with creating a mobile city to cater to more than 600 people between both shows. It was an enormously complex business model, one that was no longer sustainable. "We were dealing with animals and a cast and crew from at least 15 different countries speaking 20 different languages," Kenneth Feld says. "We had live music, we had two trains, each a mile long. And we moved the circus every week from city to city, sometimes twice a week."

He often sat beside his father during show rehearsals





to record Irvin’s critical notes. “He had great ideas,” Feld told *Mr. Media*. “He was the best I ever saw when a show was in rehearsal. Toward the end of the rehearsal period, he could go in and spot what was wrong and identify what ought to be fixed. It was an incredible way to learn.” (Feld follows his father’s model today, attending rehearsals and recording detailed feedback on everything from lighting to actors’ gestures.)

In 1984, Feld took over the circus following Irvin’s death and began expanding Feld Entertainment, acquiring the licenses to other branded content and producing shows on Broadway.

“My strengths are really in the creative side,” Feld told the *New York Times* in 2010, “coming up with big ideas, knowing how to get them done.”

FROM SCREEN TO STAGE

Those big ideas can come from anywhere—another lesson Feld learned from his father. Feld travels the world viewing entertainment in a variety of media, looks for inspiration in fairy tales and hit films, and taps his own audience. He studies what’s trending with children and loves interviewing kids. When his three daughters were little, he’d solicit their opinions for market research.

Sometimes, a big idea comes from the ability to pivot quickly when things don’t work out. In 1979, Feld acquired the touring ice shows *Ice Follies* and *Holiday on Ice*. When they didn’t perform as well as he had hoped, he approached the Walt Disney Company and asked about including a few select Disney characters in the existing show. The company wasn’t interested. Feld turned around at the door to offer another concept: an entire ice skating show that cast figure skaters in the roles of characters from beloved Disney films. *Disney On Ice* was born.

“Over the last 40 years, we have been the longest licensee of the Walt Disney Company, and they have

For the *Jurassic World Live Tour*, Feld Entertainment Studios had to construct the dinosaurs and figure out how to make them convincing characters in a live performance. For every production, the company builds a scale model of the performance space, the characters, even the props, and runs the show from start to finish.

entrusted us to protect and promote their brand via our ice shows in hometowns around the globe,” says Feld. “In turn, we created a new genre of live family entertainment with *Disney On Ice*. Today, when a new touring show launches, people immediately think it’s ‘on ice’ due to the impact *Disney On Ice* has had on consumers around the globe.”

Each year, Feld Entertainment creates a new *Disney On Ice* production; nine are currently playing around the world. The shows bring together princes and princesses, heroines and villains, from stories like *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Mulan*, and *Toy Story*. In 2013, when children everywhere began singing the *Frozen* soundtrack and dressing up like Elsa, Feld and his team knew what their next project would be. *Disney On Ice Presents Frozen* premiered in 2014.

Producing a live version of a hit film poses myriad challenges, including audience expectations. They want drama and spectacle as thrilling as the movie—they expect Elsa to conjure an ice castle from thin air.

Simply meeting their expectations isn’t enough. “We have to figure out what can we do *better* than on film,” Feld says. In *Disney On Ice Presents Frozen*, Feld Entertainment created an immersive experience that went beyond what could be done on film. They combined athletic ice jumping and traditional skating to bring two-dimensional scenes to life, and created lighting technology that made it look as though Elsa was magically building an ice world.



“Every show and event we have produced over the past 50 years has been inspired by the work my father and my family have done with Ringling Bros. We like to say, ‘Nothing is impossible.’”

KENNETH FELD

For the latest show, *Jurassic World Live Tour*, which opened in September 2019, Feld Entertainment faced bigger technical challenges—much bigger. The show is based on the 2015 blockbuster by the same name, the fourth film in the original *Jurassic Park* series, and features the wonders of Isla Nublar and life-sized Jurassic World dinosaurs. Feld’s *Jurassic World Live Tour* presents an original story line where the audience teams up with scientists to uncover a conspiracy and save the hero dinosaurs from an evil weaponization program.

“Most of the dinosaurs in the film were digital, so they never existed,” Feld says. His studio not only had to construct the dinosaurs—the largest is the *T. rex*, which is 43 feet long and 18 feet tall and weighs more than 8,000 pounds—but figure out how to make them convincing characters in live performance. To do that, they drew upon the studio’s experts in puppetry and robotics. A new dinosaur being introduced in the live show is a *Troodon*, which is animated by a puppeteer (“dinoteer”) inside a 120-pound costume outfitted with a video screen and robotics that control the creature’s expressions and movements. To create *Pteranodons*, the creative team developed flying dinosaurs that soar above the audience.

The company’s creative advancements for many shows have had a broader impact beyond the studio’s productions. For example, for the 2004 production *Disney Live! Winnie the Pooh*, the studio developed character costumes with articulated—or animatronic—heads, with blinking eyes and moving mouths. The Walt Disney Company later introduced the technology into their parks for character appearances and shows.

For every production, the company builds a scale model of the performance space, the characters, even the props, and runs the show from start to finish. “Whatever problems there might be,” Feld says, “you’d rather solve them in cardboard than you would when you have people in that room.”

IT ALL STARTS WITH A STORY

All of that technology, the special effects, the costumes, the music—the spectacle—may provide the thrills. But it’s the story that captures the audience, according to Feld.

And every production has a story. Take *Monster Jam*: the drivers and their trucks (custom-built at Feld Entertainment Studios) have unique personalities and backstories. Each of the 350 *Monster Jam* events per year has a different outcome in both racing and freestyle competition and the audience helps determine the winner by voting on their phones in real time.

“We’re storytelling because we’re engaging the kids and their families, and keeping them focused on the event,” Feld says. “It’s changed the mentality of the audience; they have more of a takeaway because they’ve had a hand in determining the event outcome. We translate that interactivity to everything we do, to engage audiences in a much deeper way than just passively sitting and watching *Monster Jam* trucks go by.

“All entertainment needs, first and foremost, a story,” Feld says. “If you don’t know where you’re going, what good does it do? You need to know where you want to go, your objective, and then you can create a road map.”

BEYOND IMAGINATION

Throughout our tour, Feld asks me about my three-year-old daughter and takes notes on her favorite characters. He insists on taking photos with my phone of me wearing a glittering circus costume, embracing Mickey and Minnie cutouts, dwarfed by a *Monster Jam* wheel.

“Your daughter will think you’re so cool,” says Feld, whose daughters, Alana (COM’02), Nicole, and Juliette, now work at Feld Entertainment in offices down the hall from their father. Feld may be catering to millions of people each year, but it’s still a family business and he still cares about whether one kid (and her mom) will enjoy the show.

“We only think of the audience, what will resonate with our target consumer,” says Feld. “We’re lucky that our entertainment is emotionally driven by families. And kids and families—I don’t care where you are in the world—are the same. So, what works here will work in Japan. We’ll do it in the local language; once in a while the nuance will change, you shift a few things. But basically the story line is the same, and it resonates around the world.”

Keeping a finger on the pulse of the audience, getting reaction and feedback, Feld says, helps keep the company nimble. “We’re flexible and willing to change and we do what the audience wants,” he says.

“The key is to constantly evolve and to look forward to see what’s out there, what people respond to, and how can we incorporate that in what we’re doing or where we think we can go. We are in an industry that will always change, but there will always be live entertainment.” ●

BUTI's Health & Wellness Program helps student musicians avoid injury, cope with anxiety



STAY WELL, PLAY WELL

SCENE

By Joel Brown

Photos by Jackie Ricciardi



Like elite athletes, classical musicians often feel driven to practice for hours at a time so they can perform at a high level when the spotlight turns their way. And like athletes, they sometimes pay a price for their devotion.

Violinists often suffer peripheral nerve problems and neck strain. Brass players endure restricted diaphragms and facial pain. Pianists may develop forearm tendinitis. Like athletes, many musicians try to “play through” the pain—usually a bad idea. Many also suffer from bouts of anxiety when it’s time to audition or perform.

The talented high school-age musicians attending the BU Tanglewood Institute face the same occupational hazards, but BUTI has launched a program designed to ensure they’ll leave the campus in the Berkshires better equipped to avoid many of those health issues and manage the rest.

“Making music at this level of artistry requires intensive physical and mental resources,” says Hilary Field Respass, executive director of BUTI. “Our Health & Wellness Program is designed to expose students to tools they can use to maintain healthy practice and mind-sets as they strive for peak performance.”

For the past four years, BUTI has offered a series of health and wellness events for students, including yoga and mental skills training, as well as classes teaching the Alexander Technique and the Feldenkrais Method, practices used by adult musicians to increase flexibility, relaxation, and freedom of movement. Now, BUTI has made health and wellness a formal part of the curriculum, starting with this summer’s 440 students. “So many students are interested in it that we’re moving toward making it part of every program,” Respass says.

“I’m excited,” says Regina Campbell, a Boston physical therapist and one of seven practitioners working with BUTI students this summer. “By offering this to younger musicians, it’s really getting to the root of the problem.”

Campbell’s physical therapy practice has focused almost exclusively on musicians for more than 25 years, including members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and faculty and students from the Boston Conservatory at Berklee. Studies generally show that more than half of professional musicians have sustained an injury that caused them to take a break from performing, with the figure

“How many people think they hold tension in their necks?” Vanessa Mulvey asks the group. Nearly all the students raise a hand.

sometimes topping 80 percent. While there’s less data on young musicians, one study reported that 79 percent of freshmen entering a Midwestern college music program experienced pain associated with playing.

Campbell’s “triage” assessments of the young musicians look at everything from their playing environment to their underlying health issues but focus especially on how each one works with their instrument. Are they using the healthiest posture? Could a different seat or a thicker chin rest avoid a problem down the road?

The BUTI program is sponsored by Alan and Lois Whitney, whose daughter Sarah Whitney (BUTI’99), a professional violinist now playing with the chamber group Sybarite5, suffered an injury that created extra challenges at the beginning of her career. Campbell is so enthusiastic about what BUTI is doing that she is writing a chapter on the new program for a forthcoming anthology from the Performing Arts Medicine Association.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S BODY-MAPPING

On a warm mid-July evening lit by fireflies, more than two dozen students in shorts and T-shirts lug their instruments down a dirt road to the building called Lively Stones at the edge of campus, where Vanessa Mulvey is teaching body-mapping, an offshoot of the Alexander Technique. “Body-mapping is understanding how your body is designed to move,” she says.

She has them take off their shoes—OK, flip-flops—and feel the “tripod” of places where their feet rest on the floor. For the next hour-plus, she leads them through a variety of exercises designed to get them in touch with how their body moves and encourage healthier posture and movement.

“How many people think they hold tension in their necks?” she asks the group. Nearly all



For the past four years, the BU Tanglewood Institute has offered a series of health and wellness events for its talented high school-age musicians, including yoga and mental skills training. Physical therapist Regina Campbell works with violin student Anusha Madapura (BUTI’19) (facing page) to adjust her shoulder rest to a more ergonomic position. Campbell’s physical therapy practice has focused almost exclusively on musicians for more than 25 years, including members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and faculty and students from the Boston Conservatory at Berklee.

the students raise a hand. “OK, we’re going to stretch,” she says. “When you set up to play and you’ve got that freedom in your body, it’s going to change the trajectory of your whole performance.”

Mulvey knows the musician’s life. She’s a flutist; her daughter, a bassoonist and a 2017

BUTI alum, is now a Tanglewood Music Center fellow. “There are kids in pain here, that are on the verge of an injury, so it’s really important to talk about this.”

Student oboist Olivia Leake, from Alexandria, Va., says she had spent “like, eight hours” playing before coming to Mulvey’s session: three hours of orchestra rehearsal, an hour of practice alone, three hours of chamber music rehearsal, then another 30 minutes of practice on her own. But a body-mapping session a couple of weeks earlier had proved effective, so she came back.

“I’ve been having stress in my back and shoulder area, so I thought it would be helpful just to be relaxed and everything. I feel like it did help,” says Leake (BUTI’18,’19). “I’m used to being in my own thing when I’m performing



and only concentrating on, ‘Oh, am I going to do well?’ But this helped me be more aware of what’s around me, what am I hearing other than my playing. It helps me not be in my own head. I feel like I can be more expressive, and I have more room to do what I’ve been practicing, rather than tightening up.”

Oboist Daniel Hirshbein (BUTI’19) of Ann Arbor, Mich., attended the previous session out of curiosity after seeing it on the BUTI “fun board,” and says he was glad he did.

“It was the night before the oboe workshop recital, and the next day, right in the middle

of my solo performance I was thinking about what we were talking about,” he says. “We were talking about the awareness of our various senses, and I think it went better. I felt better, and I didn’t feel as panicked as I could have. I felt more in control of how it was going.”

For example, he says, “There was one thing where the instructor was talking about feeling your feet on the floor, the three points of contact, and I remember distinctly thinking about that during the recital. It was helpful. Without it, I probably would not have been standing in my best posture, but, like,

putting all my weight on one foot. I phrase with my feet, which is not a good habit, which isn’t good for air support. That wasn’t the point, it was more about easing nerves, but I think it helped.”

Both students say the BUTI program is different. “I’ve had bits and pieces but not at this level, not like multiple things a week,” says Hirshbein, who will enter the Eastman School of Music this fall. “It’s definitely something new and also very good.”

PLAYING THE MIND GAME

The challenges aren’t all physical, especially when it’s time to audition for a school or an ensemble, or perform onstage, says Lisa Chisholm, a preparation and performance coach who is part of the BUTI program. At key moments, musicians may have “shaky hands, sweaty palms, or muscles that are really tight, or you’re feeling sick, or you have to go to the bathroom and then you have to go to the bathroom again, or you can’t see straight and your ears are ringing and you’re hot and cold at the same time and your mouth is dry and your voice cracks.”

It’s all part of the natural fight-or-flight response, and while the symptoms can’t necessarily be banished, understanding what’s happening to your body at those moments is half the battle in overcoming them, Chisholm says. “What I do is help people with self-esteem, self-confidence, motivation, and procrastination. Mental preparation for keeping one’s mind grounded going into game day, and then, on game day, if your mind betrays you or your body betrays you, I give you heat-of-the-moment tools to manage that.”

When you see athletes perform at the Olympics, she notes, among their many coaches will be a mental-skills preparation coach, which is not really seen in the performing arts world. “We get out there on the stage or for the audition, and we weren’t trained on how to deliver our best at the moment that we need it.” Now BUTI is changing that.

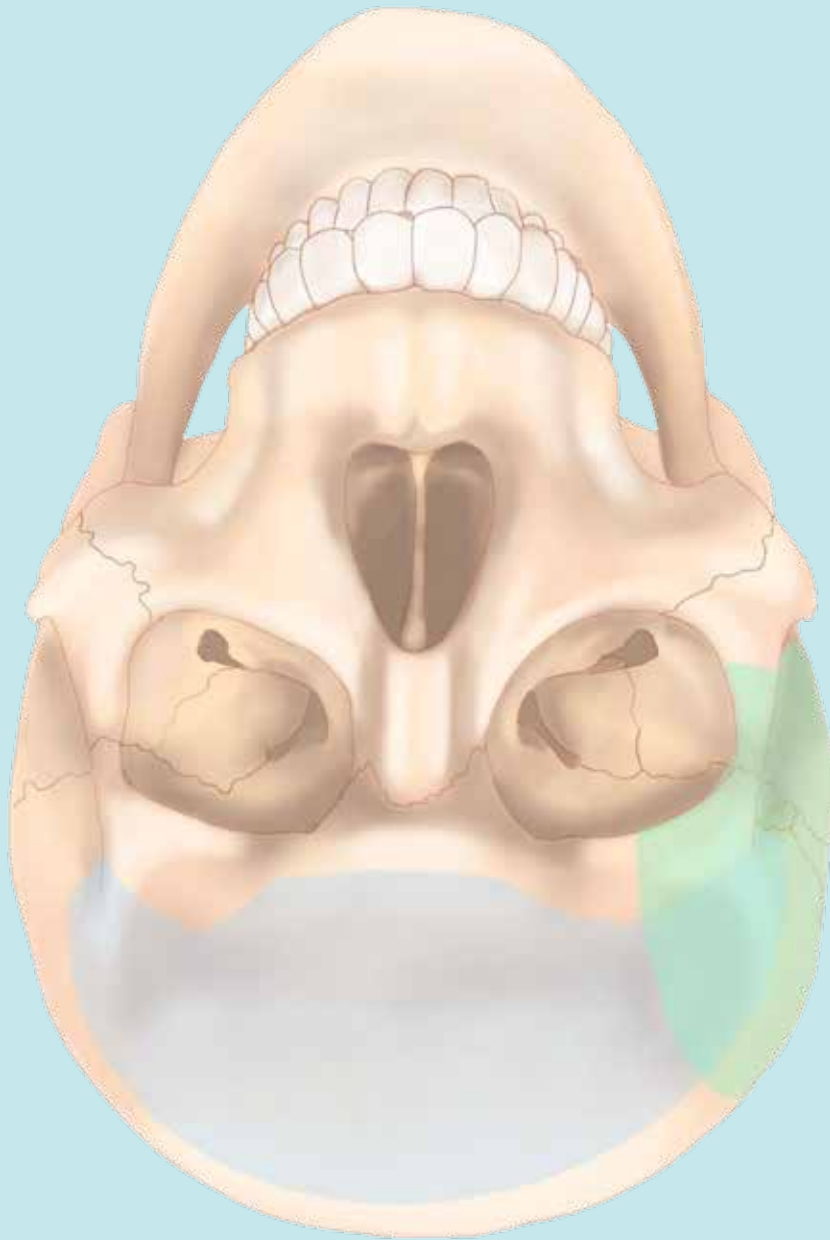
“Developing the program each year and bringing it into the core curriculum signals our commitment to the importance of health and wellness practice in any artist’s life,” says Respass. “We are encouraging our students to use resources like this so they can make music for their entire lives.” ●

During CFA's medical illustration internship, Olivia James ('20) created illustrations demonstrating the best entry points in the skull for neurosurgeons.

FEATURE



ACCURATE



Medical illustrations by CFA students show surgeons exactly where to place their scalpels

By Andrew Thurston



A key part of teaching surgeons exactly where to put those burrs is to provide them with illustrations of the best entry points. Some of the most up-to-date illustrations were created by Olivia James.

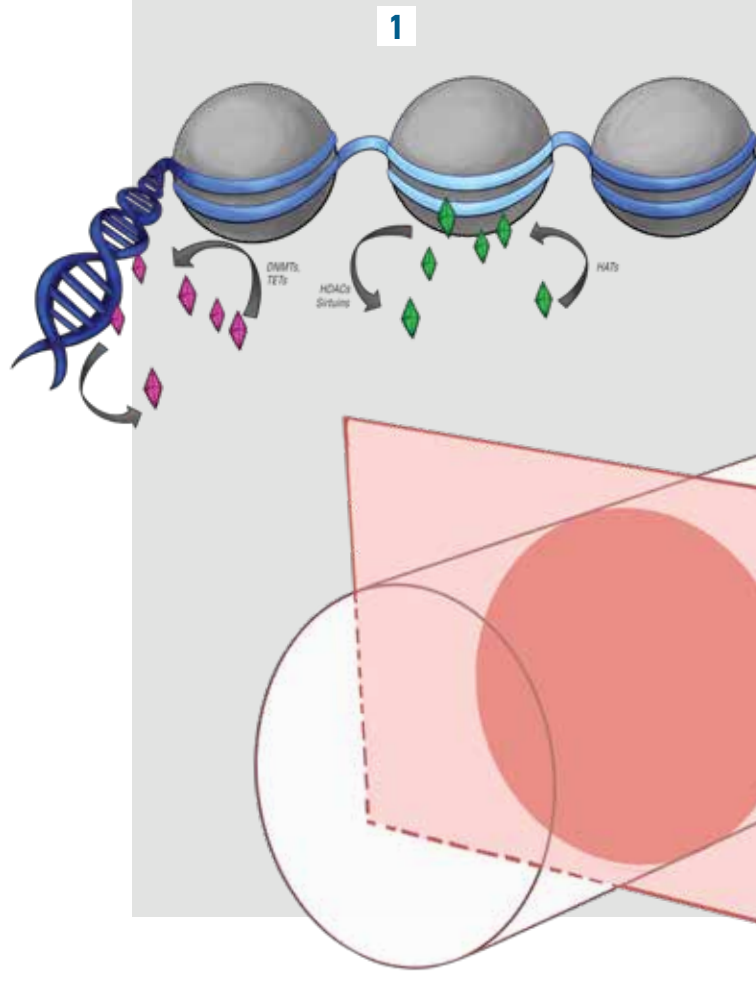
During a recent CFA internship, James ('20) worked with neurosurgeon W. Linda Bi and certified medical illustrators at Boston-based Illustrated Verdict to learn how to draw burrs. A painting major who's minoring in arts administration, James spent a semester drawing and shading images of a human skull. Four color patches—continental swathes of blue, green, red, and yellow—cover much of each skull to highlight the main operation areas; small circles show the optimal burr locations. James and two other students were admitted to the medical illustration internship, one of CFA's newest, in fall 2018 and spring 2019.

Before then, James' artistic output had largely been oil paintings of people and objects confronting "societal norms concerning body image"; today, her burr drawings are being used in Bi's presentations to other neurosurgeons.

"Medical illustration, like any powerful graphic presentation of data, has a message, a story line, a hypothesis, a data fact we're conveying," says Bi, an assistant professor of neurosurgery at Brigham and Women's Hospital,

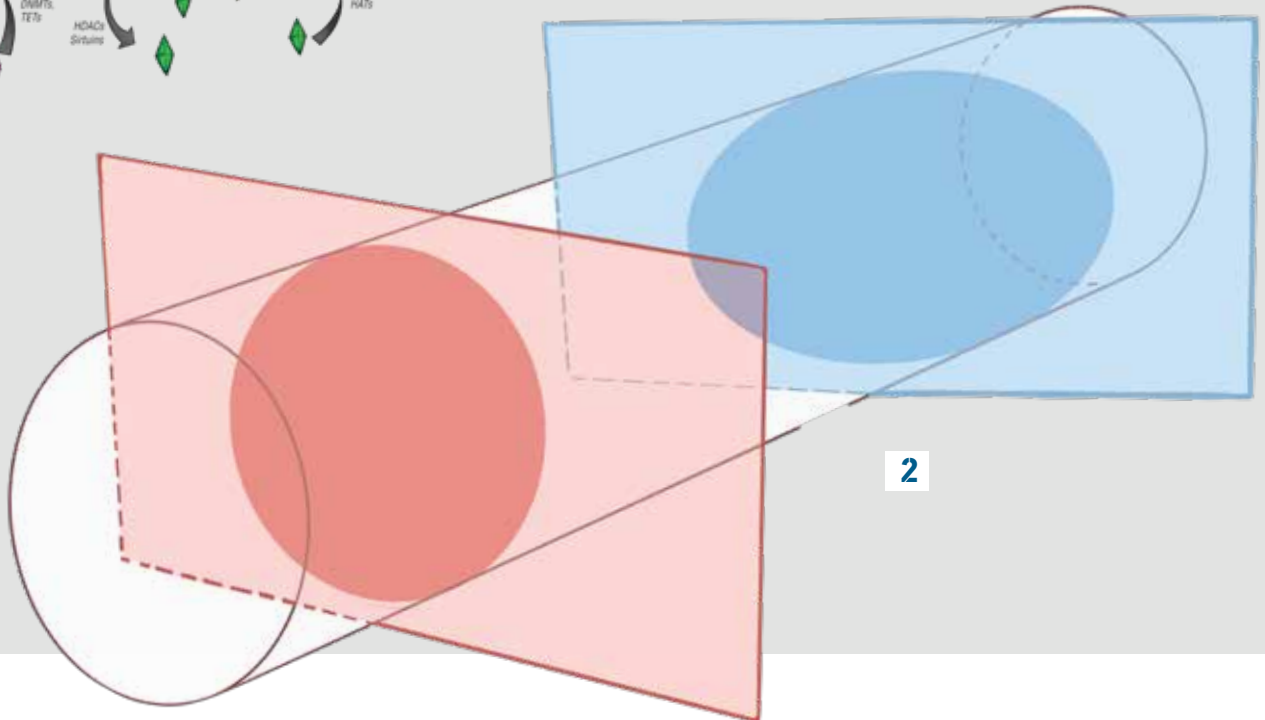
A MENINGIOMA OF THE CAVERNOUS SINUS

is an unwelcome diagnosis. A slow-growing tumor in a heavily networked part of the brain, it gradually places more and more pressure on the areas around it. Pain, facial numbness, and vision problems can follow. The treatment (squeamish readers should skip ahead a few lines) is equally unpleasant. Neurosurgeons peel back the scalp, drill holes—called burrs—into the skull, lift a bone flap, then remove the tumor. Precision is everything.



“My drawings would go through edit after edit. I learned a lot about the structure of the eye despite not being a STEM major.”

NATALIE CHAREWICZ



Harvard University. “I increasingly appreciate how an image or a well-designed graphic is so much more powerful than any lecture I can give.”

FOOTSTEPS OF DA VINCI

Illustration has been a key part of medical teaching for centuries, from *Gray’s Anatomy* illustrator Henry Vandyke Carter in the mid-19th century and Leonardo da Vinci in the Renaissance to the pioneers of the Hellenistic period who created the first anatomical illustrations on papyrus. Even as technology now shines a light on much of the body’s inner workings, medical illustrations still have a range of uses, from elucidating dreary textbook prose to enlivening pharmaceutical sales pitches; illustrations capture what even modern imaging technology cannot: subcellular processes and the relationships between different parts of the body. The best illustrators are fine artists but also able to grasp complex scientific concepts. A handful become board-certified, qualifying their work to stand up to interrogation in a criminal or medical malpractice court case. There are fewer than 400 certified medical illustrators in the world.

One member of that select group is John F. Harrington (’85), founder and chairman of the board of directors at Illustrated Verdict. He helped establish CFA’s medical illustration internship and reviewed applicant portfolios. The first batch of applicants had little

direct experience, so Harrington and his colleagues looked for students with certain traits and skills that could translate to the work.

“Medical illustration has to be factually accurate: it can’t be close, can’t be approximate,” he says. “We recognize the students are in the nascent stages of their careers, but if there are some seed crystals inside their work that say this person is very detail-oriented, that’s what we’re looking for.”

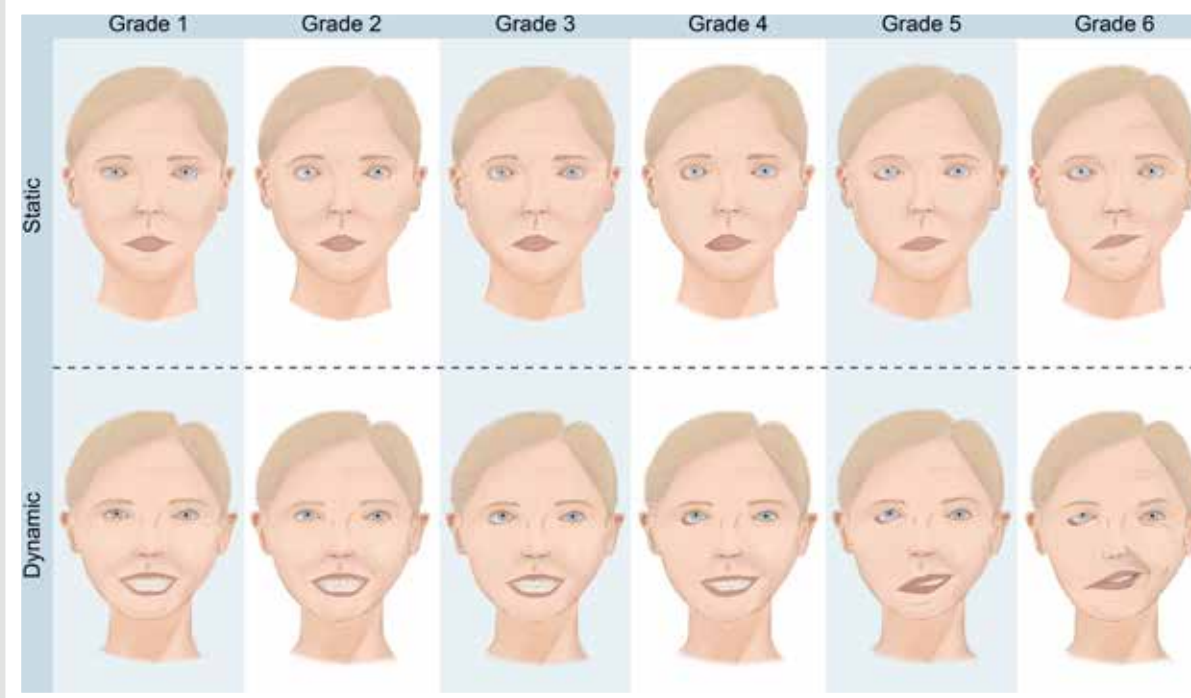
A student’s rendering skills—their use of shading and texturing to add realism—must be “very clean,” says Melissa Rockefeller, also a certified medical illustrator and chief medical illustrator at Illustrated Verdict. “We look for an understanding of proportion and perspective.”

THE PROCESS OF PERFECTION

The first step for the medical illustration interns was to meet one-on-one with Bi for their individual assignments, getting her direction on the subject matter and the audience—and diving into the science. That wasn’t always easy for Bi to convey or for the students to understand.

“What seems obvious to our mind from a medical perspective may not be so when conveying it to a student who has never encountered medicine before,” says Bi.

One of the interns, Natalie Charewicz, was given the challenge of illustrating a new technique for scanning the optic nerve with an MRI



3

1. Natalie Charewicz illustrated genetic changes in pituitary tumors. 2. She also illustrated a procedure on the optic nerve with a composition of elementary shapes. 3. Emme Enojado (CAS'21) created a set of illustrations showing the House-Brackmann scale, a classification used to grade stages of facial paralysis.

machine; Bi says the new approach “helps highlight the fluid space around the nerve, as well as the relationship to the nerve pathologies.”

Bi requested a series of carefully placed elementary shapes to demonstrate the procedure: a cylinder sliced through with rectangles and circles. But the simple brief was filled with subtle complexity. The illustration took Charewicz weeks, and many iterations.

“My drawings would go through edit after edit,” says Charewicz. Like all of the students, she did most of her illustrating on an iPad, working at Illustrated Verdict and meeting with Bi and her colleagues weekly. “I actually learned a lot about the structure of the eye despite not being a STEM major. Getting the drawing to be perfect was quite difficult—the angle had to perfectly match the reality of the imaging.”

According to Harrington, who also founded the healthcare training and assessment company Advanced Practice Strategies, Charewicz’s perseverance typifies a trait he consistently sees in artists he employs: discipline.

“What I really appreciate about artists in particular is that whether you’re a musician or in theater or fine arts, there’s a certain work ethic,” he says. “You understand you can’t just jump in and immediately achieve mastery of the skill; you have to respect the process, and the process of mastery takes time.”

“The willingness to experiment and the discipline to look critically at your work, to stop, step back, and have the courage to say, ‘I’m going

to scrap this and start over,’ that’s absolutely crucial to being successful in any artistic endeavor.”

Emme Enojado (CAS’21) had a head start on her peers when it came to grasping the science: she’s a neuroscience major minoring in visual arts. For her, there was still plenty of research to be done before she started drawing—“that’s about half of the process,” she says—but it was her artistic talent that was stretched the most.

“My illustration skills have grown exponentially throughout the past year,” says Enojado. “And also the attention to detail, noticing how a tiny bit of red in the eye, for example, can make such a difference in what you’re trying to convey—the ability to bring colors, shading, using those artistic techniques to make an image both realistic and comprehensible.”

Those techniques were tested in a set of illustrations showing the House-Brackmann scale, a classification used to grade stages of facial paralysis. Bi and Enojado considered every detail, including the age, skin tone, and even hair color of the model. An older person’s wrinkles, for example, could detract from the nuances Bi might want to show.

“All of those small details are important to us from the medical storytelling perspective,” says Bi, “but may not be immediately obvious from a purely aesthetic perspective.” Enojado’s series, which shows the gradually drooping face of a middle-aged Caucasian woman with smooth skin and light brown hair, will be used to educate physicians on treatment approaches; her work will also be featured in a research paper Bi is writing for the *Journal of Neurosurgery*.

“Being acknowledged as an important part of a team of world-renowned experts and illustrators is empowering for a young artist and is an extremely valuable learning experience,” Harrington says.

“You have a physician who’s the lead subject matter expert, and your job is to take that information and turn it into something,” he says. “Each person has a role; it’s recognizing, ‘This person is a world-renowned expert, but I’m really valuable because I can do something they can’t.’” ●

PROCESS





PAINT-

Painter
Sedrick
Huckaby
treats
everyday
people like
celebrities

By Marc Chalufour

Photos by
Justin Clemons

ING

LETTITIA

In his earliest works, painter Sedrick Huckaby found inspiration in a classic childhood genre: comic book superheroes. Now an established artist with works in the permanent collections of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and New York's Whitney Museum of American Art, Huckaby (BUTT'95, CFA'97) finds inspiration in a different sort of hero: the members of his family and his African American community. "Ordinary people matter," Huckaby told *art+seek*, and much of his work applies this statement on a monumental scale.

For his first New York City show, *The 99%*, Huckaby covered a wall with 101 black-and-white portraits of people from his neighborhood, making each sitter look "casually but distinctly regal," according to the *New York Times*. By contrast, the canvas for his 80-foot-wide *A Love Supreme* is filled by a single painting of brightly colored quilts, a craft he associates with his family. "Huckaby has managed to stay true to himself, his family, and to a rigorous practice of lovingly recording the world he knows with great sincerity," painter Bruce Herman ('77, '79) wrote for *Image*. "[He reveals] a depth of religious wisdom seldom found in contemporary art culture, laden as it often is with fashionable irony."

After graduating from BU, Huckaby earned an MFA at Yale, then traveled throughout Europe for two years, studying the continent's old masters. He eventually returned to his hometown, Fort Worth, Tex., where he has established himself as a master in his own right. His critically acclaimed works are highly sought after by museums and collectors, with some selling for tens of thousands of dollars. He's even mentored another famous Texas painter, former president George W. Bush, whom he encouraged to paint the people who inspired him. Bush embraced the idea, creating *Portraits of Courage*, a series depicting US military veterans.

Huckaby hasn't let success stunt his growth as an artist, though; he continues to experiment and to refine his work. His 2016 exhibit, *Three Forbidden F Words: Faith, Family, and Fathers*, at Valley House Gallery in Dallas, Tex., represented the first realization



of an idea he had for a family portrait comprising massive individual paintings of himself, his wife, Letitia, and their children. The show also revealed a restless creative mind, as Huckaby immediately began imagining ways to improve upon the portraits. And in the case of one—a portrait of Letitia—he decided to start from scratch.



BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD

Three Forbidden F Words included five paintings: *Little B*, *Letitia*, *Sedrick*, *Halle Lujah*, and *Rising Sun*. "When I decided to go large scale, that's a definite decision," he says. "I'm saying, 'I want to make, in essence, a larger statement.'" At the start, he'd wanted to go even larger—16 feet in height for each portrait—but needing to get everything done in time for the exhibit meant scaling them back to 8 feet. The result filled a gallery wall from floor to ceiling.

The faces of Huckaby's family, rendered in his unique impasto style, stared out from the massive canvases. Rectangle and oval frames alternated across the wall. Subtle differences in attire hinted at the figures' identities: the



When revisiting his family portrait series, Huckaby started one—the portrait of his wife Letitia (far left)—from scratch. Taking his interest in family a step further, Huckaby has converted his grandmother’s house into a studio and art installation (above and left) where he works on current projects. He references and draws inspiration from past projects that hang throughout the home.



son wears a hooded sweatshirt, the wife covers her hair with a headdress. It’s the faces, though, that powered the exhibit. Though the features are defined by broad brushstrokes, they are delicate: the son’s youthful cheeks, the daughter’s lips. For the fifth painting, *Little B*, Huckaby used a strikingly different style: white and light purple streaks sweep across the silhouette of a small child, as though the observer is looking through fog. The figure represents the one member of the family for whom Huckaby had

no sketches to work from, no reference material: a child lost in a miscarriage.

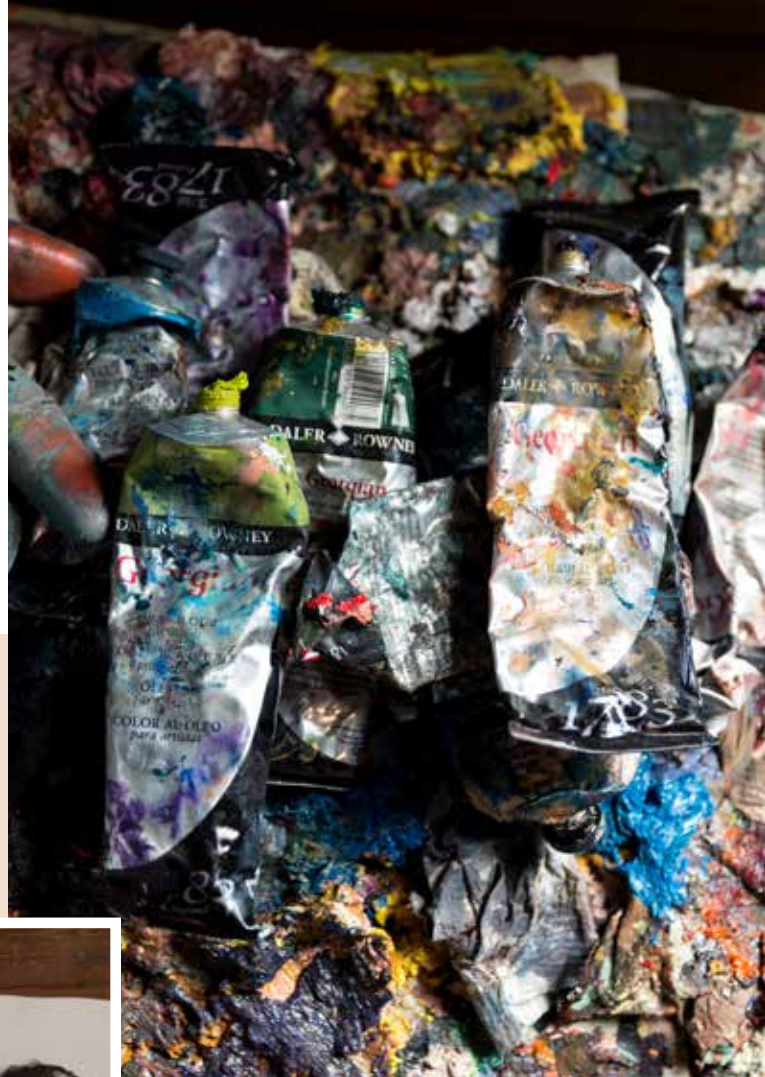
Some of Huckaby’s other creative decisions for the exhibit weren’t as final as the scale. He often refines his work over time, meaning that an exhibit is less of a culmination than a new beginning. “Many times I’ve done something and I’ve put it out prematurely only to think, ‘Man, if I could get that back I would do X, Y, and Z,’” Huckaby says. As soon as he saw the portraits mounted side by

side, he began reconsidering spacing, lighting, and other stylistic choices.

So when the exhibit ended, Huckaby took the family back to his studio. He retouched each painting, adding detail, altering lighting. He also began planning a new exhibit, with the portraits clustered tightly, their edges overlapping, like a family huddled together for a group photo. “The bunch makes the paintings act more like people,” Huckaby says. “It’s more rhythmic and dynamic.”

Throughout the process, Huckaby used a variety of references he’d created over the years. “Each member of my family sat for oil pastels, then I used those to sketch from,” he says. He pulled out these color studies and sketches as needed, each iteration of the portrait helping him understand an aspect of the

To paint the large-scale portraits in his *Three Forbidden F Words* series, Huckaby first drew each family member in oil pastels. He used these pieces to sketch from. Each iteration of the portrait helped him understand the finished work. His original portrait of his wife, Letitia, informed a new piece, *The Family: Letitia* (far right).



finished work. Color, spacing, shape—these are all details he experimented with before arriving at the finished portraits.

“People generally think of being able to render something lifelike as being a very hard thing to do,” Huckaby says. “But being loose and allowing the paint to have a looseness to it, while at the same time still having a sense of control—that’s harder.”

A FACE EMERGES

With the portrait of his wife, Huckaby saw enough details he wanted to change that he started over with a fresh canvas, creating *The Family: Letitia* (2018). He constructed

Letitia’s oval canvas by attaching curved pieces to each side of a large rectangle. The seams where the pieces met would eventually show through the paint, creating a faint frame within the frame, tightly cropping Letitia’s face—and matching the other portraits in the family. Huckaby glued the canvas to a heavy wood panel. “That’s important,” he says, “because I stack up a whole lot of paint on there.” With that massive panel leaning against a studio wall, he began painting.

“I will start off with the paint very thin and sort of washy,” he says. Gradually, a faint monochromatic portrait emerges. It’s a guide for Huckaby’s next steps, which slowly bring

the picture into sharper focus. “I will build up the image, add some color to it. And then I’ll start loading it up with paint.”

He mashed paint remnants he’d saved from past projects and Galkyd, a fast-drying compound, onto the canvas, building up Letitia’s forehead, nose, and lips. “I pile it on with palette knives and some big, thick gloves,” he says. “I mix it all together and push it and plow it into place.” In some spots, the paint was an inch and a half thick.

Then he picked up a brush again and began developing details and colors. “I’m working from life and I’m working with the colors that I see,” Huckaby says. “But I try to, at times, mimic the colors that I’m seeing using the most intense versions—so they’re a little bit of a souped-up version of what I’m seeing.” That meant choosing from upwards of two dozen colors in his palette, which bear names like cadmium orange, sap green, and burnt umber.

INSPIRATION AND INTERPRETATION

When he talks about his painting, Huckaby could just as easily be describing one of his



tiniest spots of white give her eyes a spark echoed in the other members of *The Family*.

THE FAMILY REDUX

Huckaby's second exhibit of *The Family* began in May 2018 at the Art Museum of South Texas in Corpus Christi. To complete the installation, Huckaby re-created the series in miniature. He wanted visitors to see the family in different ways as they moved through the exhibit. "Many times in life, people only see things from one perspective," he says.

Huckaby's final showing of *The Family: Letitia* (2018) came one year later, at the 2019 Dallas Art Fair, where the painting sold to a private collector. After more than three years, the members of Huckaby's family portrait were each going their own way. "It's like they're characters in a story," Huckaby says. "At the end of a story, everyone ends up doing different things."

If there was anything about *Letitia* that Huckaby felt needed more work, he's not saying now. "It's about as done as it's going to be," he says with a laugh. "Anything else I would've done to it, I need to create another painting." ●

artistic inspirations: jazz musician John Coltrane—whose album *A Love Supreme* Huckaby honored with his quilt painting. "He knew where he was in his music and he was constantly pushing toward a certain edge, pushing to go over and beyond a certain threshold," Huckaby says. Whether working with a saxophone or a brush, there's a process and structure to the art, but also plenty of space for inspiration and interpretation. It's that fluidity that leads to stylistic shifts and breakthroughs.

As he re-created *Letitia*, Huckaby kept pushing an idea he'd been working on. "One of the things that has been entering into my paintings a little more, as I've gone along, the paint has gotten a lot more fluid. It starts to drip,

it splashes," he says. "Textures, marks, even something as simple as transparency to opacity, it all becomes language to me. The splashes give the painting another kind of feel to it, it helps it to speak in a slightly different voice."

The face staring out from the oval canvas seems timeless, unanchored in any particular era—an effect captured in many of Huckaby's portraits. Its features are smoother and more subtly realized than those of the earlier version of *Letitia*. Browns, reds, and oranges combine to define her face, from her delicate cheekbones to the slightly upturned corners of her mouth. The blue headdress and a matching top frame the face, whites and blues blending to give the fabrics texture. The

CLASS NOTES

1950s

Morton Gold ('53,'60) performed the world premiere of "Acadia: A Rhapsody for Piano and Wind Symphony" during the Memorial Day Weekend Concert with the Strafford Wind Symphony.

1960s

Mary Leipziger ('60) works as a photojournalist for the *Santa Monica Observer* and covered the 2019 Women's March and the Teachers' Strike in Los Angeles, Calif.

Phyllis Elhady Hoffman ('61,'67) retired after serving in critical teaching and leadership roles at BU

for more than 25 years, including chair of the voice department and director of the School of Music, as well as executive and artistic director of BUTI and director of its Young Artists Vocal Program.

Brice Marden ('61, Hon.'07) had his works featured in the Dallas Museum of Art in 2019, for the *America Will Be!: Surveying the Contemporary Landscape* exhibit. Marden also had pieces included as part of the Artists for the Hammer Museum auction at Sotheby's New York in May 2019. Marden's work was also seen in Rhinebeck, N.Y., where 'T' Space presented Marden's *Cold Mountain Studies*.

Barbara Hirth Skelly ('65) published the book *Treasure Houses,*

WRITE TO US!

We want to hear what you've been up to. Send us your stories and photos, and we'll share the highlights here.

Email cfaalum@bu.edu.

Stories of Precious Gems and Diamonds in the Rough (CreateSpace, 2018). She was awarded a grant for her painting by the Ryan Licht Sang Bipolar Foundation and exhibited in *INSIGHTS II, An Art Exhibition of Creativity and the Bipolar Brain* at the Zolla/Lieberman Gallery in Chicago, Ill. Skelly was also featured in the summer 2018 issue of *Stay Thirsty Magazine*. Skelly continues to exhibit her artwork nationally and maintains a private practice in expressive arts therapy in the Seattle, Wash., area.

David Gregory ('66) published the book *Stuff* (David Gregory, 2018), which follows his 2015 work *On the Cellar Door and All That Goes with Winter*.

Judy Hochberg ('67,'69) published the children's book *Little Cat Lost* (SDP Publishing, 2019). Hochberg gave a reading of the book in April 2019 at the Canton Public Library in Canton, Mass., shortly after its publication.

Susheel Bibbs ('68) received eight international awards for her PBS documentary *Voices for Freedom*, which she wrote, directed, and appeared in. This follows a 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award from Who's Who Among Women and a PBS Arts Showcase on her career. In 2012, Bibbs established the Living Heritage Foundation, which provides grants and mentors accomplished arts and media professionals.

Carolyn Michel ('68) won Best Actress of the Year at the Oniros Film Awards in Italy for her role as Tanya in the 2018 film *Katia*.



Olympia Dukakis (SAR'53, CFA'57, Hon.'00) starred in her own biographical documentary, *Olympia*, which won the best documentary award at Hunter Mountain Film Festival.

1970s

Stephanie Miele ('70), a vocalist, presented *Mothers and Other Lovers*, a program of songs from musical theater and film describing the complexities of close relationships.

Lorraine Shemesh ('71) was a guest of honor at an event at the Butler Institute of American Art on May 5, 2019, which included a video about her work. Shemesh also had two solo shows, titled *The Space Between Us*. The first exhibit opened at Gerald Peters Projects in Santa Fe, N.M., on June 21, 2019,



Sandra Piques Eddy ('99, '02) performed the title role in Georges Bizet's opera *Carmen* for the Seiji Ozawa Music Academy in Japan in March 2019. **David Kneuss ('70)** directed the production, which featured **Katrina Galka ('13)** as Frasquita and **Alexandra Rodrick ('16)** as Mercedes.

and the second opened at the Gerald Peters Gallery in New York, N.Y., on September 12, 2019.

Raul Huerta ('74) was presented with the President's Medal of Distinction Award by SUNY Morrisville's president during its May 2019 commencement. The award is the highest nondegree honor awarded by the college.

Paula Plum ('75) played Mrs. Ethel Banks in the Gloucester Stage Company's performance of *Barefoot in the Park* in June 2019.

Marjorie Selden ('78), an oboe and English horn player, performed

for Westminster Conservatory at Nassau in Princeton, N.J.

Geena Davis ('79, Hon.'99) received the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science's Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award in recognition of her decades of work fighting gender bias on and off the screen in Hollywood.

Marsha Goldberg ('79) exhibited paintings, drawings, and cyanotypes at the Center for Contemporary Art in New Jersey, from April through June 2019.

Patricia Randell ('79) played Nurse Ratched in *One Flew Over the*

Cuckoo's Nest at Playhouse on Park in West Hartford, Conn.

1980s

Peter Del Vecchio ('80) is producing Disney's *Frozen 2*, coming to theaters in November 2019.

Julia Shepley ('80) debuted her new work in a solo exhibition, *Strata*, at Boston Sculptures Gallery in May and June 2019. *Strata* highlighted Shepley's trademark process: the stratification of material, imagery, and mark-making to give the illusion of depth and transience.

Jason Alexander ('81, Hon.'95) joined the cast of *Richard Lovely*, a comedy pilot for Fox, to voice Mr. Mouse. In April 2019, with the Columbus Symphony at his side, Alexander combined songs and anecdotes about his life in his show, *An Evening with Jason Alexander*. He also directed the musical *The Last Five Years* at Syracuse Stage, adding his own twists and expanding the show to feature four actors instead of the traditional two. Alexander will also voice a character for the animated *Harley Quinn* series, which will premiere in fall 2019.

Julianne Moore's ('83) *New York Times* bestselling book *Freck-*

leface *Strawberry* (Bloomsbury, 2007) was turned into a musical stage production by the Musical Theatre of Anthem, Ariz., in summer 2019. Moore also starred in the Lifetime film *I Am Somebody's Child*, which is based on a true story. In June 2019, Moore was honored at the Karlovy Vary film festival in the Czech Republic with the Crystal Globe award for her contribution to world cinema. Moore also starred in the English-language remake of the foreign film *After the Wedding*, which released in theaters on August 9, 2019. She is set to star in a new Apple+ series inspired by Stephen King's novel *Lisey's Story*.

Michael Chiklis ('85) will executive-produce and star in *Coyote*, a crime drama in development at Paramount Network.

Cynthia Rider ('85) was appointed managing director of the Tony Award-winning theater Hartford Stage in Hartford, Conn.

Roy Conli ('87) produced the Disney nature film *Penguins* that opened on April 17, 2019. A portion of each ticket sold was donated to the World Conservation Network and the Global Penguin Society.

Giovanni DeCunto ('87) created a collection of interpretations of the 13 works stolen from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in the world's largest unsolved art heist.

Francisco Noya ('88) entered his 23rd year with the Rhode Island Philharmonic, where he currently serves as resident conductor. Noya also serves as the music director and conductor of the Boston Civic Symphony, music director for Newton's New Philharmonic, and a faculty member at Berklee College of Music.

1990s

Susan Dalian ('90) directed the comedy *The Narcissist Next Door* for the Hollywood Fringe Festival.

Holly Twyford ('90) performed in the Round House Theatre's

production of *A Doll's House, Part 2* in June 2019.

Kim Raver ('91) codirected the Lifetime movie *Tempting Fate*, based on the Jane Green novel.

Cynthia Watros ('93) took over the role of Nina Reeves on *General Hospital* in June 2019.

Darryl V. Jones ('94) directed and co-choreographed the play *Kill Move Paradise*. Jones was also a cast member in the Word for Word and Z Space immersive production of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, which ran September through October 2019.

Scott Edmiston ('95) joined the Boston Conservatory at Berklee as dean of the theater division.

Jennifer Minnich ('97) performed as a member of the Casamatta String Trio at the Woods Hole Public Library on Cape Cod, Mass., in April 2019.

Todd Scalise ('97) is one of 16 fellows named by the national

nonprofit Clark Hulings Fund for Visual Artists for its 2019 Art-Business Accelerator Program. Fellows participate in a yearlong virtual course that offers training, publicity, and network-building opportunities.

David Sullivan (Wheelock'98, CFA'03) became the associate dean of Westminster College of the Arts at Rider University in August 2019.

2000s

Akiko Fujimoto ('01) was named the music director of the Mid-Texas Symphony.

Morris Robinson ('01) performed in Mahler's *Eighth Symphony* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in the Walt Disney Concert Hall.

Missy Mazzoli (BUTI'98, CFA'02) became one of the first two women in the Metropolitan Opera's history to be commissioned to create an opera. She will compose a work based on George

Saunders' novel *Lincoln in the Bardo*. Her music was also featured in **Laura Metcalf's ('04)** concert.

Kayla Mohammadi ('02) had work featured in an exhibition at the Maier Museum of Art at Randolph College in Lynchburg, Va., from January through April 2019.

Sarita Uranovsky ('02) performed a solo as part of Prokofiev's *Violin Concerto No. 2* during the Portsmouth Symphony Orchestra concert in March 2019.

George Lam ('03) served as composer-in-residence at the Chautauqua Opera Company in the summer of 2018, where he wrote three new works based on the poetry of Tyehimba Jess, Allison Joseph, and Rajiv Mohabir. Lam is an assistant professor of music at York College, the City University of New York.

Uzo Aduba ('05) will portray Shirley Chisholm, the first black woman elected into US Congress, in the 2020 FX series *Mrs. America*. Aduba appeared in the Netflix



In 2019, **Madeline Bohrer ('14)**, **Mia Cross ('14)**, **Fiona Hilton ('14)**, and **Lena McCarthy ('14)** (above: *Duality*, 2019) were featured artists in the show *Boston Friends* at Adelson Galleries in Boston, Mass., hosted by **Adam Adelson (CGS'10, CAS'12)**.

drama *Beats*, as well as the final season of *Orange Is the New Black*. Aduba is also in the voice cast of Cartoon Network's *Steven Universe* movie musical.

Mark Bartley ('06) conducted the WT Symphony Orchestra in April 2019 in accompaniment to the Orohovsky family, guest ballet dancers, in the third annual Russian Music Festival at West Texas A&M University.

Steve Eulberg ('07), a musician, composer, and educator, toured in Northern Colorado and performed for the Colorado Dulcimer Festival and the Friday Night Folk Flight at Dragonfly Art for Life in Modesto, Calif.

Autumn Ahn ('08) hosted the Documentation as Poetic-Witness: Immersive Listening & Secondary Poetry Workshop in Paris, France, in March 2019. Ahn's work was also showcased in the exhibition *Between pink & blue is Catharanthus Roseus*.

2010s

Natessa Amin ('10), Kerri Ammirata ('10), and Max Bard ('19) were selected this year as 3 of 18 Artists in Residence by the Golden Foundation for the Arts. The 2019 program provided an unlimited supply of art materials for residents as well as an educational component on sustainability and waste management practice in painting and artmaking.

Erik Grau ('10) was named a 2019 Boston Public Schools Educator of the Year by the City of Boston, the Boston Teachers Union, and Boston Public Schools.

Tara Deieso ('11,'17), Emily Ranii ('13), Aja Jackson ('18), and Lindsay Fuori ('18) worked on Wheelock Family Theatre's production of *Ragtime*, which ran January through February 2019.

Kiara Ana Perico (BUTI'06, CFA'11) is a member of the Orchid Quartet, which performed at the Grand Theatre in Kentucky.

Hampton Fluker ('13) was honored with the 11th annual Dorothy Loudon Award at the 75th Annual Theatre World Awards Ceremony for his Broadway debut performance as George Deever in Roundabout Theatre Company's Broadway revival of *All My Sons*.

Emily Ranii ('13) and Chelsea Kerl ('14) worked on the Wheelock Family Theatre's *James and the Giant Peach*, which ran April through May 2019.

Gregory Zavracky ('14) starred as Ajax 2, King of Locris, in *La belle Hélène* at Odyssey Opera and at the Huntington Avenue Theatre.

Caroline Hoenemeyer ('15) created, wrote, and stars in the web series *Dating Myself*, which released its third season in June 2019.

Bryn Boice ('16) won an award during the 37th Elliot Norton Awards

for directing the Commonwealth Shakespeare Company's *Universe Rushing Apart: Blue Kettle and Here We Go*.

Kevin Shanley ('16) was named the first executive director of the Spire Center for Performing Arts in Plymouth, Mass.

Jonathan Solari ('16) was named the CEO of Madison Ballet in Madison, Wisc.

Jonathan Stewart ('16) was appointed conductor of the Bartlesville Choral Society in Bartlesville, Okla.

Kelly Galvin ('17) directed the Barrington Public Theater's inaugural production of the play *Breakwater*.

Arthur Henry ('17) was named the Indian River School District's top educator at the annual Teacher of the Year celebration.

Matthew Stern ('17), who teaches at BU and the Boston Conservatory at Berklee, served as the music director for SpeakEasy's production of *Fun Home*.

Alexander Ager ('19) is the artistic director of Kearsarge Chorale, a community choral group affiliated with Colby-Sawyer College in New London, N.H.

Max Bard ('19) is the winner of the 2019 Esther B. and Albert S. Kahn Career Entry Fund for the Arts. Established in 1985 and funded through a \$1 million endowment from the late Esther Kahn (Wheelock'55, Hon.'86), the annual contest offers cash awards to up-and-coming BU artists as they launch their professional careers. Judges selected Bard as the grand winner out of a competitive pool of six semifinalists.



Katrina Galka ('13) (far left) and Clay Hilley ('11) (far right) performed with Boston's Odyssey Opera in Richard Strauss' *Die ägyptische Helena* in April 2019.

BUILT FOR IMAGINATION. CREATED TO INSPIRE.

BU College of Fine Arts appreciates every donation directed to support the next generation of artists during the Campaign for Boston University. A special thank-you to Steve Zide (LAW'86) and Janet Zide for making the dream of the Boston University Joan & Edgar Booth Theatre a reality.

bu.edu/booth

BOOTH THEATRE 2019/20 SEASON

The Exonerated

October 18–27, 2019

By Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen

Director: Judy Braha

...and Jesus Moonwalks

the Mississippi

December 11–15, 2019

By Marcus Gardley

Director: Sara Katzoff

The Rake's Progress

February 27–March 1, 2020

By Igor Stravinsky with a libretto by W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman

Presented by the School of Music, Opera Institute, and School of Theatre

Director: Jim Petosa

Conductor: William Lumpkin

Anyone Can Whistle

April 24–26, 2020

Book by Arthur Laurents, music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Director: Clay Hopper



BOOTH THEATRE
820 Commonwealth Avenue

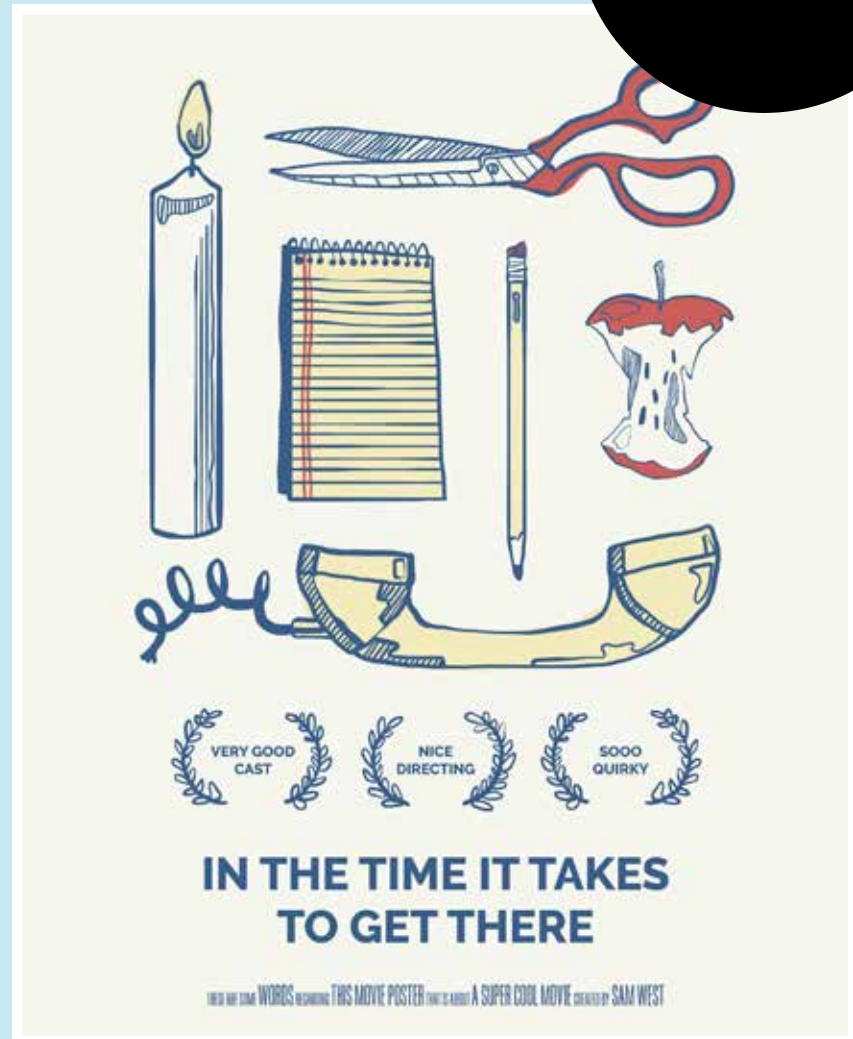
HOW A STUDENT'S SKETCHES INSPIRED ZACH BRAFF'S LATEST FILM

By Geoffrey Line

IN APRIL 2018, Sam West stood on a red carpet for the premiere of a movie she'd inspired. Five months before, West ('19) had stumbled across a contest on Instagram, in which Adobe had invited college students across the country to submit an original poster design for a movie that didn't yet exist. Adobe would partner with Hollywood to turn the poster into a real movie with real stars. On a whim, West adapted sketches from a CFA class into a poster for a movie titled *In the Time It Takes to Get There* and uploaded it to the social media platform. She won.

West's poster—for an imaginary film billed above its title as “sooo quirky”—traces its roots to an assignment for a nonrepresentational painting course. West had been challenged “to spend \$15 on anything we wanted at the Goodwill on Comm Ave, bring it back to the studio, and innovate. I was drawn to the innate narratives that surface when you group objects together,” she says. She sketched her thrift store items—scissors, a candle, a telephone—in muted shades and added an apple, pencil, and notepad. She intended the poster to be open to interpretation, “because I'm interested in the stories that we project onto things that don't necessarily have innate narratives and what those stories, in turn, say about us,” she told the *Boston Globe*.

The contest was judged by actor, director, and screenwriter Zach Braff, best known for his Emmy-nominated turn on the NBC series *Scrubs*. He selected West's poster out of more than 1,000 entries and wrote a film inspired by her design. “It was very unique,



and it reminded me of an exercise we did in screenwriting class at Northwestern,” Braff told *Muse* by *CLIO*. “We were handed an old black-and-white photo and told to free-write for 15 minutes what was happening in the photograph. A story inspired by a photo. So I really liked the puzzle of trying to figure out how all of the objects in Sam's design were related.”

Adobe flew West to LA to participate in the two-day shoot for the film, which Braff also directed.

“Zach was really genuine,” West says. “I think he's a really talented storyteller. My first day, he took out his phone to show me my poster was his lock screen.”

The 11-minute film stars Alicia Silverstone (*Clueless*), Florence Pugh (*Little Women*), and Leslie David Baker (*The Office*).

Set in the Victorian era, it's an inventive, biting send-up of social media influencers and the power of celebrity in the digital era. The film's director of photography was Mauro Fiore, the Academy Award-winning cinematographer for *Avatar*.

West's behind-the-scenes glimpse into movie-making gave her a new appreciation for graphic design. “I learned a lot about the processes that go into bringing a story like this to life,” she says. “I love storytelling; that's why I went into design. This project confirmed my belief that design is a part of everything.” ●

Watch *In the Time It Takes to Get There* at bu.edu/cfa-magazine.



Boston University College of Fine Arts

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

Nonprofit
US Postage
PAID
Boston MA
Permit No. 1839

Boston University College of Fine Arts
School of Music

bu.edu/cfa/symphonyhall

Boston University
Symphony Orchestra,
Wind Ensemble, and
Symphonic Chorus

Boston **Symphony Hall**

Tuesday, April 7, 2020

