

2016 VCFA Alumni Symposium

The Balancing Act: Career, Community, and Creativity

Presentations

Beth Bacon (WCYA '16) *Surprise As A Creative Technique*

Audrey Churgin (VA '00) *Collaboration and Community Building*

Elizabeth Coleman (W '12) *Mindfulness as the Fulcrum in Balancing the 3 C's and the Broader Scope of Our Lives*

Maggie Kast (W '01) *Ambition as obstacle to the 3 C's*

Deborah Kline (GD '16) *Is it balance or integration we strive for?*

Pamela Livingston (WCYA '12) *Juggling the Three C's through the Magic of Circus*

Kekla Magoon (WCYA '05) *Keynote: Each Project, A World Unto Itself*

Jason Malli (MC '13) *By a Route Obscure – On Composing One's Self in the Age of New Media*

Patricia Miranda (VA '14) *Artist-Run: Creating a Collaborative Artist Residency Program*

John Otterbacher (Film '15) TBD

Bios



Beth Bacon Before coming to VCFA and finding her true voice, Beth Bacon wrote cereal commercials, computer demos, and business case studies. Beth grew up in Boston where she got a BA in Literature from Harvard College then moved to New York City where she got a MA in Media Ecology from NYU. From there, she followed her heart to far-flung cities including Seattle, Monterey, San Diego, and Tokyo. In 2008, she and her adventurous family took a year off and traveled to all 50 states in a motorhome. Now rooted in Seattle, she lives a creative life working as a branding consultant, a columnist for

Digital Book World, and a children's book author. Beth is the winner of the Candlewick Award for picture books and the Marion Dane Bauer Award for middle grade.

Audrey Churgin is a writer, visual and sound artist, who professionally collaborated with children for many years both visually and aurally. She is represented in Ottawa by Galerie St. Laurent-Hill, and has exhibited her extensive collection of drawings and pastels in Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto, Washington and Scottsdale. Her collaborative audio work is included in several radio collections, and has been sampled on CBC radio, broadcast in North America and Europe, and in Chile, where she exhibited A Valdivian Choral (soundscape). Samples of her work can be seen and heard on-line at

<http://www.trentu.ca/org/trentradio/csirp/rwb04/churgin.mp3>, and at the Galerie St.Laurent-Hill web site, galeriestlaurentplushill.com.



Audrey became interested in the written word in 1999, and has since written three plays dealing with themes of daughterhood, motherhood, and sexuality. The trilogy titles are: *A Selfless Mother*, *Generational Echoes* and *A Freudian Pink Slip*. She produced and directed all three plays as 'sound art', in a format not unlike radio plays. She co-presented her visual art in gallery exhibitions, in context to the audio work. Through these works, Audrey's art blends the way we understand visual clues in relationship to text, and explores the connections the mind makes when they are paired irrationally.

Most recently, Audrey has written a novel, furthering her on-going exploration of young women's sexuality and vulnerability, but now, also in the context of violence. Where in the past her work has hinted at the darker side, she now has given fictional life to it through the characters portrayed in her unpublished novel, *Linda Melinda*.



A 2012 graduate of VCFA's writing program, **Elizabeth J. Coleman** is the author of two full poetry collections, *The Fifth Generation* (Spuyten Duyvil Press, 2016) and *Proof* (Spuyten Duyvil Press, 2014), and two chapbooks, *Let My Ears Be Open* (Finishing Line Press, 2013) and *The Saint of Lost Things* (Small Change Press, 2009). She is the translator into French of a bilingual sonnet collection by Lee Slonimsky entitled *Pythagoras in Love/Pythagore Amoureux* (Folded Word Press, 2015). Elizabeth's poetry has been published in a number of journals, and appears in *The Bloomsbury Anthology of Contemporary Jewish American Poetry*, and *Poetry in Medicine Anthology* (Persea Books 2014). A vice president of the board of the Poetry Society of America,

Elizabeth is also a classical guitarist and performs regularly at Memorial Sloane Kettering Cancer Center, and other venues. Her watercolors serve as the cover of each of her books.

An attorney, Elizabeth practiced as a public interest lawyer for many years. She currently teaches mindfulness and mindful meditation to lawyers, judges and others, and has also taught mindfulness and creativity. She runs a small foundation addressing environmental issues at the intersection of social justice. Elizabeth can be visited on the Web at www.elizabethjcoleman.com.

Maggie Kast began writing in the early '90s, after a lifetime career in modern dance. She received an M.F.A. in writing from Vermont College of Fine Arts in 2001 and is the author of *The Crack between the Worlds: a Dancer's Memoir of Loss, Faith and Family*. Her first novel, *A Free, Unsullied Land*, was published in November, 2015. She has published fiction in *The Sun*, *Nimrod*, *Rosebud*, *Carve* and others, and her essays have been in *America*, *Image*, and online in *Fiction Writers Review* and *Numero Cinq*. A chapter of her memoir won a Literary Award from the Illinois Arts Council and a Pushcart nomination, and a novel chapter, published as "The Hate that Chills," won third prize in the Hackney Literary Contests.



She has four grown children, six grandchildren and one great-grandchild. She lives in Chicago, where her daughter has an apartment in her house, and she swings from San Francisco to Martha's Vineyard to Austria to see all the others.



Deb Kline (Independent Brand & Package Design Consultant) is a strategic brand builder, designer, and educator. Known for connecting design with purpose and intent, Deb's work consistently provides a distinctive competitive advantage for her clients. These include some of the world's best-known global corporations including Johnson & Johnson, Caterpillar, Sherwin Williams and Panasonic. She draws from the experience of leading branding and

packaging for Group 4 Design and Spalding Sports Worldwide.

While her work has been recognized by CADC, American Graphic Design Awards and The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, awards aren't a real motivating factor. Instead, her passion shines through in the midst of the work; bringing to each project a problem solving approach that challenges herself and others to always improve the solution. She brings the same kind of purpose to her work in higher education, too, serving over two decades as adjunct faculty at Hartford Art School- University of Hartford, SASD - University of Bridgeport, and at Northwestern Connecticut Community College. She credits this work with keeping her own design style current and in touch with emerging talent.

In addition to managing her own design business, Deb is actively involved in the design community, serving as President of the Connecticut Art Director's Club from 2007-2009 and on the Board of Corporators for the Hartford Art School from 2010-2012. Currently she is an active member in both the AIGA and CADC. Deb received her BFA from the Hartford Art School in 1990, and most recently her MFA at Vermont College of Fine Arts.

P. A. Livingston earned a MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults at Vermont College of Fine Arts in 2012, just a mountain range away from the setting of her childhood. Each residency found her driving west across Lake Champlain, back to the Hudson River Valley to mine the veins of her family's lives honed within its stone walls for short stories. Once the manager of The Depot Bookstore, she now works part-time with Bay Area famed indie bookstore Book Passage in California. As a ghost writer and editor generally inhabiting the minds of politicians and business folk, Pamela's academic, short story and poetic works have been published by journals and small presses. When she's not polishing children's works or plotting how to use her art history degrees for more than adjunct faculty gigs, she works in a variety of art mediums. Her current writing projects include a professional guide based on her business, Infinity Education, along with the second volume to a young adult historical fiction trilogy based in the Renaissance.



Pamela Livingston



Kekla Magoon (Keynote) When I graduated from VCFA eleven years ago, I had my very first completed novel in hand. Nine published novels later, the winding path my work has taken looks nothing like I could have predicted back then. I expected to face the external challenges of the industry, but I've been equally challenged by the internal ebb and flow of my motivation and my artistic sensibilities. Moving through

this career day by day, I am rooted by my creative rituals, yet also constantly out of my depth, stretching to create. Here, I reflect on the evolution of process, and embracing change as an integral part of the creative life.

Jason Matthew Malli, M.F.A., M.A.L.S., a long time resident of Connecticut, has composed music for over 30 years. He recently completed his MFA in Music Composition at Vermont College of Fine Arts concentrating on contemporary concert and electroacoustic music delving into the realms of microtones, poly-temporality, sound masses, extended instruments, analog synthesis, and digital sound all while still cultivating his life long passion and interest for folkloric melodies and the exploration of human narratives as effective vehicles for artistic expression. Malli highlights recent accomplishments to include two multi-speaker surround sound realizations of “consubstantial,” an electroacoustic fixed media composition, first premiered in the 3D Spatialization Lab at the New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival in 2014 and more recently at The Ammerman Center for Arts and Technology’s 15th Biennial Symposium at Connecticut College as an Emerging Artist Recipient. Other recent compositions received successful premieres in the Open Sound Installation at the 2014 SEAMUS National Conference at Wesleyan University and the inaugural Emerging Composers Concert at Boston Conservatory sponsored by Boston Musica Viva in April 2014. Jason’s chamber ensemble composition, “The Gathering of Sects” was followed by a Meet the Composers Panel Discussion with Boston Musica Viva’s Musical Director, Richard Pittman.



Patricia Miranda is an artist, educator, and curator, using interdisciplinary projects to make connections between art, science, history and culture. She is founder of MAPSpace, a project space in Port Chester, NY, where she implemented a collaborative workspace residency program. She has been Visiting Artist at Vermont Studio Center, the Heckscher Museum, and University of Utah, and been awarded residencies at Weir Farm, Julio Valdez Printmaking Studio, and Vermont Studio Center. She has received grants from ArtsWestchester/New York State Council on the Arts, and was part of a yearlong NEA grant working with homeless youth. Miranda is Artist-in-Residence at Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts of the University of New Haven, and served as director and curator of the Gallery at Concordia College-NY from 2008-12. Miranda develops education programs for K-12, museums, and institutions, including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the American Museum of Natural History, the Smithsonian Institution, and Franklin Furnace in New York City. She has exhibited at Wave Hill, Bronx, NY; the Cape Museum of Fine Art, Cape Cod MA; the Belvedere Museum, Vienna Austria; Metaphor Contemporary Art, Brooklyn, NY; and Kenise Barnes Fine Art, Larchmont, NY.



Christopher Previte is an artist, graphic designer, writer, photographer, and educator. He has enjoyed working creatively for over twenty-five years. In that time, Christopher has created content and solutions in the areas of Illustration, Identity & Branding, Print & Web Design, Photography, and Event Media.

He has worked with clients such as Boston's World Trade Center & Seaport Hotel, Fidelity Investments, The Harvard Lampoon, Nancy

Kerrigan, Sail Boston, and numerous small businesses to develop engaging and timely visual solutions.

Christopher's photography has appeared in the *Boston Globe*, *Lexington Minuteman*, *Colonial Times*, and *Travel Girl Magazine*. He is also the recipient of the 2007 Creativity in Marketing Award from the Lexington Chamber of Commerce.

His current practice explores themes of loss, responsibility, and impermanence through storytelling. Christopher believes that art and design should be adaptable and nimble and that the best solutions are platform agnostic.

An educator for sixteen years, Christopher is currently a Design & Digital Media faculty at Mount Ida College in Newton, Massachusetts.

Christopher earned his MFA in Graphic Design from the Vermont College of Fine Arts in October 2015. You can see his work at christopherprevite.com