The Next Generation of Animation is Here

Joe Ksander leads the way with visionary director Shane Acker – and the guidance of Tim Burton
A Message from the President

AS ARTISTS AND EDUCATORS, we serve as advocates of artistic expression. In the classroom, this responsibility means instilling in our students the courage to take creative risks and by the same token to take constructive direction. One extraordinary event has found us transposing this teaching philosophy to an international stage.

When School of Motion Pictures & Television alumna Euna Lee and her colleague Laura Ling were arrested by the North Korean government, I knew this was an issue we had to act upon. This summer, the Academy community voiced concern with an online petition and a Community Peaceful Gathering to raise awareness of their detention. We were heard and we were not alone. As I write this letter, I’m relieved both journalists have been released.

Their story has shown me the positive change we can make as a community. You too are one of our citizens and you have We-long advocates not only among our faculty but also among your peers. We hope you will reconnect with us through A.JOURNAL, and the Alumni Association.

This spirit of mentorship is a cornerstone on which my grandfather founded the school in 1929. Now in its 80th year, the university’s commitment to supporting the next generation of artists remains unchanged. One of my directives has been to forge new partnerships; and to this end, I would like to welcome our new Director of Game Design and the Alumni Association.

We have a lot to celebrate for our big 8-0. Please join us celebrating our triumphs – past and present – and envisioning ones we will be talking about in the future.

Sincerely,

Elisa Stephens,
President

A Journal

Welcome Home
The Remarkable Courage of Two American Journalists: Alumna Euna Lee and her Current TV colleague Laura Ling return home from North Korea.

A Room with a View
Heather Hilliard designs a Showcase Penthouse. The result? The launch of her own design firm.

Before Retro was Retro
Ming Gao and the Making of a Design Era. This determined artist proves that “if you are a good artist, you can do everything.”

The Next Generation of Animation is Here
Cover: Joe Kanader leads the way with visionary director Shane Acker – and the guidance of Tim Burton.

A Show-Stopper in Sonoma
Hossein Amjadi’s sculpture garden is nestled in the middle of the city’s wine country, and the harvest is looking good. The art world’s version of a farmer living off the land.

Television Star, Fashion Phenom, Designer Extraordinaire
Chris Cortez has many talented alter egos.

inside

in every issue

OUT THERE: A synopsis of notable alumni pursuing dreams, enriching culture, and stimulating art, all over the world.
RETROVIEW: A historical journey through influential happenings from the art and design archives.
NEWS & UPDATES: News feeds that connect you to the alumni community.
CLASS NOTES: The who, what, where, and when of your fellow graduates.

about

This is A Journal about you — the artists, innovators, and designers who make up the Academy of Art University Alumni Association.

A Journal emphasizes the impeccable art and design successes of the Academy’s alumni family. It captures and embraces the diversity of creative accomplishments. It highlights a journey through the world creating, designing, inventing, and shaping. A Journal engages in the storytelling of vibrant individuals and connects a global community of art and design professionals.

keys to the kingdom

Your guide to the codes, characters, and colors denoting departmental specializations.

Advertising
Animation & Visual Effects
Architecture
Fashion
Fine Art
Game Design
Graphic Design
Illustration
Industrial Design
Interior Architecture & Design
Motion Pictures & Television
Multimedia Communications
Music for Visual Media
Photography
Web Design & New Media

+ Stuf you’ll always want to keep up with

EVENT CALENDAR: Global save-the-dates especially designed for innovators, creators, and trendsetters – that’s you.
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT: Kicking it off with acknowledgements and accolades from your alma mater.
MESSAGE FROM THE ALUMNI DEPT.: A rousing shout out to the Academy of Art University’s extended family from Janet Preloger, Director of Alumni.

+ Insight

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Welcome Home

The Remarkable Courage of Two American Journalists

Letter to Supporters from Euna Lee

Posted August 10, 2009 at: www.lauraandeuna.com

IT’S BEEN 5 DAYS since I arrived home from my traumatic experience.

What have I done... hmm... let’s see. I made scrambled eggs with Hana, I walked around the neighborhood with Michael and Hana after dinner, I combed Hana’s hair and dressed her for school, I danced and jumped with Hana, I went to a cafe and had a very happy time with Michael listening to his life and shared mine. I went to church and was able to sing unto the Lord.

I am slowly fulfilling the wish list that I made in North Korea one item at a time.

Every moment when I realize it’s real, when I am home and I am with my family, I think of all the individuals who were there at the vigil, who wrote letters to us and to the government, who read and followed our news and were concerned about us and helped Laura and I to come home.

Knowing that you would not stop until we came home kept me going day by day in North Korea.

My husband mentioned the names of so many individuals who helped us and supported us through this tough time. I won’t list the individual names here to thank because I believe you already know that I am talking to you when I say “Thank You.”

Again, I am blessed to have such support from everyone who participated and I won’t forget your love and I just want to say, “I love you too.”

Love,

Euna

Facebook pages about Laura and I or the web site, lauraandeuna.com. Because I know that once I started to read them I would get caught up in all the love and support everybody gave me and I will neglect my family.

Hana is still a bit nervous about mommy going to work again. She told me today “Mommy, when I ask you to leave (she meant ‘come home’), please come home to me.” She told Doorie (one of my cats) “Doorie, if you don’t listen, mommy will go to the airport.”

I will wait for the time when Hana truly believes that mommy’s always there for her, then I will be free to share my stories and experiences in North Korea and be able to express how thankful I am.

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THE ODDS WERE AGAINST them, but millions of thoughts, prayers, and petition signatures supported their release.

• 140 days of detainment
• Over 6,000 miles away from home
• 12 years hard labor sentence

On August 4, 2009, Academy of Art University School of Motion Pictures & Television alumna Euna Lee BFA01 and Current TV colleague Laura Ling, were pardoned by the North Korean government after being charged of “committing hostilities against the Korean nation and illegal entry.” The journalists spent 414 days in detainment after their arrest in March while an assignment for Current TV, the media company co-founded by former Vice President Al Gore. Through a humanitarian effort by former President Bill Clinton, the two women returned home on August 5 to a tearful reunion with their families in Burbank, California.

The Academy of Art University joined hands with the San Francisco community in an effort to support their release through a vigil and online petition with over 4,000 signatures. A Community Peaceful Gathering took place on June 24, 2009 attended by Lee’s four-year-old daughter Hana and the husbands of the two women, Michael Saldate and Iain Clayton, who spoke about their recent contact they had with their wives. Over 300 students, alumni, faculty, and community organizations congregated at Morgan Auditorium, joining the nation in solidarity for the release of Lee and Ling.

To view news coverage, photos, and video of the June 24 gathering, visit www.academyart.edu/petition. For additional information, visit www.lauraandeuna.com and our newly launched Academy of Art University news feed at http://newsfeed.academyart.edu.  

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WE’VE ALL SEEN THOSE homes that look like museums – the ones with living rooms that you just stand in the middle of, not knowing quite what to do with yourself. Well, alum Heather Hilliard is an interior designer who actually has a background working in prestigious museums, yet her designs are anything but cold and stuffy. Her work is best described as home design inspired by art – not by the museum you’d find it in. Recently, Hilliard’s designs have received quite a bit of attention. Just this past spring, she was chosen to work on the 2009 Decorator Showcase home in San Francisco. It’s no wonder that this honor attracts a beehive of media buzz; San Francisco is the home of some of the nation’s most talented designers, and every year all of them compete for the showcase house.

Hilliard did more than just make the cut; she was chosen to design the penthouse. The showcase this year featured a Georgian home from 1930, but the room Hilliard designed looked nothing like merry old England. Built in the 1950’s with sweeping views of the Golden Gate Bridge and San Francisco Bay (the only room in the house with a view in fact), the penthouse stood apart from the rest of the home, sharing none of the same moldings or details. Faced with the room’s enormous picture windows, Hilliard recognized immediately that the interior space should not compete with the view – one does not pick a fight with the Golden Gate Bridge after all.

She decided to take out a couple of walls and unusable closets, and then added some half height walls to create a study area with a desk. Hilliard then chose a color scheme to complement the San Francisco backdrop. As Hilliard herself explains, “I like to bring the outside in by taking color cues from the view. In an effort to create a room in harmony with the view, I combined a warm gray grass cloth wall covering, paint trim in Farrow and Ball’s London Stone and textured Tibetan Jute carpeting along with art, flowers, and accessories in the Golden Gate Bridge orange and blue-green color of the bay. The neutral backdrop allowed the room to fade away so the visitor’s eye was drawn immediately to the view.” The result? Perhaps the world’s most tasteful and inviting family space.

Before entering the competition, Hilliard decided that the Decorator Showcase would give her the perfect opportunity to open her own design firm. She had worked for large firms for years, and wanted to open her own business so she could do more personal and efficient work for her clients. And that’s exactly what she did. Using the publicity she’s received, she’s been able to create and market Heather Hilliard Design (www.heatherhilliard.com). Currently she is working on a redecoration project in Hillsborough, California, as well as a larger design and construction plan for a contemporary home in Los Altos Hills, California. A talented designer growing her own business – it’s an inspiring story that is certainly nice to hear in these economic times.

A Room with a View (and a color scheme to match)

Her work is best described as home design inspired by art – not by the museum you’d find it in.
Gee was born in San Francisco. At a young age he went back to his family’s home in China and spent his childhood in a small farming village in Canton. At the age of 16, with no knowledge of the English language, he came back to the United States to finish high school in San Francisco. He persevered through school while working at a laundromat in the evenings. After he finished high school he joined the Air Force and was sent to Germany. This was a formative time for Ming; he was deeply inspired by German and European culture in general. It was there he realized that art was his calling. Once he completed his service he returned to San Francisco and enrolled at the Academy where his remarkable life as an artist began.

Behind his business sense was the genius of Gee, who worked as her company’s main artistic talent from 1969 to 1995, designing everything from ceramics, to fold-away dollhouses, stuffed toys for Cirque du Soleil, products for the World Wildlife Fund, and a huge variety of classic apparel. As Gee explains, “If you are a good artist, you can do anything.”

But even before Gee joined Determined, he had followed a fascinating path. After serving in the Air Force upon finishing high school and then graduating from the Academy, he worked in the design department at Neiman Marcus, then moved on to retail advertising at Frost Brothers in San Antonio, Texas. In 1968, he played a main role in the design of the World’s Fair in San Antonio – from the event publications right down to the costumes and hairstyles of the staff. Soon after returning to San Francisco, he took a job at Joseph Magnin where he was discovered by Boucher, who convinced him to work for her.

Now that we live in a world where vintage tees are hip, meeting Gee feels like meeting the real thing – a designer who helped define an era that we all now think of as “retro.” Sadly, the words “craftsmanship” and “design” no longer come to mind when we think of product placement these days. That’s why it is important to know and remember the work of Gee; he reminds us all that the world is a better place, and certainly a more joyful place, with talented designers in it.

**IF YOU ARE A triva buff, you may know that Charles M. Schulz’s “Peanuts” characters were some of the first cartoon characters to be licensed for major product placement. Starting with the now-classic children’s book Happiness is a Warm Puppy, published in 1962, Charlie Brown and the gang soon adorned a variety of products, including blankets, T-shirts, and toys. Now here’s a little bit of Academy trivia for you: alum Ming Gee, who graduated in 1959, was the creative lead behind some of the earliest iconic licensed merchandise, featuring characters from “Peanuts,” “Felix the Cat,” and “Babar the Elephant,” among many others.**

When you go to Gee’s studio in the Castro District of San Francisco (which he still visits daily), the first thing you see is a shelf filled with a random assortment of things, all of which have inspired him in some way. Knick-knacks? Souvenirs? Maybe a cabinet of curiosity is the best word for it: there’s candy packaging Gee loved so much he ate the contents, and then lovingly restored the box and wrappers to their original state; toys he has found from all over the world; everyday objects he’s collected simply for their unique design or a single detail he admires. The collection reflects Gee’s personality – whimsical, brilliant, and incredibly modest at the same time. Even through the story for each object is different, every story ends with Gee saying the same thing: “I just had to have it!”

With that kind of “got to have it” attitude, it is no wonder that Gee spent most of his career at a firm called Determined Productions. It was at Determined that Gee designed iconic cartoon apparel. Connie Boucher, credited by the New York Times as the businesswoman who pioneered cartoon licensing, ran the company alongside her partner Jim Young, an accomplished design director.
The Next Generation of Animation is Here

Joe Ksander leads the way with visionary director Shane Acker – and the guidance of Tim Burton.

Joe Ksander has recently
finished almost three years of work as the Animation Director of 9 – the much-anticipated film by Focus Features that is already one of the wonders of Hollywood for 2009. Just released this September (strategically on 9/9/09), 9 is a Shane Acker film produced by Tim Burton, Timur Bekmambetov, and Jim Lemley. If you haven’t seen it yet, you are in for one big surprise: 9 delivers everything you wouldn’t expect from an animated feature.

Burton’s involvement is reason enough that 9 has received every kind of buzz there is, in every major media outlet you can think of – viral and headline alike. When you add a star-studded cast that includes Elijah Wood as the voice of the film’s main character, you’ve got yourself a twittering, blogging fan-fest. A headliner at WonderCon this past spring, 9 featured a panel headed by Wood and our very own Ksander, who both answered a slew of
people in so many places, Ksander stayed up all hours working with so many of Ksander, director Acker, editor Nick Kenway, and lifting was accomplished by a core team of leads consisting of Acker, the guidance of Burton – and the vocal talent of celebrity actors Wood, Jennifer Connelly, John C. Reilly, Martin Landau, Crispin Glover, and Fred Tatasciore – was the mighty animation talent of Ksander and his three main teams of artists based in Los Angeles, Luxembourg, and Toronto. Ksander spent much of his time in Canada during the production of the film, where he directed a team of 30 animators at the Toronto-based Starz Animation Studio. Ksander also worked with industry legend Ken Duncan, whose studio is based in Pasadena; Duncan, one of Ksander’s long-time heroes, has been credited with classics such as The Lion King, Beauty and the Beast, and Tarzan – need we say more? If there is a modern-day equivalent to the building of the pyramids, surely it is the animated feature film. 9 involved a massive amount of massively talented people who collaborated together for years; much of the heavy lifting was accomplished by a core team of leads consisting of Ksander, director Acker, editor Nick Kenway, and head of story Ryan O’Loughlin. Working with so many people in so many places, Ksander stayed up all hours to accommodate radically different time zones and dealt with countless technical issues involved in remote collaboration. Much of the film’s creative vision was formed by necessity “in medias res,” the casting of the actors being of course one of the film’s formative moments. While questions by curious fanboys and fangirls. 9 stars a set of rag dolls brought to life by a mad scientist; they are on a quest to save the world, and there are plenty of darkly animated villains standing in their way. These classic animation tropes are set in a post-apocalyptic world taken over by machines, a surprisingly chilling landscape worthy of California’s governor in his acting days. If you wanted to describe 9 in terms of other movies you’ve seen, you would have to rattle off an eclectic mix: Star Wars, The Dark Crystal, Toy Story, Indiana Jones, and of course Burton’s own work would be on that list. Ksander himself describes 9 as equal parts animation and action film. Behind the vision of Acker, the guidance of Burton – and the vocal talent of celebrity actors Wood, Jennifer Connelly, John C. Reilly, Martin Landau, Crispin Glover, and Fred Tatasciore – was the mighty animation talent of Ksander and his three main teams of artists based in Los Angeles, Luxembourg, and Toronto. Ksander spent much of his time in Canada during the production of the film, where he directed a team of 30 animators at the Toronto-based Starz Animation Studio. 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From San Francisco to Milan to Florianopolis and beyond - the alumni of the Academy of Art University represent a global community of diverse, artistic professionals. They’re sculptors, animators, architects, actors, instructors, and innovative entrepreneurs to name just a few. They’ve received Emmy nominations, SURTEX awards, among many others and have been recognized in international publications. A quick look at their handiwork reiterates their diverse achievements, representative of the common thread they share as graduates of the Academy of Art University.

Yu-Cheng Kuo
TAPPEI CITY, TAIWAN_ MFA 2010
CURRENT_Kuo is the founder and creative director of Ultrahard Co., Ltd. The company’s “nazca series” took part in the Elite bookstore’s national design festival in May, one of the most prominent design houses in Taiwan.

Alice Koswara
SAN FRANCISCO, CA_ BFA 2001
CURRENT_Koswara is the senior designer at Michael Osborne Design. She has worked on projects for Kettle Foods, Brown-Forman (Gentleman Jack), Williams-Sonoma, Square One Organic Vodka, Thomas Kemper Soda, and many other clients.

Chelsea Owens
MILAN, ITALY + LOS ANGELES, CA_BFA 2002
CURRENT_Owens is an international artist living between northern Italy and southern California. Her current exhibition, Adaptation, is a series of paintings influenced by her background in production design. View her work at www.chelseaovens.com.

Dayoung Ewart
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Chelsea Owens
MILAN, ITALY + LOS ANGELES, CA_BFA 2002
CURRENT_Owens is an international artist living between northern Italy and southern California. Her current exhibition, Adaptation, is a series of paintings influenced by her background in production design. View her work at www.chelseaovens.com.
visit alumni.academyanet.edu and participate in our pilot program, Content 1.0, a compelling opportunity to share your artistic brilliance. What are you waiting for? You can play too.

Marcus A. Furtado

CURRENT: Furtado is a 3D supervisor for Worms, the first full feature stop-motion animation film of Latin America launching in 2010 by Animaking Studio. He also teaches video, film, and animation courses at ASSESC, UNISUL, and CESUSC.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

m.arch 2007

Mark Serrata

Originally from Texas, Serrata taught English in Tokyo before studying at the Academy. He now works at Garavaglia Architecture where he lends his design and drafting expertise to a wide variety of architectural and preservation services projects.

San Francisco, CA

m.arch 2007

Yaling Hou

CURRENT: After winning the grand prize of the SURTEX 2007 International Student Design Competition, Hou launched her home and accessories line Flowie (www.flowiestyle.com) that retails nationally and is featured regularly in Sunset, 7x7, Redbook, and Daily Candy.

San Francisco, CA

bfa 2007

Adam Reeder

Award-winning sculptor, Reeder adds a 21st Century twist to classical figures with a body of work entitled, “Socio-Technic Evolution,” including “Pan’s iPod.” His work will be auctioned at the Academy’s 14th Annual Faculty + Alumni Fine Art Auction in November.

San Ramon, CA

mfa 2009

Tom Luedecke

CURRENT: Born and raised in East Germany and Russia, Luedecke worked at M3dium Design while at the Academy. Since 2003, he has been designing high performance products in Nike’s Innovation Kitchen.

Portland, OR

BFA 2002

Alicia Huffman

CURRENT: Huffman is the design manager for the Global Gap Store Environments team for Gap and Gap Body. View her work at the Gap Store on 54th & 5th in New York and Gap Body on Chestnut St. in San Francisco.

San Francisco, CA

BFA 2001

Carla Punch

CURRENT: Punch is working and living in Los Angeles, California. She recently finished a long running show in Los Angeles based on Pink Floyd’s 1973 album, Dark Side of the Moon, where she played the lead role of Mother.

Los Angeles, CA

MFA 2006

What are you waiting for? You can play too.

Visit alumni.academyanet.edu and participate in our pilot program, Content 1.0, a compelling opportunity to share your artistic brilliance.
Hossain Amjadi's sculpture garden is nestled in the middle of wine country, and the harvest is looking good.

Amjadi's sculpture garden is Amjadi's front lawn, which he uses as an outdoor gallery for his self-run studio called Art Forms. Amjadi's career as an independent artist began about twenty-two years ago, when he simply got tired of the city. After graduating from the Academy in 1984 with a degree in Fine Art, he lived in Oakland for a few short months before deciding to pack everything up and move to Sonoma. He bought a 2.5 acre plot of land, which Amjadi says “was a jungle” – but it was a jungle he preferred to the urban one. Over the years, he has stayed on this very same lot, building a home there as well as a thriving sculpture studio. His sculpture garden encompasses an entire acre of the lot, which according to Amjadi “is small in some ways, but plenty big enough to create a wide range of differently sized pieces.”

Amjadi is the art world’s version of a farmer living off the land. Art Forms, created in 1993, is a completely independent studio based out of Amjadi’s home. And Amjadi prefers it this way, “I get to deal with people directly, and I know where almost all of my sculptures are,” he says. Amjadi finds no need to seek gallery representation elsewhere; just take a trip down Arnold Drive in Sonoma, and you'll immediately see why this is so. With fifty to sixty pieces on display at any given time, his sculpture garden is an absolute show-stopper for anyone who happens to drive by. His sculptures are in high demand, attracting celebrity buyers such as Olympic champion Peggy Fleming and her husband Greg Jenkins, who own a vineyard and winery called FJ (Fleming Jenkins). Xerox purchased seven of Amjadi’s sculptures, now on display at its offices in Leesburg, Virginia. In fact, Amjadi is hired to do major installation pieces on a regular basis; just this year, he has done two major public commissions – one for Lowe’s in Sacramento, and another for Club One in Petaluma.

Amjadi’s sculptures are welded from metal, yet are full of humanity and sentiment. His creations are scaled to a wide range of sizes, and appeal to a wide audience; one of his pieces, entitled Bond, is so popular that he has sold it in various sizes to multiple clients. Although many people buy his sculptures to complement garden and outdoor settings, his pieces also look striking when put on display indoors. Over the years, he has gathered a loyal following – and all he had to do, it seems, was start welding and putting his sculptures in his garden. It is a relief to talk to someone like Amjadi; like his sculptures, he makes life seem easy and carefree. “The sculptures get sold, and I’m always making new ones”; this kind of directness is typical of Amjadi’s worldview. His artistic credo is just as powerful as it is simple: “for those who seek to learn art and want to let their creativity come to life, I say do it.”

Amjadi’s sculpture garden and studio is located at 23150 Arnold Drive, Sonoma, California 95476, nestled among the wineries Gloria Ferrer, Anaba, Schug, Jacuzzi and Cline. The location of his studio makes absolute sense to Amjadi, who says that “wine is an art and so is everything else.” To view more of Amjadi’s work, visit www.ha-artforms.com.
You’re Invited!

**FACULTY+ALUMNI FINE ART AUCTION**

**79 GALLERY, SAN FRANCISCO**

**PAINTING + PRINTMAKING + SCULPTURE + JEWELRY**

You can view the complete list of auction items and participating artists at www.academyart.edu/auction.

You can support the Academy of Art University by purchasing an online catalog at www.academyart.edu/auction.

**Please join us for an auction preview on Thursday, November 5 from 5 to 7:30 p.m.**

**The annual Faculty+Alumni Art Auction is a wonderful opportunity to showcase the incredible work of our talented faculty and alumni,” says Hillary Welde, Director of Galleries at the Academy of Art University.**

**If you would like a hard copy of the catalog, please email your mailing address to alumni@academyart.edu.**

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**THE ACADEMY OF ART UNIVERSITY’S School of Fine Art will host its 34th Annual Faculty and Alumni Fine Art Auction on Saturday, November 7, 2009 at the 79 Gallery (79 New Montgomery, San Francisco.) An reception kicks things off at 5 p.m. followed by a live auction at 7 p.m.**

**The Faculty and Alumni Fine Art Auction has continued to grow in scale and scope each year. As in past years, 50 percent of all proceeds are donated to the Academy of Art University’s Student Scholarship Fund and is tax deductible. The remaining 50 percent is dispersed directly to the artist.**

**Last year’s event generated over $160,000 in sales. With your support, we hope to raise even more in 2009! To view a complete list of auction items and participating artists, visit www.academyart.edu/auction.**

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**FALL 2009**
For many, Alum Chris Cortez needs no introduction: he achieved instant fame as the winner of The Cut, the CBS reality show hosted by none other than Tommy Hilfiger. His appearance as a contestant is worthy of a story in itself. Just imagine tens of thousands of aspiring designers across the country, all answering what they think is their personal calling – to be chosen as a fashion phenom by the legendary Hilfiger. Week after week, Cortez survived a gamut of challenges, judged by icons such as Karl Lagerfeld, Simon Doonan, Russell Simmons, and Tommy Hilfiger himself.

Nothing could be more surreal than becoming a television star, making it to the final competition for your dream job – or so one would think. For Cortez, the final challenge was more like something out of a film than a reality show. Cutting back (and forgive the pun) to Cortez at age 15, we find him working at Macy’s flagship New York City store in Herald Square. Back then, Cortez would exchange his paychecks for items from the Hilfiger brand, collecting over 250 pieces from his favorite designer. While working at Macy’s Herald Square, Cortez naively and hopefully asked if he could design the store’s windows. What he got at the time was a pat on the head, and the sage advice that he would need a degree if he wanted to do that.

Flash forward to the last challenge of The Cut – Cortez was one step away from being chosen by Hilfiger. And what was Hilfiger’s last challenge? You guessed it – to design the windows of Macy’s Herald Square. And now, Cortez is working at Hilfiger designing accessories, including, bags, belts, small leather goods, and footwear. A beautiful ending, no?

But if that is all you know about Cortez, you are really missing out. Shortly after his win on The Cut, the show went into international syndication and wave upon wave of press coverage began. As Cortez himself explains, “My goal was never to be a star or do reality TV. I saw an opportunity to use the show as a strategic move in my career.” In 2007, Barney’s asked Cortez to be their featured artist for Fashion Meets Art, featuring previous artists such as Damien Hirst, Ruben and Isabel Toledo, and Dennis Hopper. Along the way, Cortez built an impressive reputation and network of supporters, which included the senior vice president of Barney’s, creative director of Wolff Olins, and a designer who had worked with Brioni for over 20 years.

Cortez then made his move, launching his own design through distribution firm, Cortez Groupe (www.cortezgroupe.com.) Like Cortez himself, the firm is a completely

Television Star, Fashion Phenom, Designer Extraordinaire

Chris Cortez

New York, NY
MFA 2005

Cortez is currently living in New York City. In his spare time, he likes to collect trash off the street and turn it into treasures. He keeps a visual blog of his found inspirations at www.sensiblecuriosity.com. If you have any thoughts, ideas, or potential collaborations, write to him at cc@cortezgroupe.com.

FOR MANY, ALUM CHRIS CORTEZ needs no introduction: he achieved instant fame as the winner of The Cut, the CBS reality show hosted by none other than Tommy Hilfiger. His appearance as a contestant is worthy of a story in itself. Just imagine tens of thousands of aspiring designers across the country, all answering what they think is their personal calling – to be chosen as a fashion phenom by the legendary Hilfiger. Week after week, Cortez survived a gamut of challenges, judged by icons such as Karl Lagerfeld, Simon Doonan, Russell Simmons, and Tommy Hilfiger himself.

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ACADEMY OF ART UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

ACADEMY OF ART UNIVERSITY Director of Online Animation and Visual Effects, Vince De Quattro, has been an enthusiastic proponent of the new focus on developing alumni relations for his department.

“As an industry, we are very aware of the importance of networking, both within a collaborative framework for production and in the narrower terms of job identification and placement. In my role as the Online Director, networking has been my priority focus for the placement success of our graduates.”

De Quattro has implemented online offices for his full-time and adjunct faculty, has implemented online workshops, and is designing real-time online lecture elements for select coursework at the graduate level. His non-traditional approaches to distance learning are driven by the growing entry-level competition in the entertainment market.

De Quattro feels that continued portfolio development is essential after graduation. “We are adopting a dynamic approach to graduate outreach marketing tailored to the individual student’s skill set. We are doing more regional research to find internships and entry positions for those students who are outside of large entertainment markets.

“After graduation, our alumni have some interesting options for continued connection to our department. As we are currently putting in place a production system that mirrors the industry, we are looking to collaborate with our alumni in the areas of cinematography, story development, modeling, rigging, animation and lighting. We are offering our distinguished graduates adjunct faculty positions as we find that they make excellent instructors, both online and in-person.”

All graduates of any department of the University are invited to join the departmental web site (vhgateaway.com), our Facebook group (AAU:VFX), and follow us on Twitter (twitter.com/AAU:VFXClub). De Quattro can be contacted at vdsq@alumni.academyart.edu.

*Sustainability*

Printing this 36-page newsletter on Mohawk Options 100% PC Coated White Smooth 80# text (25,000 copies; 4-F, double-folded, finished size 8.5 x 11); used 55,500 sheets or 8,880 lbs; generated environmental savings equivalent to:

- 3,963 miles not driven
- 7,889 pounds greenhouse gases prevented
- 60 million BTUs energy not consumed
- 4,007 pounds solid waste not generated
- 85 trees preserved for the future
- 36,213 gallons wastewater flow saved
- 246 pounds waterborne waste not created

Source: Mohawk Environmental Calculators, available at www.mohawkpaper.com; Conversion are provided by the EDF (Environmental Defense Fund) and/or the U.S. EPA.

Looking back at what pushed us forward.

1969, Richard S. Stephens, Art Director for Surfer Magazine, founds the Academy of Advertising Art, along with his wife Clara, with a beginning enrollment of 45 students.

1976, Curriculum expands to include Fashion Illustration

1980, First Fine Art Department is added

1984, Enrollment grows to 250 students; courses offered in General Advertising and Commercial Art, Fashion Illustration, Cartooning, and Lettering & Layout

1992, Richard A. Stephens, son of founder Richard S. Stephens, becomes President

1996, Magazine Illustration and Photography curriculum are added

1997, Art History, English, and American History added to the curriculum

1998, Academy is granted authority to offer a Bachelor’s Degree in Fine Art; Fine Art, Fashion, Photography, Interior Design, Advertising and Illustration classes offered; Academy acquires its own space at 740 Taylor Street

2004, Academy expands to 625 Sutter

2006, Academy continues to expand to 540 Powell Street; approximately 750 students enrolled; library opens; in-house advertising agency begins (ADAO)

2007, Master of Fine Arts program inaugurated and approved by the California State Department of Education

2009, The Academy’s Department of Transportation begins a shuttle service for students; today the school maintains a fleet of over 50 vehicles

2008, Academy receives NATTS accreditation; Graphic Design courses offered

2013, College expands to provide a student housing facility across the street from 625 Sutter

2015, Academy is accredited by NASA

2016, Academy receives FIDER accreditation

2019, Evan Stephens, granddaughter of founder Richard S. Stephens, appointed President; 79 New Montgomery building acquired; School of Industrial Design starts as Product Design

2021, School of Motion Pictures & Video begins; Academy’s first dormitory at 680 Sutter is purchased

2023, Academy introduces Programs in Computer Arts and Digital Media; Included classes in 3D Modeling, Animation and New Media; School of Product Design becomes Product & Industrial Design

2024, Academy receives ACICS accreditation; Interior Design becomes Interior Architecture & Design

2026, School of Architecture begins; School of Motion Pictures & Video becomes School of Motion Pictures & Television

2029, First online classes offered

2034, Academy of Art College becomes Academy of Art University; School of Animation opens

2035, Academy receives WASC accreditation; Classic Car Museum housing over 100 historic cars, including a 1929 Auburn Speedster begins at 305 Van Ness

2038, School of Multimedia Communications opens; NCAA Division II Athletic Program begins, led by former San Francisco 49ers Jamie Williams

2039, School of Game Design separates from Animation; School of Music for Visual Media begins; Computer Arts New Media becomes Web Design & New Media; Academy maintains 17 academic buildings and 17 residence halls in San Francisco; 17,000 students currently enrolled with over 30 areas of academic emphasis and over 50,000 alumni worldwide

80 Years of Creative Passion

Retroview affords us the opportunity to look back at what was happening in society, the arts, and education. Celebrating 80 years, we highlight the Academy’s long history of inspiring and educating a global expanse of artists and designers.

Retaining the name Academy of Art College, the school assumed the name Academy of Art University in 1979. The Academy is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), the American Association of Art Colleges (AAAU), and the California State Department of Education. The Academy is also accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NATS), the National Association of Schools of Art (NASAA), and the National Association of Schools of Interior Design (NASID). The Academy is the only independent art college with the RFC designation by the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU). The Academy received its first FIDER accreditation in 2008 and FIDER reaccreditation in 2016.

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In touch from the great beyond.

The Alumni Association remembers Aurelio (Gig) Gonella – WWII veteran, Cannes Film Festival award winner, art director, former Academy instructor and founder of the Vancouver Yacht Co. – who passed away on August 5, 2009. After receiving his MFA from the Academy, Gonella was an art director in New York City working for 25 years as creative director for Dancer Fitzgerald & Sample Advertising Agency in San Francisco (more recently known as Saatchi & Saatchi). Gonella was 85 years old.

\[SHARED ON SHOIGHT_ALUMNI@ACADEMYART.EDU\]

Have you recently started a new career, won an award, gotten married, had children? Maybe you’ve had a recent exhibition, gallery opening, or film debut?

The Academy of Art University Alumni Association welcomes news of your milestones and events. If you would like your accomplishments featured in Class Notes, please email alumni@academyart.edu subject: Class Notes.

\[EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS SPECIFICALLY GEARED FOR ACADEMY ALUMNI\]

\[FIGURE: \]
TURNING BACK THE CLOCK over the last year, the Alumni Association has many reasons to celebrate: The first-ever Bay Area Chapter kick-off, the release of alumna Euna Lee’s essay and Laura Ling, and the launch of A Journal which was well received by a diverse audience of nearly 20,000 alumni, faculty, students, and top industry professionals. Looking forward, the excitement continues to build with the Academy’s 80th Anniversary, the anticipation of the New York Chapter kick-off and plans for future chapter locations, the new Academy of Art news feed, and the continued growth of alumni networking opportunities.

Want to get involved? Visit our website at alumni.academyart.edu to keep your contact information current and participate in our pilot program, Content 1.0, a new initiative centered around the diverse accomplishments of our alumni. The content collected from this project will appear on the pages of A Journal, on our website, and in future alumni initiatives.

Need some exposure? Post your portfolio link on the alumni portfolio page or search our wide range of alumni talent at alumni.academyart.edu/search_portfolio.jsp. Have some memories to share? We will continue our sharing of top industry professionals.

Remember that your undergraduate and graduate years aren’t just about the diploma you received, but the lessons you learned, the connections you made, the relationships you continue to build, and the vibrant contributions you now make to society as artists and designers.

All the best,

Janet Preloger, Director of Alumni
preloger@academyart.edu
so what’s the story?

When you think Apple, what comes to mind? iPhone? iPod? Innovation?
How about Google? Managing the world’s information?
Charles and Ray Eames? Bringing high-end design to the masses?

And what about the Academy of Art University? What is our story? Thousands of world-class artists, designers, actors, and visual communicators have passed through the doors of 79NM, enriching the professional landscape and local communities around the world.

The newly emerging Academy of Art University Alumni Association is now writing our story. We want the world to know who we are, what we do, and the professional work we represent. A Journal is the first tangible result. Who are we? What are we doing? Where are we doing it? Why do we do what we do? What makes us, us?

Most alumni associations want your money. Not this one. We want to know who you are, where you are, and what you are doing. And we want to share your story with the world. That’s what’s in it for you: the opportunity to be part of something much larger, a global voice in the larger world of visual communication. Get started by visiting alumni.academyart.edu today.

A sneak peek at some of what’s inside this issue.

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