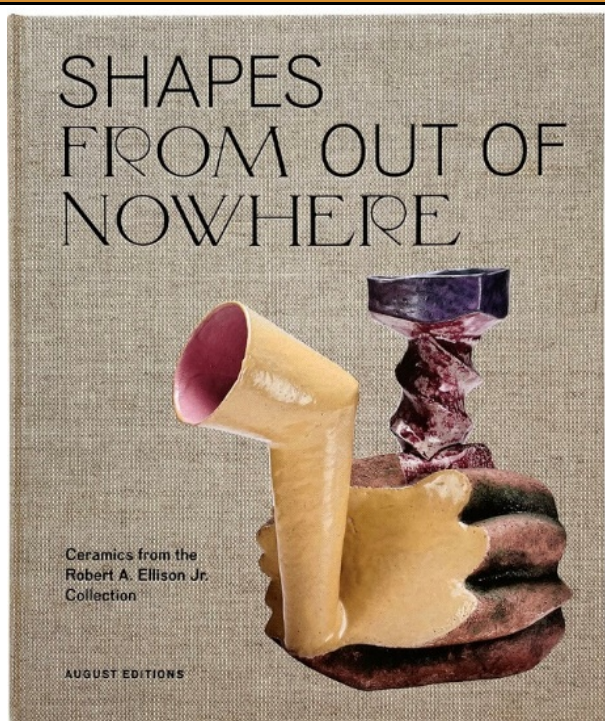


Alfred University

March 2021

Out of the Classroom

A newsletter of faculty activities and accomplishments



The Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met) this week opened the ceramic art exhibit [Shapes from Out of Nowhere](#). Drawn from the collection of Robert A. Ellison Jr., the exhibition features the work of many artists who have studied and taught in the School of Art and Design including professors **John Gill** and **Wayne Higby**.

From Adrienne Spinozzi's catalogue introduction: "For the past fifty years, Robert A. Ellison Jr. has quietly and intuitively built one of the most significant assemblages of nineteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first-century ceramics, all the while observing and investigating the creative possibilities and ambitions of the humblest of materials: clay."

The exhibition celebrates artists who transformed the medium through "deconstructing the vessel" and embracing "the freedom found in clay."

Assistant Professor **Colleen Wahl** gave a 4-day workshop to BFA dance students at Utah Valley University. The workshop, co-taught with Cadence Whittier through Integrated Movement Studies, focused on the use of Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies to develop and expand dance composition. Students explored how they generate movement, and then develop movement through specific energetic and form change choices. They also learned to weave evocative and analytic language in order to communicate specificity and intent to their dancers.

Rachel Lynett Spurgers' play *Letters to Kamala* will be part of [WAM Theatre's 2021 season](#). The play, directed by Nicole Brewer, will be available to stream Sunday, March 14, to Sunday, March 21. In the tense lead up to the 2020 presidential election, playwright Rachel Lynett conjures three female

American political leaders of the past to share their wisdom, perspective, and wry humor with VP candidate Kamala Harris.

Missing from our history books, meet three powerful women on whose shoulders Kamala now stands: Charlotta Bass, the first Black woman candidate for vice president, Charlene Mitchell, the first Black woman to run for president, and Patsy Matsu Takemoto Mink, the first woman of color to be elected to the House of Representatives, first Asian-American woman to run in Congress and the first Asian-American to run for president.

Playwright Rachel Lynett explained that following Kamala Harris's nomination for Vice President: "I wanted to write a play that explored pride mixed in with caution, a play that questioned our cultural obsession with firsts but also made room for understanding the weight that being "first" carries. Who were the other firsts? What sacrifices did they have to make to get there and what can we ultimately never compromise on?"

David De Graff's short story in the form of a course syllabus [The Theory and Practice of Time Travel](#) was just published in the [Translunar Traveler's Lounge](#).

Gary Ostrower chaired campus Zoom meetings with outside guests, including Congressman Tom Reed '93, and alumnus Tyler Maroney '95, CEO of the investigative agency QRI and author of the highly praised [The Modern Detective: How Corporate Intelligence is Reshaping the World](#).



Mojca Kuplen has had two papers published in philosophical journals. "[Reflective and Non-reflective Aesthetic Ideas in Kant's Theory of Art](#)" is aimed at resolving some of the inconsistencies within Kant's theory of aesthetic ideas that have been left unaddressed by previous interpretations. Specifically, Kant's text appears to be imbued with the following two tensions. First, there appears to be a conflict between his commitment to the view that mere sensations cannot function as vehicles for the communication of aesthetic ideas and his claim that musical tones, on the account of being mere sensations, can express aesthetic ideas. Second, his description of musical form as of aesthetic ideas as free imaginative representations that contain a wealth of thoughts and meanings. If what it means to express aesthetic ideas is precisely to stimulate much thinking, then how can exist an object that expresses aesthetic ideas, but without leaving any thoughts behind? Mojca attempts to resolve these two perceived tensions by proposing a distinction between reflective and non-reflective aesthetic ideas communicated by form and mere sensations respectively.

Mojca's second paper, "Kant's Theory of Laughter, in *Debates in Aesthetics*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (upcoming February 2021) offers an alternative interpretation of Immanuel Kant's theory of laughter that can meet the challenges left behind by the interpretations that have so far been given. She argues that

laughter is a reaction to the dissolution of nonsense, which takes the form of realizing our own misconceptions about the object. Laughter reveals something about our cognitive and rational system: namely, that it is insufficient to explain all of our experiences and perceptions of the world and that we often need to revise our expectations in order to make sense of the world. In this respect, laughter stands in a direct opposition to Kant's notion of the sublime.

In December, **Becky Prophet** was again a reader for the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF) for the New Plays Project, Region 6 (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas). With a team of two other readers in Region 2 (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, parts of Virginia, and West Virginia), she reviewed many new one-act plays and recommended four for selection at the Region 6 festival.

In January, Becky Prophet attended the virtual KCACTF Region 2 Festival. She directed *The Strategy* a new one-act play (selected by readers in Region 6), working closely with an excellent emerging playwright, Avery Erskine of University of Virginia. Avery's play was selected to represent Region 2 in the national festival in Washington, DC. Becky also responded to Irene Ryan Acting Auditions, and the Improvisation Bash.

On January 30th, **Mina Sedaghatjou** and her colleagues, James Howard from Johns Hopkins University and Minnie Liu from Simon Fraser University (Canada), presented at "The Fields Institute for Research in Mathematical Sciences" in Toronto, Canada. In early 2020, when Covid-19 changed teaching and learning in unforeseeable ways, they gathered to investigate the challenges that STEM faculty members faced in such a rushed online transition. They received 111 responses from STEM faculty members across the globe within four weeks. The results of the study showed that online "assessment/evaluation" and "pedagogy" are the two delicate and intertwined challenging aspects of teaching and learning online. They also found that the pandemic opened a new chapter in teaching STEM online for which the need for patience, understanding and empathy came to be the paramount and missing dimensions of the Khan's (2017) e-learning framework, which they called the "Pedagogy of Care."

Robert J. Maiden, PhD, presented two submissions at the Gerontological Society 2020 Annual Scientific Meeting in November at Philadelphia, PA. The theme of the conference was Turning 75: Why Aging Matters. The presentations were done in virtual reality. He presented a study on "The Effect of Loneliness on Cognition: A Longitudinal Study." His co-authors were Bert Hayslip, Jr, PhD; University of North Texas & **Larry Greil, PhD**, Alfred University.

The study's findings suggest that *loneliness and less organizational involvement* among older women (above 60) are associated with lower fluid intelligence scores, but not with crystallized intelligence and not crystallized nor fluid intelligence for men. This implies that *interventions targeting the promotion of organizational involvement* may enhance cognitive functioning in late life among women such as encouraging older women to be socially active, participate in older friend's groups, and supporting housing and neighborhood revitalization programs.

The second submission was a symposium titled, "From Ad Hoc to Academy: Developmental Milestones over 48 Years of the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE)."

Dr. Maiden presentation related the back story of the development of competency-based education in gerontology. This ultimately resulted in the creation of an accreditation entity in gerontology named the Accreditation for Gerontology Education Council (AGEC). The competencies are assessed through measuring student learning outcomes which reflect the quality of the curricula of gerontology programs with the self-evaluated goal of continuous improvement.

Kevin Adams published an article in Slavic & East European Information Resources: "Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Punk Alternative Publications: Challenges to Fugitive Materials."

This article looks at punk publications in Slavic, East European and Eurasian countries such as music releases, zines and samizdat. In the article, he examines the history and culture surrounding these publications as well as issues of access and preservation.

The full abstract for the article is available [here](#). If anyone would like access to the full text of the article, Adam can provide limited copies by emailing him at adamska@alfred.edu.