

# CONNECTIONS

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COLLEGE of  
ARTS & SCIENCES

**Culture  
Warriors**

**Innovative  
Improv**

**Stellar  
Science**

**Island  
of Shame**

**Spaces  
to Dream**





**On the Cover: Richard Bell**

Kamilaroi / Kooma / Jiman Gurang / Big Brush Stroke / 2005 / synthetic polymer paint on canvas / 240 (h) x 270 (w) cm / National Gallery of Australia

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**Letter  
from  
the  
dean**

**COMMUNITIES ARE BUILT ON STORIES**—those we recount, those we experience, and those we share. In this issue of *Connections*, we want to share with you some of the many stories that make the College of Arts and Sciences such a vibrant community and that exemplify the difference our faculty, alumni, students, and friends make every day on campus, in the District, and around the globe.

We'll share stories of our faculty members whose world-class research takes them around (and sometimes far beyond) our planet. Scholars like anthropologist David Vine, whose research for his internationally acclaimed book on the controversial U.S. military base on the island of Diego Garcia led him to live with the Chagossian people in exile for seven months. Or performing arts professor Fernando Benadon, who recently won a Guggenheim Fellowship for his groundbreaking work on microtiming and improvisation. Or U. J. Sofia, professor and chair of physics, whose research on interstellar dust promises to change forever the way astrophysicists see the sky.

You'll also find stories of college alumni and supporters who exemplify American University's ideals of excellence and service to the greater good. Students and faculty members tell how the generosity and spirit of AU arts champions Cyrus Katzen and Harold Greenberg helped raise our arts to a world-class level. Creative writing alumna Anne Lacy tells how fellow MFA graduate Talah Abu Rahmeh uses poetry to articulate her memories of growing up in a time of conflict. And Molly Smith, performing arts alumna and artistic director of Arena Stage, shares her plans to turn the Tony-award-winning theatre company into a state-of-the-art performance complex and artists' community in the heart of D.C.

Last, but by no means least, you'll read stories about the college's world-class exhibitions and programs. The flagship show of our AU Museum's fall season, Australian Indigenous Art Triennial: Culture Warriors, represents the most comprehensive indigenous Australian art exhibit ever seen in the United States. And a new, multimillion dollar Math for America grant funds a teacher education program that will help relieve our country's chronic shortage of qualified math teachers.

It is with great pleasure that we share these stories with you and invite you to share your stories with us.

Happy reading,

Peter Starr  
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

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# Culture

by Anne Lacy

# Warriors



H. J. Wedge / *Wiradjuri / Taking the Land Away* / 2006 / synthetic polymer paint on canvas / 71 (h) x 178 (w) cm / Courtesy of the Big River Collection, Tasmania / © H.J. Wedge

**THE LARGEST COLLECTION** of Australian indigenous art ever to tour the United States will be exhibited at the American University Museum in the Katzen Arts Center through December 6.

Australian Indigenous Art Triennial: Culture Warriors showcases a remarkable range of works by 30 contemporary indigenous artists from across Australia. The museum has dedicated two floors to this expansive exhibition. Eleven artists attended the opening on September 12, gave a public gallery talk, and met with art students.

The show includes works in the Western tradition—painting, photography, and sculpture—interpreted through the artists' cultural lens. Also

there are fiber pieces and wood carvings that employ techniques drawn from indigenous artisan tradition.

Director and curator Jack Rasmussen says the exhibit is a major coup for the museum, partly because of its size and partly because of its politics.

"This is by far the largest project we've ever taken on," he says. "We're working with the National Gallery of Australia—the most important and biggest museum in that country—and working with them has required us to grow in our level of professionalism."

"We're very much interested in displaying international art and we like art with a little bit of a political edge to it, so



Christopher Pease / *Minang/Wardandi/Balardong/Nyoongar / Target* / 2005 / oil on canvas / 100 (h) x 180 (w) cm / Courtesy of the Nelson Family Collection

an aboriginal show is a great opportunity for us," he adds. "We look for art that is engaged with society and has a function in that society."

Rasmussen expects museum visitors to be wowed by the work. "The primary reason we're do-

ing this exhibition is because the work is great and needs to be seen," says Rasmussen.

"The recent availability of Western artists' materials that were not completely ephemeral, weren't grains of sand or natural pigments ap-

plied to the body, has meant that work is being created that can travel, creating the possibility for this art to be seen outside Australia. There is such a rich visual tradition amongst the aboriginal people that just hasn't had an audience here." ■

# Innovative

by Jessica Tabak

# Improv



Photos by Jeff Watts

**“The new project would add a visual side, allowing listeners to see where the cuts were made as the music unfolds.”**

**IN JUNE, FERNANDO** Benadon was awarded a 2009 Guggenheim Fellowship in large part for his innovative debut album, *Intuitivo*, which was released this spring.

For *Intuitivo*, Benadon took improvised solo recording sessions from seven musicians into the studio, where he melded them into a series of cohesive compositions.

“On the one hand, I had complete control—and on the other hand, it was completely improvised and fresh,” the music professor explains. “It was the best of both worlds.”

Studio sampling in

music has become increasingly popular in the past two decades, but Benadon’s approach is different.

“This has been done many times, but, in my view, the result has always sounded artificial,” he says. “When you listen, you can tell that the music is altered electronically. I wanted to use similar techniques to achieve something that sounds more natural.”

Benadon also sought to widen the appeal of improvised music. By editing these recordings in the studio, Benadon was able to capture what he calls the “freshness of

free improvisation,” independent of the apparent musical chaos from which it is often born.

Benadon plans to begin his fellowship in fall 2010 to further his research on microtiming, the nonmetronomic rhythms played by live musicians.

“In countless musical traditions around the world, musicians bend time through subtle inflections,” Benadon explains. “They speed it up a bit, they slow it down a bit, and these changes make the music interesting, human, expressive, and great.”

He also hopes to

spend some of his fellowship time working on a follow-up project to *Intuitivo* that would incorporate film footage of the musicians cut to mirror the musical edits.

“With *Intuitivo*, the listener doesn’t know where the cuts are because I worked hard to make them imperceptible,” says Benadon. “The new project would add a visual side, allowing listeners to see where the cuts were made as the music unfolds.”

Sponsored by the Guggenheim Foundation, the fellowships are awarded annually to scholars and artists

who demonstrate both outstanding accomplishments and strong potential for continued achievement.

Each year, the foundation chooses about 220 fellows from a pool of more than 3500 applicants across the academic spectrum.

Benadon joined the AU faculty in 2004. His research focuses on rhythmic complexity, and his compositions have earned him awards and recognition both nationally and abroad. Benadon oversees the composition and theory tracks for the BA in music. ■

# Stellar Science

by  
Jessica  
Tabak

**“The most exciting thing about coming to AU is that physics here is in a growth mode.”**

**THEY'RE CALLED** interstellar dust, cosmic grains, and even “dirt in space.” By any name, these miniscule particles of carbon, graphite, and silicates suspended in the space between earth and the rest of the universe have a profound impact on the field of astrophysics.

“What [astronomers] are studying is far away, and the only information we have to work with is light,” says U. J. Sofia, pro-

fessor and astrophysicist. “As light travels thousands of light-years through this dust, even though there is very little of it, it distorts the light that’s coming to us. And this means that the data we have to work with are distorted, too.”

Sofia primarily uses data from the Hubble Space Telescope’s ultraviolet spectrometer—an instrument that breaks down images of invisible light waves into their

component colors—to determine how interstellar dust of various shapes, sizes, and composition distorts light. Astrophysicists use this information to devise ways to control for the dust in their observational data.

Sofia got his first taste of astrophysics as a high school intern at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland. His internship gave him hands-on experi-

ence working with spectra from the International Ultraviolet Explorer satellite. As an undergraduate at Wesleyan University, Sofia continued to use ultraviolet spectroscopy data to study quasars.

It was during his doctoral candidacy at the University of Wisconsin–Madison that interstellar

ment ever made, before it was even launched, was a phenomenal experience,” he says.

In addition to his work on interstellar dust, Sofia has recently begun working with his father, Yale University astrophysicist Sabatino Sofia, and Goddard scientists on an international project that measures the sun’s size and traces its temperature over time. These measurements will be used to determine how much energy the sun is releasing, which informs projections about the effects of global warming on climate change.

“We tend to treat the sun as if it’s this big light-bulb up in the sky, but its energy emissions vary,” Sofia explains. “What we don’t understand is how they vary. And even a tiny, tiny variation could have a large effect on average temperatures.”

Understanding these variations and how they alter the earth’s temperature will enable scientists to determine to what extent global warming is attributable to pollutants and how to combat the effects.

Previously a professor at Whitman College in Washington State, Sofia joined the AU faculty this summer as professor and chair of the physics department. “The most exciting thing about coming to AU is that physics here is in a growth mode,” Sofia says. “What more exciting opportunity could there be than to help build a small but very strong department into a larger department that’s even stronger?” ■



Courtesy of U. J. Sofia

# Spaces to Dream

by  
Sally  
Acharya



**“To see that the arts had come to that level of importance at AU was just incredible.”**

AT AU, THE ARTS matter. That’s what Harold Greenberg and Cyrus Katzen always knew, even in the days when students performed in a cramped experimental theatre and artists exhibited their work in the out-of-the-way room called the Watkins Gallery. Students always dream large. Katzen and Greenberg helped to give them space for their dreams.

Greenberg passed

away in April at the age of 92; Katzen in July, at 91. They each leave behind a lasting legacy: the Harold and Sylvia Greenberg Theatre, which opened in 2003, and the Cyrus and Myrtle Katzen Arts Center, which opened in 2005.

These state-of-the-art spaces have, as AU museum director Jack Rasmussen puts it, “changed AU, its face and its substance.”

Statistics alone are

impressive: thousands of square feet of space for classrooms, studios, and performance and exhibition space. Harder to quantify is the impact the Greenberg and Katzen have had on AU and its students.

Bethany Corey, BA interdisciplinary studies '07, experienced both settings. “The facilities were so much more conducive to what we needed,” she recalls. “To move into a facility that’s nice

and clean and has good acoustics and is built for what we’re doing made it so much easier to take that next step and be that much better.”

Faculty felt the magic, too. “I’d get off the elevator and walk into that building and feel I was Alice in Wonderland,” recalls performing arts professor Gail Humphries Mardrosian of the opening days of the Katzen, which followed so closely on the opening of the Greenberg. “To see that the arts had come to that level of importance at AU was just incredible.”

The excitement goes far beyond campus. The existence of the Greenberg enabled AU to forge a connection with Russia’s legendary Volkov Theatre. A performance by the acting troupe at the newly opened Greenberg Theatre led to a memorable trip to Russia by AU students to perform at the International Theatre Festival and study with Russian actors at the theatre’s prestigious drama academy.

The Katzen’s AU Museum is the largest university art exhibition space in Washington, D.C., and one of the largest in the nation. “The museum has become an important center for contemporary art of the United States, as well as international art shown in Washington,” notes art department chair Helen Langa. Critics make a point of reviewing the shows; world-famous artists come to speak.

That in itself is inspiring to students. But students

of the past few years also have memories of Harold Greenberg enjoying the plays his gift helped make possible and of Cy Katzen strolling the halls and asking students about their plans for the future.

“These were more than men who just gave money. Our students [knew] these men,” says performing arts professor and cochair Caleen Sinnette Jennings. “They enjoyed the buildings and the people in them. They were so accessible and radiated how much they cared to the students. They wanted to see students living out their dreams. That made it extra special.”

Katzen had become involved with AU through his wife Myrtle, a painter, whose experience with art classes on campus was so positive that she formed a lifelong bond with the school. Sylvia Greenberg’s family has a long tradition of supporting AU, and the Kay Spiritual Life Center bears the name of Sylvia’s father, Abraham Kay.

Cy Katzen and Harold Greenberg will be missed as members of the community, but their affection for AU will be felt for years to come. “If there is a legacy we hope to live up to,” says Jennings, “we want to keep that sense that these are places for human beings to come and celebrate what it means to be a human being—what it means to create and dream.”

*Adapted from “Space to Dream” by Sally Acharya, American magazine (Summer/August 2009).* ■

# Island of Shame

by  
Jessica  
Tabak



Courtesy of Chagos Refugee Group

**“They were told that their islands had been sold and that they could never go home again.”**

**DAVID VINE’S NEW BOOK** is getting a lot of attention. Since *Island of Shame: The Secret History of the U.S. Military Base on Diego Garcia* was released in April, the anthropology professor has appeared on news programs on four continents and lectured in major U.S. and U.K. cities, as well as in Brussels, Mauritius, and the Seychelles. And the *New York Review of Books* gave *Island of Shame* a front-page

review on May 28, declaring it a “meticulously researched, coldly furious book.”

This is all good news for Vine, who wrote the book primarily to raise awareness of the United States and British governments’ calculated, forcible expulsion of the Chagossian people.

“This story has remained almost completely unknown stateside,” says Vine. “I hope that the U.S. government will finally accept and act on its

responsibility toward the Chagossians and all they have suffered in exile.”

The story of the Chagossian exile began in the late 1960s, when the U.S. Navy identified the Chagos Islands—a remote, British-controlled archipelago in the Indian Ocean—as a strategically ideal location for a new military base.

“People in the U.S. military, at that point, were anticipating that they would get kicked out of a lot of their military bases

as colonies became independent,” Vine explains.

The U.S. government consulted with the British and the two conceived a plan to forcibly remove the Chagos’s more than 2,000 inhabitants in order to establish the Diego Garcia U.S. Naval Base.

The systematic exile began in 1968, when residents who had been traveling off-island were suddenly denied permission to return home. “They were told that their islands had been sold and that they could never go home again,” says Vine.

Within the next couple of years, the British began restricting deliveries of food and medical supplies to the Chagos.

In 1971, government officials launched a campaign to round up and kill islanders’ dogs. They then loaded the pets’

owners on cargo boats and deported them to the islands of Mauritius and Seychelles, both British territories, more than 1,000 miles away.

The Chagos economy relied exclusively on a coconut plantation established in the late 1900s by a company owned jointly by Mauritius and Seychelles. The plantation employed and provided for virtually all of the islands’ residents.

“While it wasn’t a luxurious life they were living, it was an incredibly secure one where they didn’t lack for anything,” says Vine. “They had universal employment and an array of social service benefits, including free health care, free education, and home ownership.”

But on arrival in Mauritius and Seychelles, it was a different story. They had no jobs, property, or benefits, and there was no resettlement program in place. “Just like other peoples around the world who have been forcibly displaced [without assistance], the Chagossian people became impoverished,” says Vine. “And they have remained impoverished as they have remained in exile.”

The islanders continue their efforts to return to their homeland and win reparations for their losses. When documents related to their exile became available to the public in the late 1990s, the Chagossians initiated legal proceedings against the British government.

While the British High



Court has ruled three times in their favor over the past decade, the House of Lords recently ruled that the British government could legally continue their exile. An appeal to the European Court of Human Rights is currently under way.

Vine became involved in the Chagossians' struggle in 2001, when Michael Tiger—the islanders' legal counsel and then professor at AU's Washington College of Law—asked him to serve as an expert witness in the cases being filed against the American and British governments.

Vine's research on the anthropological impact of the exile on the Chagossian people involved probing archived documents in the two countries, conducting extensive interviews with United States officials involved in the expulsion, and living with exiles in Mauritius and Seychelles for seven months over the course of several years.

The case against the United States was dismissed in 2004. Currently, the legal team, composed primarily of faculty and students from WCL's UNROW Human

Rights Impact Litigation Clinic, is exploring alternative legal angles.

By spotlighting the Chagossians' story, Vine aims to call into question the militaristic foreign policy that has characterized the United States for much of the last century.

"These policies have inflicted terrible costs on people from around the world," Vine says. "It is my hope that the book will be part of efforts to create a new kind of U.S. foreign policy based less on military force and more on diplomatic, social, and economic forms of engagement." ■

## Stage by Stage by Smith



**This space will include classrooms and artists' apartments that will "make the center a true community."**

OVER THE PAST THREE decades, Molly Smith has built a reputation on her dedication to promoting the works of new American playwrights. Currently, she is spearheading the completion of Arena Stage's campaign for a new theatre complex.

As artistic director of Washington's Arena Stage, the College of Arts and Sciences alumna has overseen the Next Stage Campaign

since it began in 2002. With well over 100 million dollars raised, the company is poised to open the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle in fall 2010, a new performance space that will complement Arena's other two theatres, the Kreeger and the Fichandler Stage. The 200-seat, state-of-the-art Cradle will be dedicated to developing new plays.

The Kreeger and

Fichandler are also slated for significant renovations, and the three spaces will be joined to create a 250,000-square-foot theatre complex in the heart of D.C. This space will include classrooms and artists' apartments that will "make the center a true community," says Smith.

"This is a defining moment in the history of one of America's most impor-

tant cultural institutions," she says. "Just as Arena Stage's founding forever changed the course of American theatre, so, too, will the achievement of these ambitious goals."

After beginning her degree in prelaw studies at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, Smith moved to the District and earned a BA in drama from Catholic University. She received an MA in performing arts from AU in 1976. The university awarded her an honorary doctorate in 2001.

Upon completing her master's degree, Smith and her then husband packed up their belongings—including 50 used theatre seats—and headed back to Alaska, where she opened Perse-

verance Theatre in 1979. During her 19 years there as artistic director, Smith coaxed the theatre onto the national stage, directing more than 60 productions and championing new play development.

In 1998, Smith moved back to Washington, D.C., to become Arena Stage's artistic director. Under her leadership, the Tony Award-winning company has focused on bringing American stories to the stage, producing classics, acclaimed contemporary works, and new play premieres.

Last season, two Arena productions of new plays, *Next to Normal* and *33 Variations*, moved to Broadway and received 16 Tony nominations and 4 Tony Awards. ■

# Poetic License

by  
Anne  
Lacy



Photo by Mike Daley

**FOR TALA ABU RAHMEH,** MFA creative writing '09, poetry is deeply personal. "My poems are like my children," says the winner of the 2009 Myra Sklarew Award in Poetry. "I want them to go out in the world and do kind things, make people think about the choices they make and their capacity for compassion."

Before moving to D.C. in 2006, Abu Rahme worked as a journalist in her native Palestine. She edited an online youth publication, wrote articles about the legal implications of the military conflict in the West Bank and Gaza at the Negotiations Support Unit, and published English-language features and news stories for the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion

**"I write what I know and what I have seen. I'm constantly placed in a box because of my nationality, but I hope to rise above the [constraints] of identity into the open space of humanity."**

of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH).

"I always enjoyed writing feature articles because I love people," says Abu Rahme. "I felt that writing detailed articles about people's achievements, lives, and struggles allowed me to bring them out into the world through my own eyes, which is an incredible honor."

The inspiration to shift her focus from journalism to poetry happened while in the midst of her creative writing master's program, which she entered as a fiction writer. Taking advantage of the program's flexibility, Abu Rahme took some poetry classes and discovered a deep love for and connection with the genre. "I always knew I

was wired for something different," Abu Rahme says. "I'm young and new at writing poetry, but I think of it as constantly opening up ideas, images, and feelings I never thought I'd have, in both good and terrifying ways."

For Abu Rahme, the personal and the political inevitably converge in her work, which, she says,

can be misunderstood. "I come from Palestine, which is a place infested with politics, so there is very little separation between what is considered political and what remains personal," she says. She strives to write about her experiences but resists being defined by her subject matter. "I write what I know and what I have seen. I'm constantly placed in a box because of my nationality, but I hope to rise above the [constraints] of identity into the open space of humanity."

Abu Rahme's poems will appear in the literary journal *Damazine* and in *Time You Let Me In: 25 Poets under 25*, an anthology edited by Naomi Shihab Nye to be released by HarperCollins in 2010. She has given poetry readings at various venues around Washington, including the Corner Store, Busboys and Poets, the Writer's Center, and Words, Beats, and Life.

Currently an arts program consultant at the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Abu Rahme hopes to help others enrich their lives through the arts in general and particularly through poetry.

"Writing poetry is like growing up," Abu Rahme says. "It happens to you whether you like it or not. It's exhilarating and necessary for your being, even if sometimes you hate it. And it constantly—hopefully—makes you better, clearer, and more aware." ■

# Following the Lead

by  
Anne  
Lacy

FOR JOURNALIST Pete Muller, BA history '05, it's all about the story. And that pursuit has already taken him far beyond American University.

Just days after receiving his degree, Muller took a job as a journalist for a Palestinian news agency. "Journalism and documentary work seemed like the logical thing for me to do," Muller says. "[I have always been] interested in stories and in creating [a record] that will be the primary documentation of what's happening now."

Most recently, Muller's work led him to Uganda and Somalia. As a correspondent for *Glimpse*, an online international journalism outlet supported in part by National Geographic, Muller traveled to Uganda to document the return of millions of refugees to their homes after more than a decade of internment at internally displaced persons camps.

Muller covered a group of refugees in northern Uganda who had been displaced by the war. Their backgrounds differed: some had been fighters in the rebel army, some members of the government's army, and some apolitical refugees. But they had one thing

in common: billiards. This eclectic group had banded together to form a billiard team. Unexpectedly, the refugee teammates also developed deep bonds, looking out for one another by dividing winnings and resources.

"I'd go and take pho-

mine clearance programs in Uganda and Somalia. In addition to removing mines and unexploded ordinances, these programs provide locked-state storage devices and implement social programs to defuse the status of firearms in the culture.

**"I hope to illustrate [these] broader issues through individual stories."**

tographs of these guys," says Muller, "but I spent 75 percent of my time getting to know them, interviewing them formally and informally, [getting] a sense of their personalities, background, and [what their] circumstances were like—finding out what led them to be in this pool hall."

Muller's work with the refugees led to a contract with the Danish Demining Group to document traditional and alternative

Muller says his study of history informs his work. "The topics of war, uprising, social movements, and sexuality defined my course of historical study at American University and generated a deep curiosity in the modern aspects of these issues," he says.

"Through a combination of photography, text, and audio recordings, I hope to illustrate [these] broader issues through individual stories." ■



Photos by Pete Muller



# Problem Solving

by  
Colin  
Redick

**“The mission of the Math for America–D.C. program is aligned with AU’s strategic commitment to improving D.C. schools, and we are thrilled to be involved.”**



Illustration by George Danby for Math for America

## THE NATIONAL MATH

teacher shortage has sometimes seemed like an unsolvable equation. And the situation in D.C. is especially problematic.

“There are now approximately 3,846 secondary school teachers in D.C. public schools. Of these, approximately 276 teach mathematics—187 are appropriately certified,” says Sarah Irvine Belson, professor and dean of the School of Education, Teaching, and Health (SETH).

Math for America is designed to help solve this problem. This summer, AU received a \$1.4 million grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to start a D.C. branch of the national program.

“The mission of the Math for America–D.C. program is aligned with AU’s strategic commitment to improving D.C. schools, and we are thrilled to be involved,” says Irvine Belson, who applied for the grant with

math professor John Nolan. The grant covers tuition for participants, as well as a stipend they receive throughout the course of the program.

The program takes a small cohort of top teaching candidates with strong mathematics backgrounds and, over the course of five years, transforms them into certified math teachers.

In year one, fellows prepare for the classroom by completing AU’s Masters in Teaching program,

with a concentration in secondary mathematics education. During the next four years, fellows work as math teachers in D.C. public and public charter schools, while receiving continued mentoring and coaching from SETH.

Math for America was created in 2004 by James Simons, president of Renaissance Technologies LLC, a private investment firm that uses innovative mathematical methods to make investment decisions. Simons’ initial goal

was to create a better education system in New York City that would act as a national model.

The program gained Congress’s attention. In 2007, Math for America–New York was used as a model for the America COMPETES (Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science) Act.

Since then, the program has expanded to San Diego, Los Angeles, and now Washington, D.C. ■

# Digital Discourse

by  
Colin  
Redick



Photo by Samantha Saleh

research and teaching. In spring 2008, then undergraduate Chip Corbett decided it was time for the department to showcase them.

That June he founded *Pharmakon*, an online academic journal published annually through the College of Arts and Sciences. The journal features scholarly essays written by undergraduate and graduate students that reflect the department's most distinctive characteristics.

One of these is the emphasis on what is known in the discipline

as the "continental" tradition. Unlike analytic philosophy, which focuses on logically analyzing both concepts and the language used to express them, continental philosophy generally purports that truth is a term defined in relation to specific cultures and historical periods.

Because the majority of philosophy departments in this country's universities adhere to an analytic approach, Corbett says, most American philosophy journals do, too.

"I wanted *Pharmakon* to provide a space where

students of continental philosophy could publish their work, too," he says.

The journal also showcases essays inspired by the student internships that are integral to the AU philosophy experience.

"Internships provide opportunities to put philosophy to work," says Ellen Feder, professor, acting chair, and internship advisor. "Students see how the tools of philosophical analysis can be of practical use for exposing problems—the operation of inequality, say, or moral failures as they occur on the ground."

Students have interned at various nonprofit and governmental organizations in the Washington area, including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the Phillips Collection, and the National Academy of Sciences.

Now that he has moved on to the master's program, Corbett has handed over *Pharmakon* to AU's chapter of Phi Sigma Tau, the national philosophy honors society. Says Corbett: "I'm glad I'll be around another two years to watch it continue to grow." ■

AU'S DEPARTMENT OF Philosophy is known for its unconventional

## social sciences

# Splitting Image

by  
Jessica  
Tabak

GINA LUFF STILL remembers the message she got from teen magazines as a girl: be thin and get a man. "Looking back," she says, "I wasn't sure if that was the most appropriate material for a 12-year-old."

Her memories, coupled with the fact that most eating disorders and body image issues manifest themselves during adolescence, led the then master's student to take a closer look

at thinness messages in teen-oriented magazines over a specified time period.

Luff conducted her research at the Library of Congress, where she examined issues of

*Seventeen* and *YM* dating back to 1956. She analyzed changes in both the frequency of content related to diet, exercise, or a combination of the two, and the body size of cover models.

Her results indicate the possibility of a growing discrepancy between what these magazines show and what they say to their young, and impressionable, audience. While models' body size increased or stayed the same over the study's 50-year scope, the mes-

saging about dieting and exercise increased during that time.

The increase in thinness content in women's magazines has been well documented, but Luff's study was the first with respect to teen magazines.

Her findings were published in *Body Image* (spring 2009), an international, peer-reviewed journal devoted to scientific research on the psychology of appearance. James Gray, psychology professor and Luff's advisor on the project, was cowriter. ■

**She still remembers the message she got from teen magazines as a girl: be thin and get a man.**

# New Faculty

**UGUR ALPARSLAN**

Assistant Professor, Department of Mathematics and Statistics

- » PhD operations research, Cornell University
- » MS operations research, Cornell University
- » BS industrial engineering, Bilkent University (Turkey)

His research focuses on the theory of stable stochastic processes. He is also interested in problems in actuarial mathematics, finance, environmental sciences, and molecular biology and genetics.

**ANNA AMIRDJANOVA**

Associate Professor, Department of Mathematics and Statistics

- » PhD statistics, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill
- » Diploma (MA equivalent) in pure and applied mathematics, Lomonosov Moscow State University (Russia)

Her areas of interest are stochastic analysis, stochastic partial differential equations, particle systems, applications to nonlinear filtering, hydrodynamics, stochastic finance, gaussian random fields, nonstationary time series, and nonparametric statistics.

**ALIDA ANDERSON**

Assistant Professor; School of Education, Teaching, and Health

- » PhD special education, University of Maryland
- » MA communication sciences and disorders, Northwestern University
- » BA art, art history, Asian studies, Colgate University

She studies early childhood language and literacy acquisition, bilingual-biliterate child language acquisition, systems of response-to-intervention in mathematics for primary students with learning disabilities, and integrated arts programs for young children with and without disabilities.

**LAURA BEERS**

Assistant Professor, Department of History

- » PhD history, Harvard University
- » MA history, Harvard University
- » BA history, Princeton University

Her interests include the politics and culture of modern Britain, particularly political culture, the impact of the media on politics, and the incorporation of women into party politics after 1918.

**EVAN BERRY**

Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy and Religion

- » PhD religious studies, University of California–Santa Barbara
- » MA religious studies, University of California–Santa Barbara
- » BA religion, Colorado College

He studies the interplay between religion and nature in modern Western culture. His most recent research was part of an interdisciplinary, collaborative ethnographic study of intentional communities in the Pacific Northwest.

**FIONA BRIDEOAKE**

Assistant Professor, Department of Literature

- » PhD literature, screen and theatre studies; Australian National University
- » BA (honors) English and philosophy, Australian National University

Her interests are eighteenth-century British literature and culture, the rise of the novel, Milton, the history of women in Britain 1700–1830, Rousseau, travel writing and travel texts, Jane Austen, Shakespeare, and film and feminist literary theory.

**JEREMIAH DITTMAR**

Assistant Professor, Department of Economics

- » PhD economics, University of California–Berkeley
- » MS economics history, London School of Economics
- » BA history and English, Swarthmore College

He studies the institutional and technological determinants of economic growth, economic history, political economy, and economic geography.

**NOEMÍ ENCHAUTGUI-DE-JESÚS**

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology

- » PhD community psychology, New York University
- » MA community psychology, New York University
- » BA psychology, University of Puerto Rico–Río Piedras

She is interested in identifying stressors related to low-wage jobs and work-family balance among women with children and adolescents at home.

**DANIELLE V. EVANS**

Assistant Professor, Department of Literature

- » MFA fiction, University of Iowa
- » BA anthropology and African-American studies, Columbia University

Her research interests are contemporary and African-American literature.

**STEPHANIE GRANT**

Assistant Professor, Department of Literature

- » MA English and creative writing, New York University
- » BA French literature, Wesleyan University

She is the author of *Map of Ireland* and *The Passion of Alice*, as well as numerous short fiction and nonfiction works.

**DAPHON DAVID HO**

Instructor, Department of History

- » PhD history, University of California–San Diego
- » BA Asian studies, economics, and history; Rice University

His research covers modern China, maritime history, Pacific connections, Tibet, video games, and the experience of modernity in East Asia.

**LISA MOSES LEFF**

Associate Professor, Department of History

- » PhD, history, University of Chicago
- » MA history, University of Chicago
- » BA history and philosophy, Oberlin College

She is examining the fate of Jewish archives in France during and after World War II.

**KIMBERLY J. LEIGHTON**

Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy and Religion

- » PhD philosophy, University of Massachusetts–Amherst
- » MA philosophy, University of Massachusetts–Amherst
- » BA liberal arts, Sarah Lawrence College

Her research explores the intersections of epistemology and moral and political philosophy.

**DANIEL LEVIN**

Assistant Professor; School of Education, Teaching, and Health

- » PhD curriculum and instruction with specialization in science education, University of Maryland
- » MAT secondary science education, Towson University
- » BA biology and anthropology, Brandeis University

He studies how, and when, science teachers address students' scientific thinking and the influence of the cultural systems in which they work.

**INGA MASLOVA**

Assistant Professor, Department of Mathematics and Statistics

- » PhD statistics, Utah State University
- » MS statistics, Utah State University
- » BS mathematical statistics, Vilnius University (Lithuania)

Her research involves time series analysis, resampling methods, Wavelet methods, and functional data analysis.

**ADRIENNE PINE**

Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology

- » PhD anthropology, University of California–Berkeley
- » MA demography, University of California–Berkeley
- » MA anthropology, University of California–Berkeley
- » BA anthropology, Brown University

Her research in the United States, Central America, Mexico, Korea, and Egypt encompasses violence, migration, gender, health care, labor justice, human rights, political economy, drug and alcohol studies, and technology and the body.

**YANA SAKELLION**

Assistant Professor, Department of Art

- » MFA digital media, Rhode Island School of Design
- » BA imaging and digital arts, University of Maryland–Baltimore
- » Collegiate teaching certificate, Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, Brown University

She works in graphic design, interactive media, and video, with special interests in interactive physical interface design and interactive storytelling.

**DEBARTI SEN**

Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology

- » PhD anthropology, Rutgers University
- » PhM sociology, Delhi University (India)
- » MA sociology, Delhi University
- » BA sociology, Calcutta University (India)

She researches cultural and social anthropology, feminist anthropology, anthropology of globalization and transnationalism, anthropology of development, anthropology of work, political ecology, environmental anthropology, community activism and social justice in the Third World, culture, power and agency, anthropology of consumption, and the politics of food.

**ARTHUR G. SHAPIRO**

Associate Professor, Department of Psychology

- » PhD psychology, Columbia University
- » BA mathematics and psychology, University of California–San Diego

His areas of interest are visual perception and neuroscience. He works on topics related to color perception, motion, visual camouflage, and low-light-level vision.

**RACHEL SNYDER**

Assistant Professor, Department of Literature

- » MFA creative writing, Emerson College
- » BA English and history, North Central College

She is an author, journalist, and public radio contributor, with special interests in human rights, globalization, cultural identity, and development issues.

**ULYSSES J. SOFIA**

Professor and Chair, Department of Physics

- » PhD astronomy with a physics concentration, University of Wisconsin–Madison
- » BA astronomy, Wesleyan University

His research interests include interstellar dust, interstellar medium, and solar physics. (See article on p. 4.)

## Appointments & Honors

In May, **MUSTAFA AKSAKAL (history)** was awarded a John W. Kluge Fellowship for study at the Library of Congress during AY 2009–10. The fellowship encourages humanistic and social science research that makes use of the Library's collections.

**FERNANDO BENADON (performing arts)** received a 2009 Guggenheim Fellowship in June, largely for his innovative debut album, *Intuitivo*, released this spring. The CD melded improvised solo recording sessions from seven musicians into a series of cohesive compositions. (See article on p. 3.)

In April, **MICHAEL BLACK (computer science)** was awarded a Fulbright fellowship sponsored by the State Department's Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES). He will teach and conduct research at Sankalchand Patel College of Engineering in Visnagar, India, for five months this fall.

In April, **KYLE DARGAN (literature)** won the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award in the poetry category for *Bouquet of Hungers* (University of Georgia, 2008). The Hurston/Wright was the first national award presented to published writers of African descent by the national community of black writers. Prizes are awarded in the categories of fiction, debut fiction, nonfiction, and poetry.

**JAMES GIRARD (chemistry)** was named a 2009 Franklin Fellow in May. During his year-long fellowship, he will serve as a science advisor to the U.S. Department of State. The Franklin Fellows program is an executive development vehicle designed to promote public service.

A recent book by **ALLAN LICHTMAN (history)**, *White Protestant Nation: The Rise of the American Conservative Movement* (Atlantic, 2008), was nominated as a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. The book examines the rise of the conservative movement in America.

In May, the university named **MIEKE MEURS (economics)** Scholar-Teacher of the Year. The highest annual honor given to a faculty member, the award recognizes the professor who best exemplifies the university's ideals of research and teaching excellence.

In May, **ANTHONY RILEY (psychology)** became the first recipient of the College of Arts and Sciences's Betty T. Bennett Faculty Scholar-Administrator Award. This annual award recognizes a faculty member who exhibits superior scholarship and exemplary leadership in an administrative role.

## Grants

**STANLEY WEISS (psychology)** will continue his research on incentive properties of abused drugs, a NIH-funded project that examines how multiple drug-associated stimuli interact to motivate drug-related behavior. He will receive more than \$1.3 million over five years.

The college's **School of Education, Teaching, and Health** received a \$1.5 million grant from the National Science Foundation to support a partnership between Math for America D.C. (MfA DC) and AU. AU is one of only 10 universities in four cities across the nation—and the only one in the D.C. area—to partner with Math for America, a program launched by the Carnegie Academy for Science Education (CASE) in 2008. (See article on p. 10.)

**STACIE TATE (SETH)** received a \$50,000 grant from the United Planning Organization for a program entitled "Providing Opportunities with Education Readiness Program (POWER) Summer 2009." This program brings 40 D.C. public middle-school students in the Congress Heights area to American University for a summer course.

## Publications & Productions

**AARON TOBLER (PhD candidate, anthropology)** and **MARIA AMELIA VITERI (PhD anthropology '08)** coedited *Shifting Positionalities: The Local and International Geo-Politics of Surveillance and Policing* (Cambridge Scholars, 2009). It includes chapters by **MICHELLE CARNES (PhD candidate, anthropology)** and **MYSARA ABU-HASHEM (PhD candidate, anthropology)**.

**MARÍA EUGENIA VERDAGUER (PhD sociology '02)** published *Class, Ethnicity, Gender and Latino Entrepreneurship* (Routledge, 2009). The book explores the business strategies and social and economic relations of first-generation Latino entrepreneurs.

**DAVID VINE (anthropology)** published *Island of Shame: The Secret History of the U.S. Military Base on Diego Garcia* (Princeton, 2009). Vine explores a largely unknown American military base on the island of Diego Garcia and the harsh actions taken by the United States and Britain against the islanders. (See article on pps. 6–7.)