

SIGHTS and SOUNDS

January 2024



—College of Fine Arts & Communication Newsletter—

Greetings for the New Year!

I'm Golden Wright, serving as the Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication at Lamar University. Our college is home to an array of talented and unique individuals, including students, staff, and faculty. This monthly newsletter is crafted to showcase and celebrate the remarkable achievements of these individuals across various disciplines within the fine arts and communication fields.

In this "Sights and Sounds" section, you'll discover details about upcoming live performances, delve into current research topics, and learn about the outstanding accomplishments of our students, staff, and faculty. The College of Fine Arts & Communication thrives on diversity, with communication being a common thread that unites us. Each area within the college relies on communication in distinct ways.

The communication and media sector employs various mediums such as television, radio, social media, and newspapers to disseminate information. Music majors, using voice or instruments, convey emotions and stories through their songs. Speech and hearing sciences contribute to enhancing our ability to speak and hear, ultimately improving our quality of life. Deaf studies focus on empowering individuals to serve as mediators in communication. Theatre and dance offer an immersive escape from reality through movement and text. Lastly, the field of art communicates visually, capturing moments and places, transporting us to new realms.

Communication is pivotal to the success of our departments as a college. I trust that this newsletter will provide fresh insights into our vibrant college and the exceptional individuals who contribute to its greatness.

"The Best Kept Secret..."



Golden Wright
Dean, College of Fine Arts & Communication

CONGRATULATIONS!

OUR FALL 2023 GRADUATES

Corey Blake Adams
Mayra Stephany Alcaraz
Julianna Rose Andrews
Gina Renette Barry
Erick Benavides Jr.
Brittney Ann Borden
Emily Karris Bryan
Iris Nicole Carrasco
Katherine Gisselle Correa*
Kenya Janae Couzin
Keleigh Rae Cummings
Khailah A. Davis
Zachary Kennosuke Nagamine Davis
Kristen Mary Devillier
Tyriel Dove
Jason Allen Drude
Christian Hali Duhon
April Michelle Dyer
Antonio Gabriel Estrada
Karlee Corinne Farish
Genevieve Marie Fekete
Angelique Shenay Flores
Sydney Alain Foulkes
Thomas S. Furlow
Giselle Lizvette Garcia
Heidy Garcia
Kathryn Denise Gilbreath
Brittany Nicole Gonzales
Lisette M. Guevara
Jonathan Kai Gumabong
Kyra Michelle Hall
Anna Grace Heiland
Tabitha Brooke Holcomb
Joshua Michael Johnson

Ire Daniell Jones
Lenzi Marie Jordan
Erica Marie Juenke
Alexya LaFleur
Sydney Ellis Madison
Kyra Donn Matlock
Rebecca Anne McGarity
Kade Samuel McCall
Brianna Renee McGee
Javier Merino Crisanto
Dane Andrew Miller
Kaitlyn Brooke Morris
Katie Leann Newton
Cree Michael Nielsen-Sewell
Nicholas Shawn Northrup*
Chloe Elizabeth Overstreet
Haley Nicole Perkins
Hannah Nicole Ramirez
Tracy Ramirez
Olivia Jamilla Roy
Harli Nicole Russell
Allison Kayla Salinas
Sandra Edith Sifuentes
Keagan Ancyl Smith
Brett Strahan
Je'lyn Vanessa Thompson
Baylee Shae Tupper
Roger David Turcios Jr.
Carri Madisyn Vickers
Jasmine Nicole Warner
Felisitie J. Williams
Emma Rose Wood

* **Reaud Honors College Graduate**

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Conducted by Tabitha Holcomb

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Can't Miss This!

Upcoming Events and COLLAGE Spotlight

an interview with... SUSAN SIMMONS

CONDUCTED BY TABITHA HOLCOMB



The music building is absolutely stunning, and was renovated from 2008-2011. I know the both of you played a big part in what the building has come to be today. Tell me about your vision and influences in making this renovation a success.

Susan: "Well, when we first got to Lamar, one of the things we wanted to do was make the campus look unified. All the buildings that were brick were a jumble of different colors, and we left as much of the red brick as we could. Along with it was a yellow brick that we painted cream to bring the color of the Montagne Center across the street to the rest of the University. On the Music building, you may notice there are some different tiled, ceramic bricks, and I had them go back and scrape the new paint off of the bricks so you could see all the different colors."

What is your favorite thing about the Susan and Jimmy Simmons Music Building?

Susan: "Oh gosh, there's some really neat fabric on the chairs there that I love. And this sounds crazy, but the new restrooms. They were a mess before. Just tiny metal bathrooms. But I also love the cut-through ceiling where you can see all the way to the second floor. It's really pretty. It's hard to pick just one thing!"

Could you share a meaningful moment or event from the past that happened in the newly named Susan and Jimmy Simmons Music Building?

Susan: "I raised my twins and my daughter in that building. Jimmy was the marching band and jazz band director. Our family grew up in that building. As that building grew, so did our family. Lamar has been around for 100 years, and our family has been there for 50 of those 100 years. If we ever needed a babysitter or a tutor we had the whole music department. We were in and out of that building for a lifetime."

It's wonderful to have you both be a part of this wonderful music fundraiser, Collage, for the Mary Morgan Moore Music Department. Collage highlights various performance groups, and seems like the perfect concert to recognize the two of you because of your contributions to the department, college and university. What are you looking forward to the most about this year's Collage Concert?

Susan: "We're really looking forward to seeing all of the students. We have, through my parents, 100 music students on scholarship through all the different programs in the music department. My dad always said that, 'our greatest investment is our students.' You need to invest in your kids."

Are there any other words you would like to share with our readers?

Susan: "Lamar's new president is wonderful. I really believe they're going to take the University to new heights. I mean, it's so important that the kids get a good education and a broad education, and not just one line of thought. And music really is a universal language that can bring us all together. If you listen to a piece of music, it speaks to you."

Thank you both so much for taking the time to meet with me and share some of your wonderful memories. All of us here at the college would like to thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to seeing the both of you at Collage later this month.

Both you and President Simmons have played such a vital role in the growth of Lamar University. Not only have you played an intricate part in the growth of the Mary Morgan Moore Music Department, the College of Fine Arts & Communication, and Lamar University as a whole, but you have also left quite the mark on the entire Southeast Texas community. For me, the naming of the music building helps to cement your immeasurable legacy, but tell me, what does it mean to you to have the building named the Susan and Jimmy Simmons Music Building in your honor?

Susan: "I just wish my parents [Jean and Rudy Williams] were here to see it. My parents gave a tremendous financial gift to the University, and they did it for Jimmy, never dreaming that I would be included. The addition of my name recognizes my efforts for the University. I never dreamed of anything like this, so it's a tremendous honor. It's just so hard to explain what it means to me to have my name on a building at Lamar."



FROM CHAOS TO CRAFT...

THE SENIORS PRESENT THEIR THESIS EXHIBITION



Every semester the Department of Art & Design works with cohorts of graduating seniors to guide them in completing their senior thesis capstone projects, each of which results in a body of artworks exhibited at the Dishman Art Museum. The fall 2023 senior thesis exhibition, *Chaos on Campus*, was on view from Friday December 1st to Friday December 8th. The show kicked off with a fantastic opening reception that was widely attended by current, past, and future graduates, as well as faculty and university and community supporters. The title of the show, which was brainstormed and agreed upon by the grads, refers to the whirlwind of stress and anxiety the seniors collectively experienced as they navigated the final stages of their academic and artistic journey towards graduation. The show featured the works of both studio artists and graphic designers and highlighted an array of artistic styles and media. In the days leading up to the show, the students worked to hone their skills as they finalized their projects. In addition to the minimum of eight artworks each student must show, the students also complete a written thesis paper and orally defend their thesis in a public venue at the Dishman Art Museum. These activities allow students to synthesize the relationships between studio and graphic design production, art history, theory, and criticism as they apply the skills learned to completing a body of work. The senior thesis and related class also provides students a final semester of communal activity, as they meet regularly with other graduating seniors and with their thesis committee members. This well-developed skill set resulting in thesis participation pays off in terms of the success rate of our students pursuing employment or graduate studies in their fields. It also makes for an exciting exhibition!

Continued on page 3...



Ire Jones
Graphic Design



Emily Bryan
Graphic Design



Julianna Andrews
Graphic Design



Katelyn Akpobome
Graphic Design



Lenzi Jordan
Graphic Design



Kyra Hall
Studio Art - Painting



Tabitha Holcomb
Graphic Design



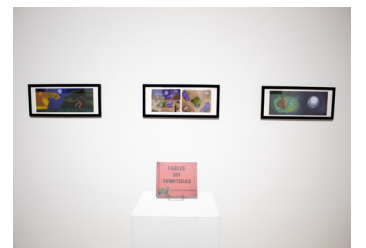
Javier Merino Crisanto
Studio Art - Sculpture



Sydney Madison
Graphic Design



Sandra Sifuentes
Studio Art - Drawing



NOBLE THINGS RE-RELEASED

The red carpet was rolled out at Cinemark Theater in Beaumont on December 14th for the re-release of the movie, *Noble Things*. This film was largely shot in Southeast Texas and has significant ties to the local film community and the Department of Communication and Media at Lamar University. The film was written by Vidor native Brett Moses and featured music by local luminaries like Tracy Byrd and Clay Walker.

Many of our Communication and Media family members were also involved in the production. This is where our dynamic film duo of Gordon Williams and Jeremy Hawa first met. Alum Wyatt Cagle met his wife on-set. Daisy Mae Hargraves, another alum, served as a stand-in for LeeAnn Womack and had a role. In addition, alumnae Cindy Greene was a production manager. The re-release brought all these people, and more, together for a premier viewing followed by an after party at Madison's in Beaumont. At the gathering, cast, crew, friends, and family mingled, enjoyed seeing one another, and imbibing signature drinks created specifically for the event.

Noble Things is an example of the great film-making potential of the Southeast Texas area many are hoping to better facilitate through our recent designation as a film-friendly community. Local productions bring money into the community through not only the shooting of the films but also for all of those who help service the productions including restaurants, hotels and others. In addition, they provide a welcome opportunity for our film and production students to get additional hands-on experience that will serve them well once they graduate and move on to pursue their professional goals. As noted by Gordon Williams, "The filmmakers of *Noble Things* allowed several of our students and alumni the opportunity to work on this film over fifteen years ago. Now those individuals have, or are, currently working as successful media professionals. Professor Jeremy Hawa was a part of that production, and now he is in our department sharing his knowledge and teaching the next generation of filmmakers."

Noble Things can be viewed on Apple TV or Amazon Prime



NOVA SCOTIA awaits...

The Department of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education is packing their bags and booking their flights! This summer they plan to travel to Nova Scotia to attend the National Deaf Arts & Culture Festival sponsored by the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Not only will they attend this prestigious event, but they also plan to tour landmarks like the Halifax Citadel National Historic Site, the Halifax Public Gardens, the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, Peggy's Cove, and the Halifax School for the Deaf.

Some of the opportunities provided by this trip include the opportunity to learn Maritime Sign Language (a sign language used in Canada's Atlantic provinces) and the opportunity to meet Deaf Artists and Sign Language Interpreters from around the world.

"The rationale for traveling abroad is to cultivate a society of global learners. It is our mission to expose students to the cultural and linguistic values of signing Deaf communities around the world. Each new study abroad experience strengthens students' connection to the American Deaf Community and promotes leadership and advocacy support in Deaf societies across the world. ASL production proficiency strongly relies on prior knowledge and authentic experiences. Access through global learning also expands students' awareness of historic sites and magnifies their appreciation and understanding of language etymology. This field study will also provide a practical application of linguistic theories and historical references that can be utilized to increase functionality into the workspace."

—Dr. Zanthia Smith

Photo: Tobias Negele on Unsplash



COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will enhance students' knowledge of Deaf art and Deaf-visual image art (DeVIA) from an international perspective. Students will also examine an overview of Canadian history and Canadian deaf history, including a brief history of the Deaf residential programs of Nova Scotia. This authentic global learning experience will allow students to develop advanced communication and networking skills to foster their cultural, academic, and linguistic development of ASL and of international Deaf communities.



2ND ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL BAND DAY

MUSIC DEPARTMENT WELCOMES 325 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO CAMPUS

The Music Department and Band Program produced its annual High School Band Day on November 18, 2023. This event, now in its second year, allows high school students to spend the day with the Marching Band. They participate in a morning rehearsal, attend masterclasses/workshops with current LU Instrumental Faculty, enjoy a Chick-Fil-A catered lunch while listening to the LU Faculty Brass Quintet, warm-up in the Quad and parade to the stadium and perform both in the stands and at halftime during the home football game versus McNeese State University in Provost Umphrey Stadium. This year, the event was paid for entirely by the Marching Band program, allowing high school students to participate for no cost whatsoever.

There were 329 high school students who participated: 33 flutes, 34 clarinets, 47 saxophones, 21 mellophones/horns, 55 trumpets, 23 trombones, 12 baritones, 20 tubas, 53 percussionists, 30 color guard members and 1 twirler. Represented within these sections were 76 students in 9th grade, 85 students in 10th grade, 89 students in 11th grade and 79 students in 12th grade.

Continued on page 7...

32 high schools were represented at this year's event from as far away as Katy: Little Cypress-Mauriceville (39), Deer Park (30), Port Neches-Groves (30), Bridge City (28), Vidor (25), West Brook (16), Hamshire-Fannett (14), Nederland (14), Cleveland (13), Orangefield (11), Crosby (11), Lumberton (10), Kirbyville (10), Silsbee (10), Woodville (9), Liberty (8), Newton (7), West Hardin (6), Hardin-Jefferson (5), Jasper (5), Deweyville (5), Kountze (4), Baytown Sterling (4), Dayton (3), East Chambers (3), Corrigan-Camden (3), North Shore (1), Katy (1), Pasadena (1), LaPorte (1), West Plains (1), and Sabine Pass (1).

This year's event exceeded all expectations, and the feedback from parents, directors and students has been very positive. The 3rd annual High School Band Day will take place on November 16, 2024, as the Lamar University Cardinals host Nichols during the final home football game of the season.

***Information will be made available by mid-September at ...
<https://www.lamar.edu/highschoolbandday>***



specialty clinic spotlight: COGNITIVE STIMULATION THERAPY

The Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences at Lamar University continues to offer quality speech and hearing services to the community of Beaumont, TX and surrounding areas. Our graduate students in Speech-Language Pathology offer services through several specialty clinics supervised by Lamar faculty. Each faculty member provides valuable education and feedback in their areas of expertise allowing our students to learn at the cutting edge of best practices within our field. One of these specialty clinics includes a Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST) group for clients with mild to moderate dementia supervised by faculty members Karen Whisenhunt Saar and Chelsea Lyles. Dr. Whisenhunt Saar recently received a Lamar University Center for Resiliency Springboard Grant and piloted the CST program in the fall of 2023. We are pleased to announce the continued offering of CST in the upcoming spring 2024 semester, marking a significant stride in the realm of dementia care within our community.

According to the *World Health Organization* there are more than **55 million people worldwide** living with dementia, and every year that number increases. You may even have a friend or family member whose life has been impacted by dementia, but with person-centered treatments that promote mental stimulation, quality of life can be improved. Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST) is one such approach offered in collaboration with Karen Whisenhunt Saar's Social ACCESS Lab.

The CST group is designed to provide evidence-based cognitive therapy services for individuals living with dementia, enhancing their mental engagement and overall well-being. Our CST group is a seven-week-long program that includes engaging sessions centered around themed activities. By incorporating socially interactive tasks with a focus on communication supports, CST aims to create an environment that fosters cognitive resilience and quality of life for people living with dementia. Members of this group are also offered individual communication consultation services, working toward personalized goals and family education. These efforts are a step toward creating an invaluable social infrastructure for this population within our community.

The SPHS Department is grateful for the addition of CST group services and the unique learning experience it provides -- currently the only one of its kind offered in Southeast Texas.



Social ACCESS Lab



For more information regarding eligibility for this program and the upcoming schedule, or any of our other specialty clinics, contact the Speech and Hearing Clinic at **(409) 880-8171**.



Photo: Lynn Lane

WELCOMING HOME EXCELLENCE

ALUMNI SET TO PERFORM IN UPCOMING SHOW

Orlando Arriaga is a theatre actor who has gained national recognition. He has performed at Hartford Stage, the Pacific Coast Playhouse, Theater Squared (Fayetteville, AR), Cal Shakes and Pennsylvania Shakespeare, to mention a few. He is also a company member at the Alley Theater in Houston, TX.

Orlando graduated from Lamar in December of 2002 with a B.S. in Theatre. This winter, he is returning to campus to play the role of Dan in *Landscape With Weapon* by Joe Penhall, as part of a special production featuring alumni and celebrating Lamar's Centennial. "Orlando and I have known each other as actors around the Houston area," says Joel Grothe, Department Chair, "but it was not until I was Chair that we were really able to connect.

I brought a group of students to see him in *Lend Me A Soprano* at the Alley Theater last Fall. He was impressed with the diversity in our student body; much different, he said, from when he was a student at Lamar."

The Department saw the Centennial as a unique opportunity to bring alumni back to campus, to reflect on the impact the program has made on so many people over the years.

The production will also feature alumni Ginger Mouton (B.S. Theatre & Dance '22) on stage and Mary McNeely (B.S. Theatre & Dance) as Stage Manager.

In addition to the first dedication of seats in the University Theatre to important contributors to the Department over the years, the Department will recognize Dr. Adonia Placette (B.S. Theatre '73, Theatre Program Director for over 30 years), Mr. Jerry McMillan (tenured staff member at Beaumont Community Players) and Andy Coughlan (B.A.A.S '01 and M.A. English '05) as part of the production.

Landscape With Weapon
February 1st through 4th
Studio Theatre

Tickets are available at
lamar.edu/lutdtix or
409.880.2250.



Michael Roqué Collins, *Weeping Chair* (Left)
Lowell Daunt Collins, *Portrait of Ruth Uhler* (Right)

leading with *LEGACY*

THE DISHMAN ART MUSEUM BEGINS THE NEW YEAR WITH NEW EXHIBITION

Legacy: The Art of Lowell Daunt Collins and Michael Roqué Collins

GUEST CURATOR

Gus Kopriva
President, Redbud Arts Center, Houston, Texas

ON DISPLAY

January 20th through March 2, 2024

OPENING RECEPTION

Friday, January 26th, 6:30-8:30 PM

DISHMAN ART MUSEUM

1030 East Lavaca Street
Beaumont, Texas 77705
Mon.-Fri. 9 PM-4 PM / Sat. 12 PM-4 PM

*T*his exhibition explores and contrasts the work of renowned Texas based artists, father and son, Lowell Daunt Collins (1924-2003) and Michael Roqué Collins (b. 1955) and their legacy in the art of the southwest.

Legacy will examine these two artists and capture how they were connected and influenced not only as family but through their individual artistic pursuits and how they both shared their passions as educators. Both have creative ties to Beaumont and the Gulf Coast through connections with Beaumont natives Richard Stout and John Alexander.

stay current with: **ON CAMPUS**

KVLU hosts ***On Campus at Lamar University***, a weekly feature sharing the voices of staff, students and faculty across the campus, not only are a multiple of voices featured on the show, but ***On Campus at Lamar University*** now presents the opportunity for students, staff and faculty to host the show and choose the topic of conversation.

The transition of the show to its new format began in October 2023, with a feature from the Department of Theater and Dance, where Theater & Dance student, Dominique Roman interviewed visiting director Craig Johnson, about Lamar Theater's production of *The Incredible Fox Sisters*. From there, ***On Campus*** has featured hosts and guests from University Advancement, The Department of English and Modern Languages, The Department of Alumni Affairs, Texas Academy and the Department of Mathematics.

"Our goal for the program is to include hosts and guests from each and every area of campus, so they can share all the great news and events that happen here at Lamar University."

—Jason Miller, KVLU Station Manager.

You can listen to ***On Campus at Lamar University*** every Monday morning at 7:50 AM on 91.3FM or at kvl.org. The show is also available on all major podcast platforms.

If you would like to be a guest or host to share news and insights from your area of campus, please contact KVLU Station Manager, Jason Miller, at Jason.Miller@lamar.edu.



For more information and to stream KVLU, visit kvl.org.

CAN'T MISS THIS!

JAN 20 — MAR 2

Legacy: The Art of Lowell Daunt Collins and Michael Roqué Collins
Dishman Art Museum

JAN 26

OPENING RECEPTION - Legacy
Dishman Art Museum
6:30-8:30 PM

JAN 23

Collage
University Theatre
7:30 PM

FEB 1-4

Landscape With Weapon
Studio Theatre

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

FOR MORE EVENTS IN THE
COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS & COMMUNICATION
SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW!



COLLAGE

January 23, 2024 | 7:30 PM | University Theatre

The Lamar University Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music's Collage concert features our finest large ensembles, small chamber groups, and a variety of student and faculty performers. Audience members get a small taste of every type of music from Opera to Jazz. Both students and faculty are utilized in a quick-paced and seamless concert that will highlight the variety of talent Lamar University has to offer. This year the concert will take place in the University Theatre on the campus of Lamar University.

As always, the proceeds from the event will benefit our students directly by helping fund our various festivals and events throughout the academic year. Your contributions allow for our students to learn from prestigious guest artists, perform with renowned musicians from across the United States, and become inspired to lead the next generation to love and experience music.

Consider becoming a sponsor for Collage by visiting [Lamar.edu/Collage](https://lamar.edu/Collage).

If you have any questions, please contact **Tim Dueppen** (tdueppen@lamar.edu)





COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS & COMMUNICATION
LAMAR UNIVERSITY

LAMAR UNIVERSITY
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Beaumont, TX 77710



COLLABORATE - INNOVATE - CREATE

To support the College of Fine Arts & Communication, please visit
www.lamar.edu/cofac