



September 26, 2017

Dear Friends, Colleagues, Agitators, and Insurgents,

Summer has receded and fall has landed upon us. The 2017-2018 school year has arrived! To the new students: Welcome! To our returning students: Welcome Back! To everyone else: Hello, how have you been?

I am awestruck by the accomplishments and activities of the WACD graduate students this summer. Collectively they have presented at conferences, traveled the globe doing fieldwork, received grants, performed all over the place, attended game shows, imbibed wine, eaten dumplings, moved across the country, and given birth to at least two children, although not necessarily in that order. In this letter, I would like to highlight their summer and let you experience what WACD can be through their endeavors.

Get ready, it is an overwhelming compilation:

- **Francesca Albrezzi** delivered the keynote address for Occidental College's 360/VR day about the use of immersive technology in museum spaces.
- **Zena Bibler** made two new dance works, both with WAC/D alumnus, Darrian O'Reilly. She also taught at an "Ecological Bodies" seminar in Portland, Oregon.
- **Carmen Cebberos** had a hectic summer designing and lecturing for three courses at the Center for the Arts at San Agustin in Mexico. Thankfully, she and her family are safe.
- **Saroya Corbett** participated in a conference at the Institute for Dunham Technique Certification in Chicago and went to New Orleans to make connections in the bounce, scholarly, 2nd line and concert dance communities. Also, she and her father were a part of a taping of the *Price as Right* for an episode to be aired on Dec. 6.
- **Jackie Davis** spent her summer preparing to move and completing two experimental screendance projects.
- **Cindi Garcia-Weyandt** received the Tinker Field Research Grant to do field work in Tepic, Mexico. Her daughter Ixchel traveled with her to Tepic to collaborate with the Programa de Revitalización de la Lengua Wixárika (The Wixárika Language Revitalization Program) in Zitakua, a Wixárika neighborhood.
- **Ellen Gerdes** gave birth to Felix on Saturday September 16, 2017. She is, "severely underslept but so happy."
- **Levi Gonzalez** taught workshops in Mexico City, downtown LA and in New York City. In Mexico City he performed with long-term collaborator Luciana Achugar.
- **Ghislain Grellier** created a new version of *L'après-midi d'un Faune*, originally choreographed in 1912 by Vaslav Nijinski, and choreographed for a music video by the Belgian group Le Rapt Invisible.

- **Jingqui Guan** worked as a movement director and editor of a 20-minute movement-based film. Her baby boy Kylan was born on July 5, 2017.
- **Johanna Kirk** mostly stayed in LA this summer. She took an Obstetrics class through the UCLA School of Nursing and nursed her tiny garden plot back to life.
- **Mika Lior** just received news of her acceptance into the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship Program in support of her fieldwork in Bahia.
- **Pearl Marill** has been producing a dance comedy show at Pianofight in San Francisco. She just performed in Taylor Mac's "24 Decades of Popular Music" at The Curran in San Francisco and was in a rock opera in the desert.
- **Melissa Melpignano** drank wine and read books. She has been invited by the Department of Theater and Performance at IUAV, the University of Architecture in Venice, Italy, to give a lecture on choreographic stagings of the justice system.
- **Fangfei Miao** served as a translator for the first time for Professor Janet O'Shea at the Beijing Dance Academy. She also ate A LOT of dumplings in China - almost every dinner.
- **Jeremy Peretz** was in Guyana conducting field research for his dissertation. In June, he presented a paper at the tenth annual conference for the Guyana Institute of Historical Research. He also has a selection of poems and photographs slated to be published in a local Los Angeles literary journal.
- **Filip Petkovski** has been doing fieldwork in Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia. He attended the 44th conference of the International Council of Traditional Music in Limerick, Ireland and presented a paper. He has also published three papers this summer.
- **Kristianne Salcines** was in Kassel, Germany performing for Annie Sprinkle as a part of *Documenta*. She then went to Copenhagen for *CutieBPOC Festival*, followed by *Ponderosa* in Berlin for a two-week residency. Finally, she premiered a new collaborative work in Tunisia in September.
- **Shweta Saraswat** started a Graduate Internship in Interpretive Media at the Getty Museum. She will be working with writers and producers to create multimedia packages for upcoming exhibitions and permanent collection items, including videos, audio tours, websites, and social media campaigns.

This sampling of our amazing graduate students leaves me thunderstruck! The future looks bright when they end up at the helm.

Also of note, on **Thursday, September 28 from 5-7** in the Broad Art Center Plaza there will be a party to welcome **Brett Steele**, our new Dean of the School of Arts and Architecture. Come one, come all. Dean Steele has moved here from his last post in London, England, so let's show him a west coast welcome. In our building, **Megan Weitzel** joins WACD as the new Student Affairs Officer focused on Graduate Studies. Megan has moved to North Campus from UCLA's Molecular Biology Institute and is managing the culture shock of being on this side of Ackerman with grace and style. Please stop by and welcome her to the department. Her office is next to Hayley's, under the main stairwell, just like Harry Potter's room at the opening of the series.

As always, the WACD family has been busy as can be and we have some amazing guests and events coming up this year:

- Just around the corner, WACD alumnus **Yehuda Sharim** will have a screening of his documentary film **we are in it** co-hosted by WACD and the Center for Jewish Studies on **Thursday October 26, 2017 at 4pm in 314 Royce Hall**. Yehuda is a scholar and filmmaker currently serving as a postdoctoral fellow in Jewish studies at Rice University.
- In spring, **Nia Love** will join us as the *Movement Research Exchange Artist* and will be making a work on students for *First Hand*. Originally from Los Angeles, Nia now lives in Harlem and describes herself as “a woman, sister, daughter, wife, grandmother, dancing activist, conceptual artist/anarchist.”
- Also in Spring we will have **Jack Gray** with us as a **Regents Lecturer** presenting and preparing work with students. Jack joins us from New Zealand where he is the founder of Atamira Dance Company and is an internationally recognized advocate for how contemporary Maori cultural practices can enhance and develop innovative indigenous dance artists and shape global communities.

Finally, our building has transformed a bit over the summer in ways that are both visible and hidden. Our theaters (rooms 200 and 208) have undergone a retrofitting of the lighting systems. Once operational it may appear as if little has changed, but the underbelly of the system finally works. Imagine a car with a new engine. The body looks the same, but you can now rely on it to transport you. Construction is almost done and Arsenio is so excited he may actually express a visible emotion. More noticeable is the new All-gender restroom next to the conference room. The good news is that the signage is up and it is clearly marked. The bad news is that the people in charge of putting up the signs are way ahead of the people doing the construction. So the room is not yet ready, but you can see where it will eventually be. I challenge you to come up with a story that describes UCLA efficiency better than that one!

Thanks to all of you for being a part of the WACD community. I look forward to seeing what the year brings and how we will all navigate and negotiate our projects and passions.

Sincerely,



Lionel Popkin
Professor and Chair
Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance
lpopkin@arts.ucla.edu