

SEMI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

SPRING '24
ARTS IN REVIEW

MC Art Beat

Visual, Performing, and Media Arts News at Montgomery College





Message from the Dean

DEAR FRIENDS OF MONTGOMERY COLLEGE ARTS,

Spring 2024 was an exciting time in the Visual, Performing, and Media Arts at Montgomery College. In addition to our extensive class offerings, an outstanding array of performances, exhibitions, and workshops showcased the immense talent and dedication of our students, faculty, and staff.

Our special events included a premier screening of the documentary film *Black Printmakers of Washington, DC: Percy Martin and Michael B. Platt*. Next semester, a major exhibition of work by Martin, Platt, and their circle will open in the King Street Gallery. In the King Street Gallery this spring, the exhibition *Natural Blue* was the culmination of a yearlong exploration of the color blue, with a group of prominent local artists addressing the theme in a variety of media. In the performing arts, *Mojada* opened to great acclaim at the Cultural Arts Center in Takoma Park. A reimagining of the ancient Greek story of Medea set in modern-day Los Angeles, *Mojada* explores issues of contemporary Latin American identity and life.

As always, we want to recognize the outstanding achievements, milestones, and contributions of our Visual, Performing, and Media Arts faculty, staff, and students. In this edition of *Art Beat* we reflect on Professor Joanne Carl's many accomplishments and unmatched dedication to her students on the occasion of her retirement from the College. We also check in with new faculty member, Professor Irene Alby, who led a group of performing arts students to victory at the prestigious Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival. Finally, we celebrate Professor Molly Donnelly who recently celebrated twenty-five years as the director of the College's Chorus and Chamber Singers. Whether they are embarking on their first year with us or celebrating decades of service, we honor and appreciate the invaluable impact our faculty and staff have on our community and are immensely grateful for their passion, dedication, and unwavering support.

The Fall 2024 Arts Calendar will be out very soon. Please be sure to check our exciting schedule of theatre productions, dance performances, concerts, lectures, workshops, gallery exhibitions, and other arts programming at montgomerycollege.edu/artsinstitute.

We wish you a wonderful semester and hope to see you at an arts event very soon.

Frank Trezza, PhD

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Cover photograph: "Mineral," acrylic on polyester film by Jacquie Crocetta and "Aftermath," wood sculpture by Ruth Lozner
 Courtesy of King Street Gallery and Montgomery College

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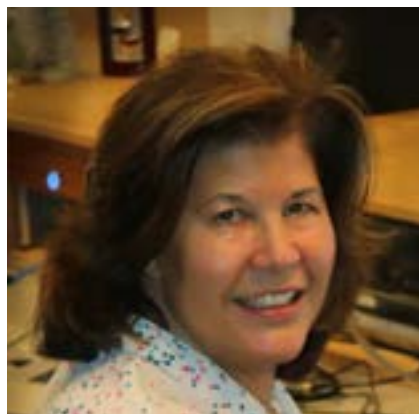
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CELEBRATING TWO DECADES OF EXCELLENCE: DR. MOLLY DONNELLY LEADS A NEW GENERATION OF SINGERS AS DIRECTOR OF THE MONTGOMERY COLLEGE CHORUS AND CHAMBER SINGERS



Above: Dr. Donnelly leads the MC Chorus at Christ Episcopal Church in Rockville

Since 1997 Dr. Molly Donnelly has directed the Montgomery College Chorus and Chamber Singers and taught voice in Rockville's Department of Performing Arts. Her students regularly transfer to elite universities and pursue careers in teaching and performance and, as many of them will tell you, Dr. Donnelly's mentorship does not end at graduation. Her alumni return to MC to perform with her choral groups as members and soloists and sometimes even as instructors.



Above: An advertisement for the 2024 Summer Choral Institute

Dr. Donnelly is a prolific performer and scholar as well as a dedicated teacher. A mezzo-soprano, she studied opera at the University of Colorado before receiving a Master of Music from the College-Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati and a Doctorate of Musical Arts from the University of Maryland. She spent a year and a half in England on a Fulbright Scholarship and has sung as a soloist with Musica Sacra, The Oratorio Society of New York, The Minnesota Orchestra, The National Symphony, The Baltimore Symphony, The Berlin Philharmonic, The Bethlehem Bach Festival, The Washington Bach Consort, The Cathedral Choral Society, The Maryland Handel Festival, The Maryland Chorus, The National Philharmonic, The Washington Opera, The Cincinnati Opera, The Oratorio Society of Washington, The Masterworks Chorus, Baltimore Choral Arts Society, The Denver Symphony, The Colorado Springs Symphony, The Boulder Philharmonic, The Ohio Light Opera, The Washington Savoyards, and many other notable ensembles. As Tolomeo, in the premiere of the North American production of Handel's opera Tolomeo, Andrew Porter, reviewing for *The New Yorker* wrote: "Her voice has character--an elusive quality, God-given, not acquirable, that makes people listen. Her countenance is clear and candid, her presence lithe and honest, her expressiveness sterling." Dr.

Donnelly is an active adjudicator serving the National Association of Teachers of Singing, The National Symphony Young Artists Award, The Friday Morning Music Club Awards, and MCPS choral festivals. Dr. Donnelly is also the co-director of the annual Summer Choral Institute held at Montgomery College and a vocal consultant for the National Philharmonic Chorale.

Even in college, Dr. Donnelly knew that she wanted to be a teacher. "I've played the piano since I was four years old, so I always accompanied my friends in school and taught along with my studies. I like the teaching environment, the studio. Watching and sharing music." As a professor at MC, her mentorship is intentional. She pushes her students to keep up with requirements, finish their degrees, transfer, and plan for careers in the field. "It's probably kind of obnoxious," she laughs, "but I think they appreciate it. It keeps them on track."

Two of Dr. Donnelly's recent graduates are a testament to her mentorship. Kelly Michael P. Mok and Connor James Halvorsen are voice majors who celebrated their last semesters at MC with a joint recital this spring. "It was awesome. We invited a lot of people and it was the first time our friends and family saw us perform classical music," says Mok, who shares an affinity

for musical theatre with Halvorsen. “Dr. Donnelly helped us organize and secure the location [Recital Hall in Rockville], but then she let us figure out the logistics on our own...the program, how to get people there. It was great experience for us in terms of performance, but also planning.”

Mok, who will transfer to the University of Arizona as a theatre major with a minor in voice this fall, first came to MC as a high school student in 2019 to participate in Summer Dinner Theatre. After meeting Dr. Donnelly he switched his major from theatre to voice and says she has helped him tremendously both academically and personally. “I’ve improved so much as a singer, but she

has also given me career advice, audition advice, and life advice. She’s been so accommodating and understanding, and she helped me get into the University of Arizona.”

The songs that Mok chose to perform at his graduation recital reflect his years working with Dr. Donnelly at MC. He chose Gluck’s *O del mio dolce ardor* because it was one of the first songs he sang with her and Mozart’s *Un’aura amorosa* because it was one of the last. Mok and Halvorsen performed in multiple languages, including English, French, Latin, Italian, and German, a skill that Dr. Donnelly emphasizes, and threw some showtunes into the program for good measure. The pair decided



Above: The College Chorus and Chamber Singers Perform at the Cultural Arts Center in April 2024



Above: The MC Chorus and Chamber Singers perform a Holocaust Commemoration concert at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville

to end with a song by Andrea Bocelli because, through their association with MC theatre, they had the opportunity to perform with the singer at CFG Bank Arena in Baltimore this spring.

MC has brought Mok other opportunities as well. Through his association with Summer Dinner Theatre and its Artistic Director, Roberta Gasbarre, he performed with the Washington Revels at the George Washington University’s Lisner Auditorium last year and he is currently teaching, directing, and choreographing at Adventure Theatre. After college, Mok would like to continue teaching. “High school and college are the times when people need the most guidance to figure out what they want to do for the rest of their lives, and honestly, I’m inspired by Dr. Donnelly. I want to be someone who

guides people through that (important) time.”

Many of Dr. Donnelly’s former students have gone on to illustrious careers in the field. In fact, one of the most exciting aspects of MC’s Chorus and Chamber concerts is that you will almost always find successful alumni returning as guest soloists. This spring, for example, the College Chorus performed Gabriel Fauré’s *Requiem in D Minor* with guest soloists Sheila Meléndez and Devin Osborne, both of whom are alumni.

Ms. Meléndez, who started as a student at MC in 2013, is back at the College not only as a performer, but as an instructor, teaching Applied Music (Voice) to majors. She credits Dr. Donnelly with starting her on the path to what has become a successful career in music.

“I’ve been singing my whole life, playing guitar, playing piano, but I didn’t know (voice) was an actual major until I met Dr. Donnelly,” she says. “With her guidance, I passed all the prerequisites... and joined Chorus. I had never been in Chorus before. It was such great ear training and the way that Dr. Donnelly does rehearsal is amazing. She’s teaching vocal pedagogy, she’s teaching musicianship, she teaches everything at once... I was learning so fast and then she accepted me into the Chamber Singers and that ended up being what really shaped the rest of my life...that was it, I found my element.”

After graduating from MC, Ms. Meléndez earned a dual bachelor’s degree in Voice Performance and Music Education from Towson University and a master’s degree in Voice Performance and Choral Conducting from the University of Denver. In addition to teaching at MC, she is currently the Director of Choirs at Trinity United Methodist Church, Assistant Director for Vittoria Ensemble, and Music Director for the Silver Singers Community Choir at The Ridge Pinehurst. In Denver, she regularly performs with St. Martin’s Chamber Singers and Evans Choir. Ms. Meléndez has been a soloist for Handel’s *Messiah*, Vivaldi’s *Gloria*, Rutter’s *Gloria*, and Dan Forrest’s *Requiem for the Living*. She has performed the roles of Susanna

in Mozart’s *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Papagena in Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte*. As a conductor, Ms. Meléndez has performed Schubert’s *Mass in G* and excerpts from Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*. This fall, she will conduct Monteverdi’s *Magnificat*.

Dr. Donnelly’s students and alumni are a testament to her commitment to teaching and the far-reaching impact of her mentorship. You will find them performing with the College Chorus and the MC Chamber Singers every semester on all three campuses and beyond. The Chamber Singers’ Holocaust Commemoration concert at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville was featured in our Summer 2023 edition of *Art Beat* and in MCTV’s Holocaust Commemoration special. You will also find graduating students performing honors concerts in December and May and performances by attendees of Dr. Donnelly’s annual Summer Choral Institute in June. They perform with professional groups like the National Philharmonic Chorale and Cantate, one of the DC area’s premier choral organizations, and in private concerts like the one offered by Mok and Halvorsen this spring. Be sure to consult our fall 2024 Arts Calendar on the [MC Arts Institute’s website](#) for more information about next semester’s performances.



Above: Alumni Devin Osborne and Sheila Meléndez pose with Dr. Donnelly after performing guest solos at the spring 2024 College Chorus Concert.

A Guide to Choral Music at MC College Chorus


The larger of MC’s two choral groups, participation in the College Chorus is required of vocal music majors, but open to all MC students and members of the community. The College Chorus performs a diverse range of musical genres with an emphasis on the great choral literature. Members enroll in the one-credit MUSC 163 class and perform at least one major concert every semester, often accompanied by a string quartet, organist, and professional soloists.

Chamber Singers

The smaller of MC’s two choral groups, open by audition only, and limited to 15-20 members. The Chamber Singers were established as a madrigal-inspired chorus and members are a diverse blend of students and experienced singers from the community. The Chamber Singers perform music from Renaissance through modern classical, jazz, and popular styles, accompanied by piano or a small ensemble. Membership is required of vocal music majors and all singers enroll in the one-credit MUSC 170 class which offers the opportunity to improve sight-reading skills and perform songs in English, Latin, German, Hebrew, Spanish, and French.

Summer Choral Institute

An intensive two-week program offered every June at Montgomery College in collaboration with Cantate. The Summer Choral Institute is co-directed by Dr. Donnelly and Cantate Artistic Director Victoria Gau and invites experienced adult singers from around the region to share the joy of community singing as they refresh and develop skills to support their choral experiences throughout the year. Four intensive workshop-rehearsals over two weeks culminate in a free public concert of exciting varied choral works in late June. This is a not-to-be missed opportunity for singers committed to building their voices and sharing community with local musicians.

A photograph of a young woman with long dark hair, wearing a white patterned top and a dark skirt, singing into a microphone on a stage. The background is dark with blue and purple stage lighting. A red, marquee-style sign with a scalloped bottom edge is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text.

**PROFESSOR IRENE
ALBY'S STUDENTS
CELEBRATE VICTORIES
AT THE KENNEDY CENTER
AMERICAN COLLEGE
THEATER FESTIVAL**

Above: Melanie Abad performs at this spring's "MC's Got Talent" competition

It is hard to believe that it was just last semester that we welcomed Professor Irene Alby to the Performing Arts Department at Rockville. Since we featured her in our Fall 2023 issue of [Art Beat](#), Professor Alby has made her mark on the College's theatre program in so many ways. In addition to reinvigorating the department's Black Box Players student group, she has introduced new field trip, performance, and learning opportunities and led a group of students to success at the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival. One need only visit the Montgomery College Theatre [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts that she administers to see the vibrant sense of community and excitement that she has brought to the College.

Among Professor Alby's favorite things about teaching at MC are the opportunities the DC area has to offer. "Of all the places I've lived in the US," says the Canada native, "including New York City, this is my favorite. I love big cities, but I wanted somewhere that also felt livable. It's amazing that there is all of this culture at our fingertips; free museums, tons of theatre... Everybody (at the College) is doing such interesting projects because there is just so much around. It is a nice place to be."

Since arriving at MC, Professor Alby has made sure that her students attend as many live performances as possible, both close to home and further afield. In April, she took a group to see Alan Cumming at the Parilla Performing Arts Center on the Rockville campus and

in March twenty lucky MC students got to travel with her to New York. On their whirlwind trip, the group saw two Broadway shows, *Chicago* and *Doubt: A Parable*, in one day. "It's my first time seeing a show on Broadway," says student Kacey Stewart in a [video album](#) Alby created for the [Montgomery College Theatre YouTube channel](#). "I really liked *Chicago*. I think the standouts for me were the acting performances and choreography. I love the jazz. I love the acrobatics. It was all a big surprise. I had never seen the show before, but I loved every second of it and I've had a wonderful day here."

Alby was also pleased to find that MC's theatre program has such strong ties to area theatres and theatre professionals, many of whom are alumni. "Theatres

in the DMV area full of alums who are actors, artistic directors, design technicians, front of house... It's a really big group," she says. Many, like Rooster Skylar Sultan, who has served as Property Master on several recent MC productions, and Lauren L. Evans, a theatre technician, come back to the College as faculty, staff, and guest artists. Others, like Audra Jacobs, the Connectivity Director for Arlington's 1st Stage Theatre, stay connected to MC in other ways. This spring, Jacobs invited Alby and her students to attend the company's productions of *Shutter Sisters* and *The Nance* and planned a special workshop for them with performer and voice teacher, Sally Imbriano. Many major names in DC theatre also guest-direct MC Performing Arts Series and



Above: Participants in the 24 hour play festival.

Summer Dinner Theatre productions throughout the year, allowing MC students to make invaluable professional contacts that serve them long after graduation.

Another benefit of working at MC for Alby is the size of its theater program. In larger departments, she says, “(professors) have to stay in their own lane. Everybody is so specialized... (At MC) I love being able to teach a wide variety of subjects and I get to spend more time with each student.” Because of the program’s relatively small size, for example, Alby was able to act quickly and creatively when she saw a need for a Voice and Diction class oriented specifically to theatre majors. Within one semester, she was able to team up with faculty from Communications Studies to reimagine and co-teach an existing Comm 109 course and the collaboration brought unexpected benefits. “I helped co-teach the class...and now Communications majors are coming to see our shows!”

It seems that anticipating student needs and creating new learning opportunities are two of Alby’s greatest strengths as a teacher. Under her direction, the Black Box Players student group has become an active and engaged community once again after a pandemic lull. Within weeks of arriving at the College, Alby was recruiting for the group during club rush and introducing popular new

programs and activities. One Saturday in November, for example, the club hosted a 24-Hour Play Festival during which students worked together to write, direct, and perform short fully-staged plays in one day. (To see video of the festival, [click here.](#))

Also within weeks of arriving at MC, Alby created a new Staged Reading Series for the Players entitled “Dismantling the Patriarchy: 21st Century Eyes On the Classic Guys (Not About Horses!).” Directed by Alby and part-time faculty member, Laura E. Miller, the new series ran throughout the year and offered students performance opportunities outside of the College’s regular schedule of large-scale plays and musicals. These more informal productions were a major success, with actors performing to large enthusiastic crowds. For the series, Alby and Miller chose unconventional works that offered new takes on classic stories from a feminist perspective. Their first production, in October, was *John Proctor is the Villain*, a “post-Me-Too examination of power, love, and sex education” via *The Crucible* by Kimberly Belflower. *Heddatron*, “a hilarious and savage journey to freedom,” in which a pregnant housewife is abducted by robots and forced to perform *Hedda Gabler*, was performed in December, and in the spring, Alby and Miller, with co-director Rooster Skylar Sultan, produced Ellen McLaughlin’s



Above: MC theatre students and alums traveled to New York to see two Broadway shows in one day.

adaptation of *The Trojan Women*.

Among Alby’s most exciting contributions to MC’s theatre program this year was her submission of the College’s first play for consideration at the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF) since the 1980s. KCACTF is the largest and most prestigious North American college theatre conference, with 18,000 student participants from colleges and universities across the country every year. Schools submit productions for consideration by KCACTF Respondents who offer feedback and nominate students for awards and scholarships in every area, including acting, design, directing, dramaturgy, playwriting, and stage management. Nominated students

attend regional festivals in January or February. There, they compete, perform, attend workshops, and participate in professional development. In addition to potentially winning awards, students meet professors, theatre professionals, and other students from their region, which in MC’s case includes 80 schools from Maryland, DC, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Western New York, Northern Virginia, Ohio, and West Virginia.

From Alby’s entry of last fall’s production of *A New Brain*, five Montgomery College students were nominated for awards and invited to the regional festival in Pittsburgh last January. When the finalists and semi-finalists were announced at the festival’s Opening Ceremony, four of

MC's five participants were honored in some capacity. Isabella DeSando was one of just 32 students from among the 198 nominees for the Irene Ryan Acting Award to be chosen to compete in the semi-final round. She performed a comedic scene from *Much Ado About Nothing* and an emotional monologue from *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea*. Actors Sky Knight Ritter and Payton O'Keefe were selected for the festival's Musical Theatre Cabaret performance and Ritter was chosen to perform a solo at the Closing Ceremonies.

Performing Arts major Melanie Abad was one of 20 out of 97 candidates selected to participate in the Musical Theatre Intensive at KCACTF. "It was so so exciting!" says Abad of the experience. "I didn't know anything about it until (Professor Alby) came to MC and introduced all of these new things to us." Abad, who was awarded the Montgomery College Excellence in Theatre Performance Award at her graduation this spring, didn't expect to hear her name called as a finalist at the festival. "There were so many colleges there and so many people." She didn't realize her name was announced, she says, "until my friends started hugging me and screaming!" From there, the rest of the festival was a whirlwind of special workshops and vocal-coaching sessions that have helped Abad recognize and prepare

for the possibilities ahead. "My dream career since I was very very tiny was to perform in some capacity, but it never felt like it was within reach until I got to MC." When she first arrived at the College, Abad says, "I felt like I was really behind because I hadn't done theatre or anything in the arts before. But I've absorbed so much since then and there have been so many opportunities for me to grow here, that now I feel really comfortable pushing my boundaries." Since returning from Pittsburgh, Abad has won the College's annual "MC's Got Talent" competition with her performance of "This Wish" from Disney's *Wish* and was chosen to perform at the President's College-wide closing meeting. After participating in this year's Summer Dinner Theatre, Abad plans to move to New York and shift her focus from theatre to film and television while applying to university programs.

Of KCACTF, Professor Alby says, "It is a great outreach and great place to see and be seen." In addition, representatives from all of MC's major transfer institutions, including the University of Maryland, UMBC, and Towson were in attendance. "Maryland has one of the highest number of universities and community colleges participating in the festival. This makes it particularly significant for our students, who get to learn the



Above: MC Theatre Students and Alums at KCACTF

latest innovations in our field while also networking with their peers." says Alby, who reported that representatives from several institutions singled MC students out for praise: "Nigel Semaj (an Assistant Professor of Acting at UMBC and the Head of the Irene Ryan Acting Competition) praised our students' work. Kathryn Kawecki (a professor at Bowie State University) offered to interview students who were interested in eventually transferring there, and Bryan Vandevender (Head of the MTI Musical Theatre Institute and Assistant Professor at Bucknell University) stated that our students were 'very strong.' Additionally, our students had the chance to participate in workshops, study with coaches and professional

artists, see performances from other participating colleges, and go to events at the August Wilson African American Cultural Center."

"It was a great experience. All of our students really held their own," says Alby," who plans to submit all four of MC's 2024 mainstage plays and send at least twelve students to next year's regional festival. "Many of our students are thinking about where they want to continue their studies. This competition really opens up not just the prospect of a four-year program, but the prospect of a career and a future in the arts." To see a video album of MC's trip to this year's KCACTF regional competition, [click here](#).





HONORING THE LEGACY OF BLACK PRINTMAKERS: A JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY AND ART

Artist: Michael B. Platt
Title: Yellow
Medium: archival pigment print
Year: 2009
Image courtesy of Platt Studios

In February, the Department of Visual and Performing Arts hosted the premiere screening of the documentary film, *Black Printmakers of Washington, DC: Percy Martin and Michael B. Platt* to a full house in the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation Art Center auditorium.



Film Screening Full House - the auditorium was standing room only for the film screening and panel discussion

Produced and directed by Susan J. Goldman, founder of the Printmaking Legacy Project (PLP), this film sheds light on the rich legacy of Percy Martin and Michael Platt, alongside their circle of collaborating artists, in the DMV (DC/Maryland/Virginia) region.

In addition to recent screenings in the DMV region, the film was highlighted at the recent Southern Graphics International Conference and will return to MC in November in conjunction with a major exhibition in the King Street Gallery. This exhibition will feature works by Percy Martin,

Michael Platt, Carol Beane, Dwight Tyler, and other artists associated with Martin and Platt's respective studios. Scheduled for November 2024, the exhibition opening reception will include a screening of the film, along with a panel discussion with the artists. Join us again in November to celebrate Percy and Michael's contributions to our art community!

"*Black Printmakers of Washington, D.C.*" is a testament to the passion and dedication of its creator, Susan Goldman. Inspired by her longstanding collaboration with Michael B. Platt through her fine art publishing studio,



FILM SCREENING
BLACK PRINTMAKERS
OF WASHINGTON, DC
PERCY B. MARTIN & MICHAEL B. PLATT

Artist: Michael B. Platt
 Title: Yellow
 Medium: archival pigment print
 Year: 2009
 Image courtesy of Platt Studios



Percy Dwight Claude - left to right - Percy Martin, Dwight Tyler, and discussion moderator Claude Elliot (top right)

emergence of a thriving artistic community, the film illuminates the challenges and triumphs faced by Black artists in a society marked by systemic inequality. Through personal accounts and archival footage, viewers gain insight into the pivotal role played by Martin and Platt in creating spaces of belonging and creative expression for Black artists.

Central to the documentary's narrative is the exploration of the artistic processes and techniques employed by Percy Martin and Michael Platt.

Platt's poignant imagery delves into themes of social justice, resilience, and collective memory, often collaborating with his wife, poet Carol A. Beane, to create powerful print installations and artists' books. Meanwhile, Martin's fusion of traditional intaglio techniques with computer-generated imagery gives rise to stunning large-scale etchings, each imbued with his unique blend of science fiction and African mythologies.

Since its premiere at Montgomery College, the documentary has resonated deeply within the Black artistic community, sparking conversations and forging connections

across generations. The overwhelming turnout at the screening, attended by esteemed figures such as printmaker Allan Edmunds, underscores the film's significance as a catalyst for dialogue and collaboration. As Percy Martin and his fellow panelists engaged with students and community members, the documentary's message of resilience and creativity reverberated throughout the lecture halls and printmaking studios.

As the film continues to garner acclaim and recognition, plans are underway to extend its reach through additional screenings, discussions, and educational initiatives. From private events at cultural hubs like Busboys and Poets to prestigious conferences such as the Southern Graphics Council International, "Black Printmakers of Washington, D.C." is poised to spark meaningful conversations and inspire future generations of artists. Furthermore, the forthcoming release of the documentary on the Printmaking Legacy Project website will ensure that its message of empowerment and artistic excellence reaches audiences far and wide.

In essence, "Black Printmakers of Washington, D.C." serves as a testament to the enduring power of art to transcend boundaries, challenge norms, and illuminate untold stories.

Through the lens of Percy Martin, Michael Platt, and their esteemed peers, viewers are invited to embark on a journey of discovery, celebration, and reflection, honoring the rich tapestry of Black creativity in the nation's capital and beyond.

As the credits roll, the names of visionaries and artisans flicker across the screen, each a testament to the collaborative spirit that brought this project to life:





Celebrating the
Legacy of Montgomery College
Professor Joanne Carl

“ Her dedication to student success was exceptional, her knowledge of MC policies and academic requirements was amazing, and her willingness to share this knowledge with her colleagues was inspirational. ”

As Montgomery College bids farewell to one of its esteemed educators, Professor Joanne Carl, it's essential to reflect on the profound impact she has had on both her students and colleagues over the years. Joanne's journey is one marked by dedication, passion, and an unwavering commitment to excellence, making her retirement a momentous occasion worth celebrating.

With a career spanning 25 years in the

broadcast industry, Joanne's expertise in production, coupled with her roles as assistant director, director, and production manager in local and regional television stations, provided her with a rich tapestry of experiences. It was within this dynamic environment that she discovered her love for collaboration and the fusion of art and science—a sentiment that would shape her approach to education in the years to come.

Transitioning from the fast-paced world of television to academia was a significant leap for Joanne, one that she embraced with characteristic enthusiasm. Despite initial obstacles, including the need for a master's degree, Joanne's passion for teaching and her innate ability to impart knowledge were evident to all who knew her. Montgomery College became her new home, offering her the opportunity to nurture the next generation of media professionals while continuing to pursue her own academic endeavors.

Joanne's teaching philosophy evolved alongside advancements in technology, reflecting her unwavering commitment to innovation and adaptability. She recognized the transformative potential of online learning early on, completing a master's in educational technology leadership and championing the integration of digital tools into the classroom experience. When the pandemic forced educators to pivot to remote teaching, Joanne's expertise proved invaluable as she navigated the challenges with grace and resilience,



Above: selfie with Movie Production students in the background working on an episode of their magazine format program EFP-TV.
Photo by Joanne Carl



Above: Joanne Carl leading the annual Media Forward career event hosted by the student chapter of SMPTE. (Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers).
Photo by Miguel Umana (TVRA alum)

emerging as a guiding light for her colleagues.

Her departmental colleague and fellow Professor, Christopher Koch, had this to say, “Her dedication to student success was exceptional, her knowledge of MC policies and academic requirements was amazing, and her willingness to share this knowledge with her colleagues was inspirational. MC lost a unparalleled asset with her retirement.”

Beyond her technical prowess, Joanne’s impact extended to her students, whom

she inspired to embrace continuous growth and self-improvement. Her advice—to persist in the face of challenges, to seek feedback and incorporate it into one’s work, and to cultivate a sense of community and collaboration—resonated deeply with all who had the privilege of learning from her.

Two years ago, Joanne was nominated for the Outstanding Full-Time Faculty Award for Excellence in Service to the College and/or Community. The former Chair of the Media Arts and Technologies Department, Erik Swanson, mentioned

in his nomination statement, “As a valued instructor, advisor and program coordinator, Joanne is an asset to the Broadcast Media Production program and to the Media Arts & Technologies Department. She has a lifetime of experience in storytelling and video production to share with her students. As a generous and enthusiastic colleague and mentor, Joanne’s contributions to the college supported the transition to remote learning from day one.”

As Joanne embarks on this new chapter of her life, her legacy remains deeply ingrained in the fabric of Montgomery

College. Her contributions to the institution, both as an educator and as a mentor, will be remembered fondly by all those whose lives she touched. As we celebrate her achievements and bid her farewell, we express our heartfelt gratitude for her unwavering dedication, passion, and commitment to excellence.

May Professor Joanne Carl’s retirement be filled with joy, fulfillment, and the same sense of purpose that defined her remarkable career. And may her legacy continue to inspire future generations of educators and media professionals for years to come.



Above: Prof. Carl overseeing the live, student produced newscast MC in Focus. MC in Focus was part of the Media Production program (TVRA) and aired live on MCTV and YouTube live for 20 years. Photo by Jon Goell





NATURAL BLUE:

WORKS BY MEREDITH LEICH, JACQUI CROCETTA,
MEREDITH STARR AND SARAH KAIN GUTOWSKI

Above: Image credits, left to right: "Mineral," acrylic on polyester film by Jacquie Crocetta; "Aftermath," wood sculpture by Ruth Lozner; "I Awake to Your Shavings," cyanotype by Meredith Starr

IN THE HEART OF THE BUSTLING KING STREET GALLERY, A CAPTIVATING NARRATIVE UNFOLDS WITHIN THE WALLS ADORNED WITH HUES OF AZURE, COBALT, AND SAPPHIRE.

Welcome to “Blue,” a profound exploration into the evocative power of one of the most enigmatic colors in the spectrum. Conceived by the exhibition committee, “Blue” serves as the thematic backbone for a series of exhibitions throughout the 2023-24 King Street Gallery season, culminating in the exquisite showcase titled “Natural Blue.”



Blue Exhibition
Multiple Works

With the theme “Blue” as their guiding beacon, each featured artist embarked on a journey of creative expression, infusing their works with both the formal essence and emotive depth of the chosen color. This open-ended thematic approach allowed for a diverse array of interpretations, resulting in a rich tapestry of artistic endeavors.

For instance, Jacqui Crocetta delved into the depths of memory and



“Aftermath”
Work by Ruth Lozner



“Blue Promise” Work by Ruth Lozner

nostalgia, utilizing shades of blue to evoke a sense of longing and introspection in her mixed-media collages. Ruth Lozner, on the other hand, employed the cool tones of blue to explore themes of tranquility and serenity in her ethereal landscapes, inviting viewers to immerse themselves in moments of contemplative solitude.

One of the hallmarks of “Natural Blue” lies in its seamless integration of diverse styles and techniques spanning centuries. From the timeless cyanotype method of the 19th

century to cutting-edge digital imagery and sculptural installations of the 21st century, the exhibition transcends temporal boundaries to present a holistic view of artistic innovation.

Meredith Leich’s video projections and photographs stand as a testament to this fusion of tradition and modernity. Created as site-specific installations, Leich’s mesmerizing visuals blend elements of drawing and animation to explore the intersection of natural landscapes and human intervention. With a subtle yet poignant

commentary on climate change and environmental degradation, Leich's works serve as a call to action, urging viewers to reconsider their relationship with the planet.

While the creative process often thrives in solitary exploration, "Natural Blue" also bears testament to the power of collaboration and community. Among the featured artists, Sarah Kain Gutowski and Meredith Starr joined forces to intertwine poetry and visual imagery,



"Surge"
Work by Jacqui Crocetta

creating a mesmerizing dialogue between word and form. Under the guidance of Professor Michael Booker, the exhibition seamlessly weaves together individual visions into a cohesive narrative.

Gutowski's evocative poetry, infused with imagery of oceans and skies, finds resonance in Starr's cyanotype prints, where shades of blue wash over the canvas like waves crashing against the shore. This symbiotic relationship between text and image invites

viewers to immerse themselves in a world of metaphor and symbolism, where each artwork serves as a window into the artist's soul.

Beyond the confines of the gallery space, "Natural Blue" leaves a lasting imprint on the cultural landscape. A poetry reading organized by Gutowski attracted enthusiasts from far and wide, underscoring the exhibition's role as a catalyst

Sarah Kain Gutowski presents a poetry reading outside King Street Gallery on Saturday, February 17th. Photo: Kevin Bowman

for community engagement and dialogue. As the boundaries between disciplines blur, the influence of "Natural Blue" is poised to extend far beyond the realm of visual art.

From collaborative workshops to interdisciplinary symposiums, the legacy of "Natural Blue" will continue to inspire creativity and collaboration across diverse artistic mediums. By fostering a sense of connection and dialogue, the exhibition serves as a beacon of hope in an increasingly fragmented world, reminding us of the transformative power of art to unite, provoke, and inspire.

Reflecting on the exhibition's highlights, one cannot help but to be drawn to the poignant collaborations between Meredith Starr's cyanotype-based images and Sarah Kain Gutowski's poetry. The interplay of visual and textual elements evokes a profound sense of introspection, echoing the very essence of the "Blue"



theme. Additionally, Meredith Leich's site-specific video projections stand out for their evocative portrayal of climate change's impact on our planet, serving as a poignant reminder of the urgency of environmental stewardship.

In essence, "Natural Blue" transcends the confines of a traditional art exhibition, inviting viewers on a transformative journey through the depths of color, creativity, and community. As the final chapter in the King Street Gallery's exploration of "Blue," this exhibition leaves an indelible mark on both the artistic landscape and the collective consciousness of its audience.

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
PERFORMING ARTS

— PRESENTS —

LUIS ALFARO'S

MOJADA



This spring, Montgomery College's Performing Arts department presented *Mojada* by Luis Alfaro at the Cultural Arts Center. Directed by Lauren Patton Villegas, this "lyrical and provocative adaptation of the Greek drama *Medea* re-frames Euripides' narrative in the complicated landscape of present-day Los Angeles."

Mojada is one of Alfaro's three "Greek plays," which explore the concerns of the Chicano and wider Latin-American communities of Los Angeles and New York through ancient drama. In 2022 the College staged Alfaro's *Electricidad*, based on Sophocles' *Electra*, and plans are in the works for a production of *Oedipus El Rey*. Despite its ancient origins and mythical scale, the story of Medea as told by Alfaro is a timely and relevant addition to the Performing Arts Series, and one with which contemporary audiences can connect and identify.

Blending Euripides' classic with Mexican folklore, *Mojada* examines America's immigration system and the destiny of one family caught in its grip. It is the story of Medea, a devoted wife and mother forced to leave her home in Mexico and endure a harrowing and traumatic journey over the border to Los Angeles with her husband Jason and son Acan. As the



Luz De Armas as Armida.
Photo by Naline Darmrong

family faces the harsh reality of their new life as undocumented immigrants in the United States, Jason is hired by a wealthy construction magnate, Armida,

who pursues him romantically. When Jason marries her Medea is driven to madness and murders Armida and Acan in a devastating act of vengeance,



The Mojada set designed by Megan Holden.
Photo credit: Naline Darmrong

Villegas, who is the Co-Artistic Director of Theatre Prometheus in Washington, DC, jumped at the chance to direct *Mojada*. Drawn to both the intensity of the story and its focus on contemporary immigrant experiences, Villegas says:

"To have a version of Medea centered on the Mexican experience and the immigrant experience in America, with all its highs and lows, was such a gift. I was just so excited about it... Throughout my professional career, I've always prioritized telling stories about the Latin American community and especially the Mexican American community because... it's really hard to hate someone when you know them as a person. Especially when you've heard how they got here and why they're here. You remember that people don't leave their homes because it's a fun

idea... (They don't) leave everything they know and the country that they love where they speak the language and know everyone to go somewhere where they are resented for their presence, where they don't speak the language and may not be able to get a job. (They go) because it is a better alternative to what their home is offering. Luis Alfaro did a really beautiful job (of conveying those ideas)...and *Mojada* is an incredible script."

Determined to tell an authentic story despite the fantastical elements and over-the-top tragedy of the play, Villegas knew that she would have to lean heavily on her cast and creative team. She made the bold decision, for example, to use shadow puppets to



Estela Villafane as Tita.
Photo credit: Naline Darmrong

reenact the violent and traumatic story of the main characters' journey across the US border. "I was trying to find a way to tell that story that didn't exploit the trauma, but just really honored it," says Villegas. "I thought about how we tell traditional stories around campfires, with shadows. How these very scary

stories can feel almost like they are for children.” When she brought up the idea to her creative team, Villegas was thrilled to find that they were more than game. Soon, the lighting and set designers were suggesting ways to create through-lines with the puppets that ensured that they didn’t feel like a “one-off thing.”



Sara Quintanilla as Medea and Estela Villafane as Tita. Photo credit: Naline Darmrong

Scenic designer Megan Holden, costume designer, Ashlynn Ludwig, lighting designer, Lynn Joslin, props designer, Rooster Sultan, and sound designer, Justin Schmitz, worked together with Villegas on every aspect of the show. “I love these collaborations. It was a real delight,” says Villegas. “There were so many decisions that we made as a group that the audience might never notice, but they are fun Easter eggs for us.” Feathers occasionally fall from the sky throughout the show, foreshadowing Medea’s transformation into a bird at the end. Lights flicker when Medea experiences intense

emotions. Lights dim and actors move in slow motion when Tita, played by Estela Villafane, steps away from the action to narrate.

Like the audience, Tita knows that the story of Medea will end tragically but is compelled to experience it anyway. This is something that Villegas and the cast talked about a lot. “The average theatre-goer knows the story of Medea. They know that it doesn’t have a happy ending. It has a devastating ending, and yet we had nearly full houses every night. So why do we keep coming back to these stories?... It’s because of the power of the story.” To Villegas’s delight, she and her team were able to surprise the audience and even themselves with every performance. “I know the script backward and forwards... None of it is a surprise, there are no plot twists... but sitting there opening night when Medea (played by Sara Quintanilla) and Jason (played by Bayron Celis) are arguing... and he tells her that he married Armida (Luz De Armas),” Villegas felt herself react along with the audience. “There was a collective gasp. The whole audience, to a person reacted. And when Medea followed up by asking if Jason had made love to Armida, a member of the audience yelled, ‘Yeah he did!’ (So many parts) of the show got these big visceral reactions... I had never seen it happen on this scale, and it happened every single show.”

She credits the actors for this as well as for keeping the larger-than-life story grounded in reality. From day one, she marveled at the cast’s ability to bring even the most outlandish scenes down to earth. “The world of this play is a magical, fantastical realm, so grounding the characters in reality and making sure that the actors have really thought about who they are, making them fully dimensional and realized is important.” She had to, for example, make the audience not only understand why Medea would murder her own son, but feel that she was somewhat justified in doing so. “Christian Curtis who played Akon is just the sweetest human being on earth,” says Villegas. “During rehearsals, I had to say to him, ‘I need you to be awful. Really awful. The audience needs to get it when she comes to murder you.’” Curtis took her direction and the next time he delivered his last line to Medea, “Mom. Speak English,” it connected. Every night, he drew a gasp from the audience. “My mom was like, ‘yeah, that makes sense,’” says Villegas. “All of the cast was Hispanic, so there were many Hispanic families in the audience. Everybody got it.”

“The whole room, the cast and myself, are all Hispanic. We’re all people of color. The difference that makes in a space is huge. I am very lucky that in my career I’ve intentionally made sure that I’m in spaces like that, but that is not the case

always or even usually. Being able to provide that means a great deal to me. There is something about getting to just be yourself in a space... like you can take a breath that you didn’t know you were holding. I don’t have to explain myself. I don’t have to justify my existence. I don’t have to justify my background. I can just be here and be myself and I don’t have to



Sara Quintanilla as Medea. Photo credit: Naline Darmrong.

be perfect. I can make mistakes because I’m not representing an entire population. I get to just represent myself.” Villegas, who reunited with several of her *Mojada* cast-members when she directed *In the Heights* for this year’s Summer Dinner Theatre in July, reflects, “*Mojada* will forever hold a special place in my heart for a million and one reasons. Numbers 1-8 being the cast and stage management... I loved the show. I’m exceedingly proud of it. It was beautiful. And the students did such an incredible job. I could not be more proud of them and I will continue to sing their praises probably for the rest of my life.”

SPECIAL THANKS

We honor Judith Kahn for her generous service of more than 40 years as an artist and educator at Montgomery College.



Judith Kahn

Judith Kahn was an adjunct art professor at Montgomery College (Rockville Campus) for four decades beginning in the mid-1970's. She was passionate about her teaching and furthering the mission of Montgomery College. She made a demonstrable impact on the education and lives of her students who on several occasions during her retirement conveyed their appreciation. Her emphasis in the classroom was on color and drawing

within an integrating approach to artistic expression. Judy was a renowned artist in multiple media with a forte in printmaking. Her travels across six continents often inspired her artwork, reflecting a diverse range of cultural influences. Her work has been exhibited in many important galleries and is in the permanent embassy art collection of the US State Department. She was actively involved with the Washington Print Club, the Washington Printmakers' Gallery, and Maryland Printmakers. Judy passed away on March 19, 2024. She was 97.

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