

# ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

FALL 2008–2009

ISSUE 3



PHOTO BY ROCIO RUSSO, MFA PHOTOGRAPHY STUDENT

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is with great pleasure that I introduce to you the newest member of our Academy family, Janet Preloger. As the Academy's Director of Alumni Affairs, Janet comes to us with an extensive background in the world of the performing arts, most recently Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York City, where she was responsible for planning special events and developing corporate outreach projects. Her experience in relationship building will be a great stride towards growing the Alumni program and expanding the reach of our graduates.

With over 11,000 alumni in the United States and across the world, our goal is to keep our graduates connected to each other and the University both socially and professionally. Whether located in the San Francisco area or abroad, the Alumni Association strives to provide programs and events that bring our alumni together as a community.

Please join me in welcoming a much anticipated addition to our University!

*Elisa Stephens*

Elisa Stephens, President



## YAHOO FOR KOURTNY HICKS

Do you love all those cool bells and whistles on your iPod? Are you among the many people who think that iLife is the greatest thing since sliced bread? Like the rest of the planet, you are probably wondering who the mad geniuses are who provide Apple with its magical technology touch. Well, one of these people is your fellow alum Kourtney Hicks (BFA, '04). Kourtney spent three years at Apple as Lead Designer in their Consumer Applications Group, where she worked on iPhoto, iMovie, and the Apple DVD Player (the one that comes with Leopard); Kourtney also worked with the design team for iTunes. As Team Lead for the iPod design team, she had a definitive hand in creating the most recent iPod Nano, as

well as the previous Nano generation. Kourtney certainly left her mark: she is one of the lead designers credited by Apple for over 55 newly registered iPod trademarks and patents.

Needless to say, Kourtney's leading role in creating today's hottest devices made her a hot commodity herself. This year, Kourtney moved on from Apple to take on an even bigger role at another technology giant – Yahoo. At Yahoo, Kourtney is the Senior Manager of User Experience and Design within Connected Life, Yahoo's Mobile Division. What does that mean for us? We'll be seeing all kinds of cool mobile apps and widgets coming out from Yahoo, courtesy of our very own Kourtney Hicks. Kourtney has already helped put out one major Yahoo application, called Yahoo oneConnect. Yahoo oneConnect is an incredibly cool toy (ahem...social

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## GREETINGS!

I am thrilled to join the Academy staff as your new Director of Alumni Affairs and look forward to working with you in launching some exciting new initiatives and extending the reach of our Alumni Association.

Transitioning from Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, an institution with a world-renown reputation and widespread reach in the performing arts, to one of the same caliber in the visual arts, is both a great opportunity and an exciting change.

First off, I am eager to launch a project with Worldstudio's Design Ignites Change, a unique opportunity for our MFA students and alumni to collaborate with a company that promotes social change. You'll find more information on this project in this month's newsletter.

I would love to hear from you, where you are working, and about recent projects. We will continue to feature interesting alumni stories in this publication and on our website. Please email me directly at [jpreloger@academyart.edu](mailto:jpreloger@academyart.edu) with your news, and suggestions.

Looking forward to meeting and working with you soon,

*Janet Preloger*

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networking tool) for your iPhone. The Yahoo website describes Yahoo oneConnect as a “revolutionary social address book” – it is an easy-to-use, fun interface that simplifies your life and brings together your phone book, sms, photos, and social networks.

Currently, Kourtny is working at Yahoo on mobile design pattern libraries, which Yahoo calls Blueprint. So what

is that, you ask? Well, this is a program that “enables others” to author all types of applications and widgets on all types of devices, be it the iPhone, J2ME, Symbian, Windows Mobile, or Android. All applications being authored would consist of elements created by Kourtny’s design team – essentially, Blueprint allows developers to author the structure of their widget or app (similar to HTML),

and then Kourtny’s team provides all of the presentation, visual components, controls, and overall look and feel (similar to CSS).

In addition to Blueprint, Kourtny will be working on countless more apps for over 2,000 mobile devices. What do we have to say about that? ...Yahoo!

**YAHOO! MOBILE**



## KENNY STOFF SIGNS WITH MUTINY PICTURES

Alum Kenny Stoff (BFA, '00) was behind one of MTV’s biggest comedy hits ever – a show that was written, shot, directed, and produced by Kenny himself. Called “Eminem: Making the Ass,” it was a behind-the-scenes documentary about the making of rapper Eminem’s music video “Ass Like That” – a documentary hosted by and starring puppets from Comedy Central’s hit show “Crank Yankers.” For the show, Kenny created an Eminem-style puppet, who crashed the scene of the music video shoot and tried to steal the show from the real Eminem. Originally

created as uncensored DVD bonus material, the show needed to be recut to 30 minutes and censored once MTV decided to air it. “You would think that MTV would be more loose than other stations, but they are actually more strict... there was a lot that I had to rewrite and cut in order to make it appropriate to air on MTV,” Kenny explains. The cuts didn’t seem to take away any of the show’s entertainment value: it became the highest rated show on MTV the summer it ran, and then MTV played it for an entire year afterward.

Since then, Kenny has been thriving in the expanding world of online video production. Like most industry experts these days, Kenny realizes that this is where the future is – the difference between Kenny and most other experts, however, is that Kenny caught on to online content from its very beginnings. Kenny is now signed up with Mutiny Pictures, a production house located in Venice, California which is known as one of the leaders of professional online video content. Kenny’s projects are focused mainly in the music industry; he has created professional footage of live concerts for some of the hottest musicians today, including Gavin Rossdale, Tokio Hotel,

The Clique Girlz, and many more. His other projects have included a TV special with 50 Cent called “Access Granted,” shot in Cancun, as well as a making of the documentary for the Sarah Silverman film “Jesus is Magic,” which went out as DVD bonus material.

Kenny had some advice to share for those who may be new graduates entering the industry: “Learn to shoot video properly and well,” Kenny says. “If you can maintain quality in video, you will be OK. Don’t treat it as a lesser medium.” With pros like Kenny leading the way, the next online video revolution will certainly be one to follow.





## LINDSAY GOODWIN FEATURED IN SELL-OUT SHOWS

Ever since graduating from the Academy, Lindsay Goodwin (BFA, '04) has made a huge splash in the art scene. She is represented at galleries across the U.S., including the Jones-Terwilliger Galleries in Carmel, California, the Ella Richardson Gallery in Charleston, South Carolina, and the Willow Gallery in Scottsdale, Arizona – and collectors are acquiring her work more quickly than she can produce it. “It’s not a bad problem to have, but I can’t keep up!” says Lindsay. It truly is a remarkable accomplishment for such a young artist – Lindsay is only 26 and four years out of college – to be in such high demand, and to be represented by some of the most discerning galleries in the nation.

But one look at Lindsay’s art tells the whole story: it is no wonder that collectors want to own these lovely pieces, which seem to transport you back to a lost age. Every June and July, Lindsay travels to France – and it is there that she gathers the materials for the bulk of her work, taking five to seven thousand (yes, thousand!) photographs of cafes, streets, and other scenes. Lindsay then paints from these photos, making them seem not like snapshots of modern-day Europe, but scenes from one’s imagination of a time and a lifestyle that once was. The exhibition of Lindsay’s work at the Ella Richardson Gallery is appropriately named “Timeless Sophistication” – it is a type of sophistication that is difficult to achieve or even conceive of today, yet Lindsay seems to depict these scenes with sophisticated ease.

Lindsay has played an active role in getting herself to where she is today; she did anything but sit around and wait for someone to discover the appeal of her art. She started applying to galleries even before graduation, and by the time she had her diploma in hand, she had already been in a gallery for a month. Lindsay is a self-proclaimed work-a-holic, painting on average eleven hours per day – and still, she can’t seem to produce enough for the eager audience waiting to purchase her latest work.

The instructors she worked with at the Academy had a profound impact on her work today, Lindsay says. “Sean Le Blanc’s costume classes were amazing – I love to paint period clothing, and Sean just made everything seem alive and interesting,” Lindsay says. She also remembers Michael Holmes, who taught her many of the entrepreneurial and business skills that she uses to this day. And she gives enormous credit to Craig Nelson for helping her advance and evolve into the artist she is today – “Craig Nelson’s Quick Studies course changed the way I painted. I became much more articulate and precise with my brush strokes because of him.”

*To see Lindsay’s work, go to [www.lindsay-goodwin.com](http://www.lindsay-goodwin.com), or visit one of the galleries that represent her: [www.jones-terwilliger-galleries.com](http://www.jones-terwilliger-galleries.com), [www.ellarichardson.com](http://www.ellarichardson.com), or [www.willowgalleryusa.com](http://www.willowgalleryusa.com).*



PAINTINGS BY LINDSEY GOODWIN, PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL KOVAC



## MONA T. BROOKS: PHOTOGRAPHER AT THE '08 DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

The 2008 Democratic National Convention was one of the most important political events in our recent history: and one of our very own alums, Mona T. Brooks (BFA, '06), had one of the best seats in the house as one of the convention's official photographers. Mona was given this honor by none other than Leah Daughtry, CEO of the Democratic National Convention Committee. From August 24 to August 29, Mona served as Daughtry's official photographer, following Daughtry's every step – which meant going everywhere the head of the

convention herself gets to go. Among Mona's best experiences was hanging out backstage with Howard Dean: "He recognized me and asked me if I ever sleep!" she says.

Mona has many incredible experiences to share from her trip – including a brief encounter with the Secret Service. "While I was photographing Michelle Obama during her speech, I stepped just a little beyond where I was supposed to stand," explains Mona, "And then a Secret Service Agent took me aside and wouldn't allow me back in." During the commotion when Obama's children came on stage to join her, Mona literally jumped right back into her original spot. She got a stern warning from a none-too-pleased Secret Service Agent – but it

was worth it. "I just had to get that shot!" Mona says.

Mona also serves as an official photographer for the Obama for America campaign's Northern California operations. She has had the opportunity to photograph Senator Barack Obama during five of his visits to Northern California since November 2007. Mona has taken some incredible shots of the Democratic nominee, some of which document the times when he is out of the limelight. While Mona was at AAU, she approached SFDA Kamala Harris and SF Fire Chief Joanne Hayes-White to fulfill her documentary photography assignments. She won their trust and in 2007 Mona was hired as the official photographer for Harris's re-election

campaign for San Francisco District Attorney, and soon moved on to photograph many other notable political figures, including Speaker Barbara Boxer, Former President Jimmy Carter, and Senator Hillary Clinton. Mona is documenting all the major fundraising events in Northern California for the Obama campaign, which means that she gets to photograph the high-profile people who attend these events – most recently, Mona has photographed two events with Caroline Kennedy as keynote speaker in Sacramento and San Francisco.

Whenever you see a photograph of a political figure in any San Francisco based publication, there is a pretty good likelihood that it was taken by our very own Mona T. Brooks – Mona's photography has been published in dozens of issues of San Francisco Magazine and 7X7 Magazine. Her work has also been featured in major publications around the world, including *Le Monde*, *Europa Quotidiano*, *Augenzeuge*, and many more.

In the short time since she has graduated, Mona has gotten more A-list shots than a seasoned Hollywood paparazzi. She has been hired to photograph Damon Wayans, Stephan Jenkins, Vanessa Carlton, among many other celebrities. So what's up next for Mona? She will take publicity photos for alternative rock band Third Eye Blind, which might be included in their next album, *Ursa Major*. And, of course, there is certainly a lot more politics to cover – we don't see Mona taking a vacation any time soon.



TOP PHOTO: SEN. BARACK OBAMA ON STAGE AT THE DNC WITH VP RUNNING-MATE JOE BIDEN AND JILL BIDEN, BOTTOM LEFT: FORMER PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER WITH DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION CEO, LEAH DAUGHTRY, BOTTOM RIGHT: FORMER PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON BACKSTAGE AT THE DNC

## IAN TAKAHASHI WORKS ON MUCH-ANTICIPATED SCI-FI FILM

The last time we spoke with alum Ian Takahashi (BFA, '05), he had just finished working with Bobcat Goldthwait as the Cinematographer on the indie hit "Sleeping Dogs Lie." We caught up with Ian – not an easy task, now that Ian has become one of Hollywood's hottest up-and-coming cinematographers. We learned that recently, Ian has finished working as the Director of Photography for a much-anticipated science fiction film: except this sci-fi may be for real.

Written by famed futurist Ray Kurz-

weil, "The Singularity is Near" is bound to attract a wide audience. Kurzweil has long been known to be one of the most astute technology theorists of our generation; he has authored several books on artificial intelligence, transhumanism, and futurism, all of which offer some of the most gripping and scientifically grounded predictions of where humanity is headed. "The Singularity is Near," the book that the film is based upon, puts forth some of Kurzweil's most interesting theories about the future merger of

technology and biology.

The film is not typical science fiction, since it depicts a future that seems not too far out of reach. In the film, we get an image of a future virtual reality where humans have the ability to download themselves into the digital network and live forever as bodiless, virtual avatars. Ninety percent of the film was shot with green screen, including a scene with famous attorney Alan Dershowitz. Dershowitz, who will make an appearance as an avatar, was filmed in Boston – but

for the final version of the film, he will appear in a court scene shot in San Francisco. The film, which wrapped in July 2008, is in post-production and is due out in early 2009. Make sure to watch for it in theatres – it is sure to be one of the most fascinating films of the year.

In other news, Ian is happy to report that he recently married Corinna Vistan, a fellow Academy graduate. Ian is currently working on other projects, including some music videos and an anamorphic short film.



## JR FABITO LANDS TOP JOB AT RED INTERACTIVE

When JR Fabito (MFA, '07) won a student Webby Award for his thesis project, papercritters.com, it was obvious that he would be a hot item on the job market. In May 2008, the Webby Awards took note of papercritters.com, which gained JR the coveted People's Choice award. The site also got a nod from the Favorite Website Awards (FWA), which named it the Site of

the Month. And no wonder it got all that attention – papercritters.com has all the makings of addictive fun that keep us all locked to our computers longer than we should be. On the website, you can create your own digital paper toys, and then share them with friends. Did we mention it's addictive? You've been warned!

Papercritters.com got JR the kind of attention a graduating senior needs: he didn't even need to send out a single resume. Red Interactive, a top web design firm located in Santa Monica, saw the site and called JR of-

fering him a job. Today he works on some of their most high-profile clients, including the Ultimate Fighting Championship, THQ, Sony Pictures Television, Universal Pictures, Toyota, Honda, and more. JR does both development and design for Red Interactive, flexing the skill set he gained from the Academy's Computer Arts New Media department. He is working near the beach, and creating web content for the Ultimate Fighting Championship...does it get any better? Knowing JR, it probably will.





## THE NORTH FACE GETS A FACE LIFT

What does a clothing giant like The North Face do when it wants to do some major re-branding? It goes to one of the best design boutiques in San Francisco, Chen Design, to tap some of the top talent in the graphic design industry. Our very own Kathrin Blatter (BFA, '06) is part of Chen Design's elite team. Only ten months out from

graduation she was chosen to work on designs for The North Face, one of the firm's most visible projects. After The North Face chose Kathrin's designs over all the other designs the company was considering, Kathrin took a leading role in re-branding one of the world's biggest outdoor clothing and equipment retailers. Kathrin was the lead designer on the entire The North Face project, working with Chen Design creative directors Josh Chen and Laurie Carrigan.

Now when you go into any The North Face store, or when you purchase any The North Face item, you will be seeing the design work of one of your fellow alums. Kathrin redesigned the sale tags, or hang tags, for all The North Face products, creating three major tags as well as a series of smaller tags for hats, fabrics, and accessories. She also redesigned all The North Face shoeboxes, creating an environmentally friendly design with all green materials and a minimal amount of ink. "The production was huge!" says Kathrin, and she certainly is one to know – for the production

process, she worked closely with a team member who prepared electronic files for approximately 1,000 different products in 4 languages. When you think about all the information that is printed with The North Face tags – the tags all include a full description of the technology behind the product you've just purchased – you start to realize just how enormous this job was. Kathrin carefully reviewed all files from her team members, making sure that the end result was consistent with her designs. The North Face was obviously impressed with the work Kathrin did with the Chen Design team – Kathrin's designs may be used on The North Face shopping bags and her graphics have already appeared in The North Face retail locations. Now that's what we call getting your work out there.

This type of mass production is much different from what Kathrin was doing before she worked on The North Face project. Her first assignment at Chen Design was for Timbuk2, the company that makes those insanely popular messenger bags. Of course, unless you've

been under a rock or still sporting that same backpack from high school, you probably already have a Timbuk2 bag. But there are a few select Timbuk2 messengers that you won't be able to get your hands on – the five limited edition bags that Kathrin stitched and spray painted by hand, which Timbuk2 put on display in one of its prominent retail store locations. These Kathrin Blatter-designed bags were not only display pieces – Timbuk2 sold Kathrin's bags, for \$500 each.

Kathrin wanted to make sure that she thanks her alma mater for where she is today: "I thought that the instructors were incredible. I was very much surprised with how passionately the classes were taught and how much the instructors cared about us. I had the impression that everyone wanted us students to succeed and learn." Thanks Kathrin! You certainly did what your instructors said you could do – succeed and learn. All of us at the Academy are looking forward to seeing your beautiful, eco-friendly designs in retail locations around the world.



WORK BY KATHRIN BLATTER @ CHEN DESIGN ASSOCIATES, PHOTOGRAPHY BY TONI GAUTHIER



## ANDREA ELLEN REED'S FIRST SOLO SHOW

Getting people's attention, and getting people to talk about substantial issues, is no easy task for today's fine artist. Alum Andrea Ellen Reed (MFA, '07) seems to have done just that, however, with her first solo show. Called *Sweet Struggle*, Andrea's exhibition was recently on display at the Target Gallery in the Torpedo Factory Art Center located in Washington, DC. The exhibition was a result of the research that Andrea did while she was a graduate student here at the Academy, which centered on the history of 19th century blackface minstrels. After learning that some of the minstrel performers were black people in blackface, Andrea was inspired to do a photography project based in that history. Under the mentorship of Michael Holmes, Andrea put together a written piece that expressed her views on the current problems and

issues facing the African American community, and how they relate to the history of minstrel performance. Working with Photography faculty member Alyson Belcher, Andrea was able to put together a photo project that linked her historical research with the modern-day commentary she wanted to make.

The result? A gripping set of images that got the audience talking. *Sweet Struggle* featured ten photographic diptychs of African Americans wearing blackface – and with each photo, Andrea Ellen Reed sent a powerful message. The Washington Post wrote a review of Andrea's exhibition, garnering attention for her already talked-about display. As Andrea told The Washington Post: "That represents a time of black people conforming to the idea that we are inferior. I wanted to re-create that...to show how

the stereotypes we are adopting today are not something that has evolved recently but are embedded in us in past imagery." The show, of course, was controversial – but that was part of Andrea's point. It got both attention and praise, winning the Target Gallery's annual open exhibition competition.

As an artist, Andrea has a wide range

of work. Her other pieces range from thoughtful portraits to stunningly lit, almost abstracted, fine art stills of streets and buildings. Currently, Andrea is living in Washington, DC and working on a new set of projects. To see Andrea's work, including images from *Sweet Struggle*, go to [www.andreaellenreed.com](http://www.andreaellenreed.com).



Home on the range. Home plate. Home cookin'. A house is not a Home. Home fries. Homeland security. Home sweet Home. Home is where the heart is. Home at last. Home run. The Homestretch. Homework. There's no place like Home. Homespun. Home for the Holidays. Homesick. Home schooled. It's good to be Home. Homeward bound. Homecoming '08.

# Homecoming '08.

The Academy of Art University School of Graphic Design will hold its second annual Alumni Homecoming on November 13, 2008. This year's event will include the Homecoming '08 | Alumni Design Show.

### EXHIBIT

Artwork will be exhibited in the 79 Gallery during the Alumni Homecoming '08 reception and all displayed entries and award winners will be published in a book to be available at [www.blurb.com](http://www.blurb.com).

 ACADEMY of ART UNIVERSITY

# 13TH ANNUAL FACULTY+ALUMNI FINE ART AUCTION

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2008  
SAN FRANCISCO AT 79 GALLERY  
PAINTING + SCULPTURE + JEWELRY

With special thanks to **Bonhams**  
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#### PREVIEW PARTY

Thursday, November 06, 2008  
5:00pm – 8:00pm  
at 79 Gallery

#### PREVIEW & SILENT AUCTION

Thursday, November 06, 2008  
9:00am : Silent auction begins  
at 79 Gallery

#### RECEPTION & LIVE AUCTION

Saturday, November 08, 2008  
2:00pm : Reception begins  
3:00pm : Live auction begins  
at 79 Gallery

#### SILENT AUCTION

Ends approximately 30 minutes  
after close of live auction

#### REGISTER NOW

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#### BENEFITTING

the University's Student Scholarship Fund.  
Hosted by the non-profit galleries of the Academy of Art University. 50% of the proceeds are donated directly to the Student Scholarship Fund and are tax deductible. 50% of the proceeds are dispersed directly to the artist.

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RICHARD S. STEPHENS IN HIS SF CLASSROOM, CIRCA 1940s

## CONTINUING A FINE ARTS TRADITION

After nearly 80 years, the Academy of Art University continues to embrace the work of its alumni and faculty members. Established in 1929, Richard S. Stephens, a fine art painter and Creative Director for *Sunset Magazine*, opened the Académie of Advertising Art right in the heart of San Francisco. With a belief in

the fundamentals of drawing and time honored foundation principles, Mr. Stephens always studied fine art drawing and art history – always a student and teacher of fine art; always learning, always an artist. It is all he wanted to be. In 1936, the curriculum expanded to include the Fine Art Department, which has now grown into an internationally renowned program, consisting of the most prestigious faculty and impressive resources of any program in the nation. The 13th Annual Faculty + Alumni Fine Art Auction displays this tradition of excellence. Taking place on November 8, 2008, this event is a great opportunity to support the Academy's Fine Art Student Scholarship Fund while previewing the exceptional work of the Academy's alumni and faculty.

## STAY TUNED

The Academy is pleased to be part of the launching of a new program in early 2009, Design Ignites Change that will give our alumni an opportunity to mentor selected MFA students in directed studies.

Design Ignites Change is an annual program that harnesses the creative abilities of talented student designers from leading colleges and universities across the country to create powerful solutions to and messages for social issues. The centerpiece of the program will be a dynamic website that showcases the work of the students and provides information to other educators on how they can incorporate socially-minded design thinking into their curriculums. The site will also aid the business community and the general public in understanding the power of design to ignite change.

Design Ignites Change is a collaboration between Worldstudio and Adobe Youth Voices.

**DESIGN  
IGNITES  
CHANGE**

## CALLING ALL ALUMNI

We're starting a class notes section of the newsletter to keep tabs on your fellow Academy graduates. Send us your news, your stories, and your announcements! Contact us at [alumni@academyart.edu](mailto:alumni@academyart.edu) and let us know what's going on in our Alumni community. This newsletter is your blank canvas; stay connected

and help us keep each new issue vibrant and fresh.

Remember, as a member of the Alumni Association, you will receive a number of free benefits and access to invaluable networking resources. Some of the free benefits we offer our alumni are:

- Free Alumni Association Member ID
- Invitations to AAU Special Events
- Features in Alumni E-Newsletter

Visit us at [alumni.academyart.edu](http://alumni.academyart.edu) to learn more!



PUBLISHER Academy of Art University // PRODUCTION MANAGER Jeannie Wallace // CONTENT EDITOR Janet Preloger // STAFF WRITER Mindy Smart // DESIGN Anthony Toy  
Special Thanks to all other contributors. 79 NEW MONTGOMERY STREET // SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105 // 1.800.544.2787