

Each issue of this quarterly newsletter will highlight Summer Arts students, former course coordinators, and former guest artists. This is a forum to tell everyone about your Summer Arts experience, or to tell us about what's happening in your life now. We would love to hear from you! If you want to write an article for the newsletter, please email your story idea to jsharp@calstate.edu.

CSU SUMMER ARTS CELEBRATES 25 YEARS!

25th
CSUSA
Anniversary

Wow, 25 years already...the time sure flew by! We're all incredibly excited to be a part of Summer Arts as we celebrate this milestone.

So far, we've offered 429 courses and served over 10,000 students. We've been hosted by four different CSU campuses, and have worked with hundreds of CSU faculty members from just about every campus the state. We've entertained thousands and thousands of audience members, too!

The 2010 schedule is set, and we've got a really exciting roster of classes lined up for next summer. Come and join us as we celebrate 25 years of Summer Arts by making 2010 the best year ever!

A complete listing of classes can be found on the back page of this newsletter, and on our website: csusummerarts.org

ALUMNI SHOUT-OUTS

We are inviting all of our alums to tell us what you've been up to!

Email the details to Kelley Lansing-Moreno: klansing@calstate.edu, and we'll publish your info in our next newsletter.

TAMELA RYATT

Digital Photography on the Move

Tamela Ryatt has co-founded an art gallery in Fresno. Her photography is a wild ride through varied styles and emotions from around the world.

The Ryatt Johnston Gallery grand opening is **November 28, 4pm - 8pm** and **November 29, 10am - 4pm**

Ryatt Johnston Gallery

22140 Frontier Rd
Clovis, CA 93619
559-299-2899

For more information please contact

Tamela Ryatt
559-779-0697
tamela@ryattphoto.com

MATTHEW RAGAN

Fearless Flight with Diavolo Dance Company

Here is a commentary from Matthew about his experience since Summer Arts:

"My time with Diavolo left me with more than just memories about sore muscles and bruised sides (which we all had in spades), it taught me about seeing past daily miseries. You can't see the painting for the individual brush strokes, and you can't see a performance for the single moments of success or failure. There was no way for any of us to know if we were creating something beautiful. We had to trust our choreographers, and ourselves. We had to trust that the agony we faced was worth it. We learned that art transforms you, sometimes in the ways that you least expect. There isn't a day that goes by when I don't use what I learned at Summer Arts. Sometimes it's in the classroom, sometimes it's when I'm upside down, sometimes it's when I'm upside down in a classroom."

POLLY BREWER

Imagining Home: Writing Fictions of Place

Valley Public Radio hosts a program called *Valley Writers Read*. It is competitive; all writing is juried. One of Polly's pieces called *Are you Real?* has been chosen for a reading on January 20, 2010 at 7pm. It is a fog story, and Fresno is usually foggy in January, so it should be very appropriate.

JORDAN OKUMURA

Imagining Home: Writing Fictions of Place

Jordan is being published in the next issue of *Gargoyle Magazine*.

MARCOS HAMMER AND MAGNUS CHHAN

Chicago Style Comedy

Marcos Hammer and Magnus Chhan will perform in:
Blimprov ACTF Fundraiser Extravaganza!

November 20, 2009 7:30pm

Blimprov will be presented at Fresno City College's theatre with all proceeds benefiting the programs students who will be participating in the American College Theater Festival. Marcos and Magnus will be performing in the main stage and encourage anyone looking for a fantastic time to attend. Their performance will consist of both short and LONG form improvisation. blimprov.com



Photo by Tamela Ryatt

WON'T YOU BE JIM'S FRIEND... ON FACEBOOK?

Summer Arts has a Facebook account under the name of our fearless leader, Jim Spalding: <http://www.facebook.com/people/Jim-Spalding/687446321>

Sign up to be Jim's friend and get regular updates about Summer Arts courses, guest artist public events, fun trivia, and general good times. Linking with Summer Arts will also give you an opportunity to reconnect with other Summer Arts students, alumni, course coordinators, and guest artists.



Jim Spalding

You can also connect with Summer Arts on MySpace:
<http://www.myspace.com/csusummerarts>.

DIFFERENT HOMES, DIFFERENT ROOMS: CREATIVE WRITING AT SUMMER ARTS 2009

By Thomas Rhoads

Student, *Imagining Home: Writing Fictions of Place*

Philosopher/comedian George Carlin once said to a packed audience “You all came from different places! All of you came from a different house, different apartment, different room.” Then with childish wonder, observed “You all left your room!”

It’s a pretty spot-on description of the creative writing class at Summer Arts in Fresno, Summer 2009. We all left our rooms. We congregated in 100+ degree heat. Every age, every walk of life. Huddled together with the same twisted obsession for words. We left our rooms and trusted strangers with our private inner thoughts.

I mention the Carlin quote for a second reason: This summer we didn’t just leave those different houses and different rooms, we wrote about them. We re-imagined home.

Home is where we invent ourselves. It’s where we first learned relationships. It’s where we hang our hats, take refuge from the world, chow down with loved ones. Home isn’t wood and nails. It’s an emotional state. What better place to discover the truth in our writing?

The tour guide for our journey home was Professor Doug Rice, mad genius of the written word. That’s not hyperbole; his sanity is questionable. But his passing grasp on reality was our gain. Doug’s a teacher who understands how to get out of your way. He sets up little byways for you to travel on your own. I’ve since called it “time-release” teaching. Weeks later, out of the blue, something he said takes hold, and your writing evolves.

Then there were the guest artists: Lance Olsen, pushing us to experiment, to reinvent the wheel just for the fun of it, to risk everything. Robert Glück, master of breathtaking similes,



Writing students hard at work in 2009

sharing everything of himself. Rebecca Brown slaughtering the sacred cows, brash, daring us to reconsider what we thought we knew. And Steve Church, reminding us that in our homes, our rooms, are universal truths that ground stories in flesh and shared experience.

And truth came to light. During one of our readings, a student shared a story so personal and raw, many of us wondered if it was fiction. She told her story without melodrama. Without playing victim. And as she told her tale, nothing outside that room existed. Now her story, passed on to others, lives. I’ll never forget it.

As I sit here today, I can say that Summer Arts, more than anything I’ve ever done, has contributed to my joyous failure as a writer. What a thrill to fail!

Before I arrived at Summer Arts, I was a perfectionist, sweating over every word, every clause, sentence, paragraph. Sounds industrious. It’s not. Perfectionism is a living hell. I learned writing is like a golf swing. It cannot be thought through. There are theories, of

course. Tips, advice, strategy. But in the end, I learned to forget everything I knew and swing.

Lance Olsen reminded us of the Beckett quote “Try Again. Fail again. Fail better.” How true. Failure emboldens us. It removes our fear. It makes us all lion tamers. And once fear is gone, everything is a possibility.

Before I close, indulge me a moment more. On our one free day, I went to Bass Lake to relax. And while I was there, I was forced to walk on rounded, ostrich egg rocks to cross to the water.

As I walked, I stared down at these ever-shifting stones, trying not to fall. All at once it occurred to me that no matter how much I looked at my feet, I could never predict how the stones would shift. I would fall, or I wouldn’t. So I looked up at the nature around me. If I couldn’t change what would happen, better to see nature around me then worry and miss the view.

And that’s what Summer Arts taught me: Leave your room. Take a risk. See the view.

THE CSU MEDIA ARTS FESTIVAL SALUTES OUR WINNERS!



The CSU Media Arts Festival finalist screening and award ceremony was held on November 7 at CSU Fullerton.

In 1991, Summer Arts established the Media Arts Festival to give talented students studying film, video, and new media within the California State University system an opportunity to present their work for critical review.

Earlier this year, 171 students representing 15 different CSU campuses submitted projects to the Media Arts Festival.

A panel of CSU faculty members spent three days screening all of the entries, and selecting the finalists in each category.

The finalists were reviewed by a panel of entertainment industry professionals, who selected the winner of each category and the winner of *Best in Show*.

All of the finalist projects were screened for the public during the Festival at CSU Fullerton, and over 200 people turned out to watch the work of our talented students.



2009 Rosebud Awards Winners

Cash prizes and the prestigious *Rosebud Award* were presented in nine different categories, plus the Audience Choice award and the award for Best in Show.

For more information about the Festival, and to view

the winning projects, please visit the Media Arts Festival website: www.mediaartsfestival.org.

Congratulations to this year’s *Rosebud Award* winners, and to all the great media students of the CSU!

PARADISE IN FRESNO

By Professor Samantha Fields, CSU Northridge

Coordinator, *Storytime: Narrative in Contemporary Painting*



Storytime student culmination, 2009

I've been at CSU Northridge as a painting professor for over ten years. For nine of those years, I have had the pleasure of working alongside Ceramics Professor, Patsy Cox. For five of those years, Professor Patsy Cox has been saying to me, "SAM! You GOTTA do Summer Arts! It's amazing! You get a real budget, you get to invite incredible artists and structure a class any way you want! It's paradise for art teachers! The people are amazing!" While Patsy is not prone to hyperbolic pronouncements, I still had my doubts. I'm a working artist, and summer is MY time; my time to work, think, recharge...the last thing I want is students. I kept my summers to myself.

Then, Summer Arts found me.

A colleague had submitted a class to Summer Arts, and was unable to complete her duties as course coordinator. She implored me to take over her course, and finally, I considered working with Summer Arts. Still, I was hesitant. Teach in the summer? It seemed like a lot of time to give up, and I had a major exhibition of new paintings scheduled for the following November. I was on the fence until I had a phone interview with Joanne Sharp. If that didn't convince me, the meeting at Long Beach with Joanne, Jim, and Shannon closed the deal. Maybe this program really was as incredible as Patsy claimed.

I had a shorter time frame than the other coordinators because I had come aboard late, so I made call after call, looking for my perfect roster of artists. One thing I realized early on is that the staff at Summer Arts is top notch.

These people do NOT mess around, and they not only love their jobs, they love Summer Arts. Perhaps this is why the program is as good as it is; every single person is there for the right reason. Joanne, Kelley, Jim, and Shannon helped bring me up to speed, and assisted me as my course took shape. I recruited, made my Facebook page, and started reviewing applications.

So now we get to the part where I tell you why I love Summer Arts, why it was not a sacrifice of my time, and why I was a fool for not getting involved sooner. I saw first hand how two short weeks can transform an artist. I had one applicant that I did not want to accept. Her portfolio was weak, the work was scattered, and most of it was several years old. I did not believe that she would be able to handle the advanced level of the course. She had acceptable formal painting skills, but there was no continuity to her work. Taking a chance, I accepted her. Maybe something in the back of my mind knew what I was soon to discover; that she was ready to shine. She came to class all smiles, so honored to be there, because she knew that her portfolio was not the strongest.

My class was focused on conceptual issues and creating content; each student had to develop a thematic rationale for their work through completing a series of related paintings. While some of the more advanced students struggled with this concept, the student I had been worried about took to it immediately. Every word of advice, every criticism, every lecture, she used them fully, folding them into her work and producing a dazzling series of sophisticated paintings. She

was there every morning as soon as the doors were opened, and every night until the doors were locked. I had many similar experiences with my other students, the young man who had to work while attending the program, and ended up being selected for the Chancellor's Gallery Exhibition, the woman who had lost her daughter, and was there to move past her grief through her painting, the young artists aspiring to graduate school, who now have the basis for their applications, it was one incredible story after another, that culminated in a truly excellent group show at the Conley Art Gallery. Walking through the selection of paintings, I was awed and humbled by the commitment of these students. They had taken harsh criticism, and faced difficult issues in the development of the work, but every single one of them had progressed to a more nuanced and contemplative place in their paintings.

During my two weeks in Fresno, I learned that Summer Arts has the power to transform anyone willing to dive in, no holds barred, and open themselves up to new ideas, experiences, and points of view. Its power lies in the people who participate, every single person is a part of a community that is wholly devoted to the arts. I discovered that I wasn't giving up two weeks, but rather, investing two weeks in something much larger than myself, and fully worthy of every minute devoted to it. I also learned that I should listen to Professor Patsy Cox more often, because Summer Arts was all she claimed and more. I found my teachers paradise, and it turns out that it's a paradise that's there for all of us, comprised of those who believe that such a thing is possible.

SUMMER ARTS 2010 CLASSES:



Violet Juno, Solo Performance



Diavolo: Redefining Dance



Sword and Forcery



Drawing and Painting in Florence

VISUAL ART/DESIGN

Drawing and Painting in Florence

June 13 to July 3

- Study, sketch and paint in the streets, piazzas, and museums of Florence, Italy – the home of the greatest examples of Renaissance painting, drawing and sculpture.

Telling Stories with Multimedia and Publishing Your Photo Book

June 27 to July 10

- This multimedia storytelling workshop is for photographers who want to combine still images and sound for the web, DVD or TV, and create a photo book.

Clay as a Medium for Sculpture

June 27 to July 10

- Learn and practice approaches to working with clay through the use of molds, construction methods, refinement of surface and installation-based work, while improving idea development and technique.

Building Reactive Sculpture: Spaces & Objects, Sound & Movement

July 11 to July 24

- Learn to build sculptures that electrically and/or mechanically activate an environment via kinetic/aural, sensory/reactive, and electronic controls.

Toy Design: Concept to Product

July 11 to July 24

- Develop characters for action figures and play sets, and design and produce working toy prototypes by turning 2-dimensional concept drawings into a 3-dimension physical model.

THEATRE

Ensemble Intensive with Steppenwolf Classes West

June 27 to July 24

- This ensemble-oriented intensive draws from three core courses of the Chicago School at Steppenwolf; Viewpoints, Improvisation for the Actor, and Ensemble Scene Study.

Sword and Forcery: Armed and Unarmed Stage Violence

June 27 to July 10

- Experience unarmed combat, rapier & dagger, “acting the fight,” safety, illusion, misdirection of attention, thrusts and parries, weapon history, trick moves, and “skill” moves.

Solo Performance Art

July 11 to July 24

- Receive small group and individual mentoring with successful touring artists who will guide you through writing and devising solo performance pieces, as well as marketing and touring a solo performance. All writers and performers welcome!

MUSIC

Auditioning for the Broadway Musical with Paul Gemignani

June 27 to July 10

- Receive hands-on training in all aspects of musical theatre performance from Paul Gemignani (“Dr. Broadway”) including auditioning, acting, singing, and dancing.

String and Piano Intensive

July 11 to July 24

- Intense daily instruction, master classes, ensemble experience, coaching and performance opportunities with renowned master artists.

DANCE

Urban Bush Women Dance: Movin’ it to the Next Level

June 27 to July 10

- Study contemporary dance, Zollar technique, conditioning, movement from the African Diaspora, text, vocal improvisation and process, and partnering.

Diavolo: Redefining Dance

July 11 to July 24

- More than just dance – push beyond your own limits and develop new tools to approach your life through trust, teamwork, and individual expression.

WRITING

Writing the Memoir: Transforming Truth into Art

June 27 to July 10

- Experiment with memories in playful ways to make visible what has been lurking beneath the surface, and create powerful storytelling.

Writing Hybrid Narratives

July 11 to July 24

- Learn new ways to tell stories by combining different narrative forms and designs, inventing impossible languages and narratives to sing in prose and rupture traditional expectations.

NEW MEDIA

Animation:

Making a Hand-Drawn Animated Commercial

June 27 to July 10

- Learn how to animate traditionally with pencil and paper, then on the computer, as you work in a team to write, storyboard, design and animate a 30-second commercial.

Please visit our website for more information: csusummerarts.org