



PHOENIX

M S A A A N E W S L E T T E R

**REUNION
ANNOUNCEMENT**

**ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT
MICHAEL ROY**

**CALL FOR
ELECTIONS**

**READ ABOUT
OUR ALUMNI
CONTRIBUTIONS**

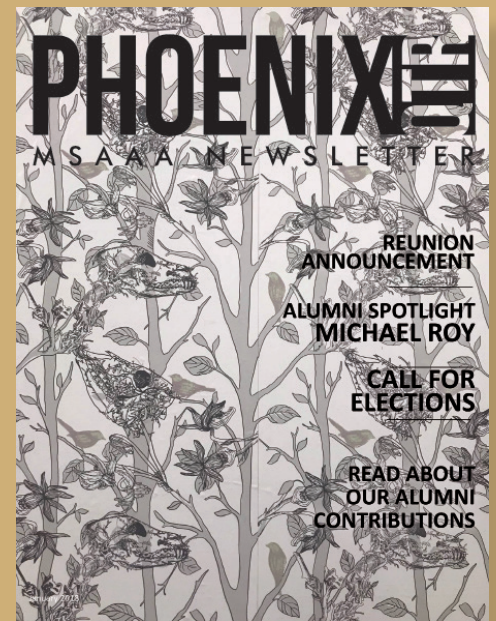
President's Note

Another year has passed us by so quickly, and it's hard to believe that the Mississippi School of the Arts will have graduated thirteen classes of young artists by this May. When MSA's doors first opened in 2003, so many doors were still closed: The only buildings in operation were the SLC, Johnson Institute, Mary Jane Lampton Auditorium, and the Y-Hut. Only three disciplines existed: Vocal, Visual, and Theatre. Over the past thirteen years, the campus has reopened the doors of Elizabeth Cottage, Enochs Hall, and even Cooper Hall for Halloween, and there are now six disciplines, widening the prospects of potential artists throughout the state of Mississippi. Every year the college scholarship offers for MSA students rise, as do the amount of student scholarships that the alumni association is able to offer.

Many alumni look back and feel as though their years at MSA occurred only yesterday, because the memories fostered there are so vibrant and long-lasting. It's amazing and inspiring to look back and see how much has been accomplished, both on the campus of MSA and within our own lives, and envision what can be accomplished in the span of another decade.

Sincerely,

Brianna Moore-Christa, MSAAA President



13TH EDITION

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Brianna Moore-Christa*

Editor

Shelby Hamilton*

Co-Editor/Producer/Art Director

Cam Bonelli

Contributor



Do you want to be a contributor? Please send your submission to msartsalumni@gmail.com for approval.

Representatives are shown with an asterisk ().*



ABOUT THE COVER ART

Millicent Kennedy Nora

Millicent Kennedy Nora is a multi-media artist based out of Chicago, IL. After graduating from Mississippi School of the Arts she studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and recieved her Bachelor's Degree in Printmaking at Northeastern Illinois University. She is currently completing her MFA at Northern Illinois University with emphasis in printmaking and fiber art.

As she approaches her thesis exhibition, her work has begun to focus on using screen print and embroidery for installations that create a domestic setting and draw imagery from personal family mythology. Her most

recent body of work utilizes anatomic illustrations from her father's veterinary textbooks and botanical illustrations. These images transform into patterns and motifs to create wallpaper, textiles and place settings. By making them more commonplace, these images become part of a surreal landscape set in a home.

She has been an artist resident at Pike School of Art and Roman Susan Gallery, and has been acknowledged with scholarship and awards, including the Presidential Merit Scholarship at SAIC. She currently works at the NIU Art Museum as a Curatorial Graduate Assistant.

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COMING IN MAY 2018

MSAAA OFFICER ELECTIONS

As we move into another year, it is time once again to decide who will serve our alumni association as officers in this year's 2018 MSAAA officer elections. **Right now we are accepting officer position applications!** We encourage qualified candidates, who are serious about helping MSA's alumni, association to put their name on the ballot by completing our electronic form.

Please click the link below and complete our application form:

[2018 OFFICER APPLICATION](#)

This application is for Mississippi School of the Arts alumni only. You must have paid your MSA alumni association membership dues for 2018 to be eligible to run for an officer position. Join the alumni association for \$10 at the MSA school store online [here](#). All submitted applications with unpaid dues will be voided after 24 hours of completing this form. The deadline to submit this officer application form is **April 1, 2018 at 10:00 p.m. CT**. All applications submitted after April 1, 2018 at 10:00 p.m. CT will be voided. Only one application per candidate is allowed. **Please be reminded that all candidates are required to attend three of the four quarterly meetings each year upon holding an officer position.**

Read below for position descriptions.

OFFICER POSITIONS

PRESIDENT He/She works directly with the vice president to organize meetings, and maintain effective communications between officers, representatives, alumni and MSA. The president is directly responsible for administering social media pages and the email account. The president must attend the yearly reunion in order to facilitate the yearly member's meeting as well as chair over all regularly scheduled meetings and organizes the alumni booth at Ole Brook Festival. Promotes the welfare and further the objectives of this Association. Plays a lead role in fundraising activities and other events.

VICE PRESIDENT Assists the president with organizing meetings, coordinating events, and maintaining communications between all officers, representatives and alumni. The vice president must attend all regularly scheduled meetings. He/She promotes the welfare and further the objectives of MSAAA. In the case that the president resigns or takes a leave of absence, the vice president will assume the president's responsibility and authority.

SECRETARY Records minutes from each meeting, helps maintain effective communication between officers, representatives, alumni, and MSA. Attends all regularly scheduled meetings and assists the president and vice-president as needed. The secretary promotes the welfare and further the objectives of this Association.

REPRESENTATIVES They play important supporting roles with MSAAA and alumni of their discipline. Representatives are responsible for the participation of their own disciplines during MSAAA events and should have the desire to provide opportunities for alumni associated with their field. They should bring new ideas to association regarding the involvement of the disciplines they represent, and they must be able to take initiative to carry out their ideas.



Becker-McGrath Archival Room

PRESERVING OUR HISTORY

On November 15th a dedication and reception were held in Elizabeth Cottage on the campus of the Mississippi School of the Arts to honor the Becker-McGrath family and their contributions to the restoration of the historic buildings on the historic campus. The historic archival room located in Elizabeth Cottage was named in honor of the two families, who were both early residents of the city. The Becker family moved to Brookhaven from New Orleans in 1867 and married into the McGrath family who came to the area in 1858. J.W. McGrath is a familiar face to almost every resident of Brookhaven: It is his statue which adorns the park between the railroad tracks and Janie's Pastry in Downtown Brookhaven. Mr. McGrath was one of the most beloved and respected citizens of Brookhaven during the Victorian Era of Brookhaven until his death in 1922.

The effort to name the room after these two prominent families was spearheaded by Bettie Cox, who served as the first librarian of MSA from 2003 until her retirement in 2007. The 2006-2007 MSA yearbook was dedicated to her father, Van Hatcher, Jr., a veteran of WWII, who was beloved by MSA students for his sense of humor and modeling talents.

The event was well-attended by members of the family and community, who enjoyed the historical displays of artifacts collected over the past year from members of the community, which included bovine bones and coal pre-dating the Civil War, a book from the personal library of Dr. Harvey Johnson (president of Whitworth College in the late 1800s), as well as memorabilia from Whitworth alumni, and signed manuscripts donated to the Mississippi School of the Arts by celebrated authors such as Beth Henley and Richard Wright. Members of Dr. Johnson's immediate family (also descendants of the Becker-McGrath family) were also in attendance. The room will serve as a remembrance of Whitworth's celebrated history and a callback to the original Whitworth Museum that was originally located on the Whitworth Campus, the contents of which now reside at the Lincoln-Lawrence-Franklin Public Library just a few feet away from the original location and the University of Southern Mississippi.

MSA EVENTS

For more information visit the MSA event calendar [here](#).

Oh, Mr. Faulkner, Do You Write? | 1/27

7:00 p.m.

Black History Production | 2/9

7:00 p.m.

Spring Dance Concert | 3/7 - 9

7:00 p.m.

Literary Arts Showcase | 3/26

6:30 p.m.

Richard III | 4/6-7

7:00 p.m.

Senior Vocal Music Showcase | 4/6

7:00 p.m.

Richard III | 4/8

2:00 p.m.

Literary Arts Senior Showcase | 4/9

6:30 p.m.

Literary Arts Senior Showcase | 4/16

6:30 p.m.

Literary Arts Senior Showcase | 4/23

6:30 p.m.

Literary Arts Senior Showcase | 4/30

6:30 p.m.

Spring Senior Visual Art Pop-Up Showcase | 5/1

6:00 p.m.

Spring Senior Media Showcase | 5/2

7:00 p.m.

Spring Senior Media Showcase | 5/3

7:00 p.m.

MSA Chorale Concert | 5/4

7:00 p.m.

MSA/Mid-South Fair Talent Competition 5/5

5:30 p.m.

Senior Dance Showcase | 5/9

3:30 p.m.

Spring Senior Visual Art Pop-Up Showcase | 5/10

7:00 p.m.

Reunion | 5/19

10:00 a.m.

Mississippi Boychoir Performance | 5/19

TBA

JOIN MSAAA ON SOCIAL MEDIA



SUPPORT MSA RENOVATIONS BUY A COMMEMORATIVE BRICK

By purchasing an engraved brick you are given the means by which to become a lasting part of the Mississippi School of the Arts. Each newly engraved brick will be placed in the walkway of Lampton Auditorium at MSA. You will also be contributing to further improvements to the campus and facilities at MSA. Order forms are available at Mississippi School of the Arts or by clicking [here](#).

\$ 100
4"x8" Brick

\$ 250
8"x8" Brick

\$ 500
8"x8" Granite
Custom Paver

2018 MSAAA REUNION

May 19

MORE ACTIVITIES AND DETAILS COMING SOON

LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

It's time to start planning for the 2018 MSA/Whitworth Reunion! MSAAA is excited to announce that this year will be an extremely special year: The Mississippi Boychoir has agreed to put on a special performance during the reunion to benefit the Rising Phoenix Scholarship. We've also lowered the cost of admission (which is still FREE for MSAAA members) to \$10 per person! The Reunion is our biggest fundraiser of the year, and ALL proceeds of this event benefit the Rising Phoenix Scholarship, so please spread the word. We hope to see you there!

Saturday, May 19

Registration	10:00 a.m.	Enochs
Historical Tour of Campus	TBA	Enochs
MSA Registration	11:30 a.m. (Register early if interested in Historical Tour)	Enochs
Silent Auction Bidding		Enochs
Lunch	Noon	Enochs
Performance by the Mississippi Boychoir	TBA	Mary Jane Lampton Auditorium
Water Ballon Fight to Follow!		Bell Tower

Michael Roy

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Visual Arts Alumni Michael Roy of the inaugural class of 2005 recently returned to MSA to paint a mural on the bridge connecting the SLC to the main campus. Michael is a contemporary muralist whose work has been commissioned around the world in Tel Aviv, New York, Chicago, Memphis, London, Tokyo, and Montreal just to name a few. As stated on his website:

“His work is inspired by an international hodgepodge of religious and mythological themes in combination with a dedicated nostalgia for the Saturday morning cartoons of his childhood. Taking visual and narrative cues from the places he travels, Roy’s work builds on the cultural accumulation of a transient life.”

Current students assisted Michael in completing the mural within a week-long timeframe. In describing the concept of his mural, Michael wrote:

“I always thought of the Phoenix as a mythical creature in the same pantheon as the dragon and the centaur, but it’s actually much younger than that. We can trace its origin back to a trip to Egypt that the Greek historian, Herodotus took in the 5th century BCE. In Heliopolis he heard about the Bennu, but by the time he decided to

write about it the story had changed fantastically. The bird was now immortal. When its body perished a new bird would grow in its place feeding and living off the father’s shell. When the son came of age, it would wrap its father (which is simultaneously his ‘nest’ in linen and spices) and bring the remains to the temple of Heliopolis. I’m struck by the power of half-truths in the story. Inaccuracy can breed incredible creativity and on top of that it seemed to fit with my work because so much of it starts with a departure from a myth. My phoenix wears a halo because they are at once alive and not alive, holy and pedestrian.”

MSAAA caught up with Michael while he was putting the finishing touches on the mural to ask him some questions about his experiences as a professional artist and remembrances of MSA:

Interviewer: What do you think is the biggest change to MSA since you were a student here?

Michael: Oh man, that’s a good question. I just went to a coffee night last night where they did a poetry reading. That’s neat. I mean, the most immediate change is that the population has grown by double, and there’s just so many more majors. You can be inter-disciplinary. I felt like there was a lot more stark contrast between the



majors when I was here. A lot of it feels very, very much the same.

Interviewer: What is your fondest memory of your time at MSA?

Michael: (laughs) I don't know. They're all pretty fond. Uh- just abusing Stephen Davis, and hanging out with Nick, frustrating Bettie Cox. They're all fond. I loved being here. It was like a terrible, terrible moment when I had to graduate.

Interviewer: Do you have any advice to young alumni or current students who want to pursue a similar career?

Michael: Yeah; work. Work hard. Work really hard. Try not to complain. Be humble. It gets you a long way if you keep your head down and work. I think the tendency when you're young is to just be so excited about creating that maybe you're a little overconfident. I know I'm pretty ashamed of all my work from MSA, really all my work from two months ago back. You want to keep growing, and so I think it's important to not be too satisfied with your work for too long.

I mean, don't beat yourself up or be a self-hater, but it's incredible how much free time you have in high school, when you think that you're completely floored with work and have no time. You have no time when you're thirty. You have no time ever if you decide to get all your money from art. That means you work eighty hours a week, and that's just to, you know, be secure lower-class, like upper lower-class.

But yeah, value the time you're here. Appreciate it, because when you look back, you'll think your entire childhood was at this campus. That's all your memories.

Interviewer: Is there any one particular thing you want people to know about your artwork?

Michael: I like to do it, and before MSA I had no intention of being an artist. None at all. I was one of the kids who came here; really to get out of a bad high school. It was poorly run, a lot of my teachers were coaches, it was bad. I came here wanting to be a literature major or a writing major. I think I can't overemphasize how important MSA was to my entire life trajectory at this point. It really began all of this. Now I'm really enjoying my life a whole lot, and I don't think I'd be here yet, at a really happy place in my life, if I hadn't gotten into MSA, so I'm very indebted to it.

Interviewer: What do you envision for the future of MSA?

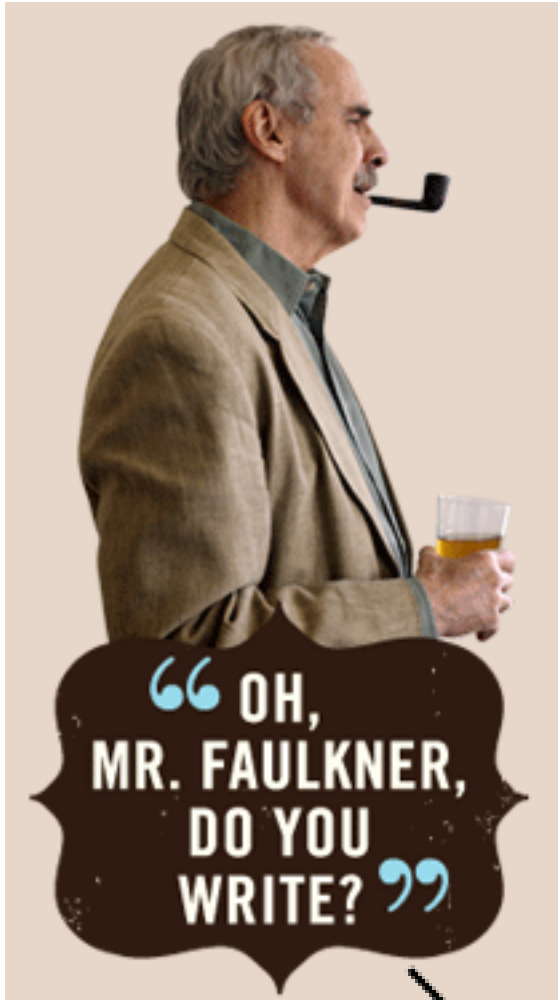
Michael: I hope that MSA continues to grow. I hope the students can get to where they're competitive in the national



arts market. I hope there's more careers coming out. You know it's not important to major or have a life in art, but I hope the kids that want to do it can find the discipline here to lead that life. Because it is possible, and when I talk to the kids here today, so many of them are, you know: They've already given up on the possibility of being able to make it in art, and I do think that it's extremely possible. Most of my friends are making it in art, and I'm not saying it's common, but I think anyone with enough self-discipline and enough work ethic can make it in any job field that's out there. It's not a crazy dream.

John Maxwell

PERFORMANCE



Mississippi School of the Arts and the MSA Foundation invites you to a special showcase. Mr. John Maxwell, a southern writer, actor and director, will perform his one-man show *"Oh, Mr. Faulkner, Do You Write?"* A dinner in Enochs Hall will be provided prior to the show.

The event is scheduled for January 27th, 2018 at 7:00pm. The evening will begin in the Art Gallery with a dinner by Chef Ken Dixon. Tour the gallery space with Greg Cartmell's art exhibition currently on show. Afterwards, the one-man show will be performed in the Gallery Theater.

From IMDB: "John Maxwell's critically acclaimed one-man show based on the life of William Faulkner is filmed before a live audience in Faulkner's home town of Oxford, Mississippi. In a rare visit to Faulkner's stud, we get a glimpse of the literary giant and Nobel laureate's character and psyche. The story is set in 1950, as Faulkner ruminates on his past and ponders if he should indeed accept the Nobel Prize For Literature that was awarded to him."

Tickets are \$50 and can be purchased on the school website, www.msabrookhaven.org

AD SPACE AVAILABLE!

FREE FOR YOUR FIRST EDITION

Do you have a product or service to sell? Are you an artist in need of promotion? When it comes to fund raising, MSAAA wants to help support our association by integrating with our members and our local communities in Mississippi through selling ads in our newsletter *The Phoenix Quarterly*. All proceeds go to our Rising Phoenix Scholarship that helps fund a special incoming MSA junior each year. We even have volunteer designers to create your ad. Ads will run for 12 months.

PRICING

Full Page ad: \$50/year per ad

Half Page ad: \$30/year per ad (FREE for your first edition)

Quarter ad: \$15/year per ad

Alumni Contributors

It's important to recognize alumni who have made altruistic contributions to the school and to MSAAA and its strategic partners throughout the year. Without the support of alumni, this organization would not be possible, so we want to take the time to give a shout out to some of the alumni who have given their time, money, or other contributions to helping keep MSA great. We apologize if we left anyone out:

Rebeka Tran taught a three-day residency for the dance department in September.

Keating and Philip Polk donated art supplies to the MSA Visual Arts department in November.

Ty-Raeshawn Jenkins donated her time to bring a prospective student to Experience MSA Day in December.

Shelby Hamilton donated her time and money to print the 2018 reunion invitations.

Jessica Sprenkle donated her time to design the 2017 MSAAA Christmas Card.

Lauren Leslie donated her time and money to design and print the thank-you cards that alumni receive when they join MSAAA.

Brianna Moore-Christa donated money for a booster for MSAAA to provide food for the Brookhaven Regional Arts Guild annual competition and to have historic postcards of Whitworth College framed for MSA's new historical archival room in Elizabeth Cottage, as well as the printing and postage costs for the MSAAA Christmas Cards and a booster to place an ad for MSA in the MS Boychoir program on behalf of MSAAA.

We'd also like to extend a thank-you to all alumni who have recently joined MSAAA.



Without your input and contributions, the twelfth edition of our MSAAA newsletter would not have been possible. *The Phoenix Quarterly* is made by the alumni for the alumni. If you would like to contribute to future editions or have suggestions please reach out to our newsletter committee by emailing us at msartsalumni@gmail.com.

You can download previous editions of *The Phoenix Quarterly* [here](#).

Thanks for reading and be sure to share!



Brianna Moore-Christa
President

Jessica Sprenkle
Secretary

Shelby Hamilton
Visual Representative