

PHOENIX



MSAAA NEWSLETTER

**OLE BROOK FEST
RECAP**

**ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT
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FEATURED IN
ALUMNI WORK**

**ALUMNI HALL OF FAME
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October 2017

President's Note

Wow, what an incredible year it's been. When I became active in this association just a few short years ago, our goal was to eventually be able to award \$2000 a year in scholarships to current MSA students. I'm excited to announce that this year that thanks to your help, we've awarded almost \$1500 in scholarships, very nearly hitting our original goal as we continue to grow our membership numbers, strategic partnerships, and fundraising efforts. It's not always easy, but it's always worth it. In September, MSAAA awarded a \$1200 scholarship for a student to attend Carnegie Hall this spring—what an incredible, life-changing experience your contributions have contributed to: the opportunity to travel outside Mississippi, stand on one of the most famous stages in the world, and represent the Mississippi School of the Arts.

If you haven't joined us yet, why not? For only \$10 a year, YOU can be a part of this incredible journey. You can join on the MSA website in the school store [here](#), or simply drop by MSA and speak to someone in the Y-Hut. The reunion this year will be on May 19th, and I'm excited to announce that the Mississippi Boychoir will be doing a special performance to benefit MSA that day, an event that will be free to members of the alumni association.

MSAAA will also be at the Hogwild Festival in Brookhaven this spring, so stop by and say hello, enjoy some great BBQ, and support an incredible cause! We hope to see you there!

Sincerely,

Brianna Moore-Christa, MSAAA President



11TH EDITION

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Brianna Moore-Christa*

Editor

Lauren Butler*

Co-Editor/Producer/Art Director

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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

A Full Life by Shelby Hamilton

A Full Life represents fulfillment found within the unique experiences of our personal journeys. In many cultures the rabbit symbolizes abundance, as well as vulnerability. When nothing is guaranteed in life, vulnerability can become our most valuable tool to perceive abundance.

While vulnerability is often associated with fear, being vulnerable is an inherent characteristic of freedom, which helps us to be more receptive and less resistant

to opportunities for leading fulfilling lives in any given situation. "...we're not promised a good or easy life, and each one is different. It's ours to do with as we journey on," Shelby commented.

Among the many influential factors in our lives, the most defining element of having fulfillment along our journeys is how we allow the strength and glow of our authenticity into our experiences no matter the circumstance.

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OLE BROOK FESTIVAL RECAP

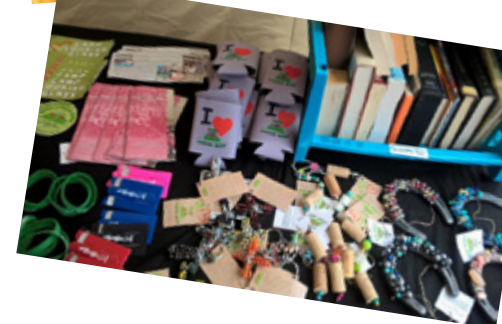
MSAAA alumni and supporters were up bright and early setting up for Ole Brook, with weather reports predicting thunderstorms in the afternoon starting around eleven a.m. The Spirit of Whitworth was with them as the weather held out, and only sprinkled for most of the day and into the afternoon. Strategic partners for Ole Brook this year included Fonseca Honey, who had no honey due to high demand during



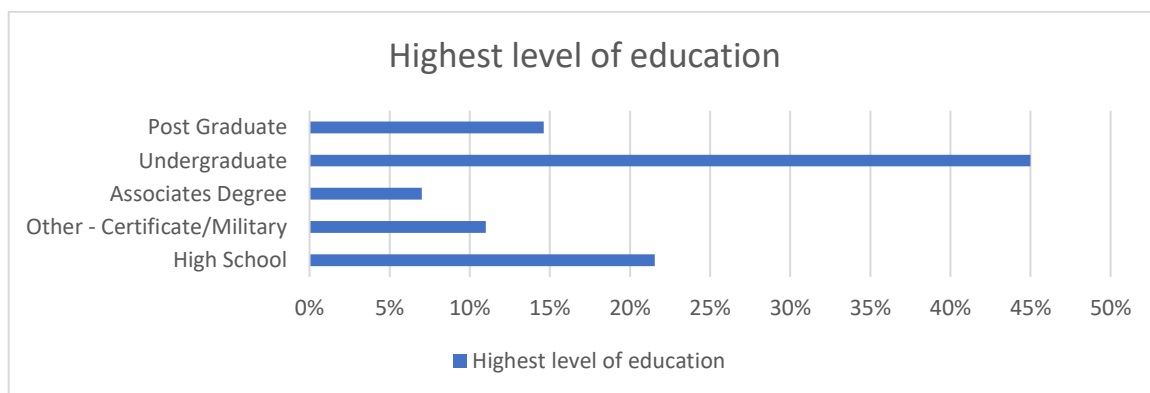
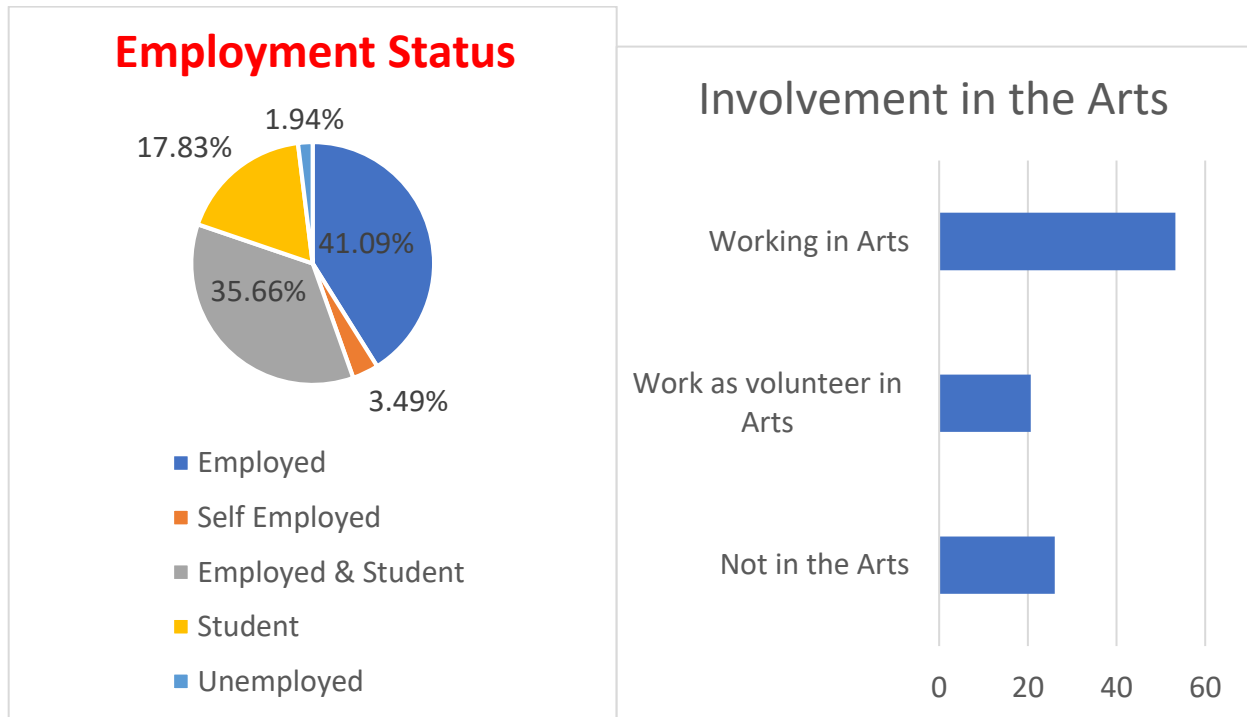
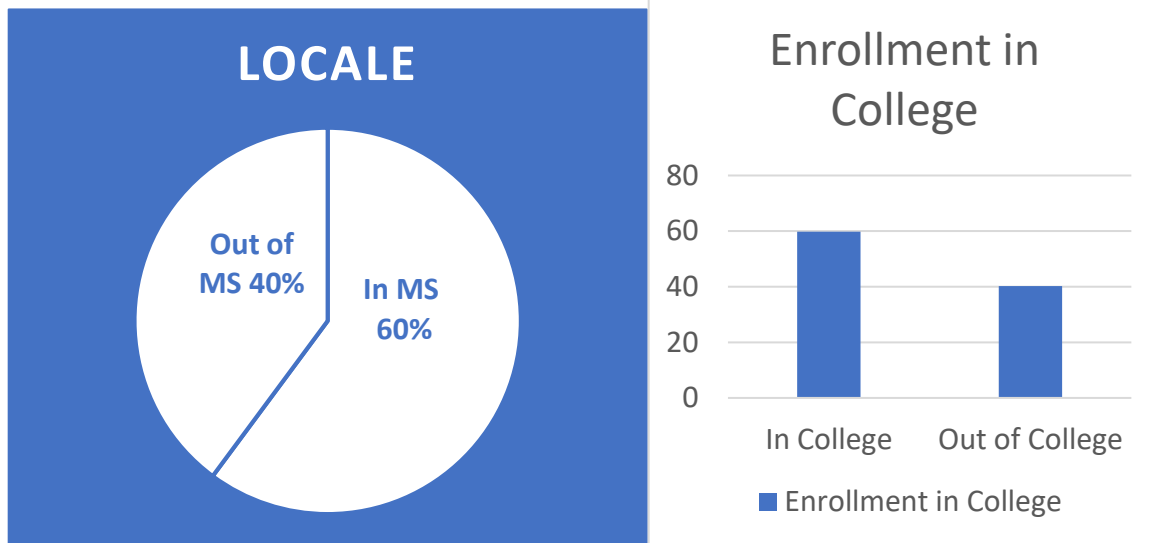
the summer allergy season, but had plenty of natural beeswax candles scented with essential oils. Alumni Amy Walker had homemade bath bombs on sale, with the best prices at the festival. Another strategic partner, Camp Looking Glass, also participated.

Camp Looking Glass is a summer camp located in Greenville for children and adults with severe disabilities at no cost. They sent camp merchandise and crafts made by their campers to sell, as well as literature so we could help them spread the word about this great organization. Alumni Brianna Moore-Christa as on site drawing portraits and selling books. Fred's Dollar

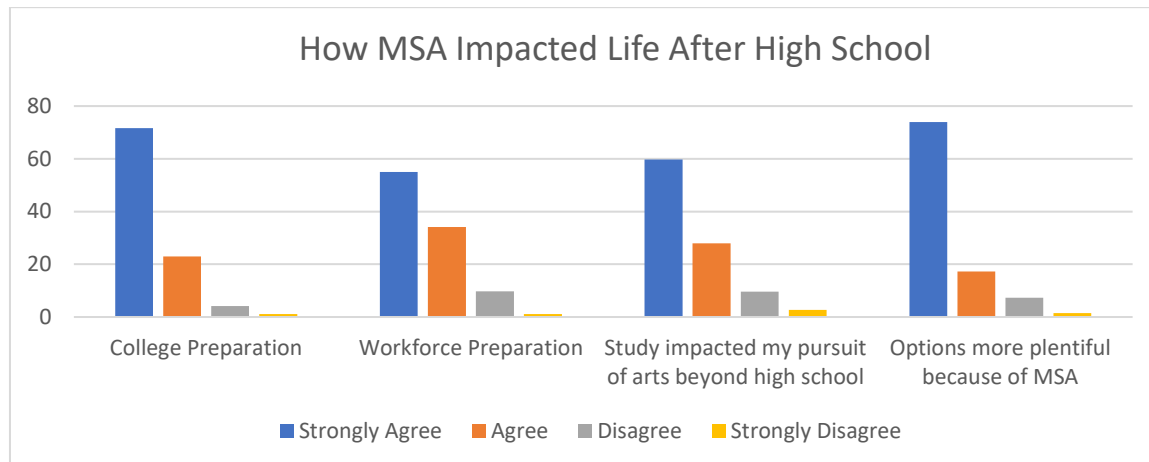
Store also paired with MSAAA this year, and gave out free bottled water at the booth. Overall, it was an extremely successful event, raising \$217 for the Rising Phoenix Scholarship.



Where are they now? An Alumni Survey – August 2017



Where are they now? An Alumni Survey – August 2017



MSA was one of the most wonderful and powerful experiences of my life. It helped me grow as an artist, a student, and a person. For the first time in my life I found myself surrounded by others that shared my interests and passions. I gained a wider understanding of what the world had to offer and what I could offer to the world. My self-confidence and independence underwent tremendous growth due to my time at MSA, as did my quality as an artist. I was ahead of the game when I started at college - and even now that I've joined the professional world I find myself constantly falling back on lessons I learned during my time at MSA. It was an invaluable experience - one that I will always cherish. I fervently hope this invaluable experience will remain accessible to generations of young Mississippian artists yet to come.

MSA was a better school environment in general. With smaller class sizes I was able to learn more effectively. I also learned about not only the arts, but how I can apply my creative knowledge to any field of study. Thinking creatively is a skill that must be honed as much as any other.

This school was the single most defining experience in my adolescence. Its impact on my character, work ethic, and passion for the arts and the human spirit is immeasurable. To cut funding to this incredible oasis for growing minds to develop their skills and gain responsibility and independence would be a horrendous mistake and a disservice to all of the state. Before MSA, I never challenged or engaged in my education. I made excellent grades but was never left with a larger understanding of life and myself in it. MSA taught me how practical things such as time management, accountability, resourcefulness, and multitasking, but also taught me more important things like empathy, creativity, courage, and passion. If you want to make America truly great, invest in its people. Invest in the people of Mississippi, the young, growing minds looking for a place to express themselves and lead a more fulfilling and productive life.

Because of MSA, I had a head start on my college studies, and I was already trained so I could take professional performance jobs in my area.

I've stated this in articles written on me in college and will continue to let it be known in future interviews, that MSA made me the artist I am today. The discipline, confidence, and hunger for artistic greatness that school instilled in me has been unrivaled by any university or professional experience I've had to date. Placing top 10 in the national Shakespeare Competition was thanks to MSA. Gaining a Co-star role on a Fox TV network show was thanks to MSA. Being able to confidently audition for Oscar winning movie directors like Steve McQueen is thanks to MSA. I proudly carry the lessons of that school with me every where I go.

Resources for artists in Mississippi are limited as it is, so having MSA was key for me getting to where I am in my development. This space fostered my love for music and overall appreciation for the arts--not to mention, it showed me the importance of having a high-quality arts education for students with interests even beyond the arts. The arts don't harm, they liberate... it should always be supported.

MSA EVENTS

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

Fall Visual Arts Exhibit | 9/1 - 11/10

Crimes of the Heart by Beth Henley | 10/6
7:00 p.m.

Ole Brook Festival | 10/7

Artober Fest | 10/27 - 10/28

Fall Dance Concert | 10/27 - 10/28
7:00 p.m.

Winter Visual Arts Exhibit begins | 11/27

Musical Theatre Ensemble Concert | 12/1
7:00 p.m.

Brookhaven Christmas Parade | 12/7

Fall Senior Media Arts Showcase | 12/12
7:00 p.m.

December 13 Fall Junior Media Arts Showcase | 12/13
7:00 p.m.

Nutcracker Performance | 12/14 - 12/15
3:30 p.m.

Chorale Concert | 12/15
7:00 p.m.

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

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

MADDIE MILLER

Madie Miller, self-described “Textile geek,” has been employed by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History as an Exhibits Specialist since May of 2015. After MSA, Madie attended The School of the Art Institute in Chicago, graduating in 2014. While attending SAIC, Madie had the opportunity to travel to India, which she describes:

“For a month I joined over twenty other SAIC students from different undergraduate and graduate programs, as we traveled to a number of cities in the country—New Delhi, Jaipur, Agra, Varanasi, and Allahabad. We met with master weavers, spinners, and block printers. We studied the incredible architecture and met artisans that continue to use traditional inlay and construction techniques. Eventually, we traveled to Varanasi to prepare for a group exhibition at Kriti Gallery.”

In her final semester at SAIC, Madie took an internship at Ignite Glass Studios, a public access glass studio and event space. By the time she graduated, Madie was an employee working in both the studio and events side of the business.

Summers at the studio were slow, according to Madie, so when offered a part time position at the Chicago Children’s Museum where she had interned as a student at SAIC, she gladly accepted. The Chicago Children’s museum partnered with the Marker Education Initiative’s Markers Corp, and Madie was selected to be a facilitator in the museum’s Makerspace, a program she thinks many MSA students would enjoy and benefit greatly from.

“I continued to work at the glass studio while also working [as] an artist assistant to a former professor and fellow textile/glass blower until I relocated. Working as an artist assistant does not always sound exciting, but I really enjoyed it. I worked on installations, documentation, grant and residency proposal prep and packets, etc.”

When Madie began looking for jobs in the museum field, she had no idea she would find herself back in her home state. At the time, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History had just recently hit the ground running on their 2MM Project—the Museum of Mississippi History and the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum.

“This was obviously an incredible time to be able to throw my name in the hat. So when I was offered the job I was ecstatic. I quickly rounded up all my things and moved to Jackson.”

As an Exhibits Specialist at MDAH, Madie works with a small team of four to develop, design, fabricate, and install exhibits at the eight museums and historic sites run by the department—The Old Capitol Museum, Manship House, Eudora Welty House and Garden, Grand Village of the Natchez Indians, Historic Jefferson College, Winterville Mounds, Mississippi Civil Rights Museum, and the Museum of Mississippi History.

Both the Museum of Mississippi History and the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum are housed in the same complex, and will open on December 9, 2017, in celebration of the state’s bicentennial. Madie’s current focus is the first temporary exhibition in both museums temporary galleries. The exhibition is titled Stories Unfolded, and feature forty quilts and quilt tops from the MDAH collection that will hang in the nearly 8,000 square foot space.

“Each story told by these objects represents a single thread—when hung side by side, these threads weave into the greater tapestry of the Mississippi Story. With this exhibit I have had the opportunity to assist with the curation of the exhibit, work with our textile conservator to prepare the artifacts for display, design and layout the gallery space, and research and write the content for the artifact labels. It has been the ride of a lifetime.”

ALUMNI WORK

GREG GANDY

greggandy.com



Sunrise Over Coit Tower, 8"x10", Oil on Panel



Fire Escape, 72"x41", Oil on Panel



After the Rain, 9"x12", Oil on Panel



Summer Light on Sacramento Street, 16"x20", Oil on Panel

ALUMNI HALL OF FAME AWARD

EZEKIEL ANDREW



On May 5th, the Alumni Hall of Fame award was accepted by Vocal alumni Ezekiel Andrew, who received a standing ovation from the crowd gathered in Mary Jane Lampton Auditorium for the awards ceremony. Being nominated for the award moved him to tears, and he gave a short speech about how much the school and Mr. Patton Rice's influence meant to him, and the opportunities it had provided. Ezekiel, who also served as a vocal judge for the 2017 MSA auditions and was voted "Most Dependable" and "Friendliest" by his class in 2006, is a brightly shining star among MSA Alumni.

After graduating from MSA, Ezekiel attended Mississippi College for his undergraduate studies, followed by Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and the University of Mississippi for post-graduate studies. He has wowed audiences with his acting skills in productions such as *Little Women*, *The King and I*, *The Secret Garden*, and the *Little Mermaid* and as a baritone, performed in operas and musicals such as *The Magic Flute*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and *West Side Story*. He was one of the artists selected for the 2017 Natchez Festival of Music, and recently made his Opera debut in Mississippi in the role of Escamillo in *Carmen*, produced by the Mississippi Opera Young Artist Program. He also debuted in the Utah festival Opera and Musical Theatre in the shows *Ragtime* and *Porgy and Bess*.

Ezekiel's upcoming performances include the role of Kerchak in Disney's *Tarzan*, Rigoletto in Verdi's *Rigoletto* with the Mississippi Opera Young Artist Program and the University of Southern Mississippi, a return to the Utah Festival Opera and Musical Theater in the role of Quasimodo in Disney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, as the Pirate King in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*, and as the Phantom in Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera* with the University of Southern Mississippi this October and November.

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

Dear Fellow MSA Alumni,

Attending MSA over ten years ago still feels as surreal as a Salvador Dali painting. Just like any school, students assemble from different backgrounds and graduate to have different experiences afterwards. However, when students are intensely immersed in what brings forth passion from their lives for those two swift years at MSA, it's the discipline that is most rewarding.

After being involved with the *The Phoenix Quarterly* for three years, I've had the opportunity to meet and speak with alumni about what they are doing now and why. Many with whom I've spoken have graduated college, joined the military; or have accomplished feats such as launching independent and collaborative projects, growing their own businesses, performing before large audiences, or winning awards for various achievements. Others have had less glamorous experiences such as enduring the misfortune of losing their jobs, becoming homeless, or fighting illnesses. While each story is different, they collectively share the same sentiment in that achievements and success are entirely relative to how they are realized.

When education is acknowledged as a tool for passion it enables us to create the best for ourselves and the world around us. The significance of how we experience education influences the way in which we determine our future—how we visualize solutions, how we dance through hardships, how we move with our voice, and how we inspire others to cultivate their own potential. Invoking the arts or creativity into any space such as education expands its purpose into other fields of awareness; and the opportunity to connect with those who also gravitate towards the arts empowers us to serve purpose from within ourselves no matter our circumstances in life.

As some of you know, I am resigning from my office of Vice President and Producer of *The Phoenix Quarterly*, but it has been a pleasure to work with fellow alumni and staff at MSA over the past three years and watch the association grow. We have managed to create a strong foundation for the association to build on and goals to work towards, which has been a very fulfilling experience. I am confident that our current group of dedicated officers will continue to manage the moving parts of the association that often take place behind the scenes to help our organization flourish. Though I am resigning, I plan to continue to support MSA through our alumni association. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to have served MSA Alumni Association as Vice President, and I encourage MSA alumni to also continue to support our association by joining and volunteering.

Sincerely,

Lauren Leslie Butler



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
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Jessica Sprenkle
Secretary

Lauren Butler
Vice President

Shelby Hamilton
Visual Representative