

EUGENE LANG COLLEGE NEWS

EUGENE LANG COLLEGE THE NEW SCHOOL FOR LIBERAL ARTS

Fall 2010



Archival image from the 1984–1985 Seminar College New School Bulletin of students and faculty. Current Dean, Stefania de Kenessey, bottom row, 4th from left.

Eugene Lang College Celebrates 25th Anniversary

“The philosophy of liberal arts is the philosophy of a democratic society in which citizenship, social responsibility, and community are inseparable.” —Eugene M. Lang, Founder

The 2010–2011 academic year marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of

Eugene Lang College. As alumni, you are encouraged to celebrate this great milestone together with faculty, students, and staff who are all dedicated to Lang’s success.

Before Eugene M. Lang endowed it in 1985, the college began thriving at the northern edge of Greenwich Village in the 1970s, when a small, ambitious group of students left their high schools to attend the Freshman Year Program at The New School. The experimental curriculum offered bright young minds a complete first-year of college-level coursework preparing them to continue their studies at the country’s most

prominent universities. Several years later, the program evolved into the Seminar College, a four-year undergraduate degree program distinguished by intimate seminar classes, a self-directed and interdisciplinary curriculum, and a commitment to social and political engagement. Eugene M. Lang, a renowned philanthropist and visionary of liberal arts education, recognized something special in the college and endowed it with the support and mission that still drives it today.

As alumni, you have all contributed to the legacy of growth, innovation, and evolution that has characterized the last

Continues on page 3...

ALUMNI NEWS

Send news about your latest achievements to alumni@newschool.edu and see more news about your fellow alumni on the Class Notes page at www.newschool.edu/alumni.

1979

Anita Glesta was commissioned to create a public art project in conjunction with the 2010 Census. The seven-acre piece was created with the intention of moving beyond the numbers and data collected by the Census and focusing on the array of cultures and histories that make America diverse. (See profile on page 5.)

1989

Julia Rodriguez is an associate professor at the University of New Hampshire. Her recent book, *Civilizing Argentina: Science, Medicine, and the Modern State*, is available through the University of North Carolina Press.

1990

Valerie Gross is the author of *Magdala*, a fictional re-interpretation of the life of Mary Magdalene. Since authoring the text, Gross has appeared on numerous radio shows and facilitated women's circles.

1993

Susan Miller currently works as a psychotherapist social worker at the Jewish Guild for the Blind in their Brooklyn Mental Health Clinic, and provides therapy to blind, visually impaired, and disabled adults. She worked for nearly 10 years as a social worker and therapist at the Interfaith Medical Center Behavioral Health Program Adult Clinic (formerly the Bedford Stuyvesant Community Mental Health Center). She received her MSW from New York University in 1995.

Paul Cheney published his first book *Revolutionary Commerce: Globalization and the French Monarchy*. Cheney is currently an assistant professor of European History at the University of Chicago.

Message from the Dean

STEFANIA DE KENESSEY

It is especially poignant for me to write to you as the new dean of Eugene Lang College. Like you, I started at The New School as a student and then went on to have a lifelong association with the university.

It is true that I enrolled back in primordial times, when laptops existed only in the minds of sci-fi aficionados. I began as a student in the Freshman Year Program, a year-long curriculum aimed at satisfying the intellectual curiosities of dissatisfied, precocious teenagers who were eager to leave the safe harbor of high school early and jump into the untested waters of college life. (Yes, I am technically a high-school drop-out, but never fear, I subsequently received both a BA from Yale and a PhD from Princeton.) Founded by Elizabeth Coleman, the program offered a seemingly standard freshman college curriculum with introductory courses in literature, math, philosophy, history, biology, and foreign languages. But despite appearances, the year revealed to me the excitement, the passion, and the hard work of a genuinely intellectual life. The curriculum was interdisciplinary but grappled with fundamental questions and canonical texts; the courses were unique and independently designed by each faculty member; discussions within the classroom were respectful, egalitarian, and committed to the highest standards of discourse. It was an exhilarating, eye-opening, completely fulfilling experience.

My experience was shared with many others who followed, and the Freshman Year Program eventually grew into the four-year Seminar College, which ultimately became Eugene Lang College in 1985 when it was endowed. The college is now proudly celebrating the 25th anniversary of this incredible legacy and bold educational experiment. I hope the description of my Freshman Year experience resonates with you today. Lang continues to offer courses that are pedagogically distinctive, taught by faculty who are passionate about teaching; classroom



Stefania de Kenessey Photo: Matthew Sussman

discussions that take intellectual freedom seriously and value peer dialogue; and, above all, a perspective that we are all equal and communicate with one another through the depth and excellence of our reasoning.

I hope that you will join me in our year-long celebration as Eugene Lang College turns 25!

All the best,

Stefania de Kenessey

BOARD OF GOVERNORS 2010–2011

Arnold H. Aronson, *Chair*
Elizabeth Cooke
Jeffrey Gural
Susan D. McClanahan
Rodney W. Nichols
Marylin L. Prince
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Mary Breasted Smyth
Deborah Aal Stoff
Lawrence Taylor
Mary Elizabeth Taylor
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Eugene M. Tobin
Lilian Shiao-Yen Wu

First Alumni Association Board Members Appointed

The New School Alumni Association is pleased to announce its first cohort of board members. Drawing from a strong pool of candidates, the university has appointed 11 alumni representing all aspects of the university. The new members began serving two-year terms on July 1, 2010. With advisement from this new group, a full 40 member board will be in place by July 2012. One of the group's first tasks is to help recruit future board members. They will also develop board objectives and goals and help shape an alumni program that provides alumni with even more opportunities to network, socialize, and connect with and support the university. The first group of board members come from a wide range of professional backgrounds and graduation years. Their expertise in various fields and their common desire to build a strong alumni presence within the New School community will be invaluable. To learn more about the new board of directors, visit www.newschool.edu/alumni/about.

The New School Alumni Association Board of Directors

Martha Alexander '79 (Parsons, BFA, Communication Design)

Mark Cajigao '08 (New School Drama, MFA, Acting)

Colin Dean '06 (New School Jazz, BFA, Jazz Performance)

Angela Gadeliya '05 (Mannes, PDPL, Performance)

Chasson Gracie '03 (Milano, MS, Urban Policy)

Michelle Hartman '06 (The New School for Social Research, PhD, Political Science)

Jahmila Joseph '06 (Eugene Lang College, BA, Liberal Arts)

Dee MacDonald-Miller '75 (Parsons, BFA, Environmental Design)

Michael McKinnon '05 (Parsons, Cert., Interior Design)

James Stenerson '80 (The New School, MA, Media Studies)

Morris Yankell '86 (Milano, MA, Human Resources) ↻

... Continued from cover

25 years at Eugene Lang College. While you may have embarked on different paths after graduation, you remain united by a common intellectual journey. And whether a recent graduate or veteran alum, you have experienced the seminar, worked with faculty who nurtured your intellectual curiosities, and learned to challenge traditional ideas.

With Eugene Lang College turning 25, there is much to celebrate. To document and preserve Lang's rich history, the school is calling on you to contribute to its archival trove. Your academic experiences and memories chronicle important milestones in the history and development of this distinguished urban liberal arts school. Many of you have gone on to careers as entrepreneurs, educators, novelists, environmental activists, and more. Help chronicle the experience of being a Lang student by sharing your stories. Help build an archive by submitting your ideas, materials, books, art, photos, and writings. A collection of alumni work will be featured at the first **Eugene Lang College All Class Reunion on Saturday, April 30, 2011**. Sharing your personal and professional work enhances the college's story and builds on the legacy of founder, Eugene M. Lang, as well as all of the people who have made this college so remarkable. ↻

SUBMIT TO LANG @ 25 ARCHIVE

Send visual and literary submissions for exhibition at the Eugene Lang College Reunion to **Mark Larrimore**, chair of the First Year Program, at LarrimoM@newschool.edu. Contribute to the discussion and connect with classmates and faculty by joining us on Facebook at **Lang @ 25**.

1999

Jason Quarles is an animator at The Martin Agency. He was formerly with MGFX, the centralized graphics operations for television stations owned by Media General Inc.

Jennifer M. Tiernan was awarded one of the first four Daschle Fellowships from South Dakota State University (SDSU) to conduct research on former Senator Tom Daschle's Congressional papers, housed at SDSU. Tiernan is an assistant professor and online graduate coordinator in SDSU's Department of Journalism and Mass Communication.

2000

Erin Grothues is the coordinator of the Bexar County Ryan White Program in San Antonio, Texas.

2002

Dante Micheaux released his debut collection of poetry *Amorous Shepherd*, published by Sheep Meadow Press. Micheaux has also worked as an instructor at The New School and at New York University.

2003

Rose Friedman, lives on a small farm in Northeastern Vermont where she raises rabbits, chickens, and pigs. She is also one half of Modern Times Theater, which performs puppet shows, plays, and music. Read more at <http://moderntimestheater.blogspot.com>.

2008

Ashley Jacobson had her off-off Broadway debut with her play, *His Beauty*, which ran as part of the Planet Connections Theatre Festivity. The play is a dark comedy about objectification, desire, and betrayal inspired by the writings of feminist Marilyn Frye and beat poetry.

2009

James Marks BA Philosophy is enrolled in the Master of Theological Studies program at Harvard Divinity School.

Olivia Schneider BA Liberal Arts began working at a television production company in Manhattan. She is currently an associate producer and project manager on various commercials and television shows the company produces.

2010

Holly Kuczynski BA Interdisciplinary Science was accepted to the Master of Science in Narrative Medicine program at Columbia University.

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2010 Dean's Alumni Council Award Recipient: Jazmin Venus Soto '10

The Dean's Alumni Council presented the 2010 Dean's Alumni Council Award to Lang graduate **Jazmin Venus Soto '10** in recognition of her talent and commitment to progressive ideals and a community-minded spirit. Soto graduated with a bachelor's degree in The Arts with a minor in Gender Studies. At Lang, she served on the Lang Student Union. In 2009, she received the outstanding student leadership award from The New School. Soto designed art publications for Lang, represented the college at a national conference for LGBT equality, and volunteered for several years at the Lang College Social Justice Conference. 🌱



DAC member Adina Newman '91

Dean's Alumni Council Welcomes Adina Newman '91

The Dean's Alumni Council (DAC) advances the mission of Eugene Lang College, and DAC members help promote alumni involvement by offering their time, experience, skills, and resources with an eye towards improving the student and graduate experience. The DAC is pleased to welcome **Adina Newman '91** as its newest member.

Newman studied political science and economics at Lang and went on to pursue a JD from Georgetown University. She is currently completing a LLM degree program at New York University School of Law. Newman joined Dean de Kenessey this past April at a reception in Los Angeles to welcome a new generation of students and their families. Newman said, "It was fascinating to meet the next generation of Lang freshman in LA and to see that despite how much has changed, Lang has stayed true to its focus on self-motivated individuals who seek a challenging, self-designed, and inspired liberal arts curriculum."

For more about the DAC, contact Jordan Blum, development associate, at 212.229.5662 x3558 or blumj@newschool.edu. 🌱

Lang @ 25: Why I Give

Lang alumni truly value the school's core mission and traditions. By supporting Lang through gifts to the annual fund, they build on that tradition and enhance the scope of learning opportunities for students. Below, alumni share why they support Lang.

Philip Silva '06

I think Lang offers some of the best opportunities for self-motivated and critically-minded young people who look forward to challenging and fulfilling careers after graduation. I figure an investment in Lang is an investment in society—particularly in New York City, where so many grads choose to stay and make a difference. I wish I could give more.

Emily Wenner '07

I give to Lang because of what Lang gave to me. Having gone to boarding school, I felt that I had experienced traditional campus life and was looking for something unique for college. Lang offered me a handful of things other schools didn't: a chance to be a part of Greenwich Village, the opportunity to study writing seriously, and the ability to take a wide range of courses without the restrictions of a major or too many core requirements or prerequisites. I am now a graduate student at the Wagner School of Public Service at New York University. My experience at Lang prepared me to read analytically, be challenged academically, and engage thoughtfully with my peers and professors. I hope that by giving back to Lang I can offer some of the same opportunities to current and future students. 🌱

Faculty News

Anthony Anemone, professor of literary studies and foreign language, edited *Just Assassins: The Culture of Terrorism in Russia*, (Northwestern University Press, September 2010). The book of essays examines how terrorism has manifested itself in Russian culture past and present, with essays devoted to Russian literature, film, and theater.

Nicholas Birns, professor of literary studies, published *Theory After Theory: An Intellectual History of Literary Criticism From 1950 to the Early 21st Century* (Broadview Press, June 2010), an overview of developments in literary theory after 1950.

Siddhartha Deb, professor of literary studies, published “Prisoner of Privilege,” a review essay on E.M. Forster in the summer issue of *Dissent* magazine, and “Breaking Away: India’s Internal Frictions,” a feature article on statehood movement in India for *The National*.

Kate Eichhorn, professor of culture and media, recently published *Fieldnotes, a Forensic* (Toronto: BookThug, November 2010). The book tells the story of one forensic anthropologist’s fieldwork in the first decade of the new millennium through combining found materials from anthropological texts, CSI scripts, and Kathy Reichs’ novels (whose work is the basis of the Fox Network series, *Bones*). **Simonetta Moro**, professor of the arts, designed the cover art for the book.

Joseph Heathcott, professor of urban studies, is a writer, photographer, and curator and has been selected by the U.S.-U.K. Fulbright Commission as the inaugural Distinguished Chair at the University of the Arts in London for 2010–2011. He is also a Senior Visiting Fellow at the London School of Economics.

Adam Swart, professor of the arts, has accepted a visiting lecturer position at Kathmandu University’s School of Fine Arts in Nepal and also served as artist-in-residence at the Kathmandu Contemporary Arts Centre. Swart teaches courses in Himalayan Arts and Culture, which are made possible through Lang’s partnership with the Rubin Museum of Art in New York City.

Alumni Spotlight: Anita Glesta ’79

Anita Glesta ’79 is a graduate of the Seminar College (now Eugene Lang College). An artist and teacher, she creates large, site-specific works that have been exhibited around the world, including *Census*, an outdoor landscape project commissioned by the Federal Census Bureau. *Lang News* recently caught up with Glesta.

What drew you to the college?

It was 1973 and I had just completed a year at the High School of Music and Art in New York City. I was 15 and was searching for something more inspiring than the tired academic and art courses that the school offered. I was encouraged to apply to the Freshman Year Program, which gave high school seniors a chance to jump into a seminar-based, interdisciplinary college curriculum.

It seemed extraordinary to me that students could spend a whole semester immersing themselves in Dickens if they wanted to, or in an anthropology class that explored Colin M. Turnbull’s best-selling, classic ethnographic study *The Forest People*, or doing in depth analysis of American anthropologist Oscar Lewis’ concept of “the culture of poverty.” So despite my messiness and limited academic experience, I applied and became the youngest of 30 students in the program. Many years later, Edith Wurtzel, the “student advisor” who transformed her tiny, undistinguished office into the headquarters and the heart of the 30-student program, informed me that I had been accepted based on having the most peanut butter and jelly stains they had ever seen on a college application. I would later return in 1977, when the Freshman Year Program had evolved into the four year undergraduate school, the Seminar College.



Anita Glesta '79

Did anything strike you about the community here?

We were a diverse group of students, and I am still in touch with many of them. We came from different backgrounds, but we all shared a spirit of questioning, a characteristic that can be found in Eugene Lang College students today. For more than 25 years, students and alumni have been willing to risk taking an unorthodox path in exchange for the experience of “learning for learning’s sake.”

How did your undergraduate experience contribute to your career as artist and teacher?

I was young and had no direction about the kind of art I wanted to make. While I loved to paint, I was concerned about what it meant to make art and what I could create that would contribute meaning through the visual arts. The four years of critical thinking experience I gained in undergraduate seminars formed a foundation that became the cornerstone of my work. The experience endowed me with the tools essential for my growth as an artist, effectively influencing every way in which I perceived the world. This is an unusual trajectory for an artist—one is typically expected to take the common path and attend art school. While I eventually attended graduate school in art, I remain convinced that my formative years at the Seminar College set me on the path I have taken as an artist.

When I teach students of art or architecture, I draw from this unique experience. My years in the Seminar College were a great gift, one that I have seamlessly woven into the work I produce as an artist that integrates the visual and the conceptual.

Learn more about Anita Glesta and view her artwork at www.anitaglesta.com. ↻



(1) Professor Timothy Pachirat and Lang students at Sunrise Seminar at Angkor Thou. (2) Student Anna Robilotta journaling at Angkor Thou. (3) Meaghan Linick at the Children's Development Village. (4) Anna Robilotta and Helen Weselcouch at the Children's Development Village.

Beyond the Classroom: Cambodia Study Abroad

In winter of 2010, 17 Lang students and three staff members joined Professor Timothy Pachirat for a three-week study abroad course in Siem Reap, Cambodia, to create a compelling experiential framework for the study of colonialism, war, genocide, international intervention, and the challenges of globalization.

Morning seminars covered the politics and history of Cambodia with a special focus on French colonialism, the U.S. bombing of Cambodia, the rise of the Khmer Rouge, United Nations intervention, and today's challenges in Cambodia. Classes on the Khmer language taught Lang students basic conversational phrases. In the afternoon, students worked at a rural orphanage and a rural junior high school managed by local partner Life and Hope Association. The students built relationships with children from the orphanage and the junior high school through reciprocal language teaching, sewing projects, music, art, and sports. In addition, students visited the Cambodia Landmine Museum and spent three days studying the archaeology, history, and continued significance of the Angkor Wat temples.

These experiences allowed Lang students to learn about Cambodia through a combination of study and real-world experience, to build cross-cultural relationships, and to ask important questions about the world and their place in it. The Venerable Somnieng Hoeurn, a Buddhist monk and the executive director of the Life and Hope Association, said that this program "will not only develop good habits for students to think globally and act locally, but will also help them to see how much they can make a difference on the other side of the world." ↻



(5) Andrew Melting at the Children's Development Village making a mattress. (6) Tanya Quigley at the Children's Development Village. (7) Helen Weselcouch at the Children's Development Village. Photos: Jika Gonzalez

What's New

NEW SCHOOL ALUMNI DIRECTORY: READY IN 2012

The next alumni directory will be ready in 2012. Harris Connect will start contacting alumni next year. If you have any questions, email alumni@newschool.edu or call 212.229.5662 x3784.



Former Secretary of the Interior Bruce Edward Babbitt, associate professor Katayoun Chamany, former director of the National Science Foundation Dr. Rita Colwell, and chair of the Interdisciplinary Science Program and associate professor Bhawani Venkataraman. Photo: Jerry Speir



Angelica Ferguson '06 addressing the Lang community. Photo: Katayoun Chamany

Lang Alum Discusses “Diseases of Inequity”

On May 21, the public program Health Challenges for the 21st Century: The Global and National Landscape presented “Diseases of Inequity.” The discussion was led by **Angelica Ferguson '06**, an alum of Lang’s Interdisciplinary Science Program, and Dr. Rita Colwell, a 2010 New School Honorary Degree recipient, 2010 Winner of the Stockholm Water Prize, and former director of the National Science Foundation.

The panelists presented on two infectious diseases—tuberculosis and cholera—and discussed novel technologies being used to study the biology of the diseases, the unequal distribution of the diseases across the world, and issues surrounding access to treatment in impoverished countries and communities.

“Understanding the biology of these organisms will inform public health measures and hopefully improve the socioeconomic impact these diseases have on the most affected parts of the world,” said Ferguson. “Both of us also presented data that disagreed with dogma in our fields. In biology we’re always learning new things. We need to go back to the data and let the data speak for itself.”

Lang Presents Sixth Annual Parent Welcome Reception

Parent leadership from across the country and abroad is an indispensable aspect of Lang’s development. Parents’ expert advice, resources, and support of Lang’s signature programs enrich campus life. On August 20, the college held a reception on campus to welcome parents and introduce them to Lang’s new dean, Stefania de Kenessey, and to faculty and staff. Participants mingled while enjoying live jazz music performed by a trio from The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music.



(1) Dean Stefania de Kenessey with parents Jose and Tamika Reyes (2) Parents David Shimasaki and Scott and Debbie Shack (3) Associate Director of The Arts Jennifer Riegler with parents Devorah Canter and Sandy Shaw (4) Parent Shirley Chu (5) Parents Larry and Teri Langhorn Photos: Ryan Blum-Kryzstal



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In This Issue

Cover Story: Lang @ 25

Message from the Dean

Alumni News

Alumni Association Board Members

Diseases of Inequality Panel

Cambodia Study Abroad Program

Alumni Spotlight: Anita Glesta '79

Faculty News

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Upcoming Events

Triangle: From the Fire **March 23–27, 2011**

Judson Memorial Church

One-hundred years ago, New York City experienced its most devastating workplace tragedy until the events of 9/11. In the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, more than 140 girls, mostly Jewish and Italian, died trying to escape a raging fire on the upper floors of a factory near Washington Square. Lang Visiting Artist and Tony-nominated composer Elizabeth Swados, writer and director Cecilia Rubino, poet Paul Finn, and designer Bonnie Roche-Bronfman present a dramatic oratorio that dramatizes the history of the fire and imparts its relevance to 21st century audiences.

Noir Festival, A University-Wide Collaboration **April 1–8, 2011**

Lang alumni and current students perform John Webster's *Noir Jacobean Tragedy The*

White Devil, directed by Cecilia Rubino with assistant director **Michael Buffer '10**, on **April 6, 2011, at 4:00 p.m.** in Tishman Auditorium. The Noir Festival is a university-wide event that includes artistic contributions from several divisions of The New School.

Eugene Lang College All-Class Reunion **Saturday, April 30, 2011** **65 W 11th Street**

All Eugene Lang College alumni, Seminar College alumni, and graduates of the Freshman Year Program are invited back to campus for the first reunion event for graduates from all class years. Reconnect and reminisce about your years at Lang with friends, faculty, and staff. The program includes a full day of receptions, seminars, and alumni exhibitions. Join the discussion on Facebook at **Lang Reunion** and **Lang @ 25**. If you have programming suggestions or would like to volunteer, contact alumni@newschool.edu or call 212.229.5662 x3784. For updated information, visit www.newschool.edu/alumni/langreunion.