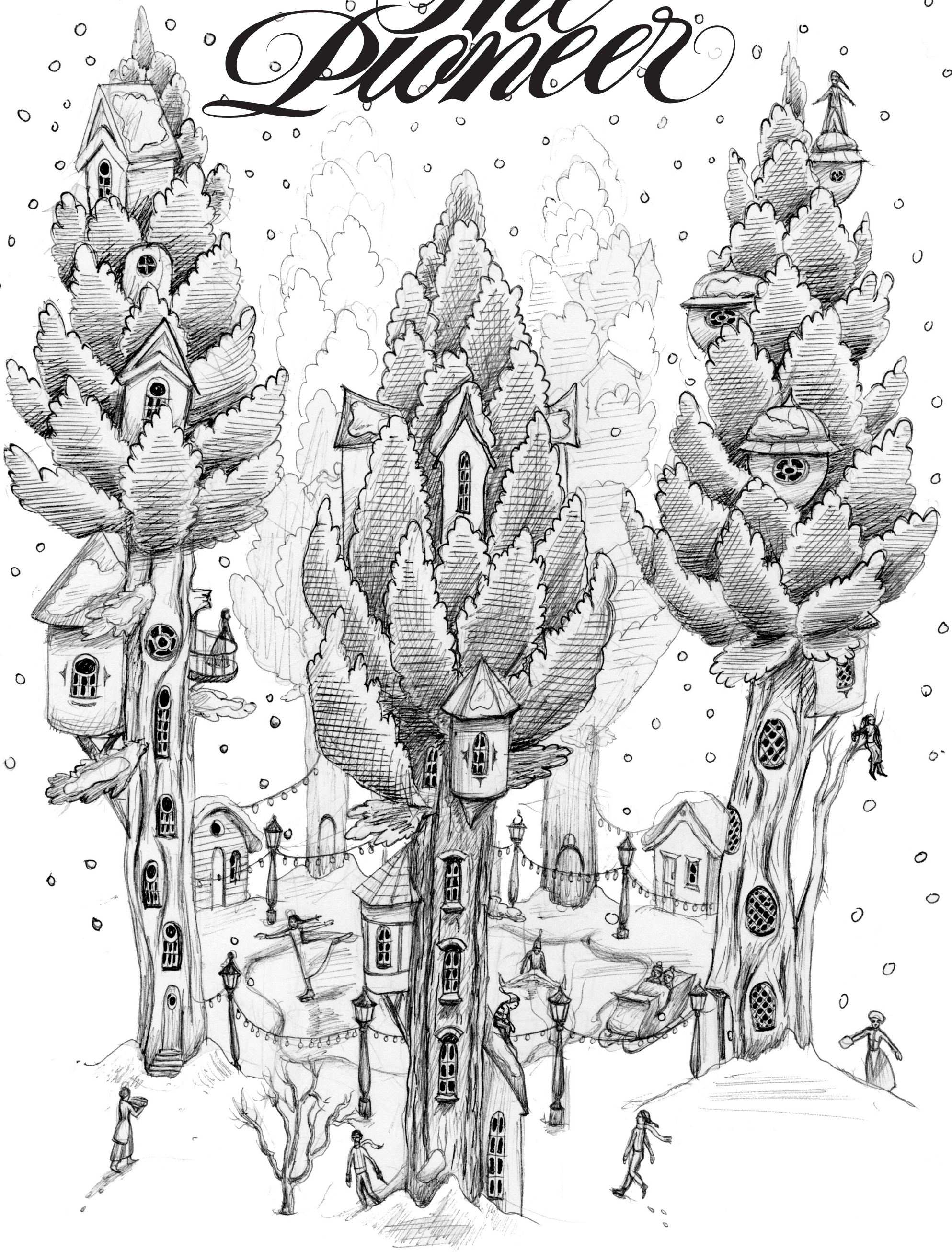


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The Pioneer



NEXT PRESIDENT SPARKS A CONVERSATION

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This past Thursday, *The Pioneer* editors spoke with President-elect Laura Sparks about her priorities as president, her first impressions of Cooper, and the role that Cooper Union can play in the immediate community and even the broader world.

On Presidential Priorities
Upon entering office on January 4, 2017, Sparks’ priority is to listen and learn from the Cooper community. She’s already visited campus multiple times to talk to students and administrators alike as she wants a deeper understanding of not only the challenges that Cooper faces but the culture of the institution as well. Embedded in this priority of listening and learning is understanding the financial picture of the university.

Sparks realizes that to bring the institution back to free tuition she needs to understand the “depth and breadth of the challenge” and work with the Cooper community to create a vision and plan for the future. Bringing Cooper back to the 100% scholarship model is a central component to her plan but Sparks believes that “Cooper is about so much more than that.” To her, Cooper is a “platform for progressive change” and the education and preparation of the students to be successful after college all need to be proper considerations for this long term strategic plan.

So, the first twelve months of Sparks’ presidency will be primarily focused on putting this plan together while ensuring that it models what Cooper strives to be, “highly engaged, collaborative, and with spirit of progress.”

“Institutions have a role to play in correcting social injustices. The Cooper Union has an opportunity to set an example for how this can be done.”

On DACA and Social Justice
Last week, Acting President Bill Mea and President-elect Sparks jointly sent campus-wide email announcing Sparks’ signature in support of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

DACA is an immigration policy enacted by the Obama administration in 2012 that al-



Photo by Mario Morgado.

lows undocumented immigrants who meet a certain set of requirements to legally work or obtain an education in the United States. Considering the post-election political climate, DACA appears to be at risk of being repealed by the incoming Trump administration. The petition—originating at Pomona College in California—has been circulating among institutions of higher education and carries over 450 signatures from the heads of public and private colleges and universities.

Sparks felt that Cooper “can and should do a lot” as she believes that though the university is historically known for being focused on the education of the students, it should play a role in the broader community especially after the recent presidential election. According to her, it is important to think as a country about how we engage in civic discourse, and “The Cooper Union has an opportunity to set an example for how that can be done in this country.”

Though it was perhaps a bold move to speak for the entire institution before taking office, Sparks felt there was broad support among the Cooper community after speaking with Mea, Dean Chris Chamberlin, and others. According to Sparks, “it is important for us as an

institution to stand up for what we believe in and to make sure most importantly that our students and broader community feel supported.” Sparks and Mea both intended to sign the statement, but only one signature per school was permitted.

Signing the DACA letter followed from Sparks’ view that “institutions have a role to play in correcting social injustices.” Cooper Union’s history as a place of social change resonated with “my background, the experiences in my own career, and what I hope for Cooper going forward,” said Sparks.

Sparks’ sense of social justice and the role that institutions can play in furthering it stems from her time at Wellesley College. Taking classes in both economics and philosophy fostered “an entirely new way of looking at the world” while also encouraging conversations about personal beliefs.

“How can we be a model for rigorous education that’s high quality, that’s accessible, and that’s dynamic?”

On Her Perceptions of Cooper Union
As part of her presidential transition, she has begun working with administrators and speaking to faculty. She has also met many students by attending a community gathering open to all students as well as a reception event for scholarship recipients.

When asked how her perceptions of Cooper have changed, she said, “I actually haven’t been that surprised, and in some ways that’s what is surprising.” She also spoke about her perception that Cooper has a very strong culture, even though that culture is difficult to decipher sometimes.

To her credit, Sparks really is aware of the current situation at Cooper. She acknowledges the Presidential Search Committee for giving her an accurate representation of Cooper’s affairs. She answered, “I think they did a great job of making sure the candidates understand the place.”

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FACES OF COOPER: WILLIAM VILLALONGO (Art ‘99)

JUAN JOSÉ GARCÍA (Art ‘20)

Could you tell us about your background?

I was born in Hollywood, Florida but my family didn’t stay there very long after I was born. I grew up in the small rural towns of South Jersey. I went to a public high school in Bridgeton, NJ where I ran cross-country and middle-distance track. I came to Cooper Union as a student in 1995 and graduated in 1999. After Cooper, I got my MFA at Temple University’s Tyler School of Art in 2001. I hung around Philly for a year with my cohort of MFA’s and sold tickets at The Philadelphia Museum of Art. Eventually, I wiggled my way to the education department and worked with young children at the Mural Arts Program as I had developed some baseline teaching skills in Cooper’s Saturday Program. I kept myself afloat by doing art residencies that gave full or partial financial assistance

such as the Skowhegan and Studio Museums in Harlem. I began showing my work around New York in 2004. By 2007, I had gallery representation, I was an adjunct professor at Cooper, and I taught courses at UConn Stamford. This was the juggling act until 2009 when I started teaching full time at Yale. During my time at Yale, I kept a studio practice going and was fortunate to exhibit at some major institutions and have a few solo shows at the Susan Inglett Gallery all while commuting between NYC and New Haven.

How did you arrive back at Cooper?

After teaching at Yale for 6 years I was really ready to be in one place. I saw that Cooper was hiring for tenure track positions in the School of Art, which I think was a big moment not only for me but for Cooper as well. I knew that



Photo provided by William Villalongo.

whether or not I got the job, good things were happening at Cooper and I gave it a shot. I’m here!

How do you perceive the difference of the art context at Cooper between “then” and “now”?

Well, I think like any art school, the art context is in many ways affected by the larger art context, at least from the standpoint of critical conversations being held. In 1995 the major gallery scene

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LET’S TALK ABOUT SOMETHING WE DON’T TALK ABOUT

GABRIELA GODLEWSKI (CE ‘19)

The opinions in this article are those of the author alone and do not represent the views of The Pioneer as a whole.

The article “Something We Don’t Talk About” set the ball rolling for the topic of mental health and how what we go through as Cooper students plays a role in our well-being. None of us are strangers to stress here. The expectations from professors and the mountains of work are sometimes enough to push people past a breaking point. As Cooper students, we are a unique group of people that are here because we deserve to be here. But we are all also unique in that stress, anxiety, and depression manifests within each of us differently. Not everyone goes through that amount of stress here, but enough of us do for us to bring it to light and talk about it candidly.

And we *have* been talking about it more candidly and openly than before. Every one of us has ranted about their stress and other negative feelings to their friends and family at least a few times. More and more people are becoming more comfortable with the idea of talking about the depression, anxiety, and other illnesses they experience because the stigma surrounding mental health is lessening. This recognition about mental health could come in response to the increasing rates of depression.

According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, depression currently affects 6.7% of people ages 18 and older living in the United States, while anxiety affects 18.1% of the same demographic. These numbers have nearly doubled since 1998. However, it is also possible that our openness to talking about mental

health has led to the increase in these numbers, as more people are made aware of the importance of their mental health leading them to seeking diagnosis and help. No matter the cause, the numbers continue

The numbers are increasing, more people are talking about it, and now the question is: how can we help?

to grow. It is projected that depression will become one of the most prevalent medical conditions in the world, second only to heart disease.

The numbers are increasing, more people are talking about it, and now the question is: how can we help? Few of us are licensed therapists, so all we can really offer is a listening ear, emotional support, and love for those who need it. In some cases, that’s all it takes to help someone feel better. The article “Something We Don’t Talk About” was focused on the counseling sessions offered to students at Cooper and mentions that only 20% of the student body takes advantage of these sessions. I strongly recommend to anyone who feels the need to talk to someone to *go to counseling!*

I took advantage of counseling the first moment I could. Before Cooper, I was a little stressed and I had days where I felt pretty down. Unfortunately, I had no resources to which I could reach out to help me when I needed it. When I came to Cooper, the stress I knew before developed into full-

blown anxiety. In high school, I had friends that suffered from test anxiety and I never understood what they were going through until I sat down for my first chemistry exam at Cooper. The room spun and I felt a rising sense of helplessness for the duration of the test. The anxiety came back in different forms at different times throughout the course of my freshman year whether I was taking a test or not. It was a stranger in my head that wouldn’t go away. I had never felt anything like it and had no idea how to handle it myself, so I scheduled a counseling session with Nicole, one of the counselors, the first chance I had. That session I had with her not only let me familiarize myself with the counseling Cooper offers but also gave me the help I really needed to begin tackling the anxiety. Since then I have become familiar with both Nicole and Philip and have seen both counselors regularly with plans on returning.

The counseling program we have at the Cooper Union is currently expanding. Neither Nicole Struensee nor Philip Bockman are employed full-time at Cooper, so the school is hiring a full-time counselor to work with students. According to Dean Chris Chamberlin, “having a full time person here will provide a level of consistency and integration with Cooper as well as expand what we can do.” Although both Philip and Nicole are skilled at their jobs, having a full-time counselor at the Cooper Union would allow that person to develop a better understanding of the culture that Cooper students experience. The person in this role will organize programs and workshops that proactively raise awareness about mental health in a meaningful way.

That’s not to say that Nicole or Philip do not have a good understanding of the Cooper culture; on the contrary, Dean Cham-

Schoolwork is important, but what’s more important is your well-being.

berlin says that response to counseling has been “overwhelmingly positive.” However, the school’s desire to hire a full-time counselor shows that the administration cares about students’ mental health and wants to help the students as much as possible.

We are all unique individuals, so stress manifests in us differently. Stress can be caused by various different things and affect us in very different ways, so there can be no one-size-fits-all solution to a problem that takes so many different forms. There have been people dissatisfied with their counseling experiences most likely because it just did not work for them the way it works for others. Fortunately, counseling isn’t the only thing available to us that works wonders on mental health. At Cooper, even the smallest adjustments can make a difference. When the stress becomes overwhelming, sometimes all you need to do is take a step back from all the work and focus on yourself — get some sleep, eat a good meal, talk to a trusted friend or family member. Schoolwork is important, but what’s more important is your well-being. ♦

AIChE IN SAN FRAN

ROBERT GODKIN (ChE ‘18)



Photos provided by Robert Godkin (ChE ‘18)

From November 11-14, the American Institute of Chemical Engineers hosted the annual Student Conference in San Francisco, where students studying chemical engineering were able to attend presentations, learn more about the field, and compete in the annual worldwide Chem-E-Car competition. It was truly an amazing experience, and witnessing the collaboration and organization from the hosting school inspired everyone who attended. With the help of the Career Center, Cooper ChemEs were able to fly out and participate in the student events.

After arriving in San Francisco, Cooper students explored a bit of the city and met some of the hosts of the Conference. The weather complied with the event, and allowed for everyone to take in the sights near Fisherman’s Wharf, Lombard Street, and of course, the Golden Gate Bridge. The conference involved back-to-back days of lectures, presentations, and student events. Some of the highlights included talks on process safety in the chemical engineering industry, topics on particle technology involving solids handling, as



opposed to standard fluid handling, discussions on processes of brewing, and new methods of energy efficiency. Though Cooper did not advance to the national Chem-E-Car competition, an event where student teams build and design chemical reactions to fuel a car to move a designated distance, students went to support and cheer on some of the other teams in participation.

Additionally, students were able to attend the AIChE career fair, where many companies and graduate school were in attendance. Because of the large ratio of students to employees, the lines were long, but students were able to speak with representatives from Chevron, Honeywell, and more companies. Following many of the events, Cooper undergraduates met up with some of the ChemE graduate students, alumni, and professors! Professors Davis, Lepek, and Maidenberg met with Cooper students, and then stayed for the professional AIChE conference for the remainder of the week. ♦

SASCHA MOMBARTZ, OFFICE FOR VISUAL AFFAIRS

PRANAV JONEJA (ME ‘18)

How did you find out about Cooper?

Well, I’m originally from Germany, but this story should start when I first moved to America after finishing high school in Egypt. My father was a diplomat for the German government and his job had us moving around a lot. I was born in Malta, I grew up in Ethiopia, Thailand, Germany, and then Egypt. So, it begins when I was around 18 and we were posted to Texas.

I showed up in Denton, Texas and it was a completely different world—bit of a culture shock you could say. I had started attending the University of North Texas, which was a big college in a pretty small town. The graphic design program I was in had a very commercial focus—lots of advertising and things like that, which is what I thought at the time I wanted to do.

While I was there, I attended a photography show and the curator was from New York. He told me about this school in New York called “Cooper’s Union—or something like that. It’s free!” Of course, I didn’t believe him right away so when I got home, I looked it up and it was a real what-the-fuck moment. It was real! But I had just missed the application deadline!

So, I called the school and through those calls I got all the way to Dean Vidler, the dean of the art school at the time. I don’t even know why they let me talk to him! Anyways, despite all my explaining and pleading, he said that I would have to wait another year to apply.

Six months later, I went to a portfolio review and Day Gleeson (Professor in the School of Art) was there. You know you hear all those stories about people who go to portfolio reviews and are crying, so I was pretty nervous. I was also the only guy wearing a shirt, tie and a jacket—I don’t even know why. But somehow she took a liking to me.

What did you feel when you first got to Cooper?

Honestly, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. It’s difficult to judge from afar all these things without actually being there. I was very... confused? I had come from a place that was very structured, and even though Cooper had classes like Graphic Design, it wasn’t like Graphic Design at UNT. The whole studio idea was very open. You have to almost come up with your own assignments.

I took an advanced drawing class. The guy next to me was doing a sculpture, another person was doing a dance performance and I was sitting there like “I don’t understand, I’m in a drawing class!” It was such a contrast from where I had come from.

Cooper is also very heavily focused on the concept. Yes, there’s a component of technique involved, but I feel at Cooper it’s all about the idea or concept behind your project.

You might say that about any high-brow art school.

Sort of, yeah. But sometimes people value the craft of the work, or they look at the technique. I didn’t go to other schools, but at Cooper, more than anything else, it was about the concept. At least that’s what I think. I feel that your craft was treated like your own business and you got better at it on your own.

When you graduated, what was your path out of Cooper?

Well, I graduated in December 2008 because I was a transfer student. My father was very eager to have me supporting myself financially, but he agreed to help me out for one month after graduation. Basically, he would pay for January rent; after that I was on my own.

Now it was early 2009, you know, financial crisis and everything and here I was trying to find a job. My friend Louise—she had graduated just a little before me—was working at The New York Times. She told me they were looking for a graphic designer and she managed to arrange a job interview for me with Khoi Vinh, their design director. The interview went really well and I was looking forward to hearing from them soon.

At the same time, I was also interviewing at Pentagram. I felt really good after that interview and I thought that was going to turn out well for me. They offered me an internship that paid quite well and I was so happy! I mean it’s Pentagram!!

[Editor’s Note: Pentagram is a multidisciplinary design studio. J. Abbot Miller, a partner at Pentagram and also a Cooper alumnus, designed the signage and is behind the decision to use that typeface you see everywhere in the NAB—the one with the chamfered edges. It’s called Foundry Gridnik.]



Photo provided by Sascha Mombartz.

Then I heard back from The Times—they wanted to do a second interview. I was like, “Holy shit, this is huge!” I was very excited. But then I felt kinda bad because I was supposed to start at Pentagram the next week. I felt like I should let them know that I’m doing other interviews because... well it’s gonna suck for them! So, I called them up—see I thought this was a good idea when I did it—and I said: “Hey, I’m doing an interview with The New York Times. I’m not sure what’s going to happen, but I thought you should know.” And the lady was like: “—Oh cool, thanks. Uhh, I’ll call you back later.” **click**

And I thought to myself, “Oh shit, call me back later? Uhh.” But this was just before my interview at the Times, so I just refocused on that. When I got out of the interview, I had a voicemail from Pentagram: “Hey Sascha, thanks for letting us know! We found someone else to take your spot. Good luck with The Times. Bye.” **click** And I thought, “Hoooooly shit, I went and fucked that up. I just lost that job.”

After that, I started getting anxious. I hadn’t heard from The Times in a while, so I called them. They said, “Hey, thanks for calling, you were second on our list, but we decided to go with someone else. Thanks so much.”

And then I just crumbled. I was such a moron; I should have just shut up and I would still have the Pentagram internship. Of course, now with hindsight, I would say my advice is you definitely need to look out for yourself because other people are not going to look out for you. I should have started at

Pentagram, and then if I got the job at The Times, I should quit and go there instead. That’s okay to do. I’m not going to hurt Pentagram by doing that; they’re too big.

Anyways, I had ended up with nothing. Mega-bummer.

Two weeks later, I got a call from Khoi at The Times again. He said: “Hey Sascha, are you still looking for a job? Would you be interested in working for us?”

I was excited all over again! I got the job! What had happened was the person they originally hired—she had her own design studio and had more experience than me—just did not fit in with the team. She was let go and I got the job!

That was my first job right out of Cooper. I was on the digital design team at The New York Times. We made all the minute details and features of the website and sidebar and translated that experience to all their mobile apps and stuff. It was such an amazing experience and I guess I did realize it at the time. You only realize how great the first job was when you’re at the fifth job and it’s not so amazing anymore.

Sounds a bit like dating.

Oh, yeah, 100%, everything is like dating. ♦

Sascha shared more stories about his work during his time at Cooper and later creating an app and starting his own company, Office for Visual Affairs. Read the full version online at pioneer.cooper.edu.

FACES OF COOPER: VILLALONGO

JUAN JOSÉ GARCÍA (Art ‘20)

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was SoHo. There were way less galleries in general. The New Museum was in an old building on Broadway and would show artists you didn’t see in major museums or galleries. Exit Art still existed and it held down the fringe. By the time I graduated in 1999, Chelsea was slowly becoming an art destination and there was funky stuff happening in Williamsburg with no baby strollers around. Williamsburg was pretty much invisible to the art market.

At that time, I believe painting was in its third dead-alive state and critics started talking about “conceptual painting,” that was, after a recent discussion of “bad painting.” The internet was a new beast and video and installation art were becoming more mainstream and gaining new theoretical frameworks, perhaps more than in a previous generation. Back then, it was sort of bad to talk about “identity politics” and

“multiculturalism” in mixed company. People talked of “culture wars,” which I always felt was such a negative term. What we were seeing of course was an all-out revolution in the arts where women and people of color were defining space in the art market and discourse for challenging Western patriarchy. Art was in a breakthrough stage.

Now many of these things are mainstream, but not without detractors in criticism. Language has changed. Art fairs are a thing. Galleries are as big as museums. SoHo seems like a weird place to go see art. You can see great art shows in the Lower East Side. Technology has drastically and quite intimately been integrated into our everyday reality. It has had a profound effect on art and social space and students are in tune with this. Art school facilities have adjusted. Painting continues its zombie apocalypse now joined by art, critical theory and history, things that have all been deemed

dead and resurrected. We should consider art after Jay-Z’s “Picasso Baby.”

What advice would you give to current students in the art school?

Explore every idea good or bad. Talk about your failures as much as your successes. Learn a useful skill.

What would you like your students, as young artists, to take away from your class?

That what we do as artists is different than what critics, curators, historians and gallerists do, but altogether it’s an influential echo chamber. Create your own echo chamber of perspectives with your peers and test them out while you have this time in school. Understand the difference. Develop a community.

Tell us a little bit about what you like to explore in your art, and about any current projects in the works.

I’m interested in the Black presence in painting. My narratives are about visibility and historical erasure. I like the figure. Male figures that are made of small pieces of natural debris that shift, pile and disperse as a condition of being. This is kind of like autumn leaves piled on the lawn. I cut pieces of flora out of this black velvet paper I’ve had lying around for some years now. I paint and collage in body parts. I’m showing two now at the BRIC Biennial which is becoming our central Brooklyn community hub.

“Black Pulp!” is a show that I curated with Mark Thomas Gibson and it shows a history of African-American printed matter alongside contemporary artists such as Kerry James Marshall, Trenton Doyle Hancock, Kara Walker and Ellen Gallagher. Lots of printmaking and paper ephemera such as zines, comics and more! ♦

Note: BRIC Biennial is located at 647 Fulton St. The show “Black Pulp!” is at the International Print Center New York, 508 W 26th St. 5FL until December 17.

MUSEUM REVIEW: THE MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN GANGSTER

GABRIELA GODLEWSKI (CE ‘19)

We know the East Village to be a culturally rich area of Manhattan, full of historically significant spots special to New York City. When I reviewed the Merchant House Museum, I spoke of a place that remained unaffected by the changes happening around the building. This museum, The Museum of the American Gangster, has had its interior changed dramatically, but no renovation would change what happened in the house in the 20th century. What makes the museum unique is that the real exhibit is not the objects on display in glass cases, but rather in the stories of the building relayed to us during the tour. Within the walls of 80 St. Mark’s Place are the stories of the most dangerous and infamous gangsters in America along with the memorabilia of the culture they created.

The Museum of the American Gangster is easy to miss. Located on St. Mark’s Place between 1st and 2nd Avenues, its only indicator is a street sign pointing to an unusually high set of front stairs to the museum. My student ID again came in handy as I secured a ticket—normally priced \$20—for \$12. At first, I wasn’t impressed. The walls of the museum were strewn with photos printed from Google Images with their descriptions all organized by time period in gangster history.

It wasn’t until the tour began that I saw what this museum had to offer. The tour

guide, an eloquent speaker and animated storyteller, started the tour with stories from the Prohibition Era and how criminalizing alcohol lead to organized crime. Throughout the tour, we were introduced to well-known gangsters that worked in New York. A personal favorite of mine was Meyer Lansky, a Polish-Jewish mob boss who, during World War II, took time out of his busy day of racketeering to successfully chase down several hundred Nazi sympathizers with only a dozen of his men. The museum also featured stories of more well-known gangsters, most notably Henry Hill, Jr., whose own stories lead to the production of Martin Scorsese’s critically acclaimed crime film *Goodfellas*.

The best part about the museum was that fact that the building itself was a part of the exhibit. In the early 20th century, the Hoffman Gang ran the building as a brothel and a speakeasy, which explained the high set of stairs in the front. Underneath the building was a booby-trapped basement that once held the entrances to tunnels that lead to different places through New York. When my tour concluded, I left the museum thoroughly impressed by what the museum had to offer, fascinated by the stories I had heard.

Like the Merchant House, the Museum of the American Gangster is yet another museum that is only a short walk from Cooper



Front entrance of The Museum of the American Gangster, open everyday 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. except Saturday. Photo from Manhattan Sideways.

yet very much unknown to the students. Although it initially did not seem interesting and rather bland, I found myself deeply enthralled by what I learned during my hour-long tour. The museum should especially be fascinating to students new to New York, as it strongly features a very interesting if not grisly side of New York history.

Cooper is a demanding environment, but taking a step back from the work load for at least an hour and exploring East Village is never a bad idea. Who knows—you might even learn something you never thought you’d want to learn. The next chance you get, check out the Museum of the American Gangster. You’ll enjoy it as much as I did. ♦

MILES OF MOVIES: FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

MILES BARBER (CE ‘18)

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them is about Newt Scamander (Eddie Redmayne), a wizard with a particular fondness for the magical creatures, some of which he keeps in an enchanted suitcase. Newt arrives in 1926 New York City in the midst of turmoil; strange occurrences are threatening to reveal the wizarding world to the non-magical community as it seems there are dark forces at work. Could the dark wizard Gellert Grindelwald be involved? Newt gets his magical case mixed up with a very similar non-magical suitcase belonging to Jacob Kowalski (Dan Fogler), which results in some of the creatures getting loose and the exposure of the wizarding world to Jacob. Tina Goldstein, a former auror (like wizard police), also gets involved through Newt’s unregistered arrival to New York. Meanwhile, Percival Graves (Colin Farrell), a high-level auror, is trying to recruit Credence (Ezra Miller) to help him find out what is causing these strange occurrences; Credence thinks it might be an orphan child under the care of Mary Lou, a magic-hater.

There is quite a lot going on in this film and quite a few characters to keep track of. Surprisingly, the film does a good job of balancing everything. I’m not sure if it will be more difficult for someone unfamiliar with the Harry Potter books or films, but it was easy to follow most of the time. That doesn’t stop there from being some pacing and tonal issues in the middle of this film. There is a scene in this film involving a floating chair that just seemed out of nowhere and rushed. On top of that, the mixture of the different stories isn’t always that smooth. For example, the main story of Newt and finding all of his magical creatures that were let loose is pretty light and fun in tone. But the “behind-the-scenes” story involving Graves and Credence is very dark and sometimes confusing. It shows

the brutality wizards face at the hands of people who want to burn them in creating a “New Salem.” Mary Lou, along with a few other characters in the film, is incredibly cruel to anyone sympathizing with magic. There is some dark content implied in this story that just doesn’t mix very well with the lighthearted fun of Newt searching for his creatures.

Still, there are a lot of great things to talk about. For one, the acting is great in this film. Eddie Redmayne seems perfectly cast in the role of Newt Scamander, an awkward wizard whose eyes light up when he’s interacting with his creatures. The music adds a few layers to this feeling as well. Composer James Newton Howard has always been good at producing scores that feel wondrous. The main theme for this film is no different. The film also does a great job at showing everyone what it’s like to live in this world. There are so many cool things that I wish were real in the wizarding world like clocks that tell you where certain people are and trunks with enough space inside to fit an entire zoo. Jacob Kowalski is like us; he gets exposed to all of this magic and reacts to it with a mixture of fear, bewilderment, and then excitement. This provides quite a lot of situational humor that added some more levity to Newt’s story.

Overall, I really enjoyed *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*. It has some great acting, a good score, likable characters, and tells an entertaining story. There are a few tonal and pacing issues in the film, particularly in the middle, and the story may not be easy to follow for someone not familiar with at least the Harry Potter films. But I still had a great time with it and would recommend checking it out. ♦

Grade: B

MILES OF MOVIES: THE EDGE OF SEVENTEEN

MILES BARBER (CE ‘18)

The Edge of Seventeen is about Nadine (Hailee Steinfeld), a high school junior who suffered a huge loss in the family a few years ago. She’s bitter and annoyed at how life has turned out and resents her brother Darian (Blake Jenner) who just seems unfairly perfect. and now feels betrayed by her only friend Krista who seems to be prioritizing other people. Throw in a hilarious teacher, Mr. Bruner (Woody Harrelson) and some real emotion and you have a stellar coming-of-age story that is pleasantly surprising.

I wouldn’t call this film a comedy, but there is a lot of humor, especially from Woody Harrelson. The situational awkwardness of so many of the scenes is also funny. Nadine is a pretty awkward person, but one of the characters in this film, Erwin, is hundreds of times more awkward. Usually I don’t like awkward humor but it works in this film because Nadine’s self-loathing is driven by her awkwardness.

The performances are really good too. Hailee Steinfeld has only really had smaller roles since her fantastic performance in *True Grit*, playing smaller characters in often mediocre movies. I’m so glad this film lets her really shine. Blake Jenner is really good as her brother too, giving a layered character some really powerful scenes towards the end. Even Woody Harrelson’s character works on multiple levels.

What I’m really getting at here is that the writing in this film is pretty stellar. Not a single line of dialogue felt like it was fake or written for a movie. All of the characters had depth beyond what you might expect in a comedy or even your standard coming-of-age film.

Unfortunately, the film isn’t without some flaws. Though I love the writing of the dialogue, the story is just a little messy in the middle of the film. There are just a few too

many stories and characters set in motion for everybody to get enough time to shine. A lot of time is given to Erwin while less time was given to Krista, who should have been a little more central to the story. Still, it’s impressive enough as it is that all of these characters have real depth.

Overall, *The Edge of Seventeen* delivers a solid coming-of-age story with layered characters, clever dialogue, and some real emotion towards the end. When characters feel something, you feel it too. Even though Nadine is such a bitter person, you feel for her pain and the seeming hopelessness of her situation and ultimately relate to her. ♦

Grade: A-



CROSSWORD PUZZLE

TOBIAS STEIN (CE '18)

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Professor Sam Keene with students Jessica Marshall (EE '17), Emily Adamo (Art '17), Stephanie Restrepo (Arch '17), and Monica Abdallah (ChE '17) at the first Cooper Brewing Exhibition on December 2. On display were information about their brewing process, equipment, and samples of their brews.



NEXT PRESIDENT SPARKS A CONVERSATION

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On the Board Meeting in December
Sparks will attend the Board of Trustees meeting scheduled for December 7. She is expected to update the Board about her presidential transition, providing comments and observations about her reception while also seeking feedback from the Board.

Other items on the agenda include meeting requirements set in the Consent Decree as part of an agreement to terminate litigation. In simpler terms, when the Attorney General brokered a deal to end the lawsuit, there were some stipulations that must be met by certain dates.

In particular, the Consent Decree requires that “all Trustees who served on the Board as of October 6, 2006, shall have their terms expire as of December 7, 2016.” In effect, this means the current Chairman of the Board, Richard Lincer, will be forced to step

down. Sparks comments on this change in Board leadership: “The Board, after it makes its appointments, will let the community know. In my experience in working with the folks that I expect to be in leadership positions after the 7th [of December], I’m very pleased. It’s been a highly productive working relationship and I think it will have a good outcome.”

Another requirement of the Consent Decree is a report produced by the Board’s Free Education Committee for the Attorney General. As written in the Consent Decree, the next progress report is due on January 15, 2017, and will update the Attorney General on the progress towards “returning Cooper Union to a sustainable, full tuition scholarship model.” Sparks: “I’ve been in discussion with the Chair of the Free Education Committee and getting up to speed with the budget cuts that have been made and others that are proposed.” ♦

- ACROSS:**
- 1. Madrid museum
 - 6. “How to save a life” Artist
 - 10. Radio broadcasting
 - 14. Daybreak
 - 15. Clue weapon
 - 16. Discount
 - 17. Something you tell your friend when you don’t care
 - 20. “Oh won’t you __ with me” lyric
 - 21. Curved molding
 - 22. Policy guru
 - 23. Truck driver radio operator
 - 25. Trash baseball team
 - 26. Online bid site
 - 28. Cremation result
 - 31. Golf tool
 - 34. Can we actually eat it during Pesach?
 - 35. Duel time, “high ____”
 - 36. Airforce, Navy, ____
 - 37. Something you tell your friend after they insult you
 - 40. Shocking fish type
 - 41. Middle East respiratory syndrome
 - 42. Sterilizes a pet
 - 43. NY time
 - 44. “That outfit is soooo...”
 - 45. Tree type, plural
 - 46. Med plan choices
 - 48. Delicious fried vegetable
 - 50. Smelly spirit
 - 51. Rabbit relative
 - 53. College sports!
 - 57. Something you tell your friend who messed up
 - 60. Whooped
 - 61. Type of Chili Pepper
 - 62. Chaps
 - 63. Accompanies crafts
 - 64. Jay Z runs this
 - 65. Ancient Greek theatre

- DOWN:**
- 1. Cooper frat letter, plural
 - 2. Prevented with galvanization
 - 3. Tolstoy’s “__ Karenina”
 - 4. Something you tell your friend when you have to go
 - 5. Choose
 - 6. Perfumes/colognes
 - 7. Drill
 - 8. Altar area
 - 9. Yeah
 - 10. Tie type
 - 11. Hipster saying: “They’re too ____ now”
 - 12. Criticism
 - 13. Director Brooks
 - 18. Gardening tool
 - 19. Female sheep
 - 24. “APSE” number of bits
 - 25. Food selection
 - 26. Olympic swords
 - 27. Take a risk for a group, idiom
 - 29. Drink with whiskey
 - 30. Internal company publication
 - 32. TV awards
 - 33. Behind these hazel ____
 - 34. Popeye’s Pea
 - 36. When your operation goes exactly....
 - 38. ‘Tis the season
 - 39. Advertiser’s target
 - 44. The frat’s yearly event that *totally* has nothing to do with alcohol
 - 47. Track events
 - 49. Best type of stand
 - 50. Layer
 - 51. Kind of poker
 - 52. Fresh, once again
 - 54. Cinema in Spanish
 - 55. Product of Detroit
 - 56. U.S. Polo ____
 - 57. Professional Basketball League
 - 58. Frequently
 - 59. Part of Freudian iceberg

