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Curiosities: The Official Blog of Sheridan

Sheridan College

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curiosities

THE OFFICIAL BLOG OF SHERIDAN

*Welcome to the book edition
of Curiosities – the official
blog of Sheridan.*

Through this curated collection,
we hope that you'll get a sense of
the vibrancy and energy at Sheridan
that we get to witness each day.

Here you'll find all things creative,
intriguing and noteworthy. From the
profound to the peculiar, the stories
in this volume offer insight into
different fields of study, explore the
ways in which Sheridan contributes
to the world, and spotlight the people
who bring Sheridan to life.

We hope that you'll continue to
feed your curiosity by visiting the
blog regularly for the latest stories
about Sheridan.

curiosities.sheridancollege.ca



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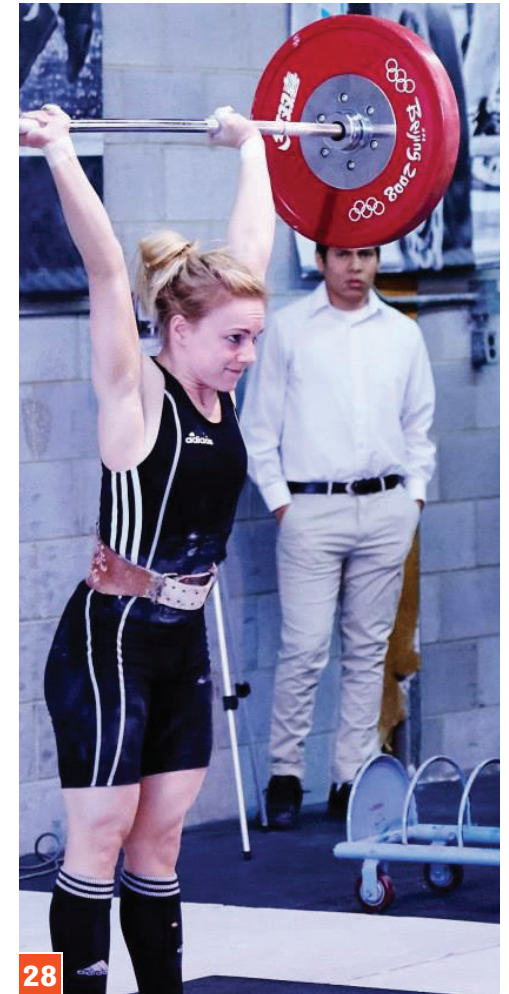
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Everyday Heroes

The “Everyday Heroes” series was inspired by a photo exhibit by Owen Colborne, a technologist in Sheridan’s Faculty of Animation, Arts and Design. With the encouragement of Dean Ronni Rosenberg, Colborne photographed his colleagues in their work environments to showcase their passion and expertise. The accompanying stories written for *Curiosities* delve into the many ways that these outstanding individuals contribute to student success.

Artwork by Mono Ahn | silkpulp.com
Bachelor of Illustration, 2013



“Records and artifacts represent our history. If you don’t capture it, you can’t recreate it.”



For the Record

Photo by Owen Colborne

From acceptance letter to diploma, imagine the paper trail that follows a student through postsecondary school. Now imagine being responsible for record-keeping at an institution that is almost 50 years old, has four campuses in three cities, and has a student body that has grown 60% in the last eight years. Linda Nelson was Sheridan's Corporate Records Officer for more than a decade and accountable for the 5,000 boxes of documents stored at its Trafalgar Road Campus.

Financials, student records and corporate information were the main types of documents that came across Nelson's desk. "It's not just filing!" she says. Almost all of the documents in storage are required to be kept by law for varied lengths of time and need to be readily accessible upon request. Trained as an Enterprise Content Management Master, she helped bring order to chaos and developed training tools for employees to ensure boxes are packed properly before they are classified and stored.

Above and beyond the call, Nelson also took responsibility for many of Sheridan's artifacts that would otherwise be lost. Often times this meant a trip to the dumpster. Black and white graduation photos of nursing students that were once in the garbage now hang proudly in a hallway at Davis Campus. The leather eagle outside the Aboriginal Initiatives

Office at Trafalgar was also at one time unclaimed, and today, elders from across the GTA are making the trip to Sheridan to admire it. "It's important to display our artifacts," explains Nelson, "It shows that we care."


A self-described "college mom," Nelson worked to keep things tidy and organized around campus while lending a helping hand wherever she could. Her 21-year career at Sheridan began as a class technician and over the years included volunteer work with the Aboriginal Awareness Committee, union activism, co-chairing of the Health and Safety Committee and adding three certificates to her name. Despite a busy workload she never overlooked the importance of making time for others. "The people make the overall picture of the College," she explains, "and that's why Sheridan has carried such a good name for so long."

In February 2015, Nelson retired from her post as resident record keeper. Although her diligence and enthusiasm are missed, her strong connection to ancestry and belief in the importance of celebrating culture will be present at Sheridan for years to come. "Records and artifacts represent our history," she explains. "If you don't capture it, you can't recreate it."

– Keiko Kataoka

Winning in Sport and Life

Photo by Owen Colborne



“Compete – no one is saying you have to win championships, but you have to try your best.”

Jim Flack achieved a major milestone in December 2014 with his 600th win in 23 years as coach of the Bruins Men's Basketball team. For someone who has been named Ontario Colleges Athletic Association Coach of the year 10 times while leading the Bruins to seven provincial championships, you would think that winning is everything to him. But you'd be wrong.

Study. Compete. Graduate. Succeed. This is the Sheridan way as conceived by Flack, who also serves as Sheridan's Athletics Director, and it's a philosophy that guides the entire varsity sports program at Sheridan. "Study is first and foremost," he says. "Sports may be a large part of the varsity athlete's experience at Sheridan, but if it's the sole focus they're setting themselves up for failure now and in the future."

"Compete – no one is saying you have to win championships, but you have to try your best," he says. And when it comes to graduating, "it has nothing to do with sports, but it lays the foundation for your future success."

Flack acknowledges that there is a commonly-held belief that when it comes to varsity athletes, academic achievement tends to take second place to performance on the field or the court. "People have said to me that you can't have both, and I don't accept that. If you can't get both, it better not be because you didn't try."

Under his leadership, Sheridan has instituted a student-athlete adviser whose job it is to track athletes and ensure they're not falling behind in their programs. If a red flag is raised, then tutoring and other supports are brought into play.

At the same time, he sees his role as coach to be aligned with that of educator. "We're with them for 16 to 24 hours a week, whereas a professor might see them for three hours. I truly believe the basketball court or the field is also a classroom."

And the lessons learned there can help set them up for future success, he says. "You're going to

run into difficult situations at work, where you don't have time to mess around but need to get your act together to resolve issues. It's the same in sport. Life isn't easy, but our players have the chance to learn some important lessons here while doing something they enjoy."

Flack's commitment to the Sheridan way was tested in 2015 with a less-than-stellar season for the Bruins, who failed to make the post-season for the first time in his tenure. "We really struggled, and I've never struggled in my career. But the message hasn't changed. If I made it about winning all the time, then I might be despondent." But it's clear that Flack is focused on a bigger prize: "We're working towards a sustainable model of athletic and academic excellence. We're not just interested in winning championships. I won't be satisfied unless all our players graduate."

– Susan Atkinson



Keeper of the Flame

Photo by Owen Colborne

For Hugh Douglas-Murray, the start of his passion for ceramics began serendipitously, when a visit to Barcelona sparked an enduring interest in tile-making. At the time, he was working behind the scenes in Toronto's film industry, but this spark ignited and led him to enrol, at the age of 32, in Sheridan's Ceramics program. After graduating in 1995, he was hired as the program technologist, a role he has dedicated himself to ever since.

A visit to the Sheridan Ceramics Studio reveals a staggering array of state-of-the-art equipment and materials, all managed and maintained by Douglas-Murray. There's a wide variety of kilns – wood-fired, salt, pit, raku, computer-controlled and car kilns – all used at various times by the students in the program looking to achieve different effects with their finished creations. A well-stocked storage room houses over 350 materials, including silica, calcium, talc and stains, reflecting the historical evolution of ceramics, this most ancient and yet contemporary art form.

Douglas-Murray's support for students goes well beyond studio maintenance. "I see my role as complementing and supporting the teaching and learning experience," he says. "I'll give advice to students about using the equipment, mixing glazes and so on, but I won't get involved in their aesthetic decision-making process." The payoff for Douglas-Murray comes with the graduate exhibition each year, when he can see the tangible progress the students have made since first year.

Over the course of his career at Sheridan, he's also been a relentless advocate for the program, making significant improvements over the years to enhance studio safety features and provide a better experience for the students. In the summer of 2014, he arranged for the purchase and installation of a wood-cutting machine, doing away with the need for students to wield axes to chop up lumber for the wood-fired kiln.

As Douglas-Murray puts it, he's responsible for "the bones of the place," but his commitment runs far deeper than that. Despite efforts by other art colleges over the years to recruit his expertise, he has chosen to stay here. Why? "It's all about our students. They're fully committed to learning, and they let you know that you're a part of their success."

– Susan Atkinson

"I see my role as complementing and supporting the teaching and learning experience."

Sheridan's Music Man

Photo by Owen Colborne

Sheridan's Bachelor of Music Theatre Performance program is renowned for producing industry-ready 'triple threat' talent – performers who are adept at singing, dancing and acting. Graduates go on to perform on stages across Canada, North America, and around the world – from Stratford to Broadway to London's West End.

But wherever they go, they are recognized by music directors for possessing a skill that is not commonly taught with as much depth in other music theatre programs – the ability to think musically through reading, writing and performing music. "This is important," says Greg Andrews, "because music directors want not only to teach the music quickly to performers who can read, they understand that a better educated performer is a more interesting performer."

As Head of the Music Discipline at Sheridan, Andrews has made it his mission to develop musicianship skills in his students as they prepare for their careers. His method is based on an integration of approaches that combines the Kodály concept of music education with opportunities where students demonstrate musicianship through performance. "I developed the curriculum at Sheridan based on the Kodály Method, which is a highly-sequenced curriculum that I adapted to fit into the music theatre program. By the end of first year, students are thinking musically and can read and write in simple and compound time, in major and minor keys. By the end of second year, they are ready to apply these skills in future Sheridan shows and their careers."

Since he began using this method in the early 1990s, hundreds of graduates have benefited from having this important skill. "There's an expectation in the industry now that if you're from Sheridan, you're not only musical in your performance, but you can read music – and music directors love that, especially when doing brand new works," he says.

In addition to fostering their musical knowledge and skills, Andrews recognizes that his students like nothing better than performing before a live audience, and he has directed his energies to providing more opportunities for them to get on stage – over and above the annual Theatre Sheridan season. His annual spring pop tribute concert, now in its 11th year, gives students valuable experience by performing with a live band in a concert setting. It's good preparation for graduates

who go on to audition for the many popular jukebox musicals, like *Mamma Mia!*, *Rock of Ages*, *Motown: The Musical* and *Jersey Boys*.

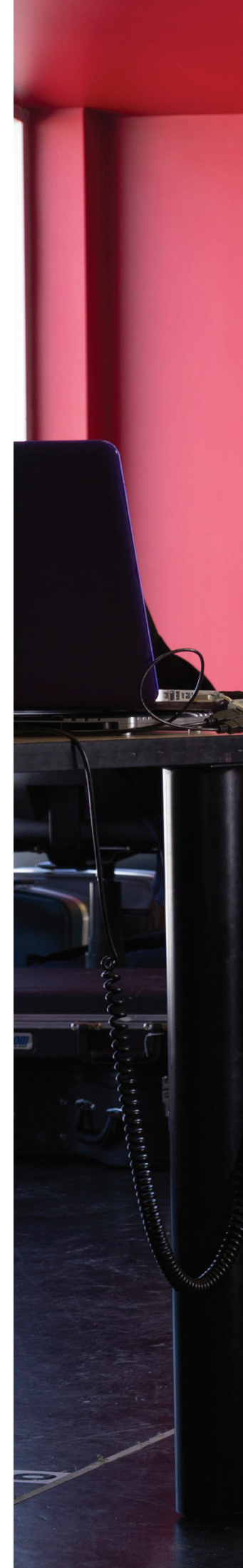
Andrews has also introduced a choral program into the degree as "another opportunity for students to apply musicianship skills through the performance of traditional choral repertoire." While his choir class is only one semester in length, the results have been enjoyed by many in the Sheridan community through the choir's performances at the College's annual Remembrance Day ceremony, as well as late November choral concerts in the Sheridan Centre for Animation and Emerging Technologies (SCAET) lobby. He also conducts and accompanies diverse groups of student performers at a variety of college events each year.


Andrews' deep-rooted love of music was first planted in childhood and nurtured throughout his teen years. Several of his brothers are also musical so music was a big part of family life. "We always had a good stereo at home so there was always great music playing in our house. I grew up listening to everything from Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett and Ella Fitzgerald, to the Beatles and The Rolling Stones," he says. "My initial musical influence was certainly swing and big band music."

His love for that musical era inspired him to enrol in the jazz performance program at Humber College, where he studied bass as a performance major. Now in his 26th year at Sheridan, he has also earned undergraduate and master's degrees in music from McMaster University and the University of Toronto, respectively.

A talented musician in his own right, Andrews balances his creative side and teaching responsibilities with equally consuming hobbies. A lifelong avid runner, he has completed 26 marathons and continues to plan for more. He's also a licensed pilot, and says that his love of flying almost won out over his love of music. Luckily for Sheridan, music took precedence. But Andrews has no regrets. "I'm really fortunate to work in a department where I can teach the subjects I'm passionate about, while providing performance opportunities to young students as they forge their own artistic identities."

– Susan Atkinson





“There’s an expectation in the industry now that if you’re from Sheridan, you’re not only musical in your performance, but you can read music – and music directors love that...”



“The theatre isn’t a world where you can go into a hardware store and find what you’re looking for.”

Setting the Stage for Success

Photo by Owen Colborne

As a scenic art technologist, resident Theatre Sheridan studio theatre set designer, and part-time faculty member, Denise Lisson spends her days helping students grasp the personal and technical skills they'll need to set the stage for their future success.

Lisson works in the Technical Production for Theatre and Live Events program, which prepares students to become part of a collaborative and creative team that supports a professional show. Students build scenery and props, make costumes, light the scenery, mix the live sound, put mics on the actors, and get involved in the rigging. "Working in all areas of production gives the students a clear understanding of what everyone contributes."

"There are many pitfalls," she warns. "Scenic art is rooted in symmetry and mathematics. Some students think they're coming into an arts program and they won't need math. Scenic artists realize design concepts and vision in full scale. Using the set model, students make samples of the finishes they see – marble, wood, wallpaper and tiles. They make three or four samples of each as well as build the tools to produce the finishes. The theatre isn't a world where you can go into a hardware store and find what you're looking for. Students have to go through all the processes to realize the final product."

If the hard skills sound varied, the soft skills students need to thrive are equally complex. "I've always felt that the scenery is secondary to the actors and

text. Once an actress begins speaking, she becomes the focus. It takes a unique type of person to not mind that their work recedes into the background."

Being a team player is another competency Lisson values. "Any head scenic artist can teach someone to paint, but you can't teach someone to have the right attitude. Students need to have confidence in themselves, find ways to communicate with people, and not get lost in the mix. They need to bring their skills to the table and be willing to learn new ones."

For Lisson, seeing the students take a project to completion is a highlight. "It teaches the importance of deadlines. When students see the first show they've helped to produce, they realize that they really did need to get their props completed on time because the actors are sitting on the chairs they built and upholstered."

Lisson has good reason to know these are the skills students need to acquire. Having graduated from the program in 1982, she spent over 30 years as a successful scenic artist at a number of regional theatres and commercial scene shops. "When I left Sheridan, I thought I'd go out in the world and conquer it. I never imagined I'd be back. In a way, it's humbling. It's been great to bring back so much of what I've learned to the place that helped me get my start."

– Christine Szustaczek



Crafting a Legacy

Photo by Owen Colborne

Anyone who has visited the Furniture Studio's annual graduate exhibit will have marvelled at the exquisite craftsmanship and individual creativity on display. In an era of mass production and cheap imports, it's rare to find the kind of dedication to art and design quality that resides within the Furniture program's studio spaces.

No one exemplifies that commitment more than Rob Diemert, who has served as the program's technologist since 1995. His history with Sheridan goes back much further, as he graduated from the Furniture program back in 1983, when it was housed at the former Lorne Park campus in Mississauga. After graduating, he operated his own studio for more than 10 years, designing and building custom furniture on commission.

As the studio's technologist, Diemert oversees and maintains all of the equipment used in the studio, and also orders and dispenses the raw materials used in furniture construction. More importantly, he serves as a mentor and guide to the students enrolled across the four years of the Furniture program within the Bachelor of Craft and Design.


"Woodworking presents constant challenges, and there's lots of trial and error. It's one thing to be lectured to about how things work, but it's the hands-on practice that really teaches students how it all fits together," he says. As the full-time technologist in a program where many faculty are part-time, Diemert is a stable presence in the machine room (where the construction of pieces takes place), providing advice and support on design issues such as determining the best type of joint for a table, or demonstrating how to operate a piece of equipment.

"The machine doesn't do it all for you," he says, noting that problem-solving is a big part of the design process. "Rather than dictate the solution to students, I try to tease it out of them. Keeping it fun is key."

Advances in technology have had an inevitable impact on the age-old craft of furniture design. "Things have changed since I was a student. The emphasis has shifted away from skilled handwork, to focus more on concept and design development, and producing goods on a more economical scale." Diemert sees many of the changes as positive. For instance, students now have access to 3D printers to test out design concepts; this can really streamline the process and prevent missteps.

After 20 years in his position, Diemert's love of furniture design and interest in helping students keeps him motivated. "It's the students we attract that make this program stand out, and it's great to watch them progressing through the program to become really good designers."

– Susan Atkinson



“Rather than dictate the solution to students, I try to tease it out of them. Keeping it fun is key.”





Students

What better way to tell the story of Sheridan than to highlight the interests and talents of our students? From a competitive Scrabble player to a champion weightlifter, Google intern, illustrator, budding youth advocate and soap makers, Sheridan students are living their dreams, honing their skills, and equating Sheridan's name with excellence through their diverse accomplishments.

Artwork by Greer Stothers | greerstothers.com
Bachelor of Illustration, 2016



“It’s an easy game to learn but
takes a lifetime to master.”



Sheridan's Scrabble King

Photo by Keiko Kataoka

A Community Worker - Outreach and Development student by day and competitive Scrabble player by night, Shan Abbasi combined his passions in a unique way in the fall of 2014. He put forward a challenge to staff and students: make a monetary donation to the United Way for a chance to dethrone the "Scrabble King." In his paper crown and cape he thwarted many a hopeful challenger and never had to concede his title. His most dominant victory came against three of his professors who teamed up only to lose by 100 points.

The allure of the game for Abbasi came from a fascination with puzzles and words as a child. His parents taught him how to play Scrabble at an early age and he was soon defeating them and looking for a more competitive arena. After taking a break from the game, in 2007, he became a member of the North American Scrabble Players Association and started competing in tournaments.

So how good is Abbasi at Scrabble? He is ranked as one of the top 20 Scrabble players in Canada and maintains his status by memorizing lists of words and the Official Scrabble Players Dictionary. In his competitive career, at tournaments such as the U.S. Nationals or Canadian Championships, Abbasi's average score per game is 400 points. In an online game he once hit a double-letter and two triple-word scores with the word 'WOOZIEST' for a personal record of 311 points in one turn.

Despite the rigorous investment in his own game, Abbasi makes time to teach beginners and organize tournaments on a regular basis. He is the director of both the Brampton and Mississauga Scrabble Clubs, which meet weekly. Although not all of his opponents play at the same competitive level as he, the accessibility of the game for people of all skill levels makes each game rewarding. "Regardless of what your opponent is doing and how many points they score, there is always a puzzle for you to figure out," he explains.

After graduation Abbasi intends to find more opportunities to bridge his knowledge and training from Sheridan with his love for Scrabble. "Community development means helping people live healthier and better lives. I feel that playing Scrabble is a creative way to achieve this: embracing alternative forms of recreation in a social environment is part of building strong communities," Abbasi says.

Hoping to continue climbing the rankings in Canada and playing competitively locally and abroad, Abbasi insists he will remain an ambassador of the game. "Scrabble will always be fun for me," he explains. "It's an easy game to learn but takes a lifetime to master."

– Keiko Kataoka

Insights from a Google Intern

Photos by Sahana Kumar

Third-year Bachelor of Design student Fiona Yeung is no stranger to internships. She completed four voluntarily before her mandatory placement as part of the York/Sheridan program. Having already experienced working at smaller, traditional design agencies, she applied as an intern at Google, one of the largest tech companies in the world. Google receives 40,000 applications annually for 1,500 intern positions so Yeung figured it was a shot in the dark. Not only was she offered a position, she was selected as one of nine interns to work as a designer at Google's Mountain View headquarters in California.

Yeung is part of the Google+ Core Team, redesigning elements of its platform using a new design language announced at the annual Google I/O conference. "It's an especially exciting time to be a design intern at Google," Yeung explains. "Material Design bridges the gap between technology and human interaction, making applications feel vibrant. The design language creates a unified user experience across all Google properties, making it 'One Beautiful Google'." Instead of re-skinning existing features with a new design, Yeung is using an iterative approach, focusing on innovative ways to rethink transitions and animations. She collaborates with multiple teams at Google to ensure that her designs create a seamless and enjoyable online experience.

Interns at Google are given work as equally challenging and meaningful as that of employees, which has made Yeung's experience rewarding. "I feel like I'm part of the team. The projects I'm working on were the responsibility of a full-time employee last year, which is great because I want to do work that matters," she says. Throughout her internship, Yeung has been mentored by two managers, Brynn Evans and Chikezie Ejiasi, and a supportive Google+ design team. She has had the opportunity to connect one-on-one with designers and innovators at Google whose work she admires, like the VP of Design Matias Duarte, Google Search designer Noah Levin, as well as Google X team members who work on Google's Self Driving Car.

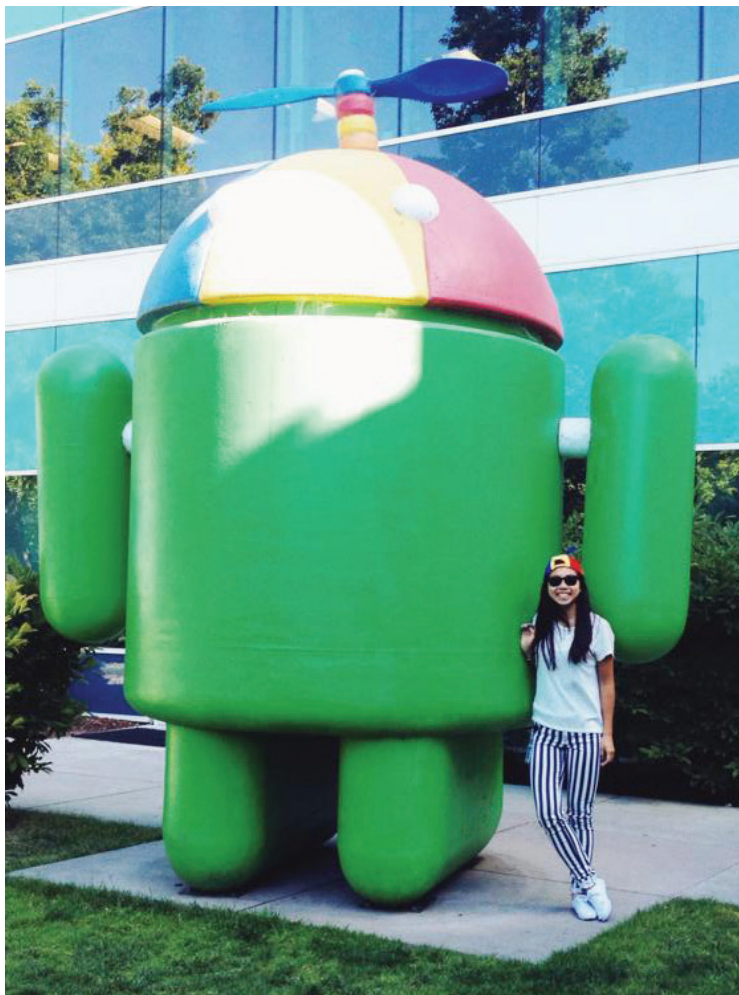
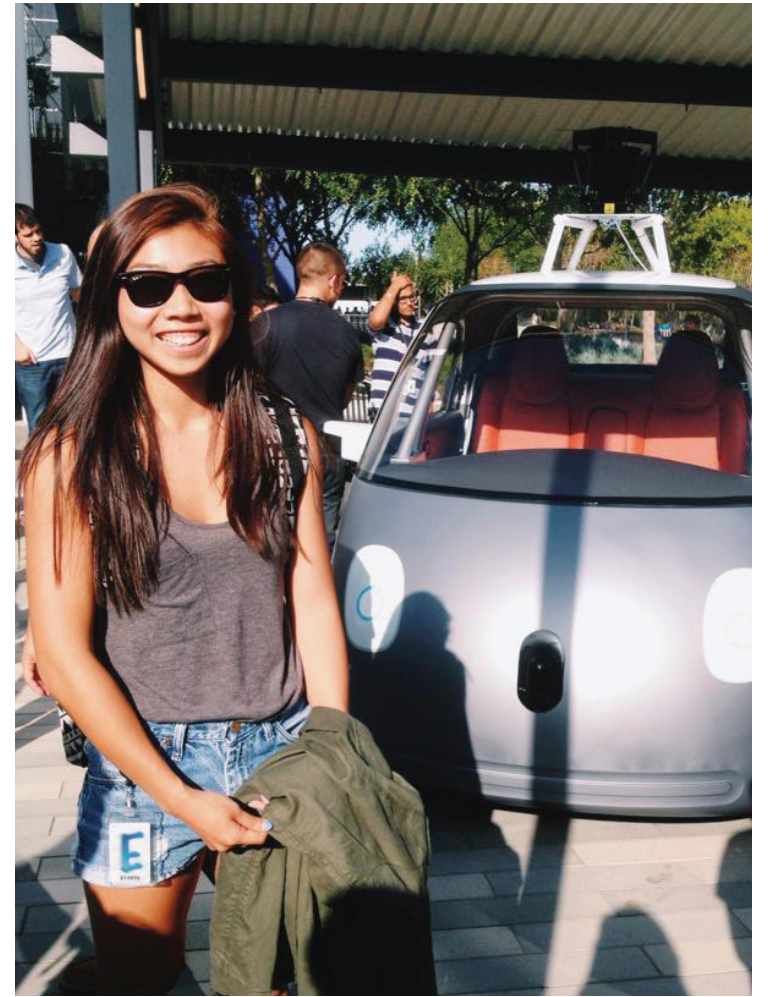
Google's open, collaborative and inclusive culture has contributed to its status as one of the top employers globally. Yeung relishes the opportunities and resources available to her, and the strong sense of community in the workplace. "There is a culture here where everyone is encouraged to keep learning," she says. She has attended professional development seminars on data visualization and presentation skills, weekly update meetings hosted by Google's CEOs Sergey Brin and Larry Page, a talk with Hillary Clinton, and multiple intern events.

Day-to-day perks also help keep employees and interns happy: a ride to and from work in the Google Bus, complimentary meals and fully-stocked kitchens, nap pods for midday breaks, and an on-site rock-climbing wall, bowling alley, soccer field and swimming pool. Employees can join a Google Quidditch Team or take part in a yoga or ballet class. "There's a strong work/life balance at Google. I'm doing a lot of work as an intern but still having fun at the same time," says Yeung.

During her time at Google, she was able to knock one item off of her bucket list: designing a Google Doodle. Her impressive portfolio led to the opportunity to work on a design in honour of the Tanabata Festival in Japan. While the final version of her doodle was not launched, she was given permission to share it in her portfolio. Yeung describes the experience of creating a piece for one of the most visible platforms in the world as "invaluable."

Yeung will return to Sheridan at the end of the summer to get ready for her fourth and final year in the Bachelor of Design program. As her time at Google comes to a close, she is already looking ahead to an exciting career in design. She has lots of advice to share with future interns: "Be proactive about your search. Reach out to recruiters and designers at the companies you want to work for and chat with them. And don't be afraid to apply to a company even if you think it's a long shot. I was unsure about applying to Google but went for it and haven't looked back!"

– Keiko Kataoka



Sharing her Story to End Stigma

Photo by *Five15ifteen Photography*

Ad-libbing in a television broadcast requires poise and confidence, something Sheridan Journalism student Muluba Habanyama knows well from her time in front of the camera. Drawing on that experience and feeling inspired by the speakers at a World AIDS Day event in Mississauga in 2014, she went off-script in her closing remarks as emcee and shared with the audience a secret kept for 22 years of her life: she has been HIV-positive since birth.

Habanyama's on-stage declaration was a moment of clarity in her young life; she was no longer going to let the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS dictate her choices. "Stigma is a disease on its own," she explains. "It prevents people from seeking out the supports they need." Empowered by the positive response from strangers at the event, a few days later she posted a five-minute video entitled *Feel No Shame* to YouTube, further explaining her previous reluctance to speak out.

With this newfound courage she was quickly thrust into the spotlight – interviewed by the *Toronto Star* and CTV News, and honing her journalistic abilities for blogs like the *Huffington Post*, MTV's Staying Alive Foundation and the website *Too Damn Young*. She also now sits on the Board of Directors for the Teresa Group, was Honourary Chair of the 2015 Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life in Peel and received a Black Women Moving Forward Award for Advocacy.

But the path that led to this point in Habanyama's life included much self-doubt and devastating times of heartache. She lost both her parents to HIV-related complications before she turned 19 and fell further into an isolated state of depression. To move on from that dark period she found purpose through education: her own studies in Sheridan's General Arts and Science and Journalism programs, and sharing knowledge with others around HIV/AIDS.

Habanyama is now not just more open about her story to those around her, she is using her experiences to foster a more open conversation around HIV/AIDS nationally and internationally, particularly with youth.

She explains: "As a journalist I'm regularly asking people to share their stories with me so I figure I should be comfortable sharing my story with others, especially if it will add to a greater and important conversation."

In February 2016, Habanyama became the first-ever National Youth Ambassador for the Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research's (CANFAR) Kisses for CANFAR campaign. The campaign is focused on empowering youth with reliable information and tools in an effort to encourage safer and more informed decisions. As the face of the campaign, Habanyama is available as a classroom speaker and will be tweeting out her #smoochselfie posts to "help kiss HIV and AIDS goodbye." With ambition to continue her advocacy work while pursuing a career in journalism – and ultimately hosting a talk show – she is truly embracing her role as a public figure.

The balancing act that comes with lending her voice to the HIV/AIDS conversation while completing her studies, sitting as a board member, and travelling for speaking engagements can present its share of challenges. "I used to always say 'school comes first' but my Sheridan program supervisor Nicole Blanchett-Neheli has to remind me that 'health comes first,'" says Habanyama smiling. "If I take care of myself, I am better prepared to help others through my work."

There's a degree of vulnerability that comes with continually sharing her story but Habanyama stays motivated from the kind words of her supporters. "A man came up to me after one of my talks and said, 'How are you so strong?' It was one of those questions that sounds simple enough but I was taken aback," she explains. "I don't really know how I got here and how I've persevered, but it's the path I'm on and I'll keep fighting the good fight."

– Keiko Kataoka



“Stigma is a disease on its own. It prevents people from seeking out the supports they need.”



Making Suds with the Chemistry Club

Photos by Abby Gail Hermoso



At its inaugural event in 2014, 20 chemistry enthusiasts from the Sheridan Chemistry Club spent a Saturday in the lab getting their hands dirty with saponification: the making of soap.

Club event coordinator Maria Trejo relished the opportunity to teach her peers about soap-making. Drawing from her experience as a Chemical Engineering Technology (Environmental) student and previous work with the cosmetics company Lush, she eagerly sourced materials, developed a procedure and safety protocol, and walked club members through the process step-by-step before they set out to make their own concoctions.

Using sodium hydroxide as a base, groups chose coconut, olive or palm oil, and added in dashes of natural colours and fragrances to customize their creations. “I think participants gained an appreciation for the science that is behind a product that we use every day,” explains Trejo, “It’s empowering to have a platform like this to develop our creativity.”

By the end of the day, students had whipped up eight batches of all-natural, preservative-free soap. From deep purple hues to pastels with a hint of sparkle, the soaps ranged from musky to floral scents and were all different shapes and sizes. Many prepared in cupcake liners and cookie cut-out shapes looked more like dessert than soap.

“Chemistry doesn’t begin and end with producing chemical reactions in a lab,” explains club president and Chemical Engineering student Maniranjan Sra. “The practical application of chemistry in creative ways is what prepares us for the industry.” In addition to preparing students for the workforce, the club’s mandate includes understanding pathways to university, forming partnerships with industry, and providing opportunities for independent research and networking. Students receive credit on their Co-Curricular Record for being active in the club, an added credential that members hope will set them apart upon graduating in an increasingly competitive field.

The next undertaking for these students is to sell their line of soap to the Sheridan community. The business side to it still has relevance to these chemistry students. “It’s a profit-driven industry so we need to think about base costs and product yield to determine pricing,” explains Abby Gail Hermoso, communications coordinator for the club. “We also need to carefully consider ingredients and what’s going in to the product to make it attractive to consumers.”

Trejo, Sra and Hermoso, all core members of the club’s executive, are nearing the end of their time in the program but still feel it is important to be involved in developing a greater extracurricular presence for chemistry students. The club continues to recruit members and is looking forward to their next team-building experiment.

– Keiko Kataoka

80 Faces

Photo by Rey Martin



“I’d rather see someone’s sketchbook than a painting they’ve worked on for five months because you can see how their mind works.”

Dominic Laporte has always been an industrious kind of guy. As a student at an arts-focused high school in Ottawa, he routinely produced and sold more paintings at the school’s annual art auction than any of his classmates. It’s probably not surprising then that Laporte, as a fourth-year student in Sheridan’s Bachelor of Illustration program, earned one of two coveted, independent studios at the Trafalgar Road Campus, giving him a dedicated space to further explore and hone his creative abilities.

Laporte invented a challenge for himself. Use the space to paint portraits of people in order to make his brush strokes loose and energetic. “I had been working on big portraits up until that point,” he says. “Those are really tightly-rendered and they take months to finish. They’re really satisfying to have in the end, but they’re a lot of work and can stop being enjoyable along the way.”

Knowing the project was a self-imposed exercise, Laporte didn’t want to invest a lot of money up front. “I went to the dumpster behind the school and gathered old cardboard, illustration board, foam core and particle board,” he says. His only hard cost was paint, something he shrugs off as a staple in his life.

Laporte set out to create eight portraits, experimenting with palettes and colour. “When I put them up in the studio, I realized that 30 would be better and 50 would be really cool and then that turned to 80. It kind of got addictive. The more I had up there, the more rewarding it got.”

What started as an exercise resulted in an exhibition at the Fall Down Gallery in Ottawa in December 2014. Faces include those of family and friends, famous actors like Viggo Mortensen and Uma Thurman, and musicians like Aretha Franklin and DJ Premier. The self-critic in Laporte claims that of the 80 portraits “10 are great and about 20 suck. But I think it’s important to see the good with the bad because I’m promoting the show as a study.”

In Laporte’s mind, it’s the process that’s compelling. “I think people like to see what artists are thinking,” he says. “I’d rather see someone’s sketchbook than a painting they’ve worked on for five months because you can see how their mind works.”

As for his big take-aways from the exercise, Laporte experimented with a technique in which he painted 10 portraits at once. “First I’d do the dark tone on all 10, and then the next tone, sort of like a conveyor belt. I wanted to be quick and gestural.” Depending on his mood, it would take him approximately two-and-a-half hours to finish a series of 10.

“With portraits, it’s all about likeness,” he notes. “Each individual had an impact on the way I painted. If it was an older guy, I’d use more chunky brush strokes, but if I was painting a picture of a beautiful woman, I’d be more crisp. If the person had textured skin, or focused on a certain type of music, I tried to take that into account in how I applied the paint.”

While Laporte isn’t sure why he likes painting people so much, he is firm on the idea that “illustration is about communicating an idea through an image. Everything has a specific meaning. When you look at a painting of a portrait, even if you don’t know who it is, you should be able to get a feeling from it – like their expression, or intensity.”

For now, Laporte is thrilled that this “happy accident” of a project is making its way out of the studio and in front of an audience. “I really want to keep creating work and putting it out there,” he says. “It’s just who I am.”

– *Christine Szustaczek*







“Your body can be ready but if you’re not mentally ready to put yourself under the bar, then you won’t do well.”

Worth the Weight

Photo by Clance Laylor, Lifter's Life



Unlike many of her teammates in the 2015 Pan American Games, the childhood aspirations of Sheridan student Amanda Braddock did not include standing atop a podium with a gold medal. It wasn't until the age of 23 that she stumbled upon her sport, weightlifting, after searching for ways to get in shape, and it didn't take much to get her hooked. Previously she had never played team sports or competed in athletic activities of any sort. Now 26, Braddock is not only getting used to her new label as an athlete, but also an Ontario 48kg record holder, a Canadian Champion and a 2015 Pan American Games weightlifter for Team Canada.

"I'm still surprised when I hear my name announced as 'the next athlete' at a competition," says Braddock, who competed at the international level for the first time at the Games in Toronto. Usually shying away from the spotlight, she has learned the significance of mental acuity in addition to physical strength in the sport of weightlifting. "Your body can be ready but if you're not mentally ready to put yourself under the bar, then you won't do well," she explains. Not only a feat of strength but an on-stage performance – each attempt takes place on a platform in front of three judges and a crowd of onlookers – Braddock's nerves were tested at the Oshawa Sports Centre, which can hold up to 3,000 spectators.

Braddock's training regimen has helped her build confidence for competing. She typically trains three times a week, three and a half hours per session, with her coach Steve Sandor at the Sabaria School of Weightlifting in Mississauga. "Weightlifting is not all about brute strength," she explains. "It's a very technical sport. There's an explosiveness and beauty in the movement of lifting and my coach helps me perfect that with timing." It's a rigorous training schedule for someone who is simultaneously working a full-time co-op placement to complete her Human Resources Management Diploma at Sheridan.

To cope with busy times in school when Braddock wasn't able to make it to the gym to train, her family helped her build a platform in the basement. When

she needed to miss part of class to work with her coach, Sheridan professors accommodated her schedule. It was this type of support throughout her athletic journey that helped ease challenges with balancing time. "There's always a way to make it work, no matter how busy things get," she says. Members of the tight-knit weightlifting community that she spends much of her time with have similar experiences juggling training, work and a social life. For Braddock, this camaraderie makes it all the more worthwhile.

Braddock recognizes that she may have to make a decision in the near future about how much time she wants to dedicate to training and a career, knowing that most of the top lifters in Canada are full-time athletes. Looking too far ahead isn't something she feels comfortable doing, considering three years ago she hadn't ever weight-trained. Instead, she takes it competition by competition, acknowledging that lifters tend to have short-lived careers due to injury and the extreme physicality of the sport. What she is sure of now is the importance of getting an education to provide future options.

Likewise, Braddock is trying not to concern herself with podium expectations at competitions like the Pan Am Games. Instead, she is eager to get more competition experience and relishes the opportunity to represent her country. "I want to put in a performance that will make my coach proud and that will reflect all of the work I put into training," she says. "I can't be disappointed if I perform my best."

At the conclusion of the Games, Braddock's plans included celebrating by indulging in a box of donuts before getting back to work and training. While she is on the trajectory to accomplish great things in weightlifting, her hope is to inspire more women and girls to get involved in the sport. "I always knew that I was capable of dedicating myself to something I am passionate about, but I never thought it would be in an athletic capacity," she says. "Pushing yourself no matter what it is you're trying to achieve makes you realize who you could be."

– Keiko Kataoka





Faculty

Inspiring students, advancing a field of study or even an entire industry, and reflecting on one's life experiences to understand how they shape the delivery of education are just some of the ways that our faculty members create a rich and dynamic learning experience at Sheridan. From anthropology to art history and millwrighting to musical theatre, their thought-provoking ideas are entwined in our institution's identity.

Artwork by Rob Brunette | robbrunette.com
Bachelor of Illustration, 2015

Reading the Bones

Photo by Susan Atkinson

As a young child, Jaime Ginter was into solving mysteries and digging in the dirt, but it wasn't until she started her undergraduate degree at the University of Alberta that she discovered a name for her passion – anthropology.

Fast forward 25 years, and Ginter had earned her BSc, Master's and PhD in the field of biological anthropology and began teaching in that subject area as a professor in Sheridan's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Her fascination in this field lies in reconstructing what people were doing in the very distant past. "My specialty is skeletal biology; I study human skeletal remains to see what I can learn about them – their age, sex, ethnic background, level of health, occupation, diet and culture."

What can bones tell us? More than you might imagine. For her PhD thesis, Ginter focused on health and lifestyle changes that occurred in southern Africa 2,000 years ago. She examined and compared the skeletal remains of hunter-gatherers and pastoralists to try to determine when and how the introduction of herding of domesticated animals occurred.

"I was expecting to find a difference in skeletal remains based on a change in food source because accounts of early explorers and other studies found that sheep and cattle herders tended to be very tall and lean, while hunter-gatherers were much smaller in size," she says. "However, I did not find any significant differences in the size and shape of these people's skeletal remains after the introduction of domesticated animals, which supports two possibilities: firstly, that the initial introduction of domesticates did not significantly impact their diet, or secondly, that domesticates were adopted by the hunter-gatherers who lived in this area rather than being introduced by foreigners migrating to the area."

While skeletal biology is a very specialized science, it can also have meaningful applications across a range of disciplines, as Ginter has discovered. In

2010, she was able to negotiate a loan of human remains from an anthropology museum in Munich, Germany, to complement her personal collection of animal bones.

In 2011 the museum shipped over a small collection of remains, including seven complete skeletons of varying ages dating from the 16th to 18th centuries. To get assistance with processing, analyzing and curating the remains, Ginter turned to the Co-Curricular Record (CCR) program. The CCR is a document that tracks and records the learning and development activities that students undertake outside the classroom.

This led to opportunities over time for students from the General Arts and Science, Animation and Athletic Therapy programs to work side-by-side with Ginter as research assistants – organizing, cataloguing and occasionally repairing bones. "The animation students used their experience to help them prepare for their human anatomy test, and found it really enhanced their knowledge," she says.

Now that the collection has been organized, Ginter has incorporated it into the curriculum of her forensic anthropology, applied biological anthropology and anthropology of health courses. She has been working with Song Ho Ahn, a Visualization Researcher working in Digital Learning and Innovation in Sheridan's Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) to complete 3D scans of some skeletal material from the collection, which will also be used in an educational app that Ahn is developing.

While her involvement in the CCR is voluntary, Ginter finds it rewarding. "I enjoy working with the students and doing what I was used to doing at university. Plus, it gives students the opportunity to explore the materials in a very hands-on, casual way, while learning more about human and animal anatomy."

– Susan Atkinson





“I study human skeletal remains to see what I can learn about them - their age, sex, ethnic background, level of health, occupation, diet and culture.”

The Script for Success

Photo by John Jones

How is it that the suburban town of Oakville, Ontario has become Canada's new hotbed for musical theatre development? To find out, I recently sat down with Michael Rubinoff, Sheridan's Associate Dean of the Department of Visual and Performing Arts, a lawyer and producer turned educator, and the brainchild behind the Canadian Music Theatre Project (CMTP).

“This new music we’re creating is making its way into audition books, cabarets and people’s repertoires.”



Z_L $OC1$ Z_L
 $V_{100} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} e^{-2000}$ $V_{200} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} e^{-2000}$
 $V_{210} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} e^{-2000} - Zr/2ae$
 $V_{21+1} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} e^{-2000}$
 $V_{300} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} e^{-2000}$
 $V_{310} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} e^{-2000}$
 $V_{31+1} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} e^{-2000}$
 $A_n = n(n-1) \cdot (n-2) \dots (n-k+1) (B_1 \dots B_k)$
 $U(x) = \frac{1}{2} A x^2 + B x + C$
 $N = N(B)$
 $E = -13.6 eV$
 $Z = \sqrt{R^2 \cdot (\omega L - \frac{1}{\omega C})^2}$
 $E = mc^2$



Appreciating the art form

Long before Rubinoff came to Sheridan in January 2011, he practiced entertainment law and ran a commercial production company in Canada, bringing works to stage such as *Love, Loss and What I Wore* at the Panasonic in Toronto and *Boygroove The Musical*, winner of Toronto's inaugural Dora Mavor Moore Audience Choice Award for Outstanding Production in 2006.

"I've always loved music theatre and I think everyone has a show that really inspires them. For me, it was the Canadian company of *Les Misérables* at the Royal Alex. Music theatre is all about when you can no longer speak the words. The music takes over and heightens the emotion of a certain moment. It's compelling, moving and beautiful.

"I also love that it's a live medium," he adds, "even more so in this world of technology and social isolation." It's a stark admission for a person who confides that he has a social media obsession. "I love the idea of sitting in a room with people and engaging in this activity together. It's become rare. There's something exciting about that."

The rise of an incubator

Rubinoff, who served as the former Chair of the Professional Advisory Council for Sheridan's music theatre program, was recruited to Sheridan by Ronni Rosenberg, Dean of the Faculty of Animation, Arts and Design. "What excited me most was coming in at a time to provide leadership on the implementation of a new bachelor's degree program in music theatre performance. It opened up a world of possibilities."

Rubinoff was deeply motivated by the challenge of finding a meaningful, applied learning experience that would serve as the new degree students' capstone project.

"I looked at that opportunity through the lens of a producer who's been active in developing new musicals. I was very interested in putting together a program that served our academic needs and that provided Canadian and international writers with a home where they could do meaningful development."

Drawing on his previous experience as President of Script Lab, a not-for-profit focused on the development of new musicals, Rubinoff set out to institutionalize a program that would nurture talented writers. "Like any good lawyer, I did my research," laughs Rubinoff, in talking about a visit he made to Northwestern University in Chicago to learn about its American Music Theatre Project.

Rubinoff's formula for his Canadian equivalent provides writers with dedicated time and space to create new works and places

the emphasis on development over performance. He then matches the writers with exceptional students who test drive their content.

"They may not be age appropriate all the time, but they have a level of talent and critical thinking skills that makes them enormously useful." Success is furthered by a significant amount of donor support that covers the expenses related to bringing in international artists – something his program budget can't cover.

CMTF found its legs during the last production slot of the 2012 Theatre Sheridan season. Rubinoff decided to experiment and present two new musicals in a reading format to enable the writers to learn from the audience's reaction. One of those shows was *Come From Away*.

Come From Away

"This was the story of 38 passenger jets grounded in Gander, Newfoundland on 9/11 and the extraordinary humanity showed by Gander and the surrounding towns to their 7,000 unexpected visitors, on one of the darkest days in our recent history." Rubinoff was convinced that it should be told through music. "I knew that the Celtic and rock-infused Newfoundland sound and culture would provide a very poignant way to tell this story."

He searched for writers to pen this musical long before coming to Sheridan. He thought back to a musical he saw in Toronto called *My Mother's Jewish Lesbian Wiccan Wedding* that was written by Canadians David Hein and Irene Sankoff, and went on to receive international acclaim.

"As soon as I arrived at Sheridan, I wrote a letter of support to the Canada Council for the Arts to obtain a travel grant for David and Irene to visit Gander on the 10th anniversary of 9/11. I committed that their show would be the first one we'd develop through CMTF. They visited Newfoundland in September 2011 and in April 2012 we presented the first 45 minutes of this new musical at Sheridan."

“I knew that the Celtic and rock-infused Newfoundland sound and culture would provide a very poignant way to tell this story.”



Photo by John Jones

Come From Away returned to the Theatre Sheridan playbill in 2013 as a fully realized, two-act performance. It has since appeared at the invitation-only New Music Festival at the Goodspeed Opera House in Connecticut and the National Alliance of Musical Theatres' Festival of New Musicals in New York City. At that point, it was optioned by Junkyard Dog Productions, a Tony Award-winning, Broadway-producing team. *Come From Away* had its co-world premiere at the LaJolla Playhouse in San Diego in June 2015 and opened at the Seattle Repertory Theatre in the fall of 2015.

The Theory of Relativity

CMTP also spawned *The Theory of Relativity*, a story about the wonders of human connection and our surprisingly interconnected lives. Rubinoff invited the Drama Desk Award nominated team of Neil Bartram and Brian Hill to Sheridan to write it.

"I always wanted to work with Neil and Brian because I really respect their work and loved their Broadway show *Story of My Life*. Meeting them early in my producing career, I thought the opportunity to work with them was a pipe dream. They were top of my list to develop a CMTP show and I was overjoyed when they accepted the invitation. We decided to create a new musical that every college and university could produce... something that is actually age appropriate."

The Theory of Relativity similarly had a run at the Goodspeed Opera House's Festival of New Musicals. It also had a professional run at Goodspeed, at the Drayton Arms in Off-West End in London, and has been produced by colleges and universities in Texas,

Oklahoma, the United Kingdom, and at the elite Stage Door Manor theatre camp in the Catskills. Bartram and Hill have since been commissioned to write a second show called *Senza Luce*, in-development as part of the 2015 CMTP lineup.

In June 2014, Sheridan hosted "Song, Stage and Screen IX," the conference of the academic journal *Studies in Musical Theatre*. Delegates were treated to a live musical production of *The Theory of Relativity*, featuring a 16-member cast that included Sheridan students and alumni as well as guests from The Boston Conservatory, the University of Michigan and the Hart School of the University of Hartford. In a dramatic display of the power of collaboration, the finale incorporated a virtual choir of 40 individuals from Canada, the US, Mexico, Spain and the UK.

"This year we even had a student audition for our degree program with a song from *The Theory of Relativity*. I can't think of anything more exciting. This new music we're creating is making its way into audition books, cabarets and people's repertoires. That's a sign that we're doing something special."

Brantwood: 1920-2020

Perhaps CMTP's biggest challenge to date has been the creation and staging of *Brantwood*, the largest site-specific, immersive musical in Canada. Rubinoff invited the writing team of Mitchell Cushman and Julie Tepperman to create the piece through the CMTP incubator and slated the musical to close out the 2014-15 Theatre Sheridan season.



Photo by John Jones

Staged in a real-life, historic school in Oakville that was slated for redevelopment, this choose-your-own-path adventure allowed spectators to decide which of the 11 concurrent storylines they would follow as they wandered through classrooms and halls. *Brantwood* featured 90 characters (portrayed by 42 actors), 200 scenes and 40 musical numbers written by Bram Gielen, Britta Johnson and Anika Johnson (with 15 hours of simultaneous scenes occurring at any given time). It was all interwoven with clockwork precision and orchestrated by a crew of 40 students from Sheridan's Technical Production for Theatre and Live Events program.

This pioneering artistic and technical feat was recognized with the Audience Choice Award for Outstanding Production at the 2015 Dora Mavor Moore Awards, celebrating excellence in Toronto's performing arts. "We weren't even eligible for this award," Rubinoff remarks. "People vote on any of the productions that are nominated for a Dora and *Brantwood* wasn't one of them. But fan appreciation prompted an email campaign and we got the votes needed to win."

Filling a void

A total of eight musicals have now been incubated through CMTP, all of which are being further developed and/or produced. Many have also been critically reviewed in *Broadway World* magazine and by theatre critics for the *Toronto Star* and *National Post*. Another four are in the works for the 2015/16 season, including one that includes a collaboration with Sheridan's renowned Bachelor of Animation program, in which students will be animating one of the songs from the show.

"I also think there's a unique way that Canadians tell stories. Arts and culture are the time capsules of history. We may be a young country but we have many examples of ordinary people who set out and did extraordinary things." Two such stories that have gone through CMTP include a musical based on Terry Fox and his determination to run across Canada to raise money and awareness for the fight against cancer, and *Prom Queen*, the story of Mark Hall, a young man who fought for his right to take his boyfriend to his Catholic high school's prom.

The real heroes


When asked what keeps him going, Rubinoff responds without hesitation. "It's the students . . . because what they have to do is so hard. They have to open themselves up to critical feedback and critique of the most personal nature – how they sound, move and convey emotion. One of the most joyous parts of my job is seeing their breakthroughs, their maturity as actors, and the way they contribute to dramatic moments."

Rubinoff equally believes in our writers and our talent in Canada. "We can do more in this country to support our homegrown talent. When we give them the tools and resources to do their absolute best work, we allow them to make a meaningful cultural contribution."

"At the end of the day, I can now say we're contributing both talent and new work to the cannon of music theatre – as a centre of education, as a centre of research and a centre of innovation and creativity. I don't know of any better way of fulfilling your mandate than doing that."

– Christine Szustaczek

GRAND HOTEL

A group of approximately 15 people, including a man in a maroon sweater in the foreground, posing in front of a 'GRAND HOTEL' sign. The group is diverse in age and appearance, and they are all smiling. The background is dark, with the 'GRAND HOTEL' sign illuminated in orange and yellow. The man in the foreground is wearing glasses and has his hands clasped in his lap.

“I also think there’s a unique way that Canadians tell stories. Arts and culture are the time capsules of history. We may be a young country but we have many examples of ordinary people who set out and did extraordinary things.”

Shifting the Paradigm on Aging

Photo by Christine Szustaczek

If Pat Spadafora, Director of the Sheridan Centre for Elder Research had her way, people would view aging as a time of continued growth and development rather than a time of disease and decline. For over 10 years, she's lived out this mantra, tackling the largely under-investigated psycho-social aspects of aging while spearheading research that builds on people's strengths rather than focusing on their challenges.

Spadafora's roots are in the disability movement. As a high school student, she volunteered at a centre for children and adults with developmental challenges. "It made me realize that I wanted to do something in a helping profession," she says. Spadafora credits those early experiences as cultivating what would become a lifelong interest in working on behalf of vulnerable populations and a passion for social justice.

After finishing her undergraduate studies in sociology and psychology, Spadafora leaned towards community development and capacity building more than individual counselling in both her graduate studies and social work practice. She was hired by Sheridan to teach in the Social Service Worker program and after six months was invited to coordinate the program and to develop the Social Service Worker–Gerontology program.

The next major milestone came several years later. "It was 1999 – the United Nations International Year of Older Persons," recalls Spadafora. "The theme of the year was 'towards a society of all ages'. I felt we had a very timely opportunity to contribute beyond vocational training and to become engaged in applied research."

Spadafora spearheaded a two-day conference to contribute to the celebratory year, bringing CBC's Michael Enright to Sheridan to do a live broadcast of his show, *Aging Dangerously*. The conference also featured Doris Anderson, one of the first editors of *Chatelaine*, Doris McCarthy, one of Canada's foremost female landscape painters, demographer David Foot, and Don Harron, the comedian, playwright and actor who brought the character Charlie Farquharson to life.

With that, the research centre was born. "The need for a focus on aging was so clear," she emphasizes. "Unless you had your head in the sand, we could all see this demographic shift coming. But it was clear to me that the health and social service sectors and society as a whole were not ready for this coming bulge in an aging population. I felt we had an obligation to address some of the inequities in society and contribute to people being able to live lives that have meaning in their later years."

The Centre has since completed over 80 applied research, evaluation and design projects that have benefited older adults and their families while creating meaningful learning opportunities for 500 students at Sheridan across 30 programs of study. Its high calibre of work has attracted almost \$6 million in government and corporate grants as well as private donations to help fund its efforts.

The work falls under several themes – the creative and performing arts (how participation in these fields contributes to healthy aging), technology to support aging in place (exploring how best to support older adults with personal computing and other technologies), the business of aging (helping small- to medium-sized businesses to develop new products and services to meet the needs and interests of older consumers) and the experience of aging in a foreign land (helping immigrants stay active and engaged in their communities).

All projects also adhere to the parameters of social innovation, which brings together a mix of people, services and strategies to apply new ideas to resolve pressing, unmet societal needs. The Centre's research approach is rooted in the concept of reciprocal benefits, in which older adult participants receive immediate personal benefits such as computer training or value-added programming, while the Centre's researchers learn more about enhancing the quality of life for elders.

As a result of the Centre, new apps and board games have been developed, a consumer panel of people aged 70 and older has been launched, and a wide range of research has been conducted. Topics have included everything from the benefits of yoga on quality of life and the effect of dance for people living with diabetes and Parkinson's, to the relationship between smells and memories, to comparing the computer and iPad in technology tutoring, and understanding how technology can affect manual dexterity.


"After 12 years, I've been told that we're still the only Canadian college that has a centre wholly dedicated to investigating this area," notes Spadafora. The Centre has also developed strong partnerships with eight universities, which she views as highly complementary. "While basic or medical research might tackle the causes or cures of hearing or vision loss, our work examines the impact of that loss on an individual's ability to navigate in their environment and be socially included."

It's important work considering society's growing life expectancy. "Today, we're living until 90 and beyond. If you retire at 65, that potentially means an additional 25 or 30 years of living, which is a long time if you don't have something meaningful in which to engage, or for you not to be considered a contributor to your community."

"We're not saying that people are never going to have any age-related challenges, but through a creative aging or healthy or active aging lens, if we can reduce the number of years in which people have additional challenges, then they can have a higher quality of life for a longer period of time."

Spadafora considers it her mission to get people to look at aging differently. "We need to do what we can to reduce ageist attitudes and make sure that older adults are seen as the valuable resources that they are in our communities."

– Christine Szustaczek



“I felt we had an obligation to address some of the inequities in society and contribute to people being able to live lives that have meaning in their later years.”



“I wanted the letterforms to look alive, to look as animated as the natural forms and automata that Hobbes talks about.”

The Artist Behind *Leviathan 1 for Sheridan*

Photo by Jonathan Bielaski

For Robert Fones, receiving the Governor General's Award for Visual Arts in 2011 was a nice acknowledgement of the body of work he has created over a more than 40-year artistic career. The London, Ontario-born artist did not expect sudden fame and fortune as a result, but was pleased by the "flurry of attention" that ensued.

Fones has achieved a significant level of renown. He has exhibited throughout Canada, as well as in the U.S. and Germany. His work can be found in the National Gallery of Canada, The Art Gallery of Ontario, and other public and corporate collections.

Like many young artists, he took on other work over the years to supplement his artistic earnings. In the early days, it was carpentry – a skill acquired from his father, and one which he says "has been very valuable to me in my art field." His mother's talent as a quilt maker was also influential: "It was a model for the way that I work as well – systematically working on a large-scale project to keep it moving along. Even stretching canvas onto wooden stretchers is similar to quilt-making."

Fones' formal artistic training was limited to one year of a specialized arts course at H.B. Beal Secondary School in London, but his more profound learning took place outside the classroom, in London's small but burgeoning arts community. Among its members was Greg Curnoe, an established artist who enlisted Fones' help to install his mural at Dorval Airport in Montreal. He also became a mentor, introducing the young Fones to French writers like Baudelaire and Rimbaud, and to the Dada art movement. "I was still at H.B. Beal when I first met him. He was one of my teachers in a way and provided a model for me of how I could live and work as an artist. There were other people in London, who also influenced me, including Keewatin Dewdney, Murray Favro and James Reaney."

Over the years, Fones has passed on his own knowledge and insight to generations of Sheridan students. His association with Sheridan dates back to 1987-1988, when he taught in the School of Crafts and Design at the former Lorne Park

Campus. He taught part-time during the 1990's, and has been a full-time professor since 2006 in the Art and Art History and Communication, Culture, Information and Technology programs – both joint degrees offered by Sheridan and the University of Toronto Mississauga.

Recently, Fones made a significant and lasting contribution to the College, with his donation of a photographic installation to the Davis Campus in Brampton. Entitled *Leviathan 1 for Sheridan*, the piece is an enlargement of a single panel from a series of eight photographic panels that are now in the National Gallery of Canada's collection.

The phrase that runs through all eight panels is from the introduction to Thomas Hobbes' book *Leviathan*, a 17th-century work of political philosophy:

NATURE (the art whereby God hath made and governs the world) is by the art of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an artificial animal. For seeing life is but a motion of limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principal part within, why may we not say that all automata (engines that move themselves by springs and wheels as doth a watch) have an artificial life?

"The whole phrase was almost incomprehensible to me when I first read it," says Fones, but "once I felt I did understand it, I decided to use it in my artwork." The first few words of the quote are depicted in *Leviathan 1 for Sheridan*, using letterforms made out of clay as the basis for the piece. They were then photographed and assembled in Photoshop with another photograph of clouds reflected in water as the background. "I wanted the letterforms to look alive, to look as animated as the natural forms and automata that Hobbes talks about," he says.

Fones' gift is a lasting legacy to the Sheridan community, one that he hopes will "contribute to the creative learning environment that we are trying to foster."

– Susan Atkinson

The Olympics of Skills

Photo by Christine Szustaczek

Imagine being asked to build a five-foot wide, hydraulically-driven conveyor system including all of the component pieces that must be assembled to create a fully functioning machine. Now imagine completing the job in front of 325,000 onlookers, in less than 20 hours and within a margin of error of plus or minus one thousandth of an inch.

That's the challenge that Peter Lauser faced when he represented Canada at the Worldskills Competition in São Paulo, Brazil in August 2015.

"The Worldskills Competition has existed for 62 years," explains Craig Brazil, a Professor and Coordinator of the Industrial Mechanic Millwright program at Sheridan and the person who served as the Chief Expert for that discipline at the competition. "What's new is the inclusion of our discipline at this international competition for the first time in history."

Brazil has long been a champion in the field. He's taught at Sheridan for the past 12 years, after working as an Industrial Mechanic Millwright in industry and education for another 20. He's been on a tireless, seven-year mission to get industrial mechanic millwright recognized and included as a discipline at the Worldskills event alongside 49 others like hairdressing, brick laying, air craft maintenance, pastry making, landscaping and CNC machining.

Given his deep-seated passion for the field, it's no wonder that Brazil did what few others might when being presented with some disappointing news.

In 2014, Brazil's apprentice Graham Mills won the Industrial Mechanic Millwright competition at Skills Canada, earning the right to represent Canada at Worldskills, should the discipline gain acceptance on the world stage.

But Mills would be too old to compete at the international level in 2015.

The opportunity was given instead to Lauser, an apprentice at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) in Calgary, who finished second at nationals, right behind Mills, in 2014.

Brazil had a choice to make. Focus all his energy on serving as Chief Expert – the person who organizes and runs the Industrial Mechanic Millwright competition at Worldskills — or split his time to also work with Lauser and help Canada put its best foot forward in São Paulo.

Without missing a beat, Brazil reached out to Brian Vintinner, an Industrial Millwright Instructor at SAIT who is Lauser's trainer. Brazil invited the pair to visit Sheridan so that Lauser could undergo three days of intense training in a program Brazil designed especially for him. Lauser and Vintinner happened to be in Ottawa meeting the other members of Team Canada who would be going to Worldskills. The stop at Sheridan would allow Lauser to have his work critiqued by two instructors, one from Sheridan and one from SAIT, each of whom is interested in helping him to succeed.

“Urgency is a priority ... you're only given so much time.”

The Sheridan training regimen included machining, welding, hydraulics, alignment and fabrication – all skills that Lauser would need to perform with a high degree of accuracy in Brazil. "Beyond that, we're trying to teach Peter how to think, how to look at the challenge ahead and plan it out. That's the real skill," said Vintinner. Brazil adds: "Urgency is a priority ... you're only given so much time. Building the project is a cumulative process spread out over four days. You also have to be able to handle distraction given the high volume of spectators, noise and strange environment."

The bulk of Lauser's training happens at SAIT and is coordinated by Vintinner. To give Lauser the range of skills he needs to compete, Vintinner has co-opted help from three other instructors at SAIT. Like Vintinner, they are donating their time and the required materials on a voluntary basis to work with Lauser outside of their normal teaching hours.

Instructors aren't the only people who are investing a great deal of time and energy in competition preparation.

Lauser is an apprentice industrial mechanic millwright in training with two years left in his education. He currently works full time with FT Services, a contractor to Canadian Natural Resources Limited Horizon in Fort McKay, 800 km north of Calgary. Like many in the industry, he works seven days straight and then has seven days off, during which time he returns to SAIT in the south, to train.

"I think what I like best about competing is that I get to solve the problem that's in front of me and get to do it in my own way, without anyone looking over my shoulder," said Lauser. He's also planning on drawing on his "field experience," having won the provincial skills competition in Alberta in 2013 and 2014. "My strategy is to stay calm, take it day by day, and not get hung up by the small mistakes – especially if they're something you can't change."

A total of eight countries have entrants in this new category – Canada, Brazil, New Zealand, Australia, Norway, Holland, Japan and Chinese Taipei.

From Brazil's perspective, Canada has already won, no matter the outcome at the event. "It was Canada that proposed the addition of the Industrial Mechanic Millwright competition at the Worldskills level." Having the discipline included is validation for the industry, for related training and education programs and for the thousands of people around the world who choose this career path.

– Christine Szustaczek





Reflections on Curiosity

Photo by Brayden Swire

“It seems to me that this was my first introduction to curiosity, to the experience of wanting to know more, of caring enough to look for more, and of being eager enough to wait for more.”

As a boy, I remember my mother taking my brother, sister and me to the local supermarket in town for weekly groceries. At this particular market, they offered a very exciting shopping incentive. They rewarded their customers with a complimentary encyclopedia volume with each purchase over \$10. Yes, I am smiling as I write this; I expect you are too. While \$10 is not much at all, for my family of five, it seemed an astronomical amount of money. You see, we had little. We shared a small three-room house, built from wooden shipping crates laid down by my father's own hands after the war. Supplies were scarce and he salvaged what he could from the factory where he worked. Indeed, \$10 was an astronomical amount of money. To get a free gift with our grocery purchase was a bonus that made the trip, the destination, and the groceries all the more worthwhile.

Week by week, one by one, the encyclopedia volumes came home. With each addition, the A to Z collection grew. My eagerness to learn, to know, and to explore the world through the magic of words and pictures also grew. It seems to me that this was my first introduction to curiosity, to the experience of wanting to know more, of caring enough to look for more, and of being eager enough to wait for more. Of course I realize that we are all born with an innate curiosity burgeoning within. It is what moves us,

as infants, to pick up toys and place them in our mouths or to get up again and again as we learn to walk. What stands out about my particular memory, however, is the expanded awareness that accompanied my curiosity each time I turned the page of my newly acquired encyclopedia. Stories about the world, its mysteries and beauty, suspended my own reality as a boy growing up with very little to call my own. They invited me into the limitless arena of my own imagination. I could dream and see places described with such detail that I could feel myself there.

What is it about curiosity that makes one's heart race with eagerness and anticipation? I am not sure. But I do know that curiosity is more than just a noun. It is an experience, a way of life, and it is a path that is sure to lead one toward many, and varied, journeys of discovery and learning. Each day at Sheridan I am afforded an arena of many curiosities. The excitement to know more, to grow more, and to learn more intersects with the people, places and opportunities at Sheridan where the landscape cultivates and nourishes all that is curious.

- *Richard Finch*





Alumni

Standing out from the crowd and making an impact in extraordinary ways – that is the legacy being crafted by Sheridan alumni. Whether they're making movies, building apps or spreading their love for Canada's unofficial sport, our alumni extend Sheridan's reach around the globe, and provide tangible examples of Sheridan's reputation for excellence.

Artwork by Melissa Chung | melissachung.net
Bachelor of Illustration, 2015

New App Helps International Students Acclimatize at Sheridan

Photo by Susan Atkinson

When it came to developing an app catering to Sheridan's international student community, Andrew Ness, Director of the International Centre, found the perfect resource: Ganesh Neelanjanmath, a 2011 graduate of Sheridan's Project Management program, and a former international student himself. Not only did Neelanjanmath live the international student experience, but he had also counselled many other students from India who were seeking information about how to study in Canada.

Neelanjanmath arrived at Sheridan in 2010 after first completing a bachelor of computer science engineering in India in 2005, and accumulating several years of varied work experience as a programmer, business analyst and project manager, first in India and later in Spain. "Most of my Spanish experience involved working for educational institutes – that's when I realized how many students go abroad to study, and I became interested in having a similar experience."

Already possessing a global outlook, Neelanjanmath drew on his experience working for a U.S.-based immigration company when researching his options. "I came to understand that Canada is truly multicultural, and nowhere more so than in the Toronto area." He chose Sheridan, at least in part, because the staff was so helpful and responsive to his inquiries: "I was hand-held throughout the process."

Given the increasing numbers of international students applying to and enrolling at Sheridan (over 1,500 new students in September 2014 alone), Ness decided that a specialized app would help to streamline the process for students embarking on their studies here, and that's when he turned to Neelanjanmath. After graduating, Neelanjanmath had launched his own company, Neel-Tech Inc, and did consulting work on the side while

working full-time for Pulse Services, Rogers and Bell Canada. After a year of development, the Sheridan iCent app was ready to launch in May 2015.

In its initial launch, the app is geared to new international students. It guides them through every step of the process – uploading their study permits, providing a pre-departure checklist, airport arrival

"...Canada is truly multicultural, and nowhere more so than in the Toronto area."

assistance, providing a registration checklist and collecting emergency contact information. Other features are geared at assisting students to settle, helping with needs such as residency, grocery shopping, banking, telecom and places of worship once they arrive in Canada. The app also provides students with details about campus maps, security info, health insurance, immigration compliance, driver's licenses, parking rules, and much more. Given that students from around the world come to study in Canada, the app caters to serving international students with information in

their preferred choice of language. The International Centre team promoted the app during pre-departure orientations held in India and China in July 2015, and to date, the app has been downloaded over 1,100 times from the Apple app and Google Play stores.

Ness says: "We have been extremely pleased with the improvements we've seen in student responsiveness and communication, and it's directly attributable to the use of the app. As the start of term draws closer, more and more students are using it. It's a key part of our strategy to integrate and acclimatize our new students and it's working beautifully."

The appeal of the app, from Ness' perspective, is the ease with which information can be added and updated quickly and easily, using the interface created by Neel-Tech Inc. In the longer term, he sees it as a key part of Sheridan's internationalization initiative. "We plan to customize it so that students from Sheridan who are going on international exchanges will be able to access the information they need as soon as they arrive at their destination."

Neelanjanmath, who developed the app on spec, has already seen interest from other colleges in acquiring a similar tool. And his relationship with Sheridan is continuing as he grows his business – he's already hired two co-op students from Sheridan, and recently offered one of them a full-time position. "I want to do something that connects the globe, and in terms of business, providing services to and being connected with youth is the best way to do this."

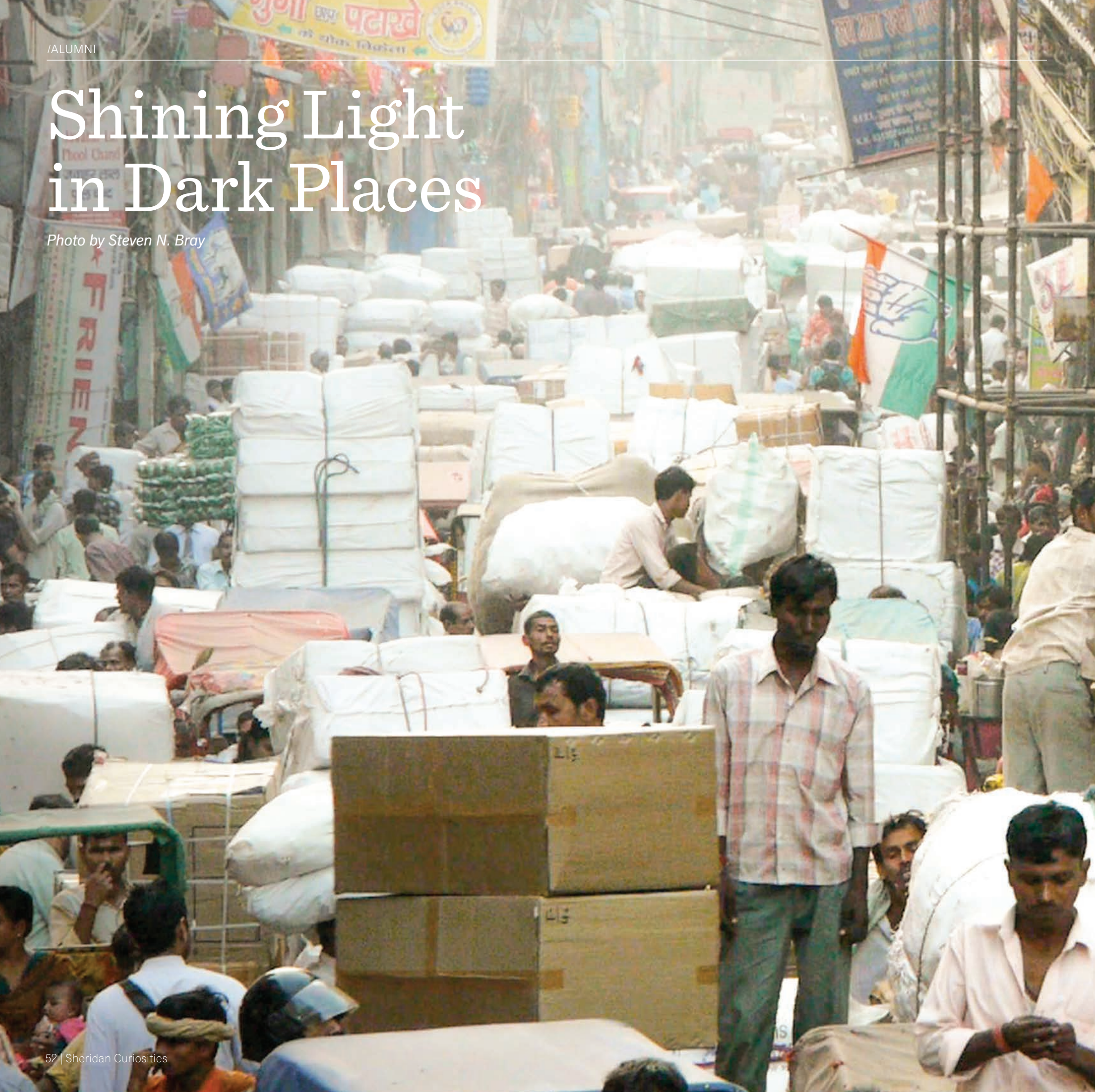
– Susan Atkinson



/ALUMNI

Shining Light in Dark Places

Photo by Steven N. Bray





“You hope your work resonates with the audience, but in the end we are making a film from the heart.”

A prophetic encounter with an auto-rickshaw driver in India led Sheridan alumnus Richie Mehta to create his film *Siddharth*, which tells a powerful story of loss and compassion. The driver, whom the filmmaker met in 2010, had sent his 12-year-old boy to work in a factory a year before and had never heard from him again. This heartbreaking true experience is the basis of the film, which follows an impoverished labourer's search for his lost son.

“It was very painful to hear the driver's story,” recalls writer-director Mehta, the son of Indian parents himself. “The only thing I felt I could do was make a film about it. It turned out to be a cathartic experience.”

Although he tackles a dark subject in *Siddharth*, Mehta set out to convey a positive side of India to Western audiences through the film. “There is an uplifting message about the power of the human spirit and the kindness of strangers,” says Mehta, 2002 graduate of Sheridan's Advanced Television and Film program. Both *Siddharth* and *Amal* were produced by fellow graduate, Steven N. Bray (Media Arts, 2002) who formed Toronto's Poor Man's Productions with Mehta the year after graduation.

Siddharth has met with much critical success – winning Best Feature at the 2014 Beijing International Film Festival and earning a 2014 Canadian Screen Award nomination for Best Screenplay.

While gaining recognition for their films is gratifying, it isn't the duo's prime motivator, says Bray. “You hope your work resonates with the audience, but in the end we are making a film from the heart.”

That's certainly true for Mehta's second feature, which was made at the same time as *Siddharth*. *I'll Follow You Down* is a sci-fi drama about the mysterious disappearance of a young scientist starring Gillian Anderson, Haley Joel Osment, Rufus Sewell and Victor Garber.

Despite their different genres, both films share themes of loss and personal connection. Mehta still considers *I'll Follow You Down* his first feature since he began writing the script years before attending Sheridan.

Other long-term “dream projects” await, says Mehta, but for now he is weighing out opportunities that have landed in his lap through *Siddharth*. “Whatever happens, I will go with the flow. I have to. It's my life.” – Carol Hill



Photo by Steven N. Bray



Photo by Bob Gundu



“The only thing I felt I could do was make a film about it. It turned out to be a cathartic experience.”

Finding Humanity in Devastation

Photos by Dan Denardo



“It touches you in a very different way,
particularly because there is no one
to blame for the outcome.”





Ron Sim, a 2002 Sheridan Media Arts graduate, is no stranger to destruction and suffering. An award-winning filmmaker, he's captured life in some of the world's most conflicted regions. But it is perhaps the bond he shares with the world's most vulnerable and dispossessed that gives his art both its edge and compassion.

Sim was born in a refugee camp along the border of Thailand and Cambodia during the era of Khmer Rouge genocides. He says that it was these early years in his life that inspired him to become a filmmaker. "Every morning, I'd awake to the image of a man behind a camera. They were filming the movie *The Killing Fields* (about the massacres under Pol Pot) outside my tent. At the age of three, I knew I wanted to be that man behind the camera," explains Sim.

His family immigrated to Canada in 1985 when Sim was five and at the age of 12 he began filming. "My parents needed some convincing that this was a good career path. The terrified look on their faces when I told them I wanted to be a filmmaker is something I have never forgotten. Back in Cambodia, artists and filmmakers were routinely killed by Khmer Rouge soldiers," explains Sim.

In 2002, Sim found himself back in Cambodia as the man behind the camera producing his final film project as a student, *I Am Khmer*. Written and directed with fellow Sheridan graduate Steven Bray, *I Am Khmer* follows Sim's return to the homeland he and his family were forced to flee. The film was screened at festivals worldwide and won Best Documentary at the Los Angeles Film Festival in 2006.

Sim has since filmed in 55 countries, ranging from conflict zones in Afghanistan and Pakistan, to remote locations in Samoa and Malaysia. His work includes documentaries, travel and current affairs programs, and corporate productions for clients such as Discovery Channel, National Geographic, Fox, BBC and Associated Press. More than half of his travels have been part of his role as Producer and Chief Cinematographer with Dow in Michigan. This work has earned him an unprecedented five consecutive awards for Best Corporate Cinematography from the Canadian Society of Cinematographers, most recently in 2014.

Despite his depth of experience, the seasoned filmmaker recalls being taken aback by what he witnessed during his visits to Haiti following the earthquake that killed over 300,000 people in 2010. "To see that kind of devastation caused by Mother Nature and not by a war or human intervention changed my outlook on life. It touches you in a very different way, particularly because there is no one to blame for the outcome," says Sim, who initially captured images for CNN and returned several times to shoot on behalf of humanitarian organizations.

Throughout it all, Sim has found a way to see humanity amidst the devastation. "My background definitely contributes to the passion I put behind my work, the kind of stories I tell and the way I tell them," he says. "Not a day goes by that I am not grateful for being allowed to do what I do."

– Carol Hill & Christine Szustaczek

“To see that kind of devastation caused by Mother Nature and not by a war or human intervention changed my outlook on life.”



“Not a day goes by that I am not grateful
for being allowed to do what I do.”



Surly Squirrel's Rise to Blockbuster Status

Photo provided by ToonBox Entertainment

When Sheridan graduate Peter Lepeniotis created the animated short film *Surly Squirrel* in 2005, little did he know that one day, his squirrel with an attitude would be at the heart of a feature-length film starring some of Hollywood's biggest names.

The Nut Job, a story about a belligerent squirrel that organizes a bank-style heist on a nut shop to help him atone for earlier evils, opened in North America in January 2014. As director and co-writer, Lepeniotis gave me the inside scoop on making the film and shared some of his favourite memories.

According to Lepeniotis, a director needs to maintain a steadfast commitment to the overall vision for a film. "You have to believe in the moral of the story and carry it through the two to three years that it takes to bring a film to completion." Lepeniotis spoke of the hundreds of people it takes to create an animated blockbuster, many of whom work on disjointed pieces for only one, three or six month stints. "As director, you have to ensure that the sequences unfold as you intended while preserving the themes."

Having the co-writer credit meant that Lepeniotis also had a say in selecting the film's actors. "I thought we'd get some local Canadian talent and I'd have been happy with that as long as the story worked, but the guys at Toonbox kept saying let's make this a big movie."

Lepeniotis flew to LA and New York to record the voice sequences one by one, over the span of about a year. "I remember being jealous of live action films. They have all their actors on set at the same time." In the interim, progress continued at the studio in Toronto to animate the non-dialogue scenes.

The upshot for Lepeniotis was the opportunity to interact with the stars. "A lot of the time, they'd ask me to read with them, because they needed to bounce off their lines with someone. It's funny how I'd feed off them and they'd feed off me and we'd get it just right. It blew me away to watch them transform themselves, stay in character and come up with their own lines. That was really exciting."

Lepeniotis also recalls the actors' dedication to professionalism. "Here are these gigantic actors and yet they'd say to me 'What exactly do you see here? How do you envision this? Where's the character coming from?' It definitely helped having written the script. I knew the lines really well and I understood what the motivations were of the characters."

"When it all unfolds and everyone gets it, that's the biggest thrill for me as director..."

In addition to Lepeniotis, Sheridan grads Daryl Graham and Morgan Ginsberg worked on the film as Director of Animation and Supervising Animator. "While I did the broad strokes, they took care of the details, helping to facilitate my vision and ensure that the animation was up to great standard."

At the end of the day however, the greatest satisfaction for Lepeniotis came from the breakthrough moments when people working on the film bought into his vision. "A lot of it is in your head. You have various discussions or debates because people don't immediately understand why certain scenes are cut as they are or why the characters say what they do. When it all unfolds and everyone gets it, that's the biggest thrill for me as director – knowing that the story is living and breathing a life of its own and no longer something you have to explain."

– Christine Szustaczek





Behind the Scenes with the Keeper of the Cup

Photo provided by Hockey Hall of Fame Archives

Sheridan business alumnus Phil Pritchard may have the official title of Vice President, Resource Centre and Curator of the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto, but to most Canadians he's better known as his Twitter handle suggests — Keeper of the Cup. In a country where hockey is a national pastime if not an unofficial religion, Pritchard just might have one of the coolest jobs on record.

Anyone who has ever watched the NHL playoffs will have seen him wearing his white gloves, carrying the Stanley Cup across the red carpet to the winning team in waiting. While

others might let the fame and fanfare get to their heads, this affable, self-proclaimed kid-at-heart continues to be humbled by the task, despite the incredible perks that come with the territory.

Pritchard began working at the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1988. At the end of his first week, he made his first official trip with the cup, bringing it to an Ontario Minor Hockey League game in Newmarket, Ontario – in the trunk of his Austin Marina GT. Since then, the cup has been to almost 30 countries, traveling upwards of 310 days per year. “Hockey is played in 75 countries – it’s the greatest sport in world,” declares Pritchard. If he has his way, the cup will get to each one of them before he retires.

Much of this travel takes place over the summer, when each Stanley Cup champion assumes possession of the trophy for a day. As Pritchard will tell you, “every visit is special and all players celebrate in a way that’s meaningful to them.”

Pritchard recounts the cup’s travels with the same spirit as someone who’s recapping a long-anticipated vacation. His tales include taking the cup into Tuukka Rask’s firewood-powered hot tub in Finland after

Boston’s 2011 win. He describes in great detail a daring adventure by helicopter to lower the cup along with Scott Niedermayer of the New Jersey Devils to the top of a mountain peak outside Cranbrook, B.C. so that Niedermayer could recreate his feeling of being on top of the world after his team won the playoffs.

Other memorable visits include reaching the top of the Eiffel Tower – despite an out-of-service elevator – so that Christobal Huet of the Chicago Blackhawks could live up to the media’s expectations for the cup’s first visit to France. Closer to home, he watched Dave Andreychuk

of the Tampa Bay Lightning suffer through the unbearable July heat while wearing his jersey to carry the cup alongside Mickey Mouse in a Disney World parade, all in the spirit of pleasing his three young daughters.

He also talks about two very memorable trips to a small town near Thunder Bay, Ontario during which time a proud Mrs. Staal organized a visit to the Legion for lunch and family photos with the cup – first when her son Eric won with the Carolina Hurricanes and again a few years later when his brother Jordan won with the Pittsburgh Penguins.

“As much as the players are happy to have their turn with the Cup, many are just as happy when we leave,” reveals Pritchard. “Hockey players are team players at heart and they don’t always like to be the centre of attention. They get keys to the city and thousands of people lining the streets for their chance to see them. After a while it wears on them.”

Pritchard believes hockey history is told behind the scenes. It’s a philosophy that suits him well, given that the other part of his job is working with leagues and

players from around the world to help collect and curate the memorabilia that fills 75,000 square feet at the Hockey Hall of Fame. “Each item tells a story because hockey history happens every day,” he says.

What doesn’t fit at the Hall gets stored in 18,000 square feet of climate and humidity controlled archives found at the D.K. (Doc) Seaman Hockey Resource Centre. A quick tour of the space reveals a wall of 4,000 hockey sticks, thousands of film reels, videos, slides and negatives, rows of hockey-related paintings and books, obscure trophies dating back to the 1890s, and shelf after shelf of pucks, jerseys, skates, gloves and goalie helmets from around Canada and beyond our borders.

For Pritchard, there’s also a story to be told in the way that the Cup continues to change over time. While it used to be hollow at the bottom, a plate was added in the 1980s to seal off this nook after it was discovered that the young Edmonton Oilers champions “who worked for a lot less than players do today” used it to smuggle cheap liquor to Alberta from the U.S.

If ingenuity makes an impression on Pritchard, the same can be said for tradition and artistry. He deeply admires the craftsmanship of Louise St. Jacques, who gets the cup for 10 days each year to hand stamp the names of the winning players onto one of five rings that covers the base. Every 13 years when the rings are full, the top ring is removed, the remaining four rings slide up and a new one is added at the bottom. The changeover creates the context for yet another tradition – inviting those people whose names are coming off to be a part of the ceremony.

By sharing stories and artifacts, or spending his days deepening his knowledge by keeping up on the latest hockey news, Pritchard is doing his part to preserve and share the sport’s rich history. “I have the pleasure of working with hockey every day and actually getting paid to do it,” he says. “It makes me the luckiest guy in the world.”

– Christine Szustaczek

“I have the pleasure of working with hockey every day and actually getting paid to do it.”







Creativity

Creativity has been embedded in Sheridan's DNA for decades. It's in our people, places and programs. Creativity entails new ways of meaning, knowing and understanding, and the production of original ideas that have value. Creativity is the precursor to innovation. It's a cognitive process and an unlimited resource that's renewed and improved by education, experience and interaction. Creativity is Sheridan's cornerstone.

Artwork by Rob Brunette | robbrunette.com
Bachelor of Illustration, 2015

Creative Energy Meets Quiet Dignity

Photo provided by Moriyama Teshima | Montgomery Sisam Architects in Joint Venture

It's not every day that an educational institution gets to create a building to help bring its vision and mission to life. But that's exactly the opportunity being seized by Sheridan in the creation of a second building that will more than double capacity at its Hazel McCallion Campus in Mississauga.

The new building is designed to facilitate creativity and collaboration while respecting a commitment to sustainability and accessibility. It also strives to achieve Mississauga's vision to transform the downtown. Sound lofty or unachievable? Not according to lead architects Daniel Ling and Daniel Teramura.

"The vision of the project is one we got excited about from the very start," says Teramura, whose firm Moriyama & Teshima Architects is one of two firms collaborating on the design. "The fact that creativity is part of Sheridan's identity is inspiring. It signals a sincere interest in adopting a unique approach."

While both firms have a strong track record in designing buildings for communities and for learning, integrating buildings with their sites, and fostering interaction, this project required more. Teramura's key collaborator, Daniel Ling from Montgomery Sisam Architects elaborates: "There are no tangible parameters to follow when designing for creativity. It requires a lot of thinking and experimenting and understanding the social dynamics of users."

A key requirement was to make space for Sheridan's first-ever Creativity Commons but to ensure that it was somehow connected to program spaces that will be distributed over five floors. "When you arrive in the building, you're on the second floor because of the street grading," explains Ling. "The first thing you see when you look down is the Creativity Commons, so there's an immediate sense of discovery in this double height space that drops down."

"The Creativity Commons also moves its way up the building," adds Ling. "We designed a stepping atrium – an interesting route that students will discover as they move up the central stairs which are connected to public and collaborative spaces. We thought about where people land on the stairs, what views they get,

and which departments will be using them to encourage interdisciplinary interactions."

At its base, the Creativity Commons is found next to a café and an architectural model-making room,

"The café has wall panels that people can sketch on and that open so other people can see into the commons."

prompting interaction. "The café has wall panels that people can sketch on and that open so other people can see into the commons. These are the types of informal and unexpected moments we want to facilitate," says Teramura.

Given Sheridan's commitment to decrease overall energy and carbon emissions by 50% by 2030, sustainability was another key requirement. "Its performance had to tie in to pedagogy. The building is meant to demonstrate sustainability of design and construction given that architecture and interior design students will study there," says Ling.

Designed as a living lab, the building achieves efficiency through a smart system that automates and controls energy use. Add to that the strategic placement of windows, a mechanical system that features on-demand ventilation, heat recovery and chilled beams, as well as energy-efficient LED lighting and the use of solar energy to partially heat water, and you've got a building that will consume roughly half of what's used by most commercial buildings of comparable size in Canada.

"Accessibility is integrated into the mainstream building experience from the outset, rather than being an afterthought," adds Ling, putting the focus on inclusivity. "It's reflected in the choice of colours and finishes in the interior to be mindful of anyone with loss of vision." Turn radiuses for wheelchairs were considered in specifying the width of aisles and functional areas were grouped together to limit the need for travel to better meet the needs of users with mobility loss.

With respect to the exterior, the goal was to have a building that would complement rather than duplicate the existing one on campus, contribute to Mississauga's cityscape and age gracefully.

"The façade of the building opens up like a curtain and reveals certain elements on the inside, allowing us to use glimpses of student energy to animate the street," says Ling. "We've also added a continuous bench on the outside to encourage people to sit up against the building, softening the edge and giving it a human scale." A bridge on the third floor physically joins the two buildings and serves the important purpose of housing data cables to share connectivity.

"Aesthetically-speaking, the exterior is quite restrained," notes Teramura. "We know it will be around for a long time so we wanted to introduce an element of quiet dignity. It's important that it can relate to future development in the area and that it isn't flashy so that it doesn't get dated quickly."

Teramura and Ling are looking forward to seeing their interpretation of Sheridan's vision come to fruition. Both agree that the contrast between the simple, yet elegant exterior, and the depth of experience and complexity of the special qualities on the inside is what will give this building its unique character.

– Christine Szustaczek



By the Numbers

- 5,600** The number of students who will ultimately call the campus home
- 220,000** Square feet
- 5** Floors
- 28** New studios, labs and production spaces
- 29** New classrooms
- 1** Creativity Commons
- 1** Creative Gallery helping to showcase student work and integrate education with civic life
- 1** Bicycle garage and two bike room showers
- 94** Kilowatt hours/meter squared per year – the energy consumption of the new building, making it one of the top performing academic buildings in North America and Sheridan's new standard for building construction

Why Embrace The F-Word?

Photo by Jonathan Bielaski

Perhaps the most offensive f-word today is failure. It can be a painful experience for any of us. We've all been there! Yet, some of the most innovative companies like Google and IDEO value failure. They understand that failure is an important part of the creative process.


While at a conference, I heard Tina Seelig, Executive Director of the Stanford Technology Ventures Program, give a talk on creativity and innovation. She talked about having her students write a failure résumé. I was surprised at this concept as the traditional résumé, which we have been accustomed to writing, focuses on our successes. By having students write a résumé that summarizes personal, professional and academic "screw-ups," Seelig invites them to reflect on each experience and describe what they have learned. What I appreciated about this exercise is its power to help us shift our beliefs and assumptions about failures and consider them as important to our learning.

A few weeks after the conference, I sat down to write my own failure résumé. Harder than it sounds! Yet, it gave me insights about my appetite for and willingness to take risks and explore my reactions to failure and success. Some of my failures related to not having taken risks or inaction – for example not taking the opportunity to study abroad while I was in university. Others had to do with having taken on risks and the challenges to expand and stretch.

What I learned from reflecting on my failures is that my most powerful learning has ultimately come from some of the biggest challenges I have experienced. I learned failing does not mean I am personally a failure. Failure is external to us. It is about getting up, brushing off the dust, deliberately reflecting on what we have learned, and trying again.

Why should we care enough to embrace the f-word? Because as Seelig points out, if we want to have successes, if we want to create and innovate, we must be willing to take risks and embrace our failures.

– *Golnaz Golnaraghi*



“...my most powerful learning has ultimately come from some of the biggest challenges I have experienced.”



Why Care About Creativity?

Photo by Catherine Flanigan

Sheridan's tagline challenges people to "Get Creative," but why does creativity matter? Dr. Gerard Puccio, Department Chair and professor at the International Center for Studies in Creativity at SUNY-Buffalo State and Sheridan's Distinguished Visiting Scholar in Creativity shares his thoughts on the matter.

"Change is happening faster and faster and rather than being overwhelmed or stressed by it, creativity allows people to see opportunity in ambiguity," says Puccio. "Creative problem solving is a process. It gives people the mindset they need to confront complex issues and the competence to deal with the challenges they'll inevitably face in their professions."

While creativity was once seen as something that people had to be born with, Puccio stresses that creative problem solving can be taught and honed and that it's a skill that matters. According to Puccio, the notion of relying on IQ to predict a person's success has fallen short on its promise. He points to longitudinal research by a Stanford psychologist which followed gifted children for 70 years. The research showed that as the group matured, they produced few successful innovative scientists, creative mathematicians, writers, musicians or artists. Another researcher, Paul Torrance has shown that children with high scores in divergent thinking – defined as the ability to generate multiple options and solutions – were 300% more likely to lead to creative achievement or success in creative ventures. "If we don't pay attention to

creativity at an individual level, then we fail to help people maximize their potential," warns Puccio. "In a way, it's akin to halting growth development."

Puccio, who holds a PhD in Organizational Psychology and a Master's in Creativity and Innovation also stresses that both individuals and

"The unique competitive advantage humans have is the ability to create..."

organizations have to deal with ongoing change. "Organizations are a collective of people all working towards some vision with structures and systems. If an organization's people are able to express their creativity and bring it into the workplace, this puts the organization in an advantageous position. You're only as good as your next idea and ideas don't come from the ether, they come from people."

While Puccio says he runs into fewer and fewer critics when touting the value of creativity, he has the following response for naysayers: "The unique competitive advantage humans have is the ability to create, that's how we survived. We don't have fur. We can't fly. We're not that strong or that fast. What we have is our imagination. Literally everything we see in our society, that we come in contact with, whether it's tangible or intangible, came from human imagination. Anytime there's a gap between where we are and what we want – and we don't know how to close that gap – we call on our imagination to find the solution. Creativity really is a life skill."

Puccio, who has studied creativity for over 20 years, says he's excited to work with Sheridan on its goal of embedding creativity across the institution. "I love what's happening here. Sheridan is delivering creativity on demand. You're taking the stance that creativity can be provoked and facilitated and that it's not something that should be limited to the arts. Sheridan understands that creativity is an added-value skill set and knowledge set. I honestly don't know of any other school that is institutionalizing, integrating and vetting creativity. I believe that you will be a model of what can be done."

– Christine Szustaczek

“If we don’t pay attention to creativity at an individual level, then we fail to help people maximize their potential.”





“Creative people need time to stare into space and see what bubbles up.”

Mining Creativity: One Writer's Perspective

Photo by Jonathan Bielaski

Acclaimed author Lawrence Hill shared his thoughts on writing and nurturing the creative impulse at a launch event for Sheridan Reads, which saw Sheridan students, staff and faculty come together to discuss his novel, *The Book of Negroes*, through a series of events in winter 2015.

Why write?

In describing his own impetus to write, Hill says that “life doesn’t feel right unless you try to seize it, make sense of it, and recalibrate it on a page.” In his view, all artists are driven by a similar desire and passion to create, be they poets, dancers, musicians or visual artists.

Hill learned the power of effective writing at a young age. In response to his request for a kitten, his father required that he write a letter outlining why he should be allowed to have one. “He gave me the kitten, which was the most foolish thing he ever did because from that point on I kept writing letters whenever I wanted something significant.”

Nurturing creativity

“Creative people need time to stare into space and see what bubbles up,” says Hill. This was not a luxury he enjoyed in his early years as a writer, as the need to make a living took precedence and also sapped his creative energy. After trying to carve out some writing time while working as a journalist for several years, Hill made the decision to take a year off and focus on his own writing. This was also a test of his own commitment to the craft – could he keep at it, day after day? “I found that I had a real passion for it,” he says, and that passion continues to drive him as a writer.

Stories matter

“I think some of us turn to stories in the way that others turn to religion – for comfort, for purpose,” says Hill. “The more stressed out we are, the more our lives are in crisis, the more we look to narrative – to our own stories – to tell us who we are, where we came from, where we’re going, what lessons can we draw from the past and how do we want to live.”

Another important lesson he shared is the importance of voice in writing. “Great writing and wonderful language first enters the body through the ear. Getting to an authentic voice happens when it becomes natural for you to write and natural for the reader to hear.”

Research vs. imagination

Hill conducted extensive research while writing *The Book of Negroes*, much of it focused on historical details of the period covered in the book, and some of it serendipitous – for example, he came across an historic painting from the 18th century depicting the cruel march of West African men, women and children to the slave ships. “Some of the random research I did really stimulated my creative imagination. Be open to the accidents of research.”

To aspiring novelists

“I think one of my chief responsibilities as a novelist is to disabuse aspiring writers of any notion they may have about the act of writing as a romantic process,” says Hill. Perhaps his most valuable and pointed advice comes in the form of an acronym he employs when advising others on the secret to writing success, and that is GYAIC – short form for ‘get your ass in chair.’ “Turning off your phone, sitting down and living in the depths of your imagination is the only way to go.”

Inspiring others

“I remember every single book I read as a young person. You carry them as a friend for the rest of your life,” says Hill. Which is why he was “elated” that *The Book of Negroes* was selected for Sheridan Reads. “It’s exciting to know that young people are reading your book and that it may have the same profound effect on them.”

Hill returned to Sheridan in April 2015 to discuss *The Book of Negroes* in more detail for the ‘Closing Chapter’ of Sheridan Reads.

– Susan Atkinson

In 2015, the *Curiosities* blog was honoured with six awards for excellence in digital communications from five organizations. Both national and international in scope, the awards represent a culmination of efforts by *Curiosities*' writers and photographers as well our alumni, employees, students and friends who allowed us to share their stories on our blog.



Curiosities was recognized by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) with a Gold Quill Merit Award for Digital Communication Channel. IABC's awards program honours excellence in business communications across all industry sectors on a global scale. *Curiosities* was honoured alongside projects from organizations in Canada, Russia, the United States and Australia.



Curiosities received a Gold Accolade Award in the blog category from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) District II. CASE District II is an organization of professionals in the areas of alumni relations, communications, and philanthropy working in higher education in Delaware, D.C., Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Ontario, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands and West Virginia.



Curiosities earned a Silver Leaf Award of Merit for Best Communication Vehicle. The awards program is administered by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Canada, recognizing communicators and their work in all sectors including private industry, non-profits, advertising/PR agencies, postsecondary institutions and governments.



Curiosities was honoured with two gold MARCOM Awards for Blog: Educational Institution and Blog: Writing. MARCOM Awards is an international creative competition that recognizes outstanding achievement by marketing and communication professionals.



Curiosities' "Everyday Heroes" series was recognized with a silver Canadian Online Publishing Award (COPA) in the Best Article or Series category and was also a finalist in the Best Blog or Column category. The program honours outstanding contributions to online publishing across the country. The win placed *Curiosities* alongside others in the category including the *Huffington Post* and Rogers Media Inc.

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