

e-Mosaics

College of Arts and Science

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Cover photo taken by Miranda Metheny. Metheny is perched atop an abandoned house in the Basque region of Spain, fall 2010.

Photo on Page 2 taken by Melody Galen



From the Editor

I *love* looking at good pictures, and in this issue, you'll get to enjoy a lot of them. Please excuse the length of our first article on senior Miranda Metheny. She wants to be a travel writer, and she's already doing a smashing job of filling her photo portfolio. I spent a long time dithering over which photos to include, and I hope you'll all take a side trip to the slide show that contains a few of Metheny's thousands of travel photos (see link at end of her story).

Alert readers will notice a new byline along with mine and Laura's. Alexandra Delaney is one of MU's newest alumni—she just graduated with a bachelor's degree in journalism. She wrote the Metheny story, and she also wrote one on a rising senior art student. At this point I don't know if Lexie will continue to volunteer for *e-Mosaics* or not, but if she has time, I would certainly be happy to publish more of her work.

Another new alumnus, Cameron Williams, will soon continue his research into the

realities of the college experience for young African-American men. A McNair Scholar, Cameron is perceptive and intends to be part of a support system for young students who need it.

Lt. Col. Robert Boone has a mission. Not only does he expect his Tiger Battalion to develop into strong, honorable Army officers, he wants other departments to benefit from those same principles of leadership.

Art student Emily Armstrong is confident, and that self-confidence has taken her all the way to New York City and Fashion Week, and gave her the opportunity to work with the likes of Donna Karan.

I hope you enjoy this issue. If you have any tips for story ideas, you can reach me at GalenM@missouri.edu or 573-884-0120.

Have a wonderful and safe summer!

—Melody Galen

Contents

- 3 From the Dean
- 4 Miranda Metheny: Blooming Abroad
- 9 Cameron Williams: He's Got Your Back
- 12 Military Science and Leadership: Selfless Service, Integrity,
and Personal Courage
- 16 Emily Armstrong: A Hand in the Process
- 19 Class Notes

From the Dean



Another academic year has come and gone—one that saw the College of Arts and Science graduate about 1,000 students in May. This past year saw another record enrollment at MU, and this coming academic year will

be no different. A&S continues to play an integral role in educating all undergraduates, regardless of their majors.

May was not only a time to celebrate graduation, it was a time to remember those whom we have lost. A&S lost several retired faculty members, among them Armon Yanders, a biologist who served as dean of A&S back in the '70s and early '80s; John Foley, who served for many years as the director of the Center for the Study of Oral Tradition and also as chairman of the Department of Classical Studies; Dick Loeppky of the

Department of Chemistry; and Calvin Ahlbrandt from the Department of Mathematics. In addition, Michael Taksar, also of the mathematics department, died suddenly in February.

Our thoughts and prayers go out not only to the many family members these fine men left behind but to their friends and students. Each of them made important, long-lasting contributions to their departments, their college, and their university. They were ambassadors for a liberal-arts education and carried high ideals in their professional life. They had wonderful personal sides away from the university, and some of the things they did in their spare time would cause people to stop and think, "I never knew that about him."

Armon Yanders, for example, was a highly capable pilot, which always amazed me, given that he was close to 6 foot 7. Until after his death, I didn't know Michael Taksar was a workout-a-holic—a morning regular at one of Columbia's gyms. And if you ever knew John Foley, and many of you did, you might never have guessed from looking at him, that to this

long-haired, sandal-wearing Greek scholar, the "classics" referred equally to Pebble Beach or the Old Course at St. Andrews as they did to Homer.

John was a scratch golfer and also my partner on occasion. In fact, we have renamed the annual A&S golf tournament the John Miles Foley Memorial A&S Golf Tournament. I hope you'll plan on joining us for that great event in October. You can find all the information about it on the Web at coas.missouri.edu/events/golf.shtml. It will be a nice way to celebrate the fact that, like the people we remember here, all of us have non-work-related sides.

—Michael J. O'Brien

Blooming Abroad

By Alexandra Delaney

A view over the Rhine River
from Roland's Arch, just south
of Bonn, Germany.

e-Mosaics
College of Arts and Science

To most Mizzou students, the number 28 references Tiger wide receiver T.J. Moe and brings back memories of M-I-Z chants and football games. To one MU student, the number 28 signifies the number of countries to which she has traveled. Senior Miranda Metheny, a self-proclaimed book nerd whose passion for visiting other places began with traveling through fiction and fantasy novels, never imagined that her studies in the College of Arts and Science and the School of Journalism would take her so far from home.



Miranda Metheny prepares to eat (her portion of) a giant paella in Pamplona, Spain, Oct. 2010.

A Developing Devotion

Metheny's international academic adventures began in the spring 2010 semester with a Spain study-abroad trip. Her classes at the Universidad de Navarra were Spanish-intensive journalism courses. As a Spanish and magazine journalism major, Metheny found the classes rewarding. It wasn't her first time outside the U.S.—she had visited Greece and Mexico with her family as a child—but it sparked her desire to travel. She decided to obtain a German minor, as well, and is considering a third major in international studies and a second minor in anthropology.

Being immersed in other cultures fascinates Metheny. "For me, traveling is a neces-

"That's when you realize far-away people aren't the great 'other.'"

sity because I feel really alive," she says. "That's what I structure my life around; it's fun for me. I love the freedom and the beauty. It's what makes life worth living. But in a more general sense, everyone should travel. That's when you realize far-away people aren't the great 'other.'"

After high school graduation and before settling down for her first semester of college, Metheny traveled to Costa Rica with her Spanish class. She made a deal with her parents: if she attended a public, in-state university, they would let her study abroad as much as she wanted by covering the cost of flights and program fees. Side trips and excursions would be Metheny's financial responsibility. She capitalized on her college experience and studied abroad three semesters.

A Flourishing Framework

Her arts and science education proved to be invaluable in Metheny's encounters in the wide world.

"It goes without saying that languages really come in handy when traveling," Metheny says. "I've studied three languages at Mizzou, and that's helped me in everything from getting directions in a small town to having deep conversations."

She went to Spain through the journalism school. Norway and Germany were direct exchanges. Her classes all required high language proficiency—classes at the universities in Bonn and in Bergen were taught in German and Norwegian, respectively.

Metheny has an affinity for languages. She started learning Spanish in middle



A traditional grass-roof building in Bergen, Norway, spring 2012.

school and has continued it for 10 years. After a decade of Spanish, her vocabulary is extensive, and it's her strongest language after English. Her Spanish papers are nearly perfect grammatically.

Her German education consisted of two years in high school and one year of upper-level MU courses before she studied at Bonn. The program required students to have four years of college-level German, but Metheny placed into advanced courses.

Perhaps surprisingly, her third language pursuit at Mizzou isn't Norwegian but Catalan, a dialect spoken in northeastern Spain, which she studied for one semester. Metheny taught herself Norwegian at age 16. Her tutor was a book called *Teach Yourself Norwegian*, and within five years of on-and-off studying, she had.

Metheny has a unique capacity to learn languages because she is passionate and determined. Her education provided her with the foundation needed to optimize her experiences abroad.

"The language classes were the most beneficial," Metheny reflects. "That's what you really bring with you and use on a daily basis."

There were instances when she didn't know the language, as was the case in Eastern Europe and Japan. To Metheny, creating connections with people without using words, and relying solely on guidebooks and gestures, was fun. She discovered gestures are not universal and that reading the bus schedule in Estonia presented a challenge, but acting it out was more challenging.

Communication skills acquired from her classes gave her the opportunity to talk to people and better understand the countries she visited. In the Basque region of Spain, she talked to a middle-aged woman working in

a video store about the "lost generation" of Basque speakers under the Franco regime. The woman was astonished that Metheny, a non-native, could understand Basque, but she herself would depend on subtitles. In Pamplona, Metheny volunteered at an elementary school and learned from the playground supervisor that the fortress on a hill overlooking the schoolyard holds mass graves from Franco's dictatorship and that 30 years later, bodies are still being found.



Metheny and Liisa Lundell of Finland pose with the huskies after a day of dog sledding outside of Turku, Western Finland, winter 2012. Courtesy of Joel Forsman © www.joelforsman.fi

Appreciating Awareness

Although language courses are the obvious educational staples that contributed to Metheny's success abroad, other disciplines played a role, too.

"Anthropology classes were good because it's a study about the facts and critical thinking," Metheny says. "You learn more in a minute abroad, in the field, than you can in a semester of class when it comes to facts. The most crucial thing was learning the way to learn, and that's what you learn in A&S."



Metheny walks on a mountain path so narrow that one has to hold onto the cable in order to safely get one foot in front of the other, the Julian Alps, Slovenia, July 2011.

Anthropology courses have helped Metheny to become more open minded and tolerant of different cultures. Instead of noticing what people from other countries do differently and making assumptions, she asks herself "Why do they do it differently?"

"In anthropology you learn that cultural things evolve the same way genetics do. For some reason, people do something differently, not to make *your* life weird, but because they're a unique people who have developed their own traditions the same way your culture has, and because that's what helps them to manage," Metheny says.

She observed that many people in Germany loath Google Earth—an Internet program that provides a satellite view of the world and can zoom in as close as street level of towns—perhaps because they consider it a violation of privacy. She didn't judge the different cultural viewpoint but instead asked herself why they might feel that way. She attributed Germans' mistrust of surveillance to censorship during the war eras. In Norway, she noticed



Boat houses near Bergen, Norway, March 2012.

that people, despite the bitterly cold weather, spend lots of time outdoors. She saw a family on skis with their dogs attached to them via leashes and their baby being pulled in a sled attached to the mom. What might seem ridiculous to us is logical to others.

She learned the value of communication and the importance of paying attention to

details. She enrolled in an art history class to fill graduation requirements but was surprised to realize that it enriched her life.

“People think of art as an obscure thing, but I’ve actually found that it relates to way more things,” says Metheny. In an Estonian art gallery she noticed the danse macabre (dance with death) theme. Most works depicted a skeleton dancing with people of all ranks, from kings to peasants. It illustrates that death affects everyone equally. While not an expert in the field, Metheny gained a new appreciation and understanding of the other culture through its art.

Blossoming into Being

While overseas, her thought processes changed on a philosophical level. Spain served as a period of self-reflection. In Germany Metheny had more free time, and she discovered what brings her joy and how much she is capable of. Growing up, she had learned to be defined by her strengths. In Europe, she learned to disregard that frame of mind.

“For such a long time I thought I was destined to be a geek because I’m interested in geeky things, and I’m good at them, but from all the traveling I realized there are ways to mix academia and the real world,” Metheny says. “It has made me realize what I’m capable of.”

If the elementary-aged girl in speech and physical therapy with braces on her legs could have predicted her future years ago, it wouldn’t have included canyoning in the Spanish foothills of the Pyrenees Mountains, walking across Scotland in eight days via the Great Glen Way, getting locked out of a Buddhist temple in Japan, playing with a falcon at the castle of Spissky Hrad in Slovakia, or hiking across frozen waterfalls with ice axes in Norway.

Metheny’s travels have taught her about her passions, strengths, and interests. She wants to become a travel writer, and her education has prepared her for the job.

Where in the World

| | | |
|----------------|---------------|-------------|
| Czech Republic | Estonia | France |
| Poland | Austria | Luxembourg |
| Hungary | Greece | Belgium |
| Slovakia | Italy and the | Netherlands |
| Slovenia | Vatican | Netherlands |
| Croatia | Switzerland | Antilles |
| Norway | Liechtenstein | Mexico |
| Finland | Germany | Japan |
| Sweden | England | Costa Rica |
| Spain | Scotland | |

has Miranda Been?

*Armchair traveler?
Click here.*



Clicking the picture will launch a new page in your Web browser with a slideshow of wonderful images from Metheny’s travels. Hover your mouse over the slide to access the controls and to see the captions. You may pause the slideshow and advance at your own pace.

He's Got Your Back

This recent graduate wants to help people deal with some of the difficult parts of life

By Melody Galen

Even the brightest among us need a helpful nudge on occasion. When Cameron Williams, BA '12 sociology, was applying for graduate school, he thought what he had written in his essay was golden. NaTashua Davis, director of the McNair Scholars program at MU, candidly told him that it was terrible—that it was generic and that he needed to put more passion into it.

The incident may sound harsh, but Williams laughs as he remembers it. “I’m so glad that she was honest with me, and that she didn’t just make a comment and not help me,” he says. “She was my most positive mentor, and she really dedicated a lot of time to me, more so than anyone else at Mizzou.”

Do More, Be More

MU was one of the original 14 universities selected in 1989 to develop a program established by the U.S. Department of Education

and named for astronaut and *Challenger* crew member Ronald E. McNair. The program’s mission is preparing undergraduates for future graduate study, and when Williams heard about McNair Scholars as a sophomore, he decided to apply. He had come to Mizzou for broadcast journalism, but then he loved the content of his social inequalities class, and he felt he could make an impact through sociology, so he switched majors.

After getting involved with the McNair program, Williams reports that his perspective changed. McNair scholars are encouraged to pursue advanced degrees, and he decided not to stop at a master’s degree. He wants to earn his doctorate, and he’s enrolled at Loyola University in Chicago this fall.

Uncovering Problems

Williams did the initial research for his McNair project during his junior year. As the child of a military family, he traveled much more than most teens, living in Kentucky,



Alaska, Iowa, Illinois, southern Missouri, and Germany by the time he was 14. He says he had interesting experiences growing up in diverse environments, but he sometimes found himself the only African-American male in his school.

Curious about the experiences of other black men, he interviewed nine middle-class, African-American freshmen at MU. He asked their opinions of the portrayals of African-American men in the media. How did they think they were perceived by the white community? By the black community? Had they had any experiences with discrimination?

He found that his subjects, because of their middle-class backgrounds, had often felt the sting of not being perceived as “black enough” because they were educated, because they grew up in a predominantly white suburb, or because they didn’t dress in the same manner as their peers from an inner-city environment, for example, might. Their white peers at MU challenged their black identity and made disparaging racial comments. These young men felt caught in a sort of limbo—sometimes not black enough to their African-American peers, yet not exactly fitting in with their white classmates.

Williams says the high school years are often difficult for students such as these because they don’t fit many of the stereo-

types, and that carries over into their college experiences. He was told by the young men he



A graduate of sociology, Cameron Williams still hasn't quite settled on his final career path—Will he become a professor or a high school teacher?

interviewed of comments by white students, adults, and instructors implying that they were in college because of affirmative action.

Aside from those sorts of careless, negative remarks, further exacerbating the problem is that much of the existing research is on African Americans of a lower socioeconomic background. As a result, the middle-class college students feel they are left out of the picture.

“As they get older,” Williams says, “it gets a little bit easier because they realize ‘I’m black regardless of what people say.’” Being more grounded in one’s own identity is ultimately a positive thing, but Williams continues, “One of the main points of my research is to expose that class does not shield these men from discrimination—in the end they are still black.”

Williams’ research is published in the *McNair Journal* (2011), and he’s presented it six times already. He plans to delve further into the topic in graduate school, but he probably won’t limit himself to only middle-class African-American men. He’s interested in learning more about the experiences of black men in general in higher education.

Wayne Brekhus, associate professor of sociology, was Williams’ adviser and mentor for the McNair research project. “He’s very enthusiastic and motivated,” Brekhus

says of Williams. “I think he has a real interest in social change and making the world a better place. He was able to confront stereotypes and paint a more complicated picture of the African-American experience than is probably perceived in the general public.”

Helping Hands

“I really feel like I can expose a socially critical issue in our society that can often be overlooked,” Williams says. “I believe, based on my background, that I’m able to articulate it to different groups of people.”

Recently he has begun to waver in his commitment to getting his doctorate in sociology. He thinks that perhaps his calling could be as a teacher, then a principal, and later a superintendent in a public school. “I like working with people on a personal level. I might be able to have more of an impact if I go that route versus becoming a professor.”

Before graduating, Williams was a peer adviser in Lathrop Hall, and he shared his McNair research with his Freshman Interest Group class. It happens that all the students in that class were white, and “I had a big learning moment in that class,” he recalls.

“I learned that because they’re Jewish, or they’re from a lower-class family, or just because they went to a private school, they’ve dealt with so many issues, too,” Williams says. The experience illuminated the fact that everyone has problems they deal with in what-

ever way they can. “I think it’s so nice to talk about them, because then we’re able to better understand each other.”

Ultimately, Williams hopes that the discrimination others face will make them more sensitive to the discrimination that black men face. “The issue is unique for black men because their race is visible and therefore they can be judged for just walking into a room and possessing black skin.”

Williams studied abroad in Rwanda with Associate Professor Béa Gallimore of the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures. “Amazing experience,” says Williams. “Of course the subject matter was really tough. Although I don’t want it to be my primary emphasis, I want to do more research on the genocide.”

Another way that Williams shows support for his fellow man is in his volunteer work. A past volunteer for Boys & Girls Club, he volunteers now with Step Up! American Association for Rwandan Women, a nonprofit organization whose mission is responding to the ongoing trauma resulting from the 1994 genocide in that country. Together with some people in a Christian ministry of which Williams is a part, he tutors a Rwandan family that immigrated to Missouri in November.

“We go over to their house and sit down with the kids and help them read books, and it’s amazing, because the son, who is a sophomore in high school—I’d say he’s almost flu-

ent,” says Williams. “That’s been a nice experience because it’s more personal, and we get to spend time with the family.”

Williams benefitted from the hands that helped him along his academic journey, and now, when he’s at the beginning of a new road himself, he wants to choose a path that will let him be there for others who need a strong hand.

SELFLESS SERVICE, INTEGRITY, AND PERSONAL COURAGE

Cadets of the Tiger Battalion Learn Core Values and Leadership

By *Laura Lindsey*

Waking up at 4:30 a.m. for physical fitness training, repelling 90 feet from a Black Hawk helicopter, and wearing army combat uniforms to class don't sound like typical college student activities. But for the 110 students in the Department of Military Science and Leadership, that is exactly what a typical college day entails.

Walking into Crowder Hall, the home of the department, one can sense the attention to detail, the determination, and the patriotism. Since 1868, this has been the place where MU students have learned the basic skills needed to defend the United States as part of the Reserve Office Training Corps (ROTC). General Enoch H. Crowder energized the program in 1884 and started the first ROTC cadet band in the nation—it later became known as Marching Mizzou.

A NEW ERA

Today, Lt. Col. Robert Boone is the chair and a professor in the department. He received his bachelor's degree in history from Sam Houston State University and his master's de-

“Leadership is intangible, and therefore no weapon ever designed can replace it.”

—*General of the Army,
Omar N. Bradley*

gree in military history from American Military University. Boone has served two tours in Iraq and has received numerous awards and recognition from the Army for his service. He has been at MU since June 2011 and has already reached out to other departments on campus to find out how he can share his expertise.

“My mission as head of the department is to recruit, retain, develop, and

Front: Samuel Hargrove and Aaron Kummemann; back: Lance Frazer, Christopher Gonzales, Austin Abarr, Richard Main, James Phillips, Chris Shoemaker, and Joe McCoskrie at the Iron Curtain sculpture in Fulton, Mo., November 2011.

commission the future officer leadership of the United States Army,” says Boone. “I also plan to teach leadership classes in other departments and get the cadets involved in team-building exercises with other groups outside of ROTC.”

Students from area colleges have the opportunity to participate in the ROTC program. Central Methodist University, Columbia College, Westminster College, and



William Woods University have cooperative arrangements which allow students to enroll in Army ROTC courses offered at MU while attending their selected college on a full-time basis. Several students from each of the partnership schools go through the program each year—three from Central Methodist University were commissioned in May.

HARD WORK HAS ITS BENEFITS

The program is rigorous, but the rewards are great. Cadets who complete the program leave with a minor in military science and are eligible for Army active duty, the Army National Guard, or the Army Reserves based on their academic grades, physical fitness scores, and preference. Cadets are expected to attend early morning physical training daily, field-training exercises that can last three days, and intense competitions that push their bodies to the limit. In return for their commitment to serve time in the Army post-graduation, cadets receive college scholarships, an annual stipend, a textbook allowance, and a commission as second lieutenant after graduation.

Like other college students, cadets choose a major, but they supplement their education with the military science course load. The curriculum is unique because it teaches leadership, critical thinking, and re-



Cdt. Morgan Vazquez, Cdt. Elise Balzaine, and Cdt. Shelbee Cowart performing a casualty evacuation as part of their physical field training.

silience as well as honor, loyalty, and selfless service.

THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT

Senior Jamar Williams couldn't stand the thought of having debt after college, so when he joined ROTC he also signed up for the simultaneous membership program with the Missouri National Guard. Under this program, he is committed to one weekend a month and two weeks each year additional service on top of his requirements through ROTC.

"The Army ROTC program provides me with unique exposure to leadership ideologies, history, battle tactics, professional development, understanding others, and it is

a great resource to meet new people and make friends at MU," says Williams.

After his graduation in December, Williams, a computer science major, will be commissioned as a second lieutenant in the National Guard while beginning his career as a software developer. He will serve eight years in the National Guard.

Shelbee Cowart, a senior from Laquey, Mo., was already a member of the National Guard when she became interested in ROTC. She plans to go to as many schools and trainings as the Army will allow and retire as an officer in the military.

Her position in the battalion is cadet command sergeant major.

"This program disciplines students, builds character, and develops wise and brave leaders for the future," says Cowart. "We are not just gaining a high-quality education, we are training to lead troops and serve our country."

HANDS-ON LEARNING AND TRAINING

In addition to traditional classes, all cadets must take labs for three years where they learn small-unit tactics, leadership, and physical fitness. In addition, there are many other opportunities to get involved and showcase their skills. The Cannon Crew serves as a positive centerpiece for the ROTC presence



The 1895 ROTC cadet band. That band program later became *Marching Mizzou*. Photo courtesy of the *Savitar*.

on campus during home football games. A tradition that began in 1895, the cannon is fired after every Tiger point, and the cadets complete push-ups corresponding to the home team's score. Other programs include the Color Guard, Ranger Challenge, Pershing Rifles, and Ranger Buddy.

"The Ranger Challenge is an opportunity for schools to compete with each other by completing military tasks," says Boone. "Cadets test their Army knowledge in a written test and complete physical fitness drills and field exercises."

The challenge is sometimes referred to as the varsity sport of the Army ROTC. The team will train in basic infantry skills and com-

pete with other teams in the fall. The events include constructing a rope bridge, patrolling, assembly and disassembly of the M16A2, the army physical fitness test, day and night land navigation, and a 10K road march.

At the end of junior year, cadets attend the Leadership Development Assessment Course in Fort Lewis, Wash. During the 29-day training, they are evaluated on common soldier skills. The main goal is to assess and evaluate the tactical

and garrison knowledge learned during their first three years in ROTC. At the conclusion of training, whether the cadet will serve in active duty or in the reserves will be determined.

"We teach our cadets how to be fit, both physically and mentally," says Boone. "Because of that, they are more mature after they have completed the program."

In May, 12 students were commissioned into U.S. Army active duty, and two were commissioned into the Army National Guard. One of those cadets was Christopher Cannon, the 2012 recipient of the George C. Marshall Award. Cannon was selected by the cadre of the department as the outstanding

Army ROTC cadet for the year. He attended a three-day conference at the Virginia Military Institute in April where he met other recipients from across the country to discuss national-security issues.

"The cadre only awards one of these scholarships a year, so receiving it when it is so limited is thrilling," says Cannon.

He has begun training at the U.S. Army flight school where he will graduate after 18 months as an Army helicopter pilot. After his service, he plans to go into personal financial planning.

"As an MU alumnus, I want to maintain contact to mentor the younger members to ensure their continued survival and success on campus," says Cannon. "The most important asset of the ROTC program is the supply of younger members who are eager to learn and who are ready to adopt leadership positions. In addition, they must have access to their alumni for lessons learned and advisory support."

"We develop well-rounded individuals who can complete a large number of tasks," says Boone. "They will be beneficial in any workplace once they leave our program."

THE TIGER BATTALION WANTS YOU

This fall the Tiger Battalion will induct its first members into the Army ROTC Hall of Fame. The inductees will be announced at the annual fall tailgate.

"I encourage all of our alumni to come back to the tailgate this fall and learn how to be a part of our program," says Boone. "We are doing great things here, and I would like to make it better with the help of our alumni."

For more information on the fall tailgate and other upcoming events, "like" them on [Facebook at University of Missouri Army ROTC \(Mizzou.\)](#)



Clicking the picture above will launch a new page in your Web browser with a slideshow of images from Army ROTC. Hover your mouse over the slide to access the controls and to see the captions. You may pause the slideshow and advance at your own pace.

A&S Dates to Remember

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Friday, Aug. 31, 2012 | Fall reception for new faculty and staff, Reynolds Alumni Center, 5–7 p.m. |
| Saturday, Sept. 1, 2012 | Nominations due for A&S Distinguished Alumni and Distinguished Service Awards |
| Wednesday, Sept. 19, 2012 | Fall welcome for students, Lowry Mall, 11 a.m.–2 p.m. |
| Friday, Oct. 19, 2012 | John Miles Foley Memorial A&S Golf Tournament |
| Saturday, Oct. 27, 2012 | Homecoming |
| Saturday, Dec. 15, 2012 | Commencement, Hearnes Center, 12:30 p.m. |



A Hand in the Process

By Alexandra Delaney

Marc Jacobs, are now so busy they hardly stop moving.

They hold pencils, Sharpies®, and paintbrushes; they touch canvas and unscrew paint caps; they sketch and blur and smudge ink. They don't stop creating. These hands belong to MU senior Emily Armstrong, a fine arts major with a double emphasis in graphic design and drawing, and she is just now beginning to fully comprehend the meaning of hands-on learning.

In 2011, Armstrong began working with Stylitics.com as a campus ambassador. Her job consists of paying attention to trends on the MU campus, snapping street-style photographs of people she thinks embody current or developing trends, and analyzing fashion to compile trend reports that the company shares with the brands with which it works. She is also involved in jumpstarting the Stylitics High School Ambassador Program. As a graphic design major, she created the recruitment poster for the program, which earned her a write-up in the *Wall*

Street Journal article “Big Marketers on Campus” (April 4, 2012).

The poster displays her artistic talents and expresses her passion for fashion. She decided to target the same demographic as *Teen Vogue*, which also served as inspiration because she admires the magazine's aesthetic style. While she was working on the Stylitics poster, she was also working on a Web site design and explored the possibilities of the glitter overlay tool. Armstrong applied the glitter technique to the poster over the photograph of her sister and her sister's

The background of these pages is a drawing inspired by filmmaker Sofia Coppola, whose questions about beauty, self, and values motivate Armstrong.

Right: The Stylitics poster for which Armstrong was written up in the *Wall Street Journal* in April.



Graphic design student Emily Armstrong is already making her mark in the fashion world, and she hasn't even graduated yet.

Her hands used to feverishly flip through *Vogue* magazine; her eyes devoured images of beauty, inspiration, and confidence. Her hands used to hold the thin pages of the thick paper packet, tearing them out occasionally to tape them on a bedroom wall. She used to imagine the rings on her fingers, purses on her wrists from all the top, most influential designers. The hands that scoured the magazine, eagerly awaiting the chance to create powerful images like Donna Karan and

friends, a photograph that she took last fall for a graphic magazine design project. Armstrong's sister appears frequently in her art. "She models for me usually," Armstrong says. "Her friends were especially excited about my using their photo for the poster."

Confidence Boost

Armstrong isn't compensated monetarily for her work, but it provides experience that pads her résumé. Stylitics founders Rohan Deuskar and Zach Davis reward their ambassadors by scheduling monthly conference calls with big names in the fashion world. Armstrong participates in the conference calls and is connected to her bosses on LinkedIn, which she says has added credibility and connections to her own profile. "Having access to industry leaders in this way is rare and exciting," Armstrong says. "Zach has helped me with my résumé, and I use him as a reference when I apply for jobs."

Stylitics is an online mediator between consumers and fashion brands. Conducting market research through virtual closets, social media, and games, Stylitics discovers what consumers like and provides fashion advice and analysis to companies. Armstrong produced a video in which she explained her jean preferences with regards to price, brand, and style.

Working with Stylitics has made Armstrong more confident. It is part of her job to approach strangers on the street and take



This still life will be framed and hung in the University of Missouri chancellor's residence. Armstrong will be the first MU undergraduate to have a piece of artwork hanging in the chancellor's home.

their pictures, a skill that has helped create a more self-assured artist.

"Confidence is so key in making what I want to make," says Armstrong. "I don't think I could have made this work before, I would have been too scared to make the marks I make with paint strokes. Sometimes the way I paint is sloppy or abstract, but to me it's a sign of the confidence of the stroke. I see this color there, and I'm going to make that stroke there."

It's not going to be blended or compromised; it reflects my attitude about life."

When Worlds Collide

She attributes her newfound confidence to the experiences that have come from working with Stylitics and living independently in New York City. A Texas native hailing from Jefferson City, Mo., Armstrong graduated from Helias High School in 2009 and looks forward to moving into the fast-paced rhythm of life in New York City.

Armstrong applied for internships with major fashion companies in New York City. Although she didn't have experience in textiles, her background in drawing and design proved strong enough to land her an internship at Donna Karan in summer 2011. For 10 weeks she worked in the fabrics department and was the only intern on the floor. She witnessed what happens in the design room and learned from designers, like Xiomara Grossett, who have been working for Donna Karan since she opened a store in the 1980s. Grossett and Armstrong talked about what it means to be an artist. "She really understood me," Armstrong says. "We were comrades in the business-oriented fashion industry. I loved to watch her invent looks with her pen. It was truly inspiring."

Fashion has been an influence in Armstrong's perception of the world since she discovered her interest in art. She subscribed

to *Vogue* when she was 12 years old, preferring the images, collections, and designer's seasonal creations to the text. She still refers to *Vogue*'s strong visuals when working.

When interning with Donna Karan last summer, Armstrong made an impression. Her internship ended in August, but she had the opportunity to go backstage during fashion week in September with the designer herself. Armstrong took pictures of the models backstage, which inspired several drawings she produced for class projects. She also served as an assistant to Karan; she recorded the designer, piece numbers, and alterations of each outfit worn at the fashion show before the models sported them on the runway. Never having taken a fashion class, she was thrust into a high-pressure situation and had to learn the technical terms on the fly as seamstresses shouted out the clothing adjustments made.

Model fittings captivated Armstrong. She witnessed the chaos behind the curtain transform into class and grace on the runway. She met top model Karlie Kloss, who grew up in St. Louis and is now internationally known. She realized how surreal stardom is. Having met celebrities on a personal level, Armstrong discovered that stars, as obvious as it sounds, really are people, too. It evoked a curiosity Armstrong had never felt before, and she created a series of paintings that comment on the bizarre nature of being star-struck and what it means to be famous. Her paintings portray a

witty, sarcastic take on the aspirations of fame and fortune.

Last summer, Armstrong attended Fashion Campus New York, a collaborative fashion program created by Parsons School of Design, the city of New York, and the Council of Fashion Designers of America. The program united the fashion interns of New York City and provided the opportunity to network with representatives of the fashion industry. That was where she became acquainted with Deuskar and Davis. She remained in contact with them and was offered a position as a student ambassador.

New York City is her home away from home. She will return there this summer as an intern with the luxury department store Barney's. Armstrong is intrigued by fashion but doesn't have experience in the construction of clothes in terms of sewing and sizing. Her experience resides in the aesthetic appeal of prints and designs. Her fashion knowledge and art skills will mix like paints on a palette to give her a better understanding of how graphic design functions in that professional setting. Her goal is to learn how to work with graphics and incorporate fashion.

Whether it's clicking away on a computer designing in-store advertisements, sketching posters to decorate inside the store, or arranging the Barney's window display for passersby to admire, Armstrong's hands will remain busy this summer.



Clicking the picture above will launch a new page in your Web browser with a slideshow of Armstrong's artwork. Hover your mouse over the slide to access the controls and to see the captions. You may pause the slideshow and advance at your own pace.

Class Notes Class Notes Class Notes

the '50s

Samuel Sang Hoy Lee, BA '52 political science, MA '53, passed away at the age of 81 on Feb. 10, 2012. Lee was a Fulbright Scholar, had served in the U.S. Foreign Service 1955–1981, and was a Hawaii state representative 1986–1996.

the '60s

Sharon Stahl, BA '68 English, was named vice chancellor for students at Washington University in St. Louis.

the '80s

Paul Foster, MA '86 history, has joined Berwyn Investments in Pennsylvania as the global head of consultant relations and senior managing director.

the '90s

Rick Skwiot, MA '92 English, is the author of the Hemingway First Novel Award–winner

Death in Mexico (previously published as *Flesh*), the Willa Cather Fiction Prize–finalist *Sleeping with Pancho Villa*, the critically acclaimed childhood memoir *Christmas at Long Lake*, and, in 2012, the novel *Key West Story*, which Kirkus Reviews described as “beach-noir.” He blogs about creative-writing issues at www.KeyWestWritersLab.com.

the '00s

Mark Littlefield, BA '02 history, joined Penland & Hartwell LLC in Chicago. He will work in the litigation practice group.

Tara Curtis, BM '06, has been named the mezzo-soprano apprentice at Kansas City Lyric Opera. Visit www.taracurtis.com for more information.

John Miles Foley Memorial Arts and Science Golf Tournament



Join Us!

Friday, Oct. 19, 2012

| | |
|------------|----------------------|
| 11:00 a.m. | Registration opens |
| Noon | Lunch and range open |
| 1 p.m. | Shotgun start |

Registration fees: Student—\$75,
Individual—\$100, Team—\$400
Sponsorships are available

For more information, visit
coas.missouri.edu/events/golf.shtml

Call Amanda Schlink at 573-884-4482
to register