



NEWSLETTER
AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020

BACK TO SCHOOL EDITION!

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UPCOMING EVENTS!

- Friday, August 28**
First Meeting | 12:00-1:00 pm
- Saturday, August 29**
Theatre Vine/Tiktok Night! | 7:00pm
- Thursday, September 3**
Virtual Game Night | 7:00pm
- Friday, September 4**
Hand-Stitching Workshop

Check out our new website to see our full calender of events, get info on student mentors, and more!

PITTUSITT.WEEBLY.COM

MEET YOUR NEW BOARD!

+ ONE THING THAT'S GIVEN THEM SERATONIN!

KAMI- CHAIR
(she/her) | Scenic Design + Arch
One time I saw a yellow butterfly do a U-turn to land on some flowers in my mom's garden. She probably wasn't doing a u-turn, but I'm gonna say she was cause she thought my mom's garden was just wonderful.

SOPHIA- VICE CHAIR
(she/her) | Technical Direction +Carpentry
Antoon's Pizza reopened!

JESS- OUTREACH COORDINATOR
(she/her) | Scenic Design + Art
I just learned that my English Literature senior seminar is focused on faeries and I literally screeched out loud I was so excited. My roommate was very concerned.

SHAMUS- SECRETARY
(he/him) | Stage Management
I love to cook and bake, and this summer I finally took the time to figure out yeasted doughs. They really aren't that scary! So now I make pizza for myself a little too much.

TJ- BUSINESS MANAGER
(he/him) | Lighting Design
I've been listening to the new Taylor Swift album and it is getting me extremely excited for Fall to be upon us soon. Fall is most definitely the superior season. Looking forward to flannels and sweaters and tea!

A NOTE FROM OUR CHAIR

A (SOCIALLY-DISTANCED BUT STILL ENTHUSIASTIC) HELLO + WELCOME!

Hello friends, new and old! It's nice to see you all, even if it's through our Zoom boxes. Things are looking and feeling very different this year. There's a lot of sadness and frustration. We miss hugging our friends and family, the energy of being in the same spaces + creating our art, and are wondering for how much longer gonna have to keep arguing for basic respect + human rights for all.

But! alongside all that, it's also important that we seek out + hold close moments of creativity, expression, growth, and joy. No matter what the year looks like, our USITT community will still be here! Creating and learning alongside each other. We have some fun stuff planned this year, from technical skill workshops you can do at home, to a "let's talk about it" series, where we learn about harmful what equity, social justice, and activism looks like in our theatre spaces. Nataki Garet said that activism can be interrupting moments and commanding space. Theatre - from actors to design to production - is all about commanding space!

We hope you'll stick around with us for the ride! Feel free to let us know anything you want to see. And we hope you enjoy our newsletter (and if you really really like it, feel free to submit anything for us to publish.)

We know you will push through this semester and we can't wait to see the wonderful things you will do. And remember getting through each day is a wonderful task in itself.

Socially distanced hugs,
Your USITT Board

BREAKING DOWN TWO ANTI-RACIST THEATRE ORGANIZATIONS

WE SEE YOU W.A.T.

We See You W.A.T. (White American Theatre) is a collective of BIPOC theatremakers who have organized in response to the civil unrest in the country. Together they created a "testimonial letter, demanding a more equitable and safe space for BIPOC communities in our nation and inside of the American Theater" signed by over 300+ BIPOC theatremakers. The collective has also created a "comprehensive list of demands calling upon white institutions to examine, change and dismantle their harmful and racist practices." These demands range from general cultural competency to work and hiring practices to academics to name a few. You can see the full list of demands as well as learn more about the collective at <https://www.weseeyouwat.com/>.

BROADWAY ADVOCACY COALITION

The Broadway Advocacy Coalition is a group that formed in 2016 in order to combat racism and understand how art and activism intersect. They partnered with the Center for Institutional and Social Change at Columbia Law School to create the Theater of Change, a methodology which "brings together high-level artists, law and policy students and experts, and directly impacted advocates to deepen connections and bridge gaps of disconnect and lack of understanding." This summer they produced a series of panels titled Broadway for Black Lives Matter Again. The panels focused on healing, listening, and accountability. You can watch their panel titled "The Miseducation" which focuses on the experiences of Black theatre students and learn more about the organization at <https://www.bwayforblm.com/> and <https://www.bwayadvocacycoalition.org/>.

WHAT DESIGN SOFTWARE ARE YOU?

What's an ideal Friday night look like for you?

- A-I love a good puzzle with friends - virtual board game night for sure.
- B-Zoom Karaoke ! My friends and I love to scream.
- C-Virtual paint + sip (responsibly) night!
- D-Putting on some Youtube videos + doing a lil sketch session.
- E- Listening party for a new album release!

What's your favorite thing about yourself?

- A-I'm straight to the point, I don't have time to mess around
- B-I will always find the most fun way to complete a task
- C-I'm really good at practicing self care
- D-I am super confident.
- E-I'm a good listener.

How would you describe your style?

- A- A hip grandpa - warm sweaters for the win.
- B- All I'll say is that Doc Martens go with every outfit.
- C- I love a good pop of color
- D- I wear plaid shirts. Any questions.
- E- I simply own black t-shirts.

What is one skill you want to learn/improve?

- A-Coloring inside the lines (but what's the fun in that?)
- B-Learning more about fonts
- C-I have a lot of stuff and wanna learn how to downsize
- D-Getting better at using computers, I'm not always the most efficient with them
- E-My culinary knife skills

What souvenirs do you buy when you visit a cool place?

- A-Postcards! I usually get one for all my friends
- B-T-Shirts! And Sweatshirts! (Also because I usually didn't pack enough clothes)
- C-Art Prints! From local artists.
- D-There is no ethical consumption under capitalism, so I refuse to participate. The only thing I will be taking back is memories.
- E- Snowglobes! Or other small fun trinkets

How organized are you?

- A- Super organized, everything is filed, labeled, organized by color + I can find everything quickly!
- B- I place things in super specific places that I think I will remember, but I never do. Then I destroy my room looking for them, and finally find my granola bar snacks in my t-shirt drawer because that makes sense.
- C- I'm the person that will lose my glasses and find them on top of my head
- D- My stationery is organized down to the pen size. But there are eraser shavings everywhere.
- E- It's easy to be organized because I'm a minimalist that owns 3 things

What is your favorite houseplant?

- A-Pothos (aka vine plant) - reliable, viney, and hard to kill!
- B-I look at a plant and I kill it
- C-A rubber tree - the new leaves are so shiny and pretty, and they come in different colors
- D-A cacti. I like the danger
- E-Mini bamboo, if I grow enough of them I can cut them + make a pan flute

Go to page 4 for your results!

PLANT OF THE MONTH!

Introducing: Zeus the Spider Plant named after the ridiculous amount of children he has!



QUIZ ANSWER KEY!

Mostly A - AutoCad! You are concise, straight to the point, and calculated! You know how to get stuff done and aren't new to putting in work. The most organized and knowledgeable, I can literally type in a command and you'll know exactly what I want! I wish when I wanted to hatch (put a solid color) into a shape you would stop freaking out and shutting down.

Mostly B - Vectorworks! What would we do without you! The way you visualize ideas is so unique and beautiful. And you make it look so easy! And you're so resourceful, I can draw something once and I can get so many different views! I wish your shortcuts were actually shortcuts though, why is the shortcut for Offset 'Alt+Ctrl+++ ' instead of 'O'? It's like I'm playing the piano. I don't perform for a reason.

Mostly C - Photoshop! You have many layers. So so many layers. Your personality is full of fun textures, colors, and different brushes and you're always discovering new things. I wish adobe didn't charge \$30 a month for you, and that you didn't take up all the storage on my scratch disks. But you, you're worth it! I bought a new laptop so you would work.

Mostly D - Hand Drafting - I admire you. You're strong. You're independent. The old-school designers love you. I could never be you. You have a confidence level that I don't think I'll ever have. Never erasing? You scare me a lil bit.

Mostly E - Audacity? What's not to like! You're approachable and friendly and everyone comes to you when they need a lil help. You always give so much. You're a great listener. Plus know exactly when to turn up the volume of life to spice things up. Sometimes your resolution could be a lil less pixelated though, it looks like you came from the 2000s and never changed a thing.

KAMI'S SPICY DESIGN CORNER!

I've been focusing on a lot of digital art this summer. I've gotten pretty okay at using a wacom tablet (for having no hand eye coordination, I was terrible at softball) and adobe illustrator, although she steals all my money with no regret (@ adobe, if you were really about it, you'd make the cloud suite free for students this year. And every year). But I forgot how good it felt to pick up a pen + paper. This makes me sound like a youth caught up in technology. But in a time when you can sketch digitally, I'm guilty of forgetting how nice paper feels. And my 0.5 black muji ballpoint pen - my favorite pen and the only one I use. I'm not lying.

I've admittedly never filled up a sketchbook. I've started a sketchbook, many a sketchbook in fact. But I could never commit to finishing one for some reason. (I'm guilty as a page ripper, when I mess up I just rip the page out. No more of that though!) Until now! I'm determined to finish the sketchbook I have now. Hopefully I'll be able to check in later with a full sketchbook.

But until then, here's a sketchbook prompt for you:

draw your room, but underwater.

(A preview of what will happen if we don't integrate some effective climate policy asap.)

COSTUME CLOSET!

This one is for all those theatre kids who miss dressing up. Chose a character and create a costume for them just from items in your closet! Feel free to send us submissions if you want your closet creation featured here!

JANIS IAN | Mean Girls



STAGE MANAGEMENT WITH SHAMUS!

Assistant Stage Managers! Where would we be without them? They do so much, but it's rare to hear people talk about the skills you need to be one. As I'm sure any stage manager can tell you, it's often its own role entirely, with its own tasks and responsibilities separate from those of the stage manager come tech time.

Proactivity and reliability are the name of the game as an ASM. Since you're the one backstage, you should always be in the actors' corner during performances. Whether it's a missing prop, places call, or trip hazard, these qualities allow everyone else to focus on their specific role, knowing they can count on you to handle problems before they even arise. This isn't to say you're the only thing standing between the show and disaster, but your vigilance in making sure an actor remembered to grab that prop before their entrance can save everyone some unnecessary worry. You'll often become quite friendly with the cast in the process, which goes a long way to making those long days just that much more fun!

Another important skill is delegation. Just like your stage manager will delegate certain paperwork to their ASMs during the rehearsal process, you as an ASM should be delegating tasks to run crew members. While you will most likely be moving set pieces and props with your run crew, you should always have a plan in place for if you need to step away to deal with a problem. Nothing makes an emergency worse than needing to worry about your set pieces being moved too! It's also good to remember that everyone will feel more invested in the show if they feel that they're contributing a fair share of work in making the show happen.

These are just two points, but there are infinitely more to talk about. While it sometimes gets seen as "lesser" for being an assistant position, ASMs are just as integral to the success of the show as anyone else. Some even prefer the job to being a lead stage manager! But hopefully this can generate some interest in the role and point out that it can be a very fulfilling position in a production.

~~SOPHIA'S TECH TIPS!~~

JESS' PAINT

Hacked!

This summer I had the very cool opportunity to paint a mural for a coffee shop. During this I learned a lot about what I haven't learned, mainly budgeting and taxes. As freelancers, we are required to place a value on our time and work, and it can feel very intimidating to negotiate prices. Remember though, you and your time are valuable! Make sure that what you are getting paid factors in your material costs, gas money or bus fare, and hours. Then add 10% to fall back on in case of paint emergencies. A client will always be happier if you come in under budget than over! And as far as taxes go, I have no idea.

SUMMER THEATRE

CONGRATS TO PITT STAGES ON THEIR FIRST DIGITAL PRODUCTION, SHE KILLS MONSTERS!



Designed by Kami Beckford + Jess Fitzpatrick

SENDING TONS OF HUGS!

STAY SAFE FRIENDS.