

# New Faces in Academic Affairs 2022–23

**FACULTY AND STAFF**

MARYLAND  
INSTITUTE  
COLLEGE  
OF ART

**M | I | C | A**

# Forough Abadian

GRAPHIC DESIGN / AICAD FELLOW



*Photo credit: Sahar Coston-Hardy*

**Forough Abadian** received her MFA in Graphic Design from the Rhode Island School of Design, and her bachelor's degree in Architecture from the American University of Sharjah, the United Arab Emirates.

Her graphic design thesis, "Ports of Entry," explores methods of understanding identity in relation to a particular space, site, matter, and time. She collects and curates fragments of evidence, found or lost, real or fictional, past or present, to tell multifaceted stories. The featured projects in her thesis showcase her interest in cultural studies and the trajectory of historical events in the contemporary cultural scene.

Forough was selected as a GDUSA 2022 Student to Watch and received the Henry Wolf award for outstanding student in the graphic design graduate program in 2019.

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# Carissa Aoki

LIBERAL ARTS / ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABILITY, & JUSTICE



**Carissa Aoki** received her PhD from the Ecology, Evolution, Ecosystems, and Society program at Dartmouth College, MS in Forest Sciences from Colorado State University, and BA in Women's Studies from Yale University.

Carissa is an applied ecologist working at the intersection of landscapes, disturbance and risk, particularly in forest ecosystems, and more recently on the working clam flats of coastal Maine. She has also collaborated with social science colleagues on issues related to urban forest ecology in Baltimore. As an instructor, she is particularly interested in bringing anti-racist principles to the teaching of science, including the use of interdisciplinary stories to bring non-traditional content into the curriculum.

Her interests in interdisciplinary research and teaching are grounded in her academic travels from humanist to scientist. She is interested in the languages and knowledges of the disciplines and the ways in which practitioner knowledges speak to those within academia. This has led her to projects focused on translating research into usable tools for resource managers and the general public, including collaborations with the web development teams from the DALI Lab at Dartmouth College.

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# Alec Armstrong

LIBERAL ARTS / ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABILITY, & JUSTICE



**Alec Armstrong** received his PhD in Marine, Estuarine, and Environmental Sciences from the University of Maryland, College Park and the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. He received a BS in Environmental Science from The Ohio State University.

Alec is an ecologist and environmental scientist with teaching experience at St. Mary's College of Maryland and the University of Maryland, College Park. His research has focused on streams and wetlands, including work on organic matter biogeochemistry and carbon cycling relevant to water policy and ecosystem restoration. He has also studied farm soils, forests, estuaries, and the ocean. Alec's research and training emphasize field observations and laboratory experiments. He worked for the National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center prior to joining MICA, developing educational materials and assisting the Center's Director. Before turning to science he worked as dishwasher, cook, and farm laborer.

His interest in ecology and environmental science and their relevance to social justice began with volunteer work on bioremediation and building healthy soil in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. He has also contributed to efforts promoting education and writing in prisons, food justice, and urban gardening. Since 2019 he has volunteered as a tutor supporting college students inside Maryland prisons.

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# Dan Barney

MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING



*Photo credit: Trevor Christensen*

**Daniel T. Barney**, after teaching at the secondary level for over a decade, received his PhD in Curriculum Studies from the University of British Columbia in 2009 with an emphasis in Art Education.

Daniel gives courses on curriculum theory and development; arts-based and speculative inquiry; courses on theories, methods, and practices in contemporary art; and he is passionate about educational spaces, including traditional classrooms. He serves on boards and committees within the National Art Education Association (NAEA), International Society for Education Through Art (InSEA), American Educational Research Association (AERA), and College Art Association (CAA). Barney has been an editor for the *Journal of Social Theory in Art Education*, and an associate editor of the *Journal of Curriculum & Pedagogy*.

Beyond his academic publications, he has exhibited and performed his drawing, painting, glass, photographs, sculptures, and social practice events widely. He is an avid walker, gardener, dyer, spinner, knitter, sewist, and baker.

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# Abraham Burickson

GRAPHIC DESIGN MFA



**Abraham Burickson** received an MFA in writing from the University of Texas Michener Center for Writers and a BA in Architecture from Cornell University.

Burickson is the Co-Founder of Odyssey Works and Co-Director of the Experience Design Certificate Program, and has spent more than two decades exploring the relationship between design and experience. His work over this time has defined a practice which unifies diverse art and design disciplines within a mode of making that prioritizes the experience over the thing. He has studied the transformative power of designed experience with the Whirling Dervishes of Turkey, the Shuar of the Ecuadorian Amazon, and with countless artists, designers, and students through Odyssey Works. He is also the founder of The Long Architecture Project, which rethinks architectural practice from the perspective of Experience Design. He has taught in graphic design, writing, interactive art, and architecture programs, and has won prizes, lectured widely, given a TEDxtalk, and was once hired by German television to kidnap an American skateboarding champion. His book: *Odyssey Works: Transformative Experiences for an Audience of One*, was published by Princeton Architectural Press in 2016. His book on Experience Design is forthcoming from Yale University Press in 2023.

Burickson joins the Graphic Design MFA program this year as the Lead Experience Design Faculty.

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# James Burkhalter

FILMMAKING MFA



**James A. Burkhalter** (he/they) is a Baltimore-based filmmaker, screenwriter, and educator. He holds a dual BA in Documentary Film Studies and English from Gettysburg College and an MFA in Filmmaking from the Maryland Institute College of Art.

In the past year, James produced the comedic short film, *F^ck 'EM*.

*RIGHT B@ck* (2022 Sundance Official Selection), and his queer horror screenplay, *Last Call*, won 2nd Place at the Baltimore Film Office's Annual Screenwriters' Competition.

His directorial credits include a feature-length poetic documentary entitled *There Will Be GLITTER*, as well as several shorts including: *Dreams Of My Father*, *Kween For A Day*, *Love, Ava*, and *Your Inbox Is Full*. His films have been honored at the Baltimore International Black Film Festival, the Black Femme Supremacy Film Festival, and the LGBTQ Unbordered International Film Festival, among others.

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# Maia Chao

## FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE



**Maia Chao** holds a BA in Anthropology from Brown University and an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. She is a Fulbright grantee and a member of the artist collective Vox Populi in Philadelphia.

Maia is an interdisciplinary artist whose work examines informal and formal institutions, such as family, school, museums, language, economic and legal systems. Working collaboratively in performance, video, sculpture, and social practice, she frequently draws on methods from anthropology, linguistics, and psychology. She is co-creator of the socially engaged artwork, *Look at Art. Get Paid.* Maia has received commissions from The Shed, The New School, and Tufts University; and exhibited at the RISD Museum, Kellen Gallery at Parsons, Brown University, Haverford College, The Fine Arts Work Center, and Cuchifritos Gallery. She has designed and led public programs at MoMA and the New Museum. Recent residencies and fellowships include: Haverford College, Asian American Arts Alliance of NYC, Pioneer Works, and Queer|Art. Her work has been discussed in *BOMB Magazine*, *The Paris Review* and *Hyperallergic*.

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# Robyn Phillips-Pendleton

INTERIM DIRECTOR, ILLUSTRATION PRACTICE MFA



**Robyn Phillips-Pendleton** received a BFA in Communication Arts, from VCU, Richmond, VA, and an MFA in Illustration, from Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

Robyn is a practicing illustrator, visual storyteller, designer, and curator. In addition to working as an illustrator, she has exhibited her work in national and international exhibitions and is an artist for the United States Air Force Artist Program. Her service work includes being a member of the Norman Rockwell Museum National Advisory Board for Enduring Ideals: Rockwell, Roosevelt & the Four Freedoms and a member of the Board of Directors of New York's Society of Illustrators.

Her research focuses on the history of illustration and the influence of published imagery on perceptions of race. Robyn's essay, "Race, Perception, and Responsibility in Illustration," appears in *A Companion to Illustration* (edited by Alan Male, John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 2019). *Homework for Breakfast*, written by the Twin Poets, is her most recent illustrated picture book. She recently co-curated the exhibition, "Imprinted: Illustrating Race," at the Norman Rockwell Museum.

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# Unique Mical Robinson

DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY ARTS MFA



**Unique Mical Robinson** is a proud Baltimore City native. She received her MFA in English from Mills College in Oakland, CA, and a BA in Creative Writing/Black Studies from Hampshire College in Amherst, MA.

Unique has performed poetry since her teens throughout the US, and Havana, Cuba. She was a Community Organizer in Brooklyn, NY, and an Academic Mentor in Oakland, CA. Unique has worked as a Poetry Teaching Artist, and in administrative roles for Leaders of Tomorrow Youth Center, AFRO Charities, & The Lyric Baltimore. She received the *Emerging Teaching Artist* award from Arts Every Day in 2017. With MICA, she has been Adjunct Faculty in Humanistic Studies since 2016, and Co-Facilitator of the Community Gathering series with the Office of Strategic Initiatives. Unique received the Grit Fund Grant in 2019, and a BOPA Artist Recovery Grant in 2022.

Unique also served as a member of Hampshire College's Writers Advisory Council, and the Chairperson of 2022 Baltimore Pride.

Unique has two book releases: *flicked/forgotten/FREED* (2014), and *Four Wings & A Prayer: A Charm City Churn* (2019). She later expanded into music, releasing blkottonkandy's EP, *vesica piscis* (2019), *Tha 27th Letter, Vol. I & II* (in 2019 & 2020), and 2021's *GETCHA LIFE! EP*.

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# Kerry Roeder

HISTORY OF ART, DESIGN, AND VISUAL CULTURE



**Katherine (Kerry) Roeder** received her PhD in Art History from the University of Delaware; her MA in Art History from the University of Maryland, College Park, and her BA in English Literature and Art History from Trinity College.

Kerry is a historian of graphic illustration and print culture, with an emphasis on 19th and early 20th century art. Prior to joining MICA she was a guest curator and Luce curatorial fellow in American Art at the Smithsonian's Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, where she curated *Freer's Global Network* (2022), *Dewing's Poetic World* (2020), and co-curated *Whistler in Watercolor* (2019). Her book, *Wide Awake in Slumberland: Fantasy, Mass Culture and Modernism in the Art of Winsor McCay* (University Press of Mississippi, 2014) was nominated for an Eisner Award. Her articles have appeared in *American Art* and *The Comics Journal*, and she contributed essays to *A New Literary History of America* and *The Comics of Chris Ware: Drawing is a Way of Thinking*. She previously taught at George Mason University, George Washington University and the Corcoran College of Art, and held fellowships at the National Portrait Gallery and the Library of Congress.

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# Melanie Stegman

## GAME DESIGN



**Melanie Stegman** graduated from the University of Chicago in 1992 with a degree in political science and received her PhD in Molecular Genetics, Biochemistry and Microbiology in 2004 from the University of Cincinnati. She completed Postdoctoral appointments at Dartmouth Medical School (AY05) and Cornell Weill Medical College (2005 – 2008), where she designed a strategy to screen for novel chemical inhibitors of DNA repair in the Human pathogen, *Tuberculosis mycobacterium*.

Melanie's career in video games began at the Federation of American Scientists in Washington, DC where she served as the Director of the Learning Technologies Program from 2010 – 2014. Melanie won a competitive research grant from the NIAID/NIH to study the video game, *Immune Attack* and create the real time strategy game, *Immune Defense*.

Melanie is pleased to join the Game Design program on a Special Contract, to pursue groundbreaking work at the intersection of art, science and game design, while equipping MICA students with computational literacy and design strategy. Most recently, Melanie led teams of professors, students, and outside developers in the design and development of games, simulations and web based interactives at Harrisburg University of Science and Technology. Melanie continues to serve as affiliate faculty at the Drexel University College of Medicine for the Masters in Biomedicine and Digital Media program.

Melanie is the founder and owner of Molecular Jig Games, LLC, where she creates games that take place in the molecular world. Melanie maintains the ScienceGameCenter.org and hosts events to support game developers interested in creating science games.

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# Kelli Williams

## FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE



**Kelli Williams** is an alumna of Morgan State University where she majored in Fine Art, with a concentration in Photography. She received her MFA from Columbus College of Art in Design.

She is an animator, visual artist, and community artist. In her personal work, she uses stop-motion animation, photography, installation, and humor to create work that comments on society through the lens of social media and technology. Her work has been shown nationally and internationally and has been featured in the *Huffington Post*, *Columbus Live*, *Hyperallergic*, *Artnet*, *Baltimore Magazine*, and Netflix's *Cops and Robbers*.

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# Nakita Dolet

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS FOR  
OPEN STUDIES



**Nakita Dolet** earned a Bachelor of Arts in English Language & Literature from the University of Maryland-College Park, an MS in Professional Writing from Towson University, and a doctoral degree in Lifelong Learning in Adult Education with a focus in Online & Distance Education from the Pennsylvania State University.

Her professional experiences include direct student support in roles at the Pennsylvania State University and Anne Arundel Community College. Outside of her experiences working in Higher Education, Nakita has also worked at a non-profit, where she provided programmatic support to grant dedicated to increasing the number of underrepresented students earning graduate degrees in STEM.

Nakita joined the Open Studies team in October 2021, her work in the unit focuses on holistic support to students enrolled in the MPS programs (Data Analytics and Visualization, the Business of Art and Design, Product Management, and UX Design) as well as the dual degree MA/MBA Design Leadership program in partnership with Johns Hopkins University. Her dissertation worked to understand how adult-learners seek and utilize information during the college admissions process.

Her hobbies include listening to and singing along to her favorite songs, attending concerts, traveling, and watching a ton of reality TV and anime.

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# Tonya Hyman

REGISTRATION ASSISTANT FOR OPEN STUDIES



**Tonya Hyman** earned a Bachelor of Science in Behavioral and Social Studies, as well as a Graduate Certificate in Learning Design and Technology from the University of Maryland Global Campus. In addition, she earned a Master's in Secondary Education from George Washington University.

Professionally, she has worked in the private sector as well as government industry in Office Management, Administration, Graphic Design and Real Estate. Most recently, she has worked in Education, as a Learning Facilitator and Team Lead.

Joining Open Studies in November 2021, she continues to provide support to students through the registration and student life cycle.

Some of her interests include traveling, shopping, cooking and dancing.

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# Katie Kelley

DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION FOR  
OPEN STUDIES



**Katie Kelley** earned a BA in History with a concentration in the Civil Rights Movement in 2006 and an MA in Legal and Ethical studies in 2011, both from the University of Baltimore.

Her professional experiences include work as an Academic Specialist at University of Baltimore in the Legal, Ethical, and Historical Studies department, and various roles with the full and part time MBA programs at the Carey Business School.

Katie joined the Open Studies department at MICA in May of 2022, and is thrilled to have joined such a dynamic and enthusiastic team. Outside of building a career in higher education, Katie enjoys many passions: gardening, hiking, pit bull and rescue dog advocacy, taking long walks around Baltimore, knitting, baking, concert going, eating great food, watching movies, and reading - especially historical non-fiction and fantasy novels - and spending time with her wife and two teenage children.

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# Chris Kiehne

ACADEMIC ADVISOR FOR FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE



**Chris Kiehne** earned his BA at Vassar College where he studied gothic and horror literature and received his MA from Brooklyn College.

Chris has loved spooky autumnal themes since he was a child growing up in Baltimore County. He carried those interests into his academic career, deciding to focus on writing. For some years, at a few different schools, he taught First Year College Composition and Literature. In addition to teaching, he has experience serving as an academic advisor and finds that the two roles complement each other well.

Chris loves telling stories and loves helping his advisees tell theirs. When he is not advising, Chris writes and sings songs about dogs and dark forests. When he is not writing or singing, he is probably in a dark forest somewhere with his dogs.

# Cora Leighton

MANAGER OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY



**Cora Leighton** began her academic life as an artist and completed her first MA and PhD in performance studies from California State University and Louisiana State University respectively. More recently, she earned her MA in Instructional Technology from San Francisco State University.

Cora was hired in the spring of 2022 as the new Manager of Educational Technology in the Center for Teaching Innovation & Exchange. She comes to MICA by way of Oakland, California. There she worked as a Speech Communication instructor and as the Distance Education Coordinator for Berkley City College. She shifted from teaching to educational technology prior to the pandemic because she was interested in the ways that it could be used for greater equity and learning opportunities if done intentionally. She sees herself as a teacher first and envisions bringing her diverse experience to support faculty, students and staff in creating spectacular online learning.

In her personal life, she loves to travel and has visited 49 of the 50 states in the US!

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# Natovian McLeod

DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS FOR  
OPEN STUDIES



**Natovian McLeod** graduated from the Maryland Institute College of Art in 2015 with her BFA in General Fine Arts and her Master of Art in Teaching in 2016.

She was an Elementary Art Teacher in Baltimore County Public Schools for six years. During that time, she was an elementary art curriculum writer, K-12 Social Emotional Learning curriculum writer, awarded Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) Novice Art Teacher of the Year, nominated for BCPS Teacher of the Year, and in 2022 she was awarded MAEA's Maryland Elementary Art Teacher of the Year. Natovian has facilitated district and state level professional development focused on culturally responsive practices, anti-racist teaching and student engagement. Her passion for contemporary art led her to be a panelist moderated by Davis Publications and Art 21's discussion on how to use contemporary art in the elementary classroom and inspire students to become change advocates. Before becoming the Director of Youth Programs and Community Education at MICA, Natovian was the program coordinator for MICA's Art and Design College Accelerator Program and MICA's Pre-College Art and Design Residency Program. She is committed to arts education and hopes to promote more access and educational opportunities to youth and adults in Baltimore City.

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# Kate Porter

ASSOCIATE DEAN, OPEN STUDIES



**Kate Porter** earned both her BFA in Photography and MAT at MICA. She also earned an Administration 1 Certification, Certificate of Advanced Study in Organizational Change, from the College of Graduate Studies and Research at Towson University; holds an MSDE Advanced Professional Teaching Certificate in Art PreK-12; as well as being MSDE Administrator I and II Certified. Prior to coming to MICA, Kate worked as the Program Director for Youth in Focus (a non-profit youth development photography organization in Seattle, WA) and as the assistant principal for the Baltimore Design School.

Kate served as the Director of Youth and Community Education in Open Studies for 4 years. In this role she provided strategic and logistical leadership and direction for all programs serving young students (grades K-12) and community education for life-long learners through MICA's Open Studies academic unit. These programs currently include: Young People's Studios; the Pre-College Art and Design Residency Program; the Art and Design College Accelerator Program; Community Education; and Professional Practice. The Director also managed and implemented any new or special initiatives related to the K-12 or community audiences.

Kate was promoted to Associate Dean of Open Studies in April 2022 where she will focus on leading organizational strategy, strengthening operational efficiency and effectiveness, oversight and management of area policy, regulatory compliance, accreditation, assessment, program review, academic services and resources, etc. for all Open Studies programming including degree programs, lifelong learning programs, and youth programs.

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# Susan Tuberville

PROGRAM MANAGER, COMMUNITY ART COLLABORATIVE



**Susan Tuberville** received her MFA in Community Arts from the Maryland Institute College of Art, and her BFA in Studio Art and Art Education from Birmingham-Southern College.

As a studio artist and educator, Susan is passionate about expanding access to meaningful arts-based experiences. She has taught Visual Art at both the primary and secondary levels in Botswana and South Korea. As a MFACA student and Community Art Collaborative member in Baltimore, Susan partnered with BCCC Refugee Youth Project to develop afterschool arts programming and special events for newly arrived families in Baltimore. Susan has since worked with multiple schools and arts organizations across the city, including Baltimore Lab School, Access Art, and Creative Alliance. She also leads artmaking workshops for adults and families, and has developed curriculum for youth-serving organizations across the country including Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) and Jewish Family Services of Western Massachusetts.

Susan continues her studio practice working primarily in fibers with a spontaneous sprinkle of other media that bring her joy. She looks forward to supporting CAC members, host organizations, and youth and families throughout Baltimore City through CAC's unique model for youth arts programming.

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