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College Voice Vol. XLII No. 1 [September 25, 2018]

Connecticut College

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THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1977

Global Islamic Studies Awarded \$806,000 Grant from Mellon

MAX AMAR-OLKUS
EDITOR IN CHIEF

This past week, the Trump administration announced that it would admit no more than 30,000 refugees to the U.S. in the coming year, down from the current cap of 45,000. Earlier this month, the right-wing, anti-immigration Sweden Democrat party saw a surge in its parliamentary power, coming in third place in a recent election with 17.6 percent of the vote. The uptick in the party's parliamentary representation will likely reshape Sweden's immigration policies. The Swedish Democrat Party, with its anti-im-

migrant sentiment, taps into public opinion across Europe. A recent Pew Research Center study found that 61 percent of Italians and 56 percent of Poles expressed a negative view of Muslims in their country. Far-right nationalist parties such as the National Front in France, AfD in Germany, and the BJP in India (just to name a few) have been on the rise in recent years. These political actors stir up a fear of all things related to Islam by scapegoating Muslims and blaming them for a lack of jobs, exploiting welfare systems, and stoking

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A Fine Place Worth Fighting For

MAX WHISNANT
CONTRIBUTOR

The world is a fine place and worth the fighting for and I hate very much to leave it.
--Robert Jordan in Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*

On Saturday, August 25, 2018, the world lost an American hero. After a yearlong fight with brain cancer, Senator John McCain passed away in his home state of Arizona, surrounded by loved ones. Surviving nearly six years as a prisoner of war in Vietnam, McCain returned home to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1983-1987 and then in the



Photo courtesy of Ross D. Franklin/AP

U.S. Senate from 1987 until his death. As a Senator, John McCain chaired the Armed

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New London Through a Camera Lens



Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Berry

ELIZABETH BERRY
STAFF WRITER

Currently on display in the Cummings Arts Center lobby is a photography exhibit titled "Looking for John Winthrop Jr." composed by Conn's recently retired photography professor, Ted Hendrickson. This exhibit showcases photographs taken from present day New London and other New England cities and landmarks which relate to the life of John Winthrop Junior or "the Younger." Winthrop was the eldest son of John Winthrop, the first Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and his wife Mary Forth.

One of the photographs pictures the time-

line of the younger Winthrop's life beginning from his birth in Groton, Suffolk, England in 1606 to his death in 1675. Winthrop went to Trinity College in Dublin. After college, he traveled around Europe and eventually married his first wife, Martha (Fones) Winthrop. Winthrop then moved to America and unfortunately, shortly after this move, his wife and their daughter died in their new home in Ipswich, MA. However, Winthrop married again to Elizabeth (Reade) Winthrop and continued his travels throughout MA and CT, even travelling to our home, New London, in 1631. In fact, John Winthrop Jr. is credited with founding New London. Winthrop is remembered

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OPINIONS

Jacee Cox details trends in college acceptance rates on page 7.

OPINIONS

Emir Kulluk warns against Turkey's Democratic decline on page 9.

ARTS

Brooke Sponzo previews the upcoming Wig and Candle Season on page 12

From the Editors

After a weekend of copy-editing and late night InDesign sessions, we are excited to release the first issue of *The Voice* for this semester. The paper features articles from both first-time contributors and seasoned staff members on a range of topics—including the politics of museums, the future of women running for office, and academic developments at the College. Despite the wide array of topics featured in this issue, many articles have an underlying common theme: political courage.

We expect political courage from our elected leaders. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who unseated Democratic incumbent Joe Crowley, tapped into this hope by highlighting that a simple act of political courage can spur systemic change. Max Whitsnant '21, in his profile on John McCain for *The Voice*, noted that “the Maverick” secured his legacy by working across the aisle—an act of courage given our hyper partisan climate. But while holding leaders accountable is important, we should talk more about the courage and engagement we expect from voters. College students have the potential to spur meaningful social change. Yet, in the last midterms, only 18% of college students actually voted according to data compiled by Tufts University. We need to channel our desire for political reform into concrete action, and newspapers can play an important role in his effort.

We have seen that protests staged by college and high school students have real policy impacts. The #NeverAgain movement pressured Florida lawmakers to signed into law the Majority Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act—a start to more comprehensive gun safety laws. Social media connected students across state lines and expanded the movement. Social media represents an essential tool of the emerging media landscape. Newspapers that adapt to the digital age will prove more able to understand and represent movements. College newspapers, through media savvy, have already proven better able to represent their communities. In 2015, for example, the *Columbia Missourian*—the student newspaper associated with the University of Columbia—obtained video footage of campus protests that led to the termination of a professor.

In the upcoming year, we hope that *The Voice* will serve as an archive of events happening on campus and will energize readers to become more involved in national politics or the politics of Conn. We plan to revamp our website and social media presence to make the newspaper more assessable to the community and to be better aware of the issues important to Conn. You can expect more long-form investigative pieces if we believe that that a particular policy merits further exploration and the campus has not been provided sufficient information by the administration. We have new staff this year, all strong writers with great ideas on how to make *The Voice* the best that it can be. We look forward to hearing your thoughts in the months ahead and we invite you to reach out to us as we produce the next issue of the paper.

-Max and Dana

THE COLLEGE VOICE

The views and opinions expressed in *The College Voice* are strictly those of student authors, and not of Connecticut College. All content and editorial decisions remain in the hands of the students; neither the College's administration nor its faculty exercise control over the content.

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Community Bulletin

No Catholic Church Investigations in CT

In the wake of revelations that 300 priests in Pennsylvania had sexually abused more 1,000 children in a span of 70 years, several states have launched investigations into Catholic Church. No such investigation is even being contemplated in Connecticut because the state claims no specific evidence of crimes exists.

Powder Incident at New London Mosque

The Groton police, in tandem with the FBI, is investigating a hate crime involving a white powdery substance sent to the Islamic Center of New London. The substance was sent alongside a note cursing the Prophet Muhammad. Technicians reviewed the powder at the scene and police say there is no immediate danger to surrounding residents.

Nonstop Service from Boston to Honolulu

Hawaiian Airlines announced that, starting April 4, 2019, it will offer five-day-a-week nonstop service between Boston and Honolulu. When launched, the 11 hour and 40 minute flight from Boston to Honolulu will be the longest nonstop domestic flight ever flown in US history.

Sports Spotlight

BY PRICE DAY

Men's Results

Cross Country 6th at Purple Valley

Water Polo wins 15-11 vs. Monmouth, lose 9-16 vs Washington & Jefferson

Soccer wins 1-0 vs Hamilton,

Women's Results

Cross Country 10th at Purple Valley

Soccer loses 1-2 to Hamilton, win vs. Colby 2-0

Volleyball loses to Clark 0-3, Wesleyan 2-3

Field Hockey lose 0-4 to Hamilton, 1-2 to Colby

Upcoming Events

September 26th Field Hockey @ Trinity

September 27th Volleyball @Amherst

September 28th Sailing Danmark Trophy @ Coast Guard

September 29th Men's & Women's XC @ Bowdoin, Men's & Women's Soccer vs. Williams, Volleyball @ Trinity, Field Hockey vs. Williams

Staff Recs

Media and journalism recommendations from the staff of *The College Voice*

Dana Gallagher:

"Americans Aren't Practicing Democracy Anymore," *The Atlantic*. As participation in civic life has dwindled, public faith in our system of government has also declined. This in-depth article provides solutions meant to bolster faith in our political process.

"Talk of the 25th Amendment Underscores a Volatile Presidency," *The New York Times*. The *Times* reports that Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein had encouraged senior administration members to wiretap their conversations with the President to prove his lack of fitness for office. The piece provides new insight into the dynamics at the White House.

Grace Amato:

"On Hurricane Maria Anniversary, Puerto Rico is still in Ruins," *The New York Times*. This article highlights the relief that Puerto Rico still needs even after one year since Hurricane Maria. There are many helpful graphs to underscore the destruction and personal stories that help us as college students in Connecticut understand the island's struggle.

Saadya Chevan:

"Bundyville," *Longreads*. A seven episode podcast that examines the Bundy family and how their religious and legal beliefs influenced their actions and trial. Rancher Cliven Bundy was the central figure of the Bundy Standoff, a 2014 armed confrontation between federal law enforcement and his supporters and his sons Ammon and Ryan led the 2016 occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

Alex Klavens:

"Number of migrant children in Texas shelters reaches new high despite end of 'zero tolerance'," *The Texas Tribune*. This is an example of great data reporting by the Texas Tribune on the continued practice of migrant children being held by immigration authorities. While the current Presidential administration officially ended a 'zero tolerance,' the number of children living in shelters remains high.

"Russia's Pro-Gun Influence Accounts Copied The NRA — And Sometimes, Vice Versa," *NPR*. An NPR investigation reveals highly similar language in Russian social media accounts and those of the National Rifle Association. "What is clear is that, at times, the Russians followed so closely behind the American gun rights group that it duplicated its content word for word."

Price Day:

"France Removes Toxic Tyres from Failed Reef Project," *BBC*. French divers remove thousands of tires from an artificial reef after they were discovered to spread toxic chemicals and other pollutants. A similar project is being conducted near Fort Lauderdale, FL.

Jeffrey Cole Replaces Abby Van Slyck as Dean of the Faculty

WALTER STUART
CONTRIBUTOR

As of July 1, former anthropology professor and Associate Dean of the Faculty Jeffrey Cole now occupies the second-highest ranking office at the College after the President as the new Dean of the Faculty.

He replaces Abigail Van Slyck who stepped down after four years in that position. Van Slyck helped craft the College's strategic plan, and she participated in committees that introduced a Vice President of Finance and Administration and a Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion to the College. Additionally, as Dean of the Faculty, she brought in the second-highest reported income of any college employee -- \$266,783 in FY2016.

The search for a new Dean of the Faculty yielded two finalists: Cole and philosophy professor Derek Turner. In a two-page candidate statement, Cole expressed concerns about the College's financial state, saying "all divisions across the college will be asked to maintain high standards with less."

Turner, who has served on the College's Priorities, Planning, and Budget Committee, focused his fourteen-page statement on what he claims to be the College's financial vulnerabilities, claiming the College is "more tuition dependent than the schools we compete with in the admissions market."

The Dean of the Faculty oversees multiple crucial departments and areas here at the College. "Part of my job is to be the principal advisor on academic affairs to the President.

"I have oversight over the departments, programs, and centers on campus. The arbo is one. It is an issue of curriculum, the Arboretum contains vast collections that are curated. The arbo is used by something like 20 courses a year. Faculty have historically and today conducted research, it is fundamentally part of our curriculum."

Cole says the role goes beyond simple oversight and extends to directly working with faculty and staff to help develop the resources of the College.

"A big part of what we do in this office is try to provide a number of professional development activities for faculty through programming and through internal funding."

Cole first joined the College in 2008 as the chair of the Anthropology Department after working for 15 years at Dowling College.

He says his background as an anthropologist will help him transition into this new position. "One of the things I have done as a cultural anthropologist over the last 20 years is to observe and listen carefully. That attention to listening carefully is an aid for anyone in an administrative position."

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One Book One Region and Connecticut College present

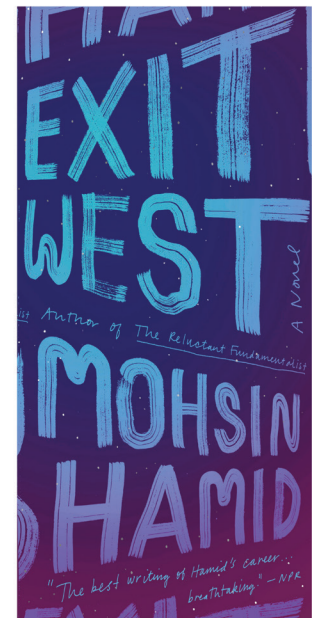
A CONVERSATION WITH MOHSIN HAMID, AUTHOR OF *EXIT WEST*

This year's **One Book One Region** selection is *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid. Set in a world being irrevocably transformed by migration, *Exit West* follows a young couple in an unnamed country, as their city collapses and they are forced to join a wave of migrants fleeing for their lives.

Connecticut College selected *Exit West* as its summer read for all incoming first-year students.

Author Mohsin Hamid visits New London to discuss *Exit West* and related issues.

The author will host a book signing following the event.



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Health Center Still Without Permanent Director

ALEX KLAVENS AND ALEXIS HOWARD
NEWS EDITOR AND CONTRIBUTOR

A failed search for a new director of Student Health Services and the resignation of a part-time nurse practitioner has forced the College's primary medical office to cut services to just 28 hours per week. While the search for replacement staff continues, the Associate Dean of Student Life is taking on some director responsibilities while SHS will lean on a new partnership with a New London urgent care clinic to meet students' health needs.

Following the retirement of SHS Director Cate Moffitt last winter and the resignation of interim SHS director Shauna Rago last spring, the College conducted a summertime search for a new director. At least three people were interviewed for that position, but none were hired.

With nobody currently occupying that position, Senior Associate Dean of Student Life Sarah Cardwell is handling many non-clinical duties of the SHS director.

The Director of Student Health Services traditionally serves both clinical and administrative roles, treating patients while handling budgeting and representation of SHS in meetings. The SHS director reports to the Associate Dean of Student Life.

Cardwell is not playing the complete role of SHS director as she is not licensed to conduct clinical work. She says she does not have access to student medical records and is "not in the weeds of the actual medical care," attributing that to her lack of a medical license. She is not included in medical conversations that would normally include a SHS director, such as a discussion on a student's medical treatment.

Speaking to SGA this past Thursday, Cardwell says she is involved in "things like the budget, in the hours, the communications of things about health services out to the campus." Cardwell coordinates with SHS staff on schedules, represents SHS in meetings and works directly with staff about non-medical concerns and problems.

In addition to Cardwell's title of Senior Associate Dean of Student Life, she is the Deputy Title IX coordinator; she is responsible for the College's student-based Honor Council; she supervises the Office of Wellbeing and Health Promotion; she works closely with the Director of Student Wellness, Alcohol and Other Drug Education and with the Director of Sexual Violence Prevention and Advocacy, a position that is currently vacant.

It is not clear how much time Cardwell spends as an administrator of SHS in proportion to her many other roles on campus.

Cardwell says she doesn't know how much time she puts in: "I just do what I know needs to be done. Right now, I'm working a lot more nights than I normally do."

Meanwhile, there is no formal medical leader of SHS. Cardwell says that two SHS nurse practitioners and the College's contracted physician, Dr. Michael Kilgannon, are making medical decisions.

Though Cardwell referred to Dr. Kilgannon at Thursday's SGA meeting as the "medical director of health services," the College's website does not give him this title, describing him as "the medical director at both Saint Joseph's Living Center in Willimantic and Medeast Walk-in Clinic." Dr. Kilgannon does not appear in the College's internal directory in that role or at all. All other SHS staff appear in that directory.

Cardwell says the "unanticipated" resignation of a part-time nurse practitioner this past summer left SHS "with an even bigger hole in the hours." She characterized a rush to hire a nurse practitioner as a top priority, saying she has "personally gone to extremes" to find someone she describes as an "emergency hire."

This does not appear to be a search for a permanent fix. The College's current "Nurse Practitioner" job listing describes a part-time, non-salaried, no-benefits temporary position that will end in May 2019.

Though Cardwell says the search for a director is ongoing, there is no current listing on the Connecticut College website for that position.

Short on clinical hours, the College has turned to the Go-Health urgent care clinic, located near the New London ShopRite. Cardwell says the College's partnership felt necessary "when it became apparent that we were going to be short hours at the beginning of this year."

Cardwell described the new relationship as "an expansion of what we offer on campus" because they offer more hours than SHS and they provide services like "X-Rays and stitches" that SHS can't offer in-house. She also noted that students can use a Uber-based service through campus safety that will not require students to pay out-of-pocket for transportation to urgent care.

While SHS remains understaffed, it cannot be a full-time medical office as it has been in the past. Cardwell claims this is a "temporary situation" and she says the College is "feverishly trying to reopen so that we are open 9 to 4, 9 to 5, whatever the hours will be." •

GIS Grant

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

violent conflict. These parties, and their millions of followers, look to the Middle East and blame internal conflict in the region and the global refugee crisis on some sort of inherent fallibility limited to the followers of Islam. However, Connecticut College is working to combat the narrative that Muslims are evil, violent, and only come from the Middle East. Late last week, it was announced that the Global Islamic Studies Department had received a four-year \$806,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation to continue to foster interdisciplinary study of Islam on a global scale. “We’ve made it clear that what we want is to undo that knowledge construction,” said Professor Sufia Uddin, a core faculty member and the former director of Global Islamic Studies. She continued, saying, “Mellon doesn’t just give money away. The grant represents a firm belief in what we’re doing— that what we’re doing is the right thing.”

“Students come to Connecticut College and want to study, ‘why Muslims hate us’ or they say, ‘we have to do security studies because we are in conflict with Muslims and we must destroy them, or defeat them, or keep them contained. The language can vary from very blatantly racist and prejudicial to more subtle terms. We’re trying to undo that,” said Uddin.

The grant is multi-faceted, but the main goals are to further develop Global Islamic Studies and to infuse the knowledge shared by the professors into different departments across the curriculum. There are opportunities for professors who already teach on aspects of Islam to enhance their scholarship and change the way they teach their classes. Additionally, there will be an exchange program with Brown University in which Connecticut College professors will be able to go to Brown and study some aspect of Islam and Muslim communities globally. In return, Brown will be sending advanced Graduate students to teach courses at Conn.

“How I teach modern European history has definitely changed in a positive way since becoming a part of this program,” said Professor Eileen Kane, the current director of Global Islamic Studies. Kane, a Historian of Eastern Europe, likened the rapid growth of the Global Islamic Studies Department at Conn to the political aftermath of the Russian Revolution. “It’s kind of like how Lenin saw it as a strength that there had never really been flourishing capitalism— or not to the same extent as Western Europe. He said, ‘we’re lucky because we can skip over that stage and just go right to socialism and communism. We never had (like many other colleges and universities) a Middle East Studies program here, and that was seen

as a strength. A lot of programs have renamed themselves ‘Islamic Studies’ but they’re really just about the Middle East.”

Discussing the growth of Global Islamic Studies after an initial seed grant from the Mellon Foundation in 2012, Professor Uddin said, “We are working on reimagining how people study Muslims and Islam. A lot of colleges have tried that already but they get too much resistance— people just don’t want to commit to that. It’s really because they’re so tied to the link they have to Orientalism.”

When creating the program, Professor Uddin saw that the faculty expertise lay largely outside of the Middle East, focusing on areas such as Bangladesh, North Africa, Turkey, Russia, and South East Asia. “Most Muslims live outside of the Middle East,” remarked Professor Kane. She continued, saying, “Muslims do not live in isolation. Historically, Muslims have always lived among other people. The program is also very much about studying Muslim communities as part of world history and cultures.”

The new grant from the Mellon Foundation will provide funding for additional Foreign Language Across Curriculum (FLAC) courses and will also bolster the Structured Independent Language Study (SILS) program operated out of the Walter Commons in Blaustein. Amy Dooling, the Associate Dean of Global Initiatives and Director of the Walter Commons for Global Study and Engagement, said that SILS has been a great success since launching last spring, and has broadened the list of languages students could learn during their time at Conn. These courses are operated mostly by student tutors, under the oversight of Laura Little, who already speak languages such as Urdu, Turkish, and Bengali for students interested in learning something other than classical Arabic.

Professors Kane and Uddin were particularly excited about the interdisciplinary nature of Global Islamic Studies. “What’s great about Global Islamic Studies is that we also learn from a number of different areas, such as Post-Colonial studies. Our partnerships should be with fields of study like Africana Studies, Latin American Studies, Native American studies— the struggles of other people who have been persecuted can help enlighten one’s own area,” said Uddin.

Fiona Hull ’21, a History and Global Islamic Studies double major, said, “I’m really excited. I think this will make us more of a legitimate department. I think it’ll encourage students who would otherwise do International Relations to keep pursuing Global Islamic Studies because you can combine your interests in a way that’s much more impactful or meaningful.” •

Dean of Faculty

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Cole says his experience serving as Associate Dean of the Faculty since 2015 prepares him for challenges he will face in his new role. In that role, helped to implement the Connections curriculum while supporting the College’s involvement in the C3 consortium which promotes diversity in higher education.

He also assisted departmental reviews. He recalled external praise of the College’s faculty and says a main challenge is bringing together what he describes as the “great ideas” of faculty and staff. “It’s a question of how much we can make happen.”

Financial issues are a concern for students, professors, and administrators, and Cole is no exception. “Costs are an issue at every institution of higher education. It is a widespread challenge to the whole sector of higher ed.” He says the school plans to continue its fundraising campaign, specifically mentioning the endowment as a priority within the College’s strategic plan.

Cole claims the College’s budget reflects institutional values. “Let’s take the institutions budget, which is a little over \$100 million a year. The amount of money dedicated to financial aid has grown from 26 to nearly 39 million since the 2011-2012 year, which is a significant increase and demonstrates the colleges commitment to supporting students and their families.” Beyond that, the money goes to “the administrators, staff, faculty, and student workers. All the people who make the College go.”

Cole says he is “humbled and honored” to have stepped into what is his biggest role yet at the College. He says his experience teaching drives his passion to help improve the College and its community. •

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The Class of 2022

JACEE COX
NEWS EDITOR

Connecticut College's Class of 2022 marks the largest group of first-year students the College has ever welcomed, selected from its equally record-setting sized pool of applicants. The College received 362 applications in the first and second rounds of Early Decision and 6,071 applications in the regular decision rounds. 37.8% of applicants were accepted into the College throughout the process, and the school yielded 21.04% of these students.

Andrew Strickler, Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, reports that "further development and understanding of the Connections curriculum, waiving the application fee to increase access to a Conn education, and continued enhancement of recruitment travel" all contribute to the numbers the school saw in the spring season of admissions. The College also credits its renowned career program and encouragement of global engagement for drawing in such large numbers of interests among prospective students. Whether or not these factors were actually as influential in the decisions of applying students is unclear.

Record-breaking numbers represent a trend among other NESCAC schools in the 2018 admissions process as well. Colby College had its

most selective year yet, admitting just 13% of its 12,314 applicants. For the first time, Hamilton College's applicant numbers broke 6,000, with 6,240. Middlebury College also experienced its largest applicant pool thus far, with 9,230 applicants and 1,696 enrollees. Our neighbors in Hartford at Trinity College noted in its data the highest number of first-generation and international students included in their class of 2022. Across the board, small liberal arts schools are seeing major growth with the number of students they are attracting.

In an effort to increase applications, our peer schools have also reduced steps within the application process. Bates College removed its required supplemental essay on its application this past year. Bates boasts 550 members of its 2022 class from the largest application pool in the school's history with 7,685 applications.

The incentive for schools to remove such items from their application rests in the persuasion of numbers. Although the number of admitted students has increased in certain cases as applicant numbers rise, the growth of enrolled students is nowhere near proportional to the rate in which students are applying to these schools. With little

extra needed to complete an application, choosing to apply to an institution without extra requirements is widely accessible. Schools benefit from seeing their acceptance rates fall as their application numbers rise because institutions want to be perceived as selective and competitive. A lowering acceptance rate may indicate, to some college customers, that a school is increasingly desirable, whether or not this is the actual consensus amongst applicants.

An additional concern for schools involves money. The 2017-2018 total cost of attendance at Connecticut College was reported to be \$68,440. The 2018-2019 year attendance cost is stated to be \$71,970. Tuition is increasing throughout the country, and it once again demonstrates the role of numbers. Schools are caught in competition with each other to appear selective and competitive, while also raising revenue from tuition. Some schools, Connecticut College included, have eliminated their application fees, which is certainly an attractive quality for prospective students. However, schools must then find other means to bring in that would-be revenue.

Connecticut College has the lowest endowment of all other NESCAC institutions, and

the school's revenue is heavily dependent upon tuition and room and board expenses. The College sustained a near \$300 million endowment as of 2017. According to Fiscal Year 2016 tax data, the College took in \$111,261,000 in revenue from tuition and room and board, nearly half the value of our estimated endowment. The College's endowment is significantly lower in comparison to peer institutions, and previous class years have included notably fewer members than the Class of 2022. The size inflation of the first-year class suggests the College may be attempting to make up for lost revenue.

Year-by-year, assessing how application data change and stagnate amongst colleges is challenging. Numbers are bound to fluctuate by the nature of the market. However, one thing to keep in mind is finding tipping point at which application numbers and enrollment drop due to financial restraints caused by the competitive and constraining education industry. With the application trends emerging amongst smaller liberal arts institutions, how far will these schools go until they are no longer able to support these patterns or student body sizes? •

A Fine Place Worth Fighting For

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Services Committee for the three years leading up to his death. When asked during a 2008 Presidential campaign interview, then-Senator John McCain stated that Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* was his favorite book. The title is taken from John Donne's "Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions." The bells to which both works refer are funeral bells. They serve as reminders that death eventually comes to us all. It's a humbling metaphor that John McCain took to heart, especially in his final days. In a beautifully penned farewell address to a grateful nation, John McCain gave us hope for a brighter future. He wrote, "Do not despair of our present difficulties but believe always in the promise and greatness of America, because nothing is inevitable here. Americans never quit. We never surrender. We never hide from history. We make history." Memorial services will continue to sweep across the nation in the coming days and weeks as Americans gather to thank and memorialize a legend in American politics. A man so revered by his colleagues is rare. A man so revered by a grateful nation is rarer still. John McCain was both.

Throughout his career, McCain accomplished much. He crossed party lines more often than what is considered "normal" within politics as he stood steadfastly by his principles. However, he was hardly infallible. The most visible and controversial being "The Keating Five," a 1989 corruption scandal where McCain was eventually cleared of any wrongdoing. After his absolution, he dedicated significant time and effort to decreasing corruption in politics. On a personal level, he had an infamous temper. It could burn white-hot and then melt away just as quickly into a wide grin and a pat on the back. But it was his imperfections, his mistakes, his humanness that made him the man he became revered for throughout his career. Lapses in judgment and human flaws cannot overshadow his service to our country.

McCain was a giant in the Senate. Yet he was unpredictable as well, a reputation that earned him the nickname "The Maverick." He pushed the boundaries of party-line politics, something almost unheard of in today's politics, never wavering in the face of intense scrutiny. His politics aside, McCain's strength of will and moral fortitude are to be admired, traits too often overlooked in our leaders. Our politicians buckle far too easily under

partisan pressure, compromising their values for votes. Not John McCain. As infuriating as he was to conservatives and liberals alike, he amassed enormous power by building up his reputation as a man trying his best to do right by his constituents. He led by example, forcing us to look in the mirror and question which values we should cling tight to and which values we can let slip from our fingers. It was a challenge to us all to be better than ourselves.

We've lost our way as a country beginning at the highest levels of our government. Politicians have lost sight of what it means to represent something more than themselves. We need dynamic leaders willing to risk everything for the good of the country and not their careers. It's a responsibility at which few can succeed, but politicians unwilling to take responsibility for their actions cannot be the standard. It pains me to say, but I believe that we live in a world where caring for someone other than ourselves is too much of an afterthought. Politics is a zero-sum game. Good faith doesn't exist and personal ambition blinds us so we forget that the country's best interests must come above all else. But it's not too late. We can salvage the pieces and put everything back together again. All we have to do is accept the challenge.

For all his faults, known and unknown, John McCain believed in America. He believed in her ability to be a beacon of hope and example to the rest of the world. His career was highlighted by a challenge he extended to us all--that we might rise above partisan pressures in the interest of country. It is now our job to accept his challenge and follow the example left behind by John McCain. He left this world with dignity and grace and with all the love in the world. Unfortunately, he left us in dire need of women and men who lead with respect for the power they yield. But, he gave us a silver lining. We never hide from history. We make history. We can never question that sentiment, for it speaks truth to the promise of what America can be. He set the bar high, and it's our job to maintain it. Make history. Look to the John McCain's of the world. Let them guide you, for there are good people willing to work for what's right. Maybe it's the quiet kid in the back of the class. Maybe it's the stranger on the bus. Maybe it's the store clerk. Maybe it's the coal miner in West Virginia. Maybe it's the priest in Arkansas. They can sometimes be hard to find. All you have to do is look. •

Women in Politics

HAILEY GILSON
CONTRIBUTOR

"The Year of the Woman." The last time this phrase held significance was in 1992. At the time, only two women were serving in the Senate. Political pundits believed that women were driven to run for government positions as a result of testimony provided by Anita Hill. In 1991 Hill, testified in front of an all male Senate Judiciary Committee accusing Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas of sexual harassment. The committee, as evidenced by its treatment of Hill, did not believe her claims. She was berated and her experience was dismissed without any real investigation, a fact that provoked outrage across the country. The Hill hearing gave women an understanding that their interests could not be represented by a largely male Congress.

In 1992, white men occupied most government positions. But the hearing inspired a surge of women to run for office. Their shared outrage mobilized them to vote and resulted in a record number of 24 women elected to the House and four women into the Senate. The 1992 elections represented the start of something new. It foreshadowed a more equal representation of men and women in Congress. However, in the years that followed, that hope has not been realized. Today, women make up only 19% of Congress. The 2018 midterms, however, may prove to be a turning point in congressional representation. This year, 468 women are running for the House and 51 women are running for the Senate. Women, enraged by their underrepresentation, understand that Congress needs to look different if things

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Turkey: A Bridge Not Worth Burning

EMIR KULLUK
BUSINESS MANAGER

Ever since a failed coup by the Turkish military in 2016, Turkey has undergone a steady political decline that seems unalterable. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has become much more aggressive when it comes to implementing his agenda. He has instituted a boycott of American electronics, silenced critics of his administration, and threatened his political rivals. The latest Presidential election, which featured political candidates Erdoğan and Muharrem İnce, ended in total chaos. Ballot boxes were stolen, disregarded or burnt. Contributing to the country's current instability, the economy has also taken a massive hit recently. The increasing value of foreign currencies such as the British Pound, the Euro and the American Dollar impact the prices of all imports and the spending power of Turkish citizens.

As Turkey's stability continues to decrease and the country slowly crawls towards authoritarian rule, how should the rest of the world respond? Why is Turkey different than any other country that is destabilized or experiencing some kind of civil war or interference from outside forces?

First of all, Turkey is the bridge between the Middle East and Europe, a connection that benefits and affects both regions. There are several transportation lines which go through Turkey that help import and export goods from the Middle East and Europe, benefitting both sides economically. If Turkey becomes destabilized and incapable of transporting goods, this might affect the economy of the Middle East and Europe. The resulting economic downturn would cause further conflict and backlash within the Middle East, while European countries may be forced to find other, potentially more costly routes to import said goods. Another possibility is the migration of the masses. Since Turkey is physically connected to two continents, instability in the coun-

try may result in the migration of both Syrian refugees and Turkish migrants towards Europe. Migration, in turn, may contribute to the ensuing refugee crisis and prompt

seems adamant at seizing every possible facet of power. He has devalued the Senate and has given himself the power to make unilateral alterations to the law. Erdoğan has also

allowed himself to stay at his position for many more years to come. His attitude towards foreign leaders has shown that he is not in favor of receiving help from other countries, letting alone listen to their advice, which has weakened international alliances.

One possible scenario to stabilize Turkey is through popular revolt. As the price of basic items such as food, housing, fuel, electricity and water continue to rise, a possible protest by the people might dethrone Erdoğan. However, this scenario would not immediately improve the situation in Turkey. Rather, popular protests would have the

opposite effect. The country would continue on a path of decline as it tried to find a new leader and correct its way of governance. But, once this issue is resolved, the country would once again be able to build its relationships and its economy.

Why does all of this matter if nothing can be done directly by anybody outside of Turkey? Well, one advantage Erdoğan has is the lack of coverage of the events taking place within Turkey, as his strict grip over the media has stifled any negative press regarding him or his governance from being released online or outside. If more people become aware of the what is happening in Turkey and realize the possible impact of Erdoğan's policies, then world leaders would be more inclined to support the people of Turkey, impact local politics through protests and encourage free speech. In the end, history proves that Turkey has been a great bridge of cross-cultural interaction. It has provided opportunities for foreign economies to flourish and become a great spot for tourism. As of now, these bridges need to be repaired or a possible collapse is imminent. •



Photo courtesy of Tarik Tinazay/AFP/Getty Images

European countries to start taking drastic measures to limit the intake of refugees.

Secondly, Turkey's potential collapse could result with the country allying with a super power, such as Russia or the US, which could start a whole new set of problems for the rest of the world. Since Turkey's location is right under Russia's busiest ports, if the US forms an alliance with Turkey, there might be stricter regulations for Russia, which might result in tensions rising amongst the two superpowers. Similarly, if Russia forms an alliance with Turkey, its apprehension of vital transportation lines might result with European countries becoming more aggressive towards Russia, which might result in tensions rising once again. On the other hand, if Turkey joins an alliance with Middle Eastern countries, Russia and the United States may institute a much more aggressive approach to the Middle East. Both countries could conceivably try to seize control of Turkey.

All of these possible scenarios beg the question: How can all of this be prevented? Truth be told, as of now, it cannot. Erdoğan

Women in Politics

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

are going to change. In 1992, white women were the primary winners. Today, there is so much more diversity among the candidates, which can potentially create a Congress that actually reflects the demographics of our country.

In 2018, Members of the LGBTQIA community witnessed the electoral win of a fellow member Christine Hallquist. Hallquist, a Democrat from Vermont, made history as the first transgender candidate nominated for governorship by a major party. Her nomination is an impressive feat and an important step for LGBTQIA equality.

There are many women to watch as this years elections take place. Rashida Tlaib



Photo courtesy of Daniel Leal-Olivas -- AFP/Getty Images

could become the first Muslim woman elected to Congress. She is the daughter of Palestinian parents and understands first-hand the discrimination Arab-Americans face in American society. In local, state, and public offices, more than 90 Muslims individuals have won. Gina Ortiz Jones, a resident of Texas, is also running for a spot in Congress. Jones would not only bring female representation if elected, but would also represent other minority communities as well. She would be the first Filipina-American woman to win, a first generation American, a member of the LGBTQ community, and a Iraq war veteran. Also running for governor

is Paulette Jordan of Idaho. If elected, she would become the first female Native American governor. She has spoken about the challenges of running, saying at times that people doubt her abilities and question her decision to run in the first place. These criticisms have not deterred her. Many of the communities with which these women identify have been struggling in the current political climate. Perhaps by winning, they can be voices for their communities and advocate for policies informed by their diverse personal experiences.

The fight for female representation within the government has not been easy. Women face

many challenges that men do not. They are constantly under intense scrutiny and work harder to prove themselves. In order to be taken seriously, women cannot let their emotions drive actions. They cannot act aggressively or they may be labeled

difficult. They cannot be too soft or they will be perceived as weak. People expect women candidates to be likable to prove that they are qualified, another thing that men do not have to worry about. These stark limitations continue to represent the fine line women navigate through.

The voices of women are invaluable. They are essential in the process for attaining equal rights and for enacting laws that deal with issues women face today. Women not running for office have been on the front-

lines in their communities through protests and advocacy for the passage of certain laws. Throughout 2018, women of all backgrounds have banded together to become one unifying force fighting for the rights they believe in. History is in the making, and women are at the forefront. 2018 is shaping up to be another "Year of the Woman." •



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Recent Graduates Start NYC Theater Company

SAADYA CHEVAN
ARTS EDITOR

It has been a busy time for Lindsey Ruzza, Dara Pohl Feldman and Rebecca Brill Weiz--all theater majors from the Class of 2018. In the four months since their commencement, they have started the New York City-based Ruthless Nightingale Theater Company and produced Ruzza's "In the Spotlight" at the Loft at the Davenport Theatre, an Off-Broadway house, under the company's banner. Ruzza and Pohl Feldman co-founded the company and serve as co-artistic directors; Brill Weiz is the general manager.

The name Ruthless Nightingale is meant to emphasize the risks that the company hopes to take by producing new and interesting works of theater. Pohl Feldman notes the Nightingale is a symbol that never has been neutral. It always has been used to represent polar opposites like "love and hate" or "death and life." "It's going to sound really pretentious," said Pohl Feldman. "But I hope that [Ruthless Nightingale] begins to serve the theater industry. I hope that it begins to go somewhere different."

From a business standpoint, Ruthless Nightingale will be supporting productions that more conservative producers would likely shun. Describing the freedom they hope to give to theater-makers, Pohl Feldman explains: "A production might fail, and fall flat on its face, but I don't want anyone to ever say that it failed because it didn't try hard enough, or it didn't take the risk that it wanted to take; that it was safe. I hope [Ruthless Nightingale] serves the type of people who are looking for that right now."

The production process for "In the Spotlight," which previously received two performances during Conn's May 2018 Theater Capstone Festival, was rather hasty. The company found out it had received a space grant at the Loft only six weeks prior to the performances. It was forced to hastily assemble a cast and crew that included former and current Conn students: Lizzy Moreno '18, who was reprising her role from the production at Conn, and Carly Sponzo '21, who designed costumes. The company also recruited involvement from contacts the three had made during their time as interns at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Waterford, CT. A fund-

raiser helped the company afford costs for technical staff and actors. The producers were particularly proud that they were able to pay their actors as many similar companies in the industry often do not do so.

Brill Weiz describes the process of learning to produce an off-Broadway show on the job as "all the same things you do in school. It's like a Wig & Candle show, but in the real-world. The concepts are all transferable. It's all of that stuff that we learned working on shows at school just bigger and more expensive."

"In the Spotlight" deals with the culture of abuse in the theater industry. Ruzza was inspired to write it after reading an article about the mental, physical, and sexual abuse perpetrated by the artistic director of the Profiles Theater in Chicago. Although she began work on it prior to the rise of the #MeToo Movement in October of last year, she acknowledges that there may have been some subconscious influence from it and the events surrounding it. She also notes that the work's connotations with the movement is an association she expects her audiences will make.

Ruzza describes the play's audience and message as follows: "To me 'In the Spotlight' serves the young [20-something] actor, who is starting out and realizing that there are sacrifices to be made but there are lines to be drawn. I think all too often actors are asked to make personal sacrifices for the arts, and I think all too often actors are thought of as disposable....I hope that if nothing else 'In the Spotlight' tells this young actor that walks into a theater and thinks that he/she/they has to do something that puts them in danger be it emotional, physical, mental, whatever and/or makes them uncomfortable in any sort of way. I want them to realize that first they have a choice....I suppose that 'In the Spotlight' is for the artist, but I hope that it speaks to more than the artist."

Ruzza, Pohl Feldman and Brill Weiz are already working on Ruthless Nightingale's next project. In June Ruthless Nightingale put out a call for 20-30 minute plays to be considered for a new work festival, a production that has yet to come to fruition. While the company has not yet formally announced any future productions, it appears that Ruthless Nightingale has so far gotten off to a good start. •

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Wig and Candle Continues Conn Theater Tradition

BROOKE SPONZO
STAFF WRITER

An one hundred three-year-old organization, Wig and Candle continues to harbor a strong following among students, producing and developing live theater just as it did at the dawn of the twentieth century. Today, its original mission remains the same: to produce and develop works that, when cast under the theatrical spotlight, bring joy and relevance to the student body. However, no organization as old as this has existed without change, so what does the present and future hold for Wig and Candle?

I spoke with the group's Artistic Director and Co-President Julia Hutton '19 to learn more about this semester's theater scene and how Wig and Candle plans to adapt in light of recent changes on campus that include a renovation of Palmer Auditorium.

Wig and Candle began its 2018-2019 season on Sept. 21, with the play *4 Monkeys and A Banana* written by Margaret Condon '21 and directed by Christopher Thompson '21. This play deals with the psychological effects of an interstellar crisis. It is a science fiction thriller, with a very Twilight Zone-esque vibe.

Hutton herself directs the upcoming production of *Art*, a piece that was originally written in French by playwright Yasmina Reza. It is being performed on Oct. 26th and 28th. According to an article by Michael Billington in *The Guardian*, titled "Blank Canvas: The Enduring Appeal of Yasmina Reza's Art," this show, which opened in London in the late '90s, transferred to New York where it won the Tony Award for best play. Twenty years later, Hutton believes its humor remains timeless. She summarizes the production as "a fun little satirical piece commenting on material culture and the middle class." She believes that students will be able relate to its themes of friendship as well as delight in its hilarity. She's also added her own twist on the piece, using an all female cast instead of the script's call for a trio of men.

For its winter production, Wig and Candle has something huge planned. The organization will be presenting the hit Pulitzer-Prize-winning *Next to Normal*, a rock musical sensation that centers around a suburban family's struggle to adapt to a mother's battle with bipolar disorder. This will open on Nov. 30, and from Hutton's point of view, the production couldn't have come at a better time:

"The senior class that just graduated really had a big impact on the whole theater scene, both in the department and Wig and Candle. We have really felt their absence."

However, auditions for *Next to Normal* still attracted a

good number of students. "We had no problem casting it," Hutton adds, stating that the name recognition and allure of the musical "makes an opportunity for us to be able to recruit more first years and get them involved."

She does harbor some concerns about general attendance though. Without the class of 2018, whose members often attended its performances, the club worries its audiences will shrink. However, students in the theater department at Connecticut College have historically been nothing if not supportive. "You're either involved in a show" she explains, or "you're seeing it because you know people in it that you care about".

The organization also faces another potential threat, one a bit farther off, but bound to affect it all the same. As President Katherine Bergeron announced at the end of last semester, Palmer Auditorium and neighboring Castle Court will be receiving a \$20 million makeover. This change is destined to revolutionize theater on campus and invest in the future of the department, which is undoubtedly grateful for the upgrade. As wonderful as this news was for future theater students when it broke, the leadership of Wig & Candle became concerned that this new space would not include a practice area for the club to rehearse and perform in (Wig and Candle regularly uses Palmer 202, the small classroom and black box theater located above the auditorium's main stage).

Leaders created a Google Forms-based petition addressed to Bergeron and Vice-President of Finance and Administration Richard Madonna to raise awareness about the organization's plight. The petition, circulated via Facebook and other social media websites, stated the club's reliance on Palmer 202, explaining: "a space like [Palmer] 202 is not just desired, it is essential. Spaces like Oliva Hall are appreciated and used, but without a dedicated lab space, our growing student theater is effectively homeless."

In a recent interview with the *Voice* about the petition, Madonna claimed Wig and Candle has nothing to fear. While he had heard of the petition, he explained that the visuals presented last year, the source of the club's initial concern, were really just that: visuals. He assures that no solid decisions have been made and that a program study will take place this fall that will prioritize "reaching out to the faculty, staff, and to students, especially those major stakeholders that are using the space on a regular basis to understand how do we use this space today, how have we used the space, and what's the vision for the space in the future."

As of right now, construction will likely begin in November of 2019 with a summer 2021 completion date. •

New London Through a Camera Lens

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

as a governor, alchemist, healer, and entrepreneur, and for being involved in politics, religion, slavery, and business among other fields. Due to his contribution to the city, the Winthrop Elementary School is named after him.

Hendrickson grew up in New London and went to Winthrop Elementary School.

He found inspiration for this exhibit during a visit to his former school. Hendrickson had always been fascinated by Winthrop's history and connection to New London. Thus, he decided to capture Winthrop's seventeenth century activities in photographs to evaluate how New London has changed since his time. In an email, Hendrickson explained that he gravitated towards locations in New London that had strong connections to Winthrop such as his home and the statue of Winthrop. He also focused his attention on places that have "Winthrop" in their name-- like the Winthrop Parking Garage. Hendrickson hopes that the viewer uses their imagination to question what changes have taken place in the landscapes.

There are photographs from Dock Square in Boston, Quincy, New London, Niantic, and Groton. I was surprised by how many locations included in the exhibit I have visited during my time at Conn. This aspect of the collection was meaningful as it connects to the student body, and makes this exhibit relatable to them. A recurring question students and faculty are constantly asking is how to connect the College to the Greater New London community. This exhibit is a perfect example of how to achieve this and educate students on the New London area.

Besides displaying the current physical layout of New London, the exhibit also features historical elements which contextualize the present. Several photographs have captions with quotes or excerpts from various works of literature from Winthrop's time. For example, a photograph capturing a beautiful landscape in Ipswich titled "Winthrop Agricultural Land" includes a handwritten letter written by Winthrop. I enjoyed this addition to the exhibit as it combined art with history, an interdisciplinary experience that added a layer to

this simple, somewhat bland, exhibit.

For this reason, I particularly liked when Hendrickson sliced images of a singular view, as opposed to singular photos. These spatial gaps improved the visual composition as it complicated the simplistic photographs of beach scenes, machines, and decaying buildings. In particular I enjoyed "Painting by Frederick Allen ca. 1854 /

Mill from State Pier Road" which shows three images alongside each other that depicts the evolution of State Pier Road from 1854 to present. On a pigment inkjet print, Hendrickson overlapped old images of New London with new ones in photoshop. In the painting of Frederick Allen, the old image depicts a view of the Old Town Mill, the Winthrop Mansion, and Hodges Square, which has since become a homeless shelter. In the "photograph" Hendrickson uses the Mill to line up the two images. "Thames River from Top of Fort Hill Monument" and "State Pier and Central Vermont Pier" also follow the same form as the aforementioned piece. The only part

of the exhibit that was not photographed were three iron slag samples from Quincy, Saugus, and East Heaven.

While simplistic in color, composition, and content this exhibit provokes students to think

about how history impacts the physical being of a city such as New London. Hendrickson believes there is unrealized potential in New London that ebbs and flows. As he took photographs of New London, he felt both optimistic and sad as he reflected on Winthrop's goal for New London to become "a center of commerce and learning," as stated in an email exchange. These conflicting emotions are expressed in the photographs. As I made my way through the exhibit, I couldn't help but wonder what Winthrop would think about how his city has evolved, for better or for worse, since he last walked the streets of New London. Hendrickson continues to work on this series, researching and taking more photos to capture Winthrop's New London. •



Pictured above, from top to bottom: "Thames River from Top of Fort Hill Monument" and "State Pier and Central Vermont Pier."

Image courtesy of Elizabeth Berry

“Best Popular Film:” What Does That Even Mean?

EMIR KULLUK
BUSINESS MANAGER

In August, the Academy surprised the entire film industry by creating a brand new award category named “Best Popular Film.” The news prompted online discussion, with everybody from film critics to actors weighing in on the issue. Even though the Academy ultimately got rid of the category due to heavy backlash very recently, the mere consideration of the category itself has caused people to speculate over the intentions of the Academy. The Academy has also stated that it will institute the category later down the road, a decision that renders all of these speculations and questions still relevant. How does a movie qualify to be “Best Popular Film?” How will this affect general Hollywood blockbuster movies and their place at the Oscars? Is introducing the new category later just an easy way for the Academy to avoid criticism?

The Academy did not elaborate on the necessary qualifications for said category, and told everybody that details would be coming in later. However, some have speculated that basic financial reasons could have motivated the Academy to add such a category, and others hinted at larger issues with the awards ceremony.

The first reason for the addition of such a category is to draw in more viewers. The Oscars are generally viewed as an awards show only for movies deemed to be “artsy,” “heavily critical” or “realistic,” since movies that the general population has not even heard of receive awards. Famous presenters for the Oscars such as Chris

Rock have poked fun at the ceremony’s elitism by asking members of the general public if they have even seen any of the nominated movies. The obscurity of some nominated movies is not inherently a bad thing. The Oscars show that a movie does not have to bring in millions of dollars at the box office to be recognized for critical cinematic achievement. However, awarding movies that only a small portion of the general population has seen has impacts on the show itself. The latest Oscars had the lowest viewing rate of all time, which resulted in a loss of profit for the channels that paid to broadcast the show.

Therefore, the addition of such a category and an increase in the amount of Hollywood blockbuster movies nominated at the Oscars could bring in more viewers, as the ceremony would become more relatable to a general public able to gain a critical perspective of movies they have already seen. This increase in viewers would make the Oscars much more profitable for all parties involved.

On the other hand, people have speculated that this new category is going to be used as a way to separate Hollywood blockbusters entirely, leaving the other categories entirely to the “artsy” movies. Modern Hollywood blockbusters that are received well by the masses consist mainly of superhero movies, large franchises and action flicks. People have been complaining about the lack of representation of such movies at the Oscars, stating that the Academy is afraid to include superhero movies among its nominations, fearing it might damage its prestigious and elite reputation. With the addition of such a category, the Academy could simply nominate and place

box office hits within the “Best Popular Film” category. This move would please the masses by recognizing the movies that they like, while keeping these popular out of other categories. Such a speculation does seem probable, but we will have to wait until next year’s ceremony to see what the Academy has in mind.

The third and last speculation involves a whole other controversy, one that has been brought up several times over the past couple of years, and that is the separation of movies regarding race and black cinema in general. For several years, the Oscars have been criticized for its lack of representation of the black community. Very few movies have been nominated that have a black protagonist or a more black-oriented cast in comparison to other races and ethnicities. With the #OscarsSoWhite hashtag trending and famous actors such as Will Smith boycotting the Oscars, such backlash has forced the Academy into a corner. The rollout of a “Best Popular Film” category could address criticisms about the Oscars while maintaining many of its core features.

Some people believe that if somebody makes a movie about racism, the Academy would most probably give it an Oscar out of guilt. This argument was brought up several times after *Moonlight* was announced as the winner of Best Picture, with Warren Beatty stating only seconds that *La La Land* got Best Picture. The same argument has been made about movies such as *12 Years A Slave* and it has been haunting the Oscars for the last decade. Additionally, thanks

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Oscars Controversy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

to the success of *Black Panther*, the Academy is facing a whole other scenario: What is it going to do with a movie that has an all-black cast, is a superhero movie, is a cinematic achievement and is popular amongst the general masses? Prior to the roll back of the award, people speculated that the Academy's answer to *Black Panther* is the "Best Popular Film" category. By having *Black Panther* nominated for popular film, the Academy would not need to nominate it for Best Picture and could protect its status as an organization recognizes elite movies.

Such an idea made ripples across social media, with even Marvel stating that it planned to have *Black Panther* nominated for Best Picture and not Best Popular Film. Chadwick Boseman, the actor playing *Black Panther*, also stated that the filmmakers were aiming for Best Picture. This backlash provides insight into why the Academy withdrew the award.

One might look over this and think, why does this matter? Why does it matter whether a superhero movie gets nominated for Best Picture? Why does a new awards category matter at all? Truth is, it does matter. The Oscars have been around for 89 years and are, to some extent, a representation of our society. The Academy votes for and rewards movies that it deems essential to cinema, art and culture. The Oscars are, in a way, a reflection of our culture. Therefore, how the Oscars and the Academy change, what the Academy chooses to incorporate, chooses to leave out, chooses to reward shapes the future of our culture. Even if the Oscars have withdrawn the "Best Popular Film" category, the Academy has shown that it has intentions to change the format of the show. Whether it is to adapt to the changing culture to represent the public better or to benefit their own, the Academy has set change in motion. How future Oscars ceremonies plan to represent the whole film industry has much more importance now and we should all keep an eye out for what the Academy chooses to do. •

Representation and Exploitation at the Whitney

GRACE AMATO
ARTS EDITOR

Ongoing struggles to combat Western hegemony, movements that promote diverse representation, like #OscarsSo White, have appeared in the arts and entertainment sphere. Value has been placed in seeing our physical or definitive identities in art to promote visibility and education. Naturally then, one could understand my excitement and expectations, as a queer woman, to see an exhibit surrounding a queer man's artwork at the Whitney Museum in New York City.

However, upon surveying this heavily advertised "trendy" and "must see" exhibit for myself, I was underwhelmed by its intended significance. I did not feel wholly represented as a queer person and did not find that the art was that great technically or aesthetically. David Wojnarowicz (1954-1992), a victim of the HIV/AIDS epidemic during the '80s, first expressed his anger with the government's lack of response to the epidemic through his writing. At one point in his written oeuvre he recalls an example of homophobic remarks from the health care official that "if [he or she] had a dollar to spend for healthcare [he or she would] rather spend it on a baby or innocent person with some defect [...] not some person with Aids [sic]." However, one of his close friends recommended that he try expressing himself through visual art. Wojnarowicz, mostly self-taught, began experimenting with different mediums. Anti-capitalist and anti-government, he tried to incorporate symbols of America's world power and greed into his works.

Despite my expectations, his work did not connect with me, even on a political level. Overall, his art did not have a strong impact on the viewer, the way "good" art should. His symbolism was too direct, and too obvious, which made his work come off as shallow and amateur. He used a globe to represent the United States' dominance

of the world. He incorporated US currency when criticizing our capitalist society, as seen in the piece "Untitled (Hujar Dead)."

With overbearing symbolism, Wojnarowicz may have been trying to make his art more accessible, but his work did not put a large emphasis on political aesthetics. I felt that I did not know where to place my eye first on such a busy canvas that lacked artistic value, especially composition and cohesion. Therefore, the political and historical significance of the works outweighed their artistic significance. Without the context of his struggle as a gay man suffering from AIDS, this art would not be praised in the same way. His work wasn't on display- his identity was.

Even worse, I unexpectedly felt a disconnect with his art- despite our shared gay identity. The emotions of a white gay men during the AIDS crisis is not representative of my experience as a white lesbian in the 21st century. However, we have this idea that by sharing an identity with the creator of a work will constitute a connection and fulfilling sense of being represented. As Bianca Vivion Brooks stated recently in *The New York Times*, "[representation] cannot be the benchmark against which we measure good art. Good art must do more than reflect our own images back at us. It must move us to a place beyond our obsession with identity, sense of tribalism and fear of others." Therefore, even though I was one of the targeted audiences as a member of the LGBTQIA community, I did not feel connected to his work. It is not enough to have one shared identity to be able to feel represented in art or even see it as good art. Being a part of a same community, especially one that has so much variation, is not the benchmark for representation. However, I felt that this art museum missed the point of what good art and representative media is supposed to do, which is to make someone's story feel heard, and to try to educate others on that experience. I just did not feel like

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Representation and Exploitation at the Whitney

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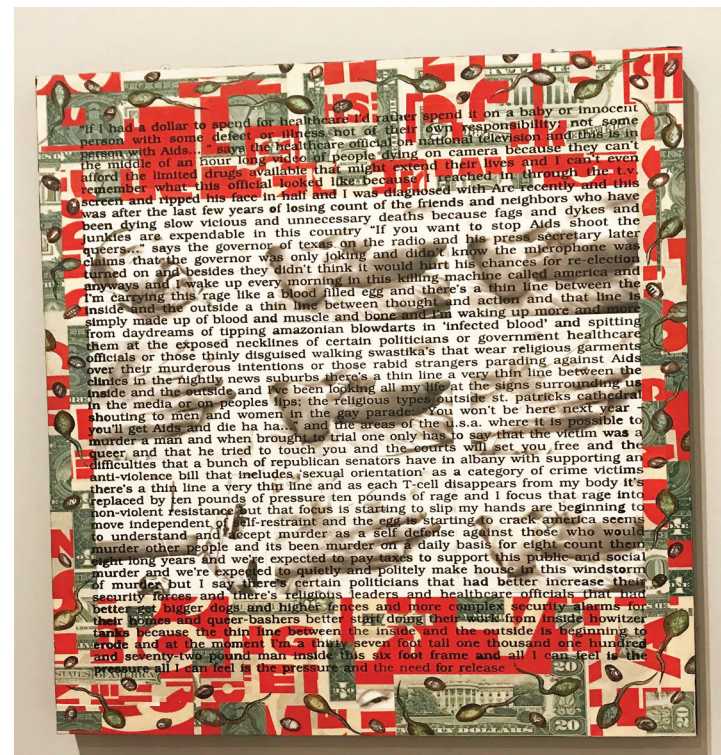
Wojnarowicz's art was the one to do it. It felt off, and perpetuated the standard of white male gay stories representing the face of LGBTQIA history.

As is the standard in museums, those who try to discuss pieces on display must do so quietly because of a museum's reserved atmosphere. Criticism is perceived as rude for disturbing the peace. What does that teach us about art and art museums as an institution? That we are not supposed to question or discuss what is in the museum? Instead, we politely take in the works that they have given us to look at. We accept and appreciate these works as art because of their status in the museum. Art that isn't in a museum or on display, then, is not validated by the institution to be appreciated as art.

Increased public awareness and desire for diversity in artistic spheres has prompted museums to exhibit non-western and non-traditional forms of visual art in order to validate them as forms of "fine" art. Wojnarowicz's work showcased a marginalized identity to "represent" queer people, but it overlooked the actual artistic values or aesthetics that make art impressionable or interesting to look at. This exhibit was among others such as a history of protest in the United States and Latin American indigenous artists now based in the United States. The marginalized identities of the artists are commodified by the Whitney for the sake of boasting a diverse selection of art, potentially drawing in a wider range of museum patrons without lowering the price of admission to truly make the work accessible.

In addition, by placing these works into institutions created to value traditional and Western forms of art like Renaissance portraits, they look out of place on the starch white walls and cannot always be fully expressed through the small amounts of signage provided by the museums themselves. Museums are able to revise the content of their exhibits by displaying exhibits like Wojnarowicz's, without revising the institution itself. The museum, then, still holds the power over what is considered "fine" art and what is not, and only embraces minority cultures and identities when they exist for our viewing pleasure.

Unimpressed and disconnected from these pieces, I ventured to the gift shop to find a black styrofoam hand in the shape of the black power fist with words along the lines of "resist" or "rebel" being sold for \$11. •



Top: *Untitled (Hujar Dead)*, Left: *Fuck You Faggot Fucker*, Bottom: *We Are Born Into a Preinvented Existence*
Images courtesy of Grace Amato