Alumni

Liz Magic Laser, Beau Willimon, and Other Alumni in the News

Spring 2013



Liz Magic Laser ’08SOA. Photo: J. Countess / Getty Images

All's fair in art

Razi Ahmed ’11SIPA organized the inaugural Lahore Literary Festival, in Pakistan, which attracted sixty authors and more than 30,000 attendees and was covered by the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the BBC. The festival followed a similarly popular event in Karachi; both are considered groundbreaking because of the restrictions that religious conservatives have placed on similar cultural events in Pakistan in recent years.

The Armory Show, a prominent contemporary and modern art fair held annually in New York, this year chose **Liz Magic Laser ’08SOA** as its commissioned artist, responsible for establishing the fair’s visual identity and designing its catalog. Laser is known primarily for participatory performance, theater, and installations, and was the first in the show’s history to employ focus groups to advise on her artistic strategy.

What's in the cards?

Beau Willimon ’99CC, ’03SOA made television history with his adaptation of the BBC miniseries *House of Cards*. The American version, which Willimon developed and produced, was released as an entire season on February 1, becoming the first original Netflix series. Within a month it was the most-watched content on the popular streaming service.

Michèle Stephenson ’95LAW and her partner, Joe Brewster, won a Sundance Festival special jury award for their documentary film *American Promise*, which follows their son Idris and his best friend, Seun — two African-American boys — from kindergarten through high-school graduation at an elite Upper East Side prep school.

Inform, reform

Bloomberg News correspondent **Janet Lorin ’95CC, ’96JRN** won the George Polk Award for national reporting. Her series on abuses in higher-education financing, cowritten with John Hechinger, led to new federal debt-collection regulations as well as reforms at colleges and universities.

Mapping Stars

The White House named **Rafael Yuste**, a Columbia professor of biological sciences and neuroscience, as an adviser to the Brain Activity Map project, a ten-year, multi-billion-dollar initiative aimed at charting for the first time the complex network of neurons in the brain. **President Barack Obama ’83CC** mentioned the plan, which

is modeled after the Human Genome Project, in the State of the Union address.

Gordana Vunjak-Novakovic, the Mikati Foundation Professor of Biomedical Engineering and Medical Sciences, was selected to serve on the first board of directors of the Center for the Advancement of Science in Space, which promotes and manages research on the International Space Station.

Appealing choices

Governor Andrew Cuomo nominated **Jenny Rivera ’93LAW** to the New York State Court of Appeals. A former clerk for then US district- court judge Sonia Sotomayor, Rivera is the founder and director of the Center on Latino and Latina Rights and Equality at the City University of New York School of Law, where she is a professor.

George Canellos ’89LAW has been named acting director of the US Securities and Exchange Commission’s enforcement division after serving as its deputy director for the previous eight months. Canellos, a former federal prosecutor in the Southern District of New York, served as the director of the SEC’s New York office for three years.

CFO.com

Kristina Salen ’03BUS recently became the first chief financial officer of Etsy, the online craft marketplace, now valued at nearly $900 million. Salen comes to Etsy from Fidelity Investments, where she ran the media, Internet, and telecommunications group.



Guide to school abbreviations

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