

Fall 2022 Newsletter

University of Iowa

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Presidential Welcome with President Barb Wilson



The freshman class of Presidential Scholars outside of President Wilson's home.



The 2022-2023 PSP Executive Board.



Photos by Samm Yu

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This Semester

Some of what we've been up to this fall!



Rock climbing at the CRWC

Holiday cookie decorating



Pumpkin painting



Art at Iowa

Following over a decade of absence, the University of Iowa has once again seen the opening of art museum doors on campus. This past August, the Stanley Museum of Art opened to the public with its Inaugural Homecoming event, where they were able to display its exhibits and new building. The building- comprised of three stories and an outdoor sculpture garden- is the result of years of careful planning and design to ensure that the tragedy that struck the previous art building will not happen again.



Stanley Museum of Art, opened in August 2022.

In the spring of 2008, the University of Iowa Museum of Art was the victim of flooding, which forced the emergency evacuation and storing of the Museum's entire art collection. With this history in mind, the new location of the museum was carefully chosen. Built on one of the few locations spared from flood waters according to overhead photos of that time, the new museum also has a multi-floor parking garage underneath the museum, which would have to be filled with water before a flood could reach the art again.

According to Stanley Museum Director Lauren Lessing, the University's collection never stopped being put on display, "During the 14 years we were closed, our collection was stored in a number of different places. The bulk of it was at the Figge Art Museum in the Quad Cities. We pivoted to a traveling exhibition program, traveling school programs, and a foothold in the IMU. This all allowed us to continue functioning as a museum without walls."

As these exhibits find their way back home to Iowa City, it was important to Lessing and her team that the interior of the museum was designed to display the pieces in complementary and unique ways. The previous art museum was a beloved staple of the University, and many alumni can recall the impact the space and exhibits had on them. Alumni Mike Bauerly, who graduated in 2003 with a BA in Studio Art and a BSE in Industrial Engineering, remembers the old art museum fondly, "I spent time at the museum when it was across the river – it was always a calm spot to go and hang out. I always loved a big Robert Motherwell painting that was in the galleries there – there was really nice space in the gallery and the scale was perfect for those big, modern paintings."



Robert Motherwells' "Elegy to the Spanish Republic, No. 126" next to Sam Gilliam's "Red April" in the old UI Museum of Art sculpture court, ca. 2006.

that a teaching moment. We're going to take it off of its strainer, and restretch it the way Motherwell will want it to be stretched, which will give alumni the chance to rediscover the painting and love it all over again."

The Motherwell is now accompanied by *Painting (4.78-I)* and *Painting (4.78-II)* by Oliver Lee Jackson, an alumnus of the University of Iowa, and a seminal artist in the Black Rights movement. Still an active participant at the University, Jackson was honored by the Stanley Museum of Art on Feb 23, 2023, where he gave a lecture entitled "The Alchemy of Making". According to Director Lessing, alumni have always been at the heart of the museum, and at the forefront of their minds while designing the new building, *We're really interested in finding those alumni who are really interested in the arts, who are maybe art collectors, who want to engage with the museum as alumni, and creating programs for them to do so. We are thinking about ways we can do that- tailgates, game days- and how can the museum be a part of those festivities. This building was built the same way as the previous museum- through donations from Hawkeyes not just across the country but from around the world who stepped forward to build this museum. We have lost that opportunity to engage with three generations of the University of Iowa students while they were students on campus, and that is going to be hard to make up for, but we're busy doing it."*

The Motherwell- Elegy to the Spanish Republic, No. 126- was painted specifically for the University of Iowa, and now calls the 2nd floor of the Stanley Museum of Art home. In the previous art museum, it was positioned directly in dialogue with some of the other well-known pieces in the University's collection, such as Jackson Pollock's Mural, which Motherwell reportedly had in mind while painting Elegy. Director Lessing and her team hoped to give a new perspective to both of these paintings by putting them in dialogue with new pieces of work. To do this, they painstakingly examined the conservation papers of every work on exhibit. "In our research of the Motherwell, we also found a really interesting thing. Our exhibition designer- alumni Steven Erickson- always found it strange that we had a white border around our Motherwell, and so we did a deep dive into the papers of the conservator who stretched the painting for us," said Lessing, "When we received it, it was as a rolled piece of canvas that had never been stretched, and so through a deep dive we discovered there was a note in the papers from Robert Motherwell saying that he wanted it to be stretched so the white border would not show, but that was never done. So we will be stretching it, but we're going to make



Robert Motherwells' "Elegy to the Spanish Republic, No. 126" next to Oliver Lee Jackson's "Painting (4.78-II)"

Alumni Spotlight: Nick Rolston

What is your current professional role?

I am an Assistant Professor of Electrical, Computer, and Energy Engineering at Arizona State University. I am also a Graduate Faculty member in the Materials Science and Engineering and Chemical Engineering departments.

Was the Presidential Scholars Program influential in any way in your transition to Arizona State University and your participation in their physics and engineering programs?

The presidential scholars program allowed me to connect with incredible students at Ulowa along with wonderful networking opportunities with staff, faculty, and administration at the university. It served as a catalyst for me to pursue a PhD and a career in academia since I was so inspired by the professors who I met at Ulowa. Several of these connections occurred through PSP.

How did education and opportunities at Iowa impact you in your current role as an Assistant Professor at ASU?



I started undergraduate research at the IATL building (the shiny looking one resembling a futuristic space ship next to the IMU) with Professor John Prineas in the Physics department on using molecular beam epitaxy to grow nanowires ($\sim 1/1000^{\text{th}}$ the thickness of a human hair) a single atom at a time. This was through a connection from class, as he taught the Physics course I took freshman year and I spoke with him about his research in his office. He saw that I had an interest and offered me the opportunity to work in his lab, which I did for the entirety of my undergraduate time at Iowa.

This was the most formative experience as I had the chance to learn about how research worked and was captivated by the opportunity to work at the frontier of scientific knowledge.

If you could come back to the University of Iowa for one day, what would you make sure to do?

I would spend some time at my favorite building, the Blank Honors Center, which was such a critical part of my time at Iowa through the students and staff located there. I would hope to meet with some physics or engineering students (or better yet, an ICRU meeting/symposium to see undergraduate research presentations) to see what their perspectives are on science, research, and the university as a whole. I'd hope this could all somehow happen on a Saturday during football season so I could go back to Kinnick stadium for a football game too!



What/who was your favorite memory, class, and/or professor during your time in undergrad?

My favorite memory at Iowa was creating a ticket to run for UISG with a fellow Physicist and 40 of our friends as senators. We called ourselves the "#Party" in homage to a social-media fueled campaign focused on engaging the student body (a concert in Kinnick, need-based scholarships, and open forums for feedback in the IMU). We lost along with all 40 of our senators, but it was a lot of fun and I realized somewhere along the way that politics are not something I have any real interest in anyways.

My favorite time in the classroom at Iowa occurred in my first semester when I enrolled in the vaguely named "Honors Seminar on Public Scholarship" taught by the then-Honors Director, John Nelson. It was through him that I learned about the importance of being a public scholar—a person who participates actively in debate, critical thinking, and open discussions in society—through reading, in-class debates, a networking dinner, weekly class poetry recitation, and a final exam that consisted of a one-on-one conversation.

My favorite professor (other than Professor John Prineas) was Jay Holstein who taught the class "Quest for Human Destiny". He just retired after celebrating 50 years at Iowa, and he was one of the more engaging, quirky, and thought-provoking people who I have encountered. He masterfully managed to captivate full lecture halls in Macbride auditorium through humor and discussions on religion, science fiction, philosophy, and the meaning of life.

All About Alumni

In the Spring 2021 survey, we asked alumni, “What advice would you give to a younger version of yourself?”

Here’s what they had to say!

Alumni Survey

For the Fall 2022 survey, we are asking alumni, “Why did you choose the University of Iowa, and what would you want people to know about the school and/or Iowa City?” Please take a few minutes to answer [HERE](#)

