state press magazine

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state press magazine

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Letter from the Editor

In a time characterized by artificial intelligence, doomscrolling and streaming, the lack of creativity around us is palpable, with the lack of support for such creativity even more palpable. Art is not on the decline, but engagement is. With less people willing to read, interact with live arts and learn about modern visual artists, we decided to release a magazine highlighting art and artistic communities on and around campus.

Our feature story included a reporter's connection with Arizona, based on the state's popular art. Another reporter looked at the Southwest's distinct art style and how modern artists have changed it. One reporter wrote about the "art to writing a LinkedIn post" during the current job market, as well as a look into students on campus who play table top role play games. One reporter wrote a play based on her experiences with on-campus elevators and another reporter learned about the rehearsal process for ASU's orchestra and symphony.



REPORT

Reinventing the Cowboy

The artists who deconstruct the Wild West

By George Headley

Illustrations courtesy of Thomas Blackshear II, Billy Schenck and Jacob A. Meders

A naked woman stands with two revolvers, a red bandana around her neck and a bandolier around her waist. Another woman exclaims bluntly to a cowboy she's not into men – He looks downward, defeated.

This is an illustration by Billy Schenck, creator of Western Pop Art and connoisseur of Western film and media. He wasn't satisfied with the cowboy tales he grew up with on television.

"I love the idea of emasculating East Western myth," he said. "I undermine everything in Western film mythology."

Several artists, and some who've presented their work at the University, have challenged this mythology. In previous decades, the romanticized cowboy was critiqued by prolific authors like Cormac McCarthy and Larry McMurtry, but their time of protest has come and passed.

Yet the revived American West lingers, and artists old and new continue to mold a more realistic, sometimes provocative, frontier lost to historical amnesia.

Rebellion



Schenck said he was the first to illustrate cowboys and cowgirls in a "pop" style. He worked with Andy Warhol in 1966 and other artists like Roy Lichtenstein. What set him apart, however, was the material he used for his work: Western film. Sergio Leone's "Dollars" trilogy first inspired him to take on the theming.

"There's nobody falling in love or some love triangle," he said. "Nobody in those films is interested in a ranch. They are in the pursuit of money as an end in itself. It's not even talked about how it's going to be spent, and everything is treachery."

Schenck lived as a cowboy before he started painting them. He spent many summers up in Lander, Wyoming, watching rodeos and herding cattle. For him, this was a blend of two worlds he knew well.

He started collecting stills from black-and-white movies as a starting point and used an opaque projector to outline and later color in the monotone outline. He got his first solo show of his pop art when he was 24. He said he sold out the exhibit.

"Eventually, I moved out to Wyoming permanently, and then down to Arizona in the winter," he said. "And I just began shooting my own surge matter and transferred from opaque projectors to slide projectors, 35 millimeter slides."



Billy Schenck herding cattle, circa 2016.

Schenck wasn't interested in appealing to the masculinity of the West, or what he called "machismo."

He was far more compelled to break down the archetype and show a more emasculated cowboy through his original character, Cliff, whom he derived mainly from films starring John Wayne.

"I'm emasculating John Wayne every single time," Schenck said.

He points toward the women as the "fiercely independent," characters in his work, a reversal of old Western clichés.



"It's always the guy coming to the rescue," he said. "The woman is just a second-class citizen."

After moving to Wyoming, Schenck began rodeoing and won a world championship in 2009. He said his team was the only one with a woman.

He still connects with other artists in the genre, such as those within the Cowboy Artists of America, but he hasn't considered joining the group. He said if they invited him, "that'd be like inviting cancer into your body."

"Most of these people are incredible technicians, but their thinking is to keep alive a traditional mythological point of view of what is the American Western frontier," he said.

Schenck said that while he plans to continue blending contemporary art with Western media, he's not keen on using newer technologies like digital art and AI, instead sticking with more physical means of creation. Above all else, he will continue to find ways to flip the genre on its head.

"Born, bred, raised, eat, drink provocateurism every day," Schenck said. "I just like to question everything. Give me a reason why it should exist. Give me a reason why it's right."

Renewal



Jacob Meders, a professor at the School of Humanities, Arts and Cultural Studies, is more about revision than innovation.

Meders focuses his work on opening dialogue about the portrayals of Indigenous peoples and their removal, both physically and culturally.

"The history of America always starts with colonization," he said. "They don't start with this thousands of years of history prior to white contact."

One of his exhibits, "Familiar Territory", blacks out stereotypical depictions of Indigenous groups in paintings from John Clymer, an American painter who illustrated the West. Meders himself is a Native American from Northern California.

Beyond Clymer, he referenced how many illustrators were sent by magazines to construct a vision of what the West looked like, often reinforcing negative stereotypes of Indigenous groups.

"We don't spend time as a society trying to really correct those, and we live in a time now where it's happening again, not just to native people," he said. "There's different cultures and people and different demographics who have felt the effects of that in America."

He also said the people who developed this initial interpretation sometimes weren't from where they drew, or even the same country.



He had the idea for the exhibit when Peter Bugg, who oversees the Vision Gallery in Chandler, invited him to talk about a collection of pieces the gallery received. They both agreed the original artwork was problematic, but Meders was against letting the history go erased.

"Say it's a piece of someone who was notoriously racist and notoriously bad to certain people in society, and it's a sculpture," he said. "Why don't you give that to an artist whose family or generation or lineage was affected by that, and then why don't you let them make a revision to it?"

He said this mischaracterization or absence of accuracy isn't just confined to Native American people. About one in four cowboys in the American Frontier were Black, according to the Smithsonian, but Meders said this is often lost in dialogue surrounding the era.

As he began to revise the controversial artwork, he took it upon himself to remove the caricatures entirely, while also keeping the silhouettes within the paintings. His decision-making stemmed from bringing to light the removal of Indigenous people while altering the work to be his own.

"It's also removing the artist's hand to be the person who gets to create that perspective," he said. "You know you don't have the right to create our stories for us, and so it's kind of removing that authority in some way."

Rebirth

Thomas Blackshear II is an illustrator and the inventor of "Western Nouveau," an art style that blends a romanticized, fine art style with Western theming. He's less interested in portraying the grounded reality of the West and more on the romanticized version, but through more accurate depictions.

One example is his "Neon Cowboy" which features a cowboy with a colorful, bright bandana around a stretched-out neck.

Blackshear first started illustrating cowboys when a friend of his told him the Western art market was shifting, and his talents could fit really well into the new scene.

During this time, he said he was in a rough patch after he was sued by a company, which he won, calling it "the lowest point of my career."

"Still, the hell I went through, I lost everything," he said. "I was at the bottom part of my life."

Blackshear said when he first entered the Western art scene, he wanted to stand out but not be pushed into a specific look. He debuted with several different styles, which gave him freedom later in his career.

He went from illustrations of Native Americans to cowboys of different races, specifically Black cowboys. He is Black himself, and wanted to address the reality of the variety of cowboys in the West, something he said he still sees people get surprised by.

"I didn't want to call it Black cowboys because that wasn't really making the statement I felt needed to be made," he said. "I called it 'Two Americans of the Old West,' and I put the painting out there, and I think people were really excited about the image."

He said he is very grateful to the Western art market but has faced pushback from others in the community.

"I'm not the only Black artist in the Western art market," he said. "It's not a lot of us, but the few that I do know, they've had the same problems."

At one show he did, he said he remembers one of the employees rolled into him as they walked past each other.

"He did that on purpose to send me a message, and the message was, "'I don't like you being here,'" he said.

However, he said it isn't emblematic of the entire group, and he is "blessed" to be in the space.

To him, he is a "trailblazer" for the market as one of few Black artists in the industry. He said the best advice he could give to others hoping to get into the market is to try to come up with ways to stand out.

"There's only so much you could do with the Western theme," he said. "So the whole point is kind of see if you can come up with something that tweaks things just a little bit to set you apart from everybody else, if you can do that."

Brittany Corrales, a curator at the ASU Art Museum, said she's seeing more younger people get into the theme.

"I do think that there's been a resurgence in the zeitgeist right now," Corrales said. "A renewed interest among young people in this cowboy myth, and they're starting to sort of reclaim it as their own."

She said she worked with one artist, José Villalobos, who put his own spin on rodeo and cowboy culture.

"He reimagined rodeo equipment and cowboy imagery and these traditional ideas of masculinity, particularly through a queer perspective and a Mexican American perspective."

Others, like Meders, have also worked with Corrales to present artwork that both redefines the West and recognizes the historical context of harmful depictions or the absence of populations.

"(I'm) always making sure that there is that critical dialog around the historical work," Corrales said.







SATIRE

Let’s connect

The art to building the perfect LinkedIn profile

By Sam Luba
Photos by Paul Pascual
Illustrations by Natalia Jarrett

Another fall semester is underway, and if you're a student who is serious about your future career prospects, that means only one thing – internship application season is here.

The uninformed reader may see this and start scrambling to print out resumes, design business cards or reach out to family members and friends to find leads on positions. But the sad truth for those individuals is that they are living in a bygone era of internship applications.

This isn't your grandpa's internship cycle – the year is 2026. The modern digital world demands innovation, new techniques and a dedication to a craft not unlike a painter's dedication to the canvas. It demands LinkedIn.

So follow along with this foolproof guide to the art of the perfect LinkedIn profile, which will be sure to land you a summer internship that will have your friends and colleagues saying: "Congratulations! Can't wait to see what you'll accomplish next!"

First Impressions: The Perfect Headshot

After you create a LinkedIn page, the next step is ditching the soulless gray silhouette in the profile photo circle and replacing it with a photo of yourself. Remember, not just any photo of you will do. The perfect LinkedIn page demands the perfect headshot to show employers that you mean business. No action shots. No casual candids. What you are striving for is pure corporate blandness. So bust out your sharpest business casual outfit, get a blank background behind you and start snapping away.

Many ask whether they should smile in their LinkedIn photo, and the answer is yes, but with a small caveat. Smile with your mouth, but make sure your eyes look completely dead. We are shooting for the sort of smile that says, "I'll be friendly enough with you in person, but on the inside, I'm just counting down the days until retirement."

LinkedIn photos will be viewed by seasoned employers in your industry, so displaying a smile they can relate to is sure to draw them into your profile. The finishing touch will be that iconic green banner you'll display at the bottom, announcing that you are "#Opentowork," in case it wasn't clear enough already.

Quantity over quality

So now you have your profile picture, but what actual experiences or accomplishments should you include? The answer is anything and everything.

The key to a great LinkedIn page is to give the appearance of a seasoned and dedicated future intern, even if that doesn't reflect who you really are. Remember, LinkedIn isn't a reflection of you – it's a reflection of what an employer is looking for in a new hire. So as you fill out your experience, skills, honors and awards pages, add everything possible. That campus club you went to one meeting for, then ghosted? Throw it on there! The multi-level-marketing scheme your mom got you involved in? It was sales training; add it to the list!

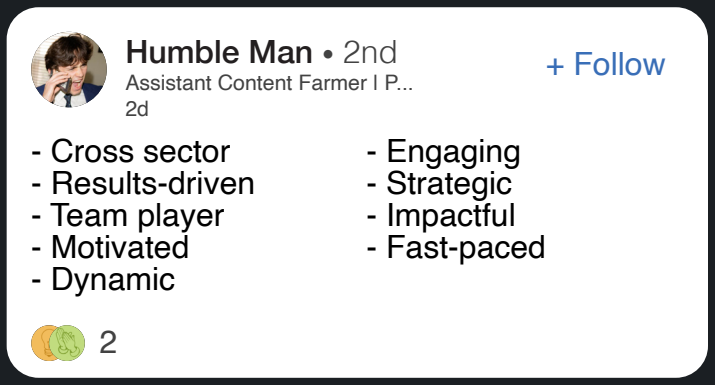
When cultivating your LinkedIn page, it's crucial to keep in mind the golden rule: "Quantity over quality." Having a variety of different experiences doesn't show an inability to keep a job or position past a couple of months. It shows tenacity, grit and the desire to always be looking toward the next big opportunity. And that is exactly the kind of go-getter attitude that corporations are looking for to fill their cubicles. So go all out. No position or role is too small or insignificant, because, at the end of the day, they all contribute to showing your future employer who their next star intern will be.

Buzzwords Make it Better

By this point, you've got a profile picture and a slew of listed positions and accomplishments on your page. But just listing the title of the job you had and the years you worked there isn't enough. The same goes for simply listing an award or distinction you were given. To really bolster your LinkedIn page and give some substance to the things you are bragging to employers about, you need to utilize one of the most effective tools in the modern business world: Buzzwords.

Buzzwords are words and phrases added to your statements meant for style rather than substance. They are the sort of words that look good as one glances through a resume or a cover letter but quickly crumble into incoherent nothingness upon closer inspection. Luckily, that closer inspection is a rarity in the world of LinkedIn, meaning buzzwords can be a powerful tool for giving the surface-level appearance that you know what you are talking about.

Here are a few buzzwords to help get you started as you fill out your LinkedIn page!



Adding Connections

The central purpose of the LinkedIn page is to do exactly what the website's name suggests: link with people and build connections. But how does one do that? The answer is deceptively simple, and it is to start adding people to your network. It doesn't matter how distant or convoluted your connection to the person might be. Whether they sat next to you in a lecture hall or they are an alum of your school from thirty years ago, if there is some shared facet of life between you and someone else, they should be added to your network. Remember, when you send an invitation to connect on LinkedIn, the person receiving it should have nothing more than a vague recollection of your face, or, better yet, just some shared detail in the bio of your profile. It is these connections, formed by distant, purely superficial and arbitrary similarities, that will truly fuel the effectiveness of your LinkedIn page.

Pro Tip: For our readers who are more experienced in the art of LinkedIn, the quest to make connections doesn't stop at inviting a few new people to join your network. Where the true LinkedIn connoisseurs make their mark is within the hallowed halls of a Starbucks, with a coffee chat. Nothing says dedication like spending $7 on a black coffee while you discuss the aspects of a job you have no interest or passion for. So once you add someone to your network, don't be afraid to shoot over a message right away, asking this total stranger to partake in the oldest of internship application traditions.

Commenting on posts

Congratulations! Your LinkedIn journey is almost complete! You have created a profile, inserted a headshot, added your experiences, bolstered them with buzzwords and added new connections to your network. The last step to becoming a true LinkedIn artist is mastering your interactions with other people's LinkedIn posts. When you open up the LinkedIn website, your screen will instantly be flooded with posts from people in your network, and one of the best ways to show your dedication to the craft of networking is by leaving comments on those posts.

Do those comments have to be unique or meaningful? No! Remember, the substance of the comment is not what matters – just the fact that you are leaving a comment is enough. In other words, it's not what you say, it is that you said something at all. We've cultivated a list of useful comment-starters that you can incorporate the next time you scroll through the latest posts on your feed:



Turning tips into tendencies

With these tricks of the trade, you are ready to cultivate the perfect LinkedIn presence that will be sure to land you that next internship. But remember, don't let your use of these tips turn into a one-off occasion. To keep your LinkedIn profile strong and increase your odds of landing an internship, these tips need to become tendencies. When you gain a new experience or skill to add to your page, spice it up with buzzwords. When you see a new post on your feed, leave a comment using our comment-starters. If you maintain those habits, the sky truly is the limit for the future of your internship prospects and, someday, maybe even your prospects for a real job.

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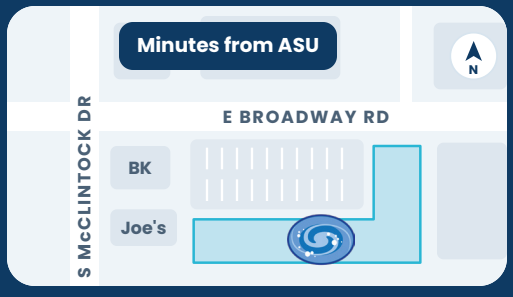


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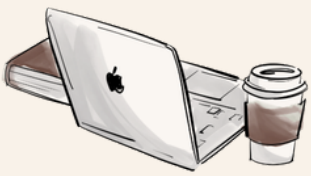


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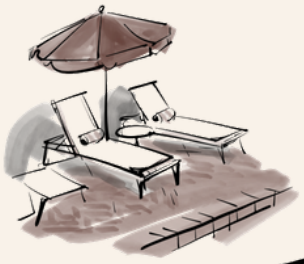
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What goes up, must come down

A short play by
Jocelyn James

(A satire, based on the college elevator experience)

CHARACTERS

Tyler
: 20s, male. A stereotypical party guy. Very loud and unapologetically so.

Madeline
: 20s, female. Has a meeting she cannot be late for.

Brandon
: 20s, male. Chronically online. No filter.

Leiny
: 20s, female. Claustrophobic.

TIME

Now.

PLACE

A Gordon Commons elevator.

(BRANDON, LEINY and MADELINE are three of several students in a long line at Gordon Commons.)

BRANDON

Oh, screw this. I'm just going to take the stairs.

(*BRANDON* looks around.)

Where *are* the stairs?

LEINY

Oh, they're outside. We can't use them. Locked and all.

(The line finally moves with the speed of the slug from Monsters University rushing to his first day classes. You know the one.)

MADELINE

Oh, thank god.

(BRANDON, LEINY and MADELINE are one person from scanning in.)

(Of course, this person acts like it's their first day on Earth.)

LEINY

You'd think after all of that waiting, people would know how to use the scanners.

(The elevator goes up without them.)

BRANDON

NO.

MADELINE

UGH. Just stop talking already.

LEINY

Are you okay?

MADELINE
I have this meeting scheduled for 15 minutes from now.

LEINY
Oh, you'll definitely make that!

BRANDON
I wouldn't be too sure. This *is* Gordon Commons.

MADELINE
So?

BRANDON
So, the elevators get stuck allll the time. One broke yesterday. Got stuck with 70 people inside.

(LEINY goes white.)

MADELINE
That's not a big deal.

LEINY
So, what's your meeting about?

MADELINE
Oh, it's-

(The elevator dings.)

LEINY
See? I told you you'll make it.

(LEINY and BRANDON step inside. When MADELINE is about to, she collides with a student on their phone.)

MADELINE
Hey, what's your problem?

STUDENT
My problem? You're the one who ran into me.

MADELINE
You took forever to leave, and you weren't even looking.

STUDENT

Just, be careful. That elevator has been faulty lately.

MADELINE

Sorry, what were you saying? I was distracted by that fugly outfit you're wearing. Yikes. Anyway, I have a meeting. Now, shoo.

(The student looks upset, like they want to say more, but they don't. They walk away. MADELINE steps inside)

BRANDON

You didn't have to be so rude.

MADELINE

Well, you didn't have to wear such strong cologne. What's that scent, by the way? "I hate women" Eau De Parfum? No, you chose to. Just like I chose to be rude. I'm not sorry it gets results.

(The doors finally begin to shut. Before they can, TYLER kicks his foot in the doors. They open with a groan. His flip-flop flies off his foot and hits MADELINE)

TYLER

Ha! New personal best, BaBY!

MADELINE

Oh, goddamnit. What does this elevator look like, the humane society? We don't take strays.

BRANDON

Ohh she cooked you.

(BRANDON goes in for a fist bump. MADELINE recoils and backs away. BRANDON radiates the energy of a sad puppy. LEINY fist bumps him with a sigh. TYLER begins doing sets of jumping jacks.)

LEINY

What are you doing?

TYLER

Exercise, bro.

LEINY

In an elevator?

TYLER

Hey, I gotta maintain the smoke show somehow.

(TYLER does an extra aggressive jump. The elevator makes a groaning sound, then stops.)

MADELINE

What. Did. You. Do.

LEINY

Ok. Don’t panic. Don’t panic. Nobody PANIC.

(LEINY attempts to open the door. It doesn’t budge.)

MADELINE

Hey, you have no right to panic. I’m the one who’s missing my meeting. There’s like no Wi-Fi in here.

TYLER

No one cares about your stupid meeting.

(BRANDON has been silent, doomscrolling on his iPhone)

BRANDON

Twitter is so good right now.

MADELINE

How’d you get Wi-Fi?

BRANDON

Oh, I just have that downloaded to my phone.

TYLER

Check this. You don’t need Wi-Fi to mog.

(TYLER looks at himself using the reflection on his turned-off iPhone.)

LEINY

Oh, god. I’m going to die in this ASU elevator with a narcissistic frat boy.

TYLER

Wow OK. I find that label very offensive, actually. I’m a narcissistic frat *man*.

(LEINY sits on the floor and starts rocking back and forth having a panic attack.)

Oh, I wouldn’t sit there.

(LEINY looks. There are questionable stains where she sat.)

LEINY

This can’t be real.

TYLER

Hey, this is real. By the way, I’m real too, babe. Why don’t you give me your information?

LEINY

We have no service. Even if we did, I wouldn’t be giving that to you.

TYLER

Oh, c’mon, girl. I *always* get what I want from the females.

BRANDON

Don’t call them that, bro.

MADELINE

Speaking of service, can I hop on that downloaded Wi-Fi?

BRANDON

I’m sorry, but your meeting’s going to have to wait. I’m on clip four of this h3h3productions saga.

TYLER

What even is that? Touch grass. Anyway, Let’s bring this back to us.

(TYLER turns to LEINY.)

LEINY

Yeahh. No offense, but you’re a Phoenix 4. I’m a Tempe 10.

TYLER

First of all, rude. Second of all, I wasn’t making a move on you *romantically*.

LEINY

Then what do you want?

TYLER

I just want your LinkedIn. I gotta get those connections up — I have an interview with Lockheed Martin soon.

MADELINE

Are you joking? That’s what my meeting’s for!

BRANDON

Ha. You’re about to get mogged physically *and* professionally.

END OF PLAY

ART BASH BY KORMAC MOORE




WOW, YOU REALLY BASHED THIS PAINTING, DUDE!
WAIT— I'M NOT DONE!
YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE! BECAUSE NOW, BASH GETS TO ADD TO IT.
WHAT A MESS!
SWITCH!
OH SHIT! MY BA-
SLAP!
HAHA, STOP—STOP!
THAT'S TIME!
OKAY, I GOTTA RINSE OUT BROOKE'S HAIR.
AND MY HANDS.
DAMN, THIS LOOKS SICK!
DO YOU LIKE IT? I TRIED TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKE YOURS.
THE END.

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FEATURE

Insight: Second Impressions

Learning to love the desert through art

By Angelika Minoli
Photos by Angelika Minoli
Illustrations courtesy of Cam DeCaussin, Melissa M. Button and Margit Kagerer

At first, I hated Arizona.

I found it to be treacherous and mostly dead.

I hated the cement buildings and the urban sprawl. I found the looming Saguaros creepy as I drove home on dark nights. I hated Bashas' and the 101. It took me two years to look beyond the cityscape and notice the wonder surrounding me in the Sonoran Desert.

My family moved to the U.S. when I was fourteen years old. After spending most of my childhood embraced by the coast of the Pagasetic Gulf of Greece, I grew accustomed to the lullaby of the Mediterranean Sea. I loved the salty air that kissed my face as I watched swaying white and blue kaikis, traditional wooden fishing boats, pull nets of fish out of the crystal blue waters. One winter, we rebuilt our life in a small ski town along the lip of Yellowstone National Park: Red Lodge, Montana. I replaced my flipflops with snow boots, and learned to love the thick, green forest – permanently sprinkled with snow like powdered sugar.

In my early twenties, I dragged my feet to my new home in Scottsdale, Arizona. I miserably traded the snow-kissed mountains for a heat so fierce you could see it dance off the pavement. I missed snow, and longed for the ancient seashores that I once called home. For a while, I resented my new, prickly home. It wasn't until I started looking at the desert through art that I understood the sublime beauty it concealed.



The perfect muse

For centuries, artists across mediums have sought to encapsulate the heart of the desert in their work. From architects to painters, many have found themselves called to build something everlasting beneath the canyons of the West. Arizona is home to myriads of artists who have made the desert their muse. By connecting with them and reflecting on their work, they turned a cynic like me into an admirer of the Earth's most misunderstood ecosystem.

Paolo Soleri was an Italian architect and former lecturer at ASU who made it his life mission to live in unison with the desert. His work stands on the shoulders of his mentor, Frank Lloyd Wright, one of America's most renowned architects. Wright's work emulated what he called "organic architecture": buildings that seemed like they were 'planted' into the landscape they surrounded. Growing his personal style from this school of thought, Soleri coined the term "arcology" –a marriage of ecological symbiosis and archeological structures. He aimed to end the insatiable spread of urban sprawl and sought to build living urban structures that minimized environmental strain. His capstone achievement: Cosanti, a gallery and flourishing studio, which is nestled in the shrubs of Paradise Valley.

The first thing I hear as I arrive are the chimes. Great, bronze bells are tied by the hundreds to the half-domed roof, undulating like fish. I duck between them as I reach my tour guide. Part of me feels like I'd entered a retro-futuristic spaceship, where the house balanced between the relics of the ancient world and the infinite potential for the future. Pictographs were engraved on the plastered ceilings like modern hieroglyphics: gloopy human forms, abstract flowers and quotes of encouragement ran across the terracotta walls.

The home was full of busy hands; Artists working in the studios shaping clay, slamming bronze and scooping out plaster formations set in the dirt. Our tour begins with a 'bronze pour', where crews of welders pour soupy, searing bronze into molds shaped like bells. Sharp heat emanates like sunbeams as the crew pulls a searing pot of molten bronze from a fiery pit in the middle of the ground. This is how they make their bells, in this baptism of fire.





Once they cool, welders score each one with unique designs. The imperfect ones, with cracks and holes where the bronze cooled too fast, are recycled in the next pour. Almost all of the materials used to build Cosanti are recycled. Refurbished train tracks have become the load-bearing pillars, sewer piping is sliced into perfectly circular window panes and all the walls are made from repurposed cement.

In candid color

Art challenges us to examine different perspectives. It becomes a vignette, a snapshot into a new world, an inexplicable feeling, or a memory, frozen in time. Some of my favorite art is about places: the places that shape us, and the reflection of them that lives behind our eyes and beneath our canvas.

Cam DeCaussin is an oil painter and teacher at ASU's School of Art whose work depicts the emotional weight of everyday quotidian scenes. Through his work, he examines the interconnection that tethers all human beings, and seeks to transport his viewers into the moments of vulnerability that we often conceal from the world. His approach is semi-voyeristic, as he describes it. He peruses his neighborhood during golden hour, and captures the homes of his neighbors as they dangle in a golden tinge. He often finds inspiration from Arizona's skyscape: rich, deep stretches of sunset-tinged clouds caress his canvas.

DeCaussin examines the souls of the suburban homes that are sprinkled across his neighborhood. He finds the concept of home interesting and the spirits they take on as generations reside in them. To him, the buildings and landscapes we take up are far more than just locations– they are spiritually tethered to our very essence.

He is particularly drawn to the mid-century architecture popularized in Arizona, and how it contrasts with the expansive sky during sunrises and sunsets.

"In a way, the sky is more of a subject than the actual people in my paintings," he tells me one gray, rainy morning. "The sky is a character in my art."

DeCaussin uses the language of color to anthropomorphise the desert sky, giving this expansive backdrop a visual language to articulate the emotional state of himself and his neighbors.

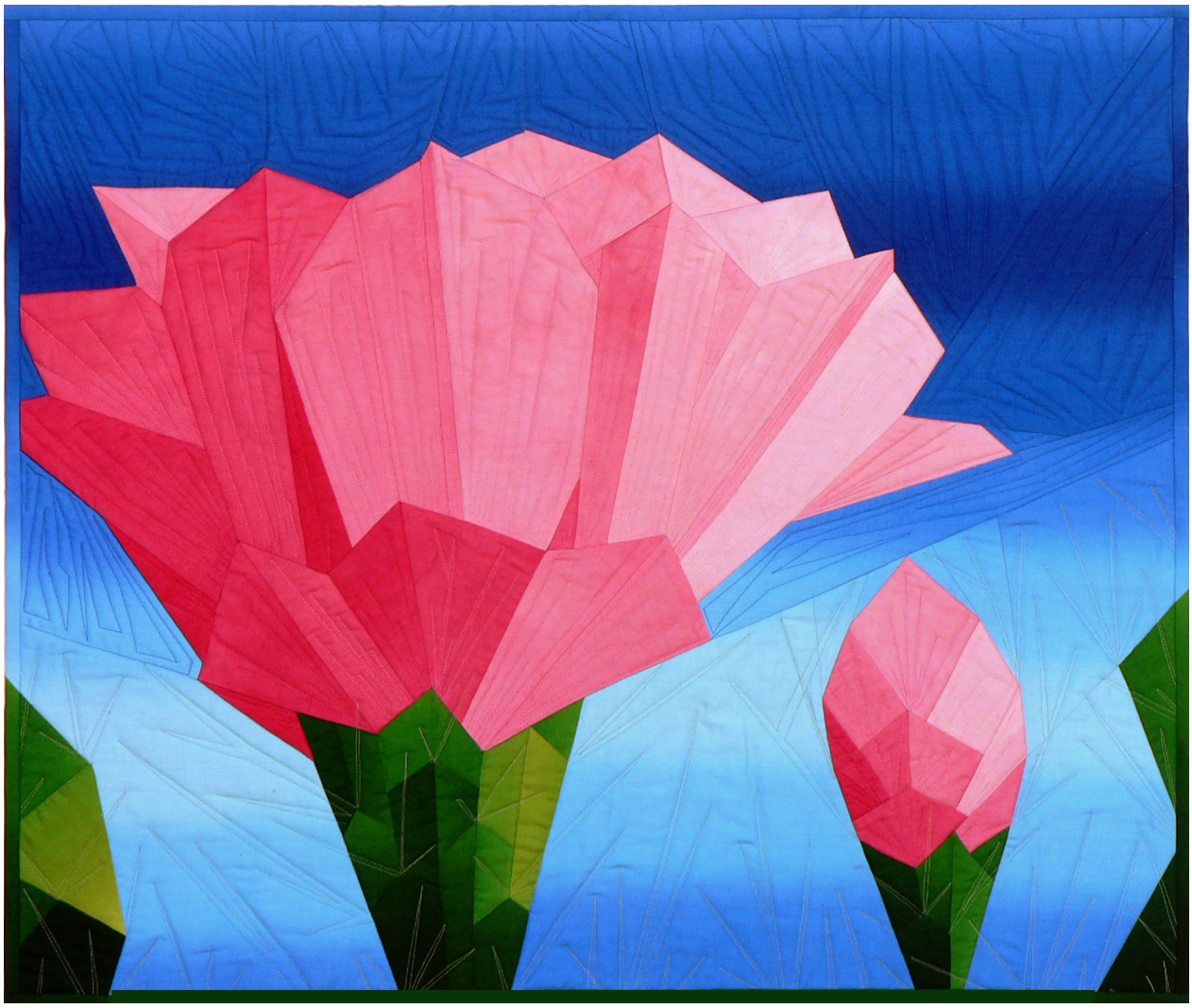
The skyline reflects unveiled vulnerability, naked for the viewer to decipher. He tells me that his home state of Michigan hid the sky from him for a very long time: thick treelines and dense clouds reflected a veiled subconscious, hidden from the world. When he moved to Arizona, he was impressed by the harsh, exposed heavens. There was less moisture in the atmosphere, leading to the sunrays spotlighting the world in a vicious, divulging hue.

"Colors are different here. Arizona is made up of a pastel color palette unique to the desert. Shadows are purple here, too. That was a big change."

DeCaussin feels inspired by the cultural traditions of "finding yourself in the desert." In Arizona, the Tohono O'odham tribe of the Sonoran Desert has a rich history of ceremonial salt pilgrimages across the desert. The desert is harsh and exposes the truth. It unpeels and leaves behind the most vulnerable aspects of our internal world. DeCaussin reflects on these traditions in the visual language of his work.

His subjects are mostly candids of women, capturing an inexplicable melancholy as they dance between the facades they carry through their day. DeCaussin's work has a Jungean flavor of psychological analysis; He understands that the human condition has accustomed us to wearing 'masks' as we fit into the roles we are burdened to carry. These 'personas' hide our true selves, the inner children we keep trapped, waddling around our spirit as we try our best to appear grown up. DeCaussin was intrigued by this inner conflict between our childlike 'hearts' and mature, rational 'minds'. Although these facades are innately self-preserving, they can also be suffocating. He notices the ways we carry the weight of our burdens in our bodies and within our faces through microexpressions. He's interested in painting the small, transitional moments throughout the day when our masks briefly slip off.

"I feel like I'm truly myself as I go to take out the trash, or in those moments before I open a door, bracing for a new version of myself I need to step into."



Desert impressionists

En plein aire is one of the most influential art techniques in history. It means "fresh air" in French, and, as the name suggests, involves painting in nature. The movement began in the 1860s, when four art students began spending their afternoons together, painting landscapes. These students have since become the forefathers of the Impressionist Movement: Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Alfred Sisley, and Frederic Bazille. The Impressionists redefined the art-de-mode by creating new techniques and dismantling established styles. They took advantage of the invention of tubed paints to encapsulate the fleeting sensory experience of depicting a moment in the great outdoors.

In the Spring, DeCaussin and his colleague Melissa M. Button teach a plein aire class, where they introduce students to the transformative practice of painting in the desert. For seven weeks, he takes students across different natural landmarks sprinkled across the valley. Due to the limitations of painting outside, students often have to hike with their heavy painting gear, leading to a forced elimination of excess materials. How many colors of paint do you really need to capture a scene?

"For six hours, you're outside with no distractions," Button said. "It's just them, their bare-bones setup and the view. It forces you to be present in a way that's harder to do in the studio. When you're painting inside, it's more sterile: the lighting is all the same, and there's only one way to capture the subject. With plein aire, it's really up to the individual to notice what perspective they're drawn to. Whether it's painting rocks, or a flower, or looking at the landscape through a ravine. "

Mother Nature can be harsh, and it's not uncommon for students to paint in the blistering sun or have their work splattered by rainfall. DeCaussin feels that these imperfections become "mementos," of the day outside, encapsulated into their art. The space an artist takes up as they navigate the conditions of the day tinges their work; A cold artist might create a different piece than a sweaty one.

Like the Impressionists before them, students seek to capture their interpretations of the landscape as it shifts through time. Their view will never be captured again. It exists only once, through their eyes and inside their shoes.

"The purpose of making art is to create work with a soul. You don't have to explain it, or justify why it exists. It just has a quality that moves people," DeCaussin explained.

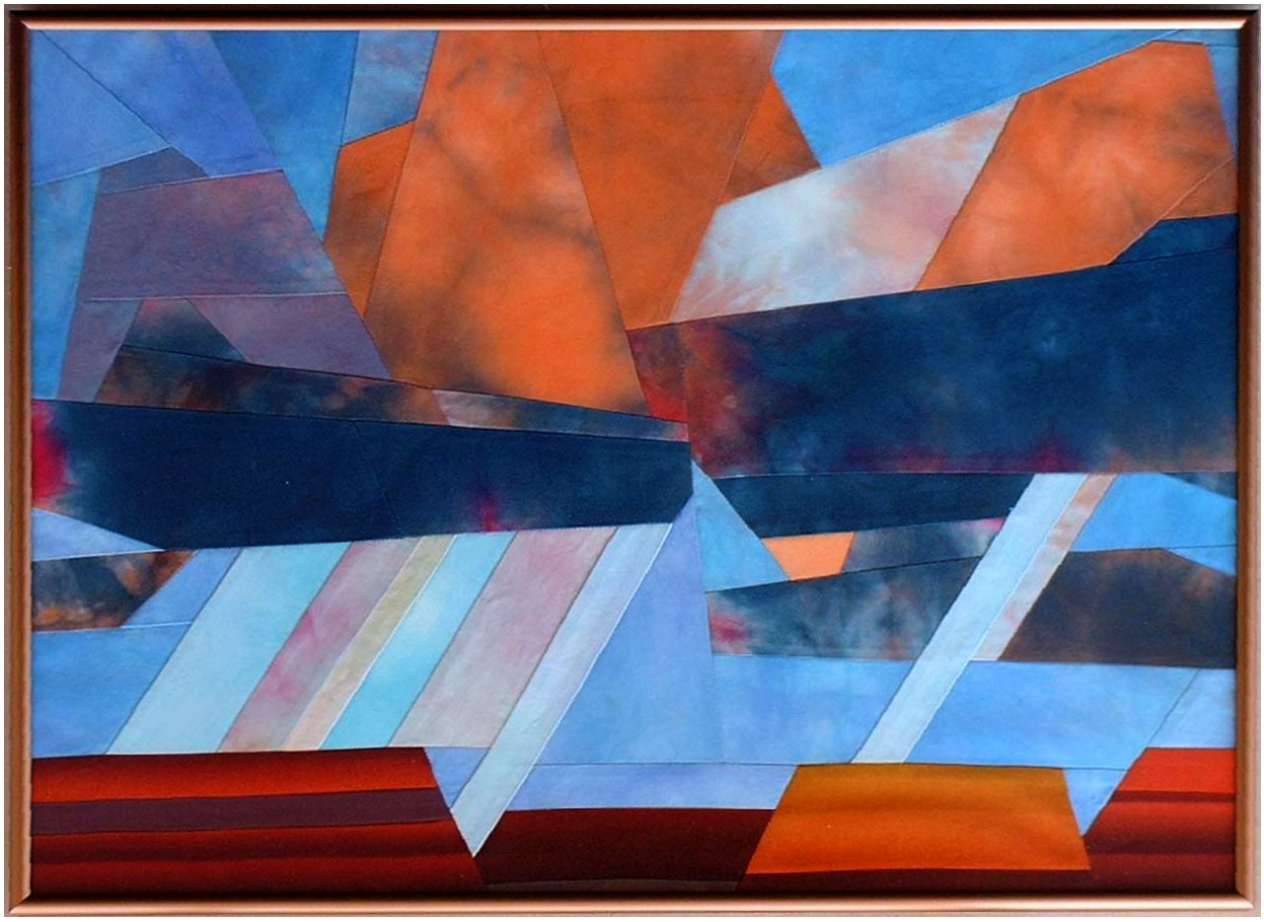
Quilting the Sonoran

Margit Kagerer is a contemporary fiber artist whose unique quilts are bursting with soul. Originally from a small town off the beaten trail to Munich, Germany, Kagerer moved to the U.S. in her forties. Despite this uprooting, she has fallen in love with her new home and has made the desert her muse. Kagerer loves to quilt. As a former math teacher, she was drawn to the intricate geometric patterns she could explore within the medium.

"I have two different styles," she tells me. "One is nature and surroundings, and the other one is geometry."
Her quilts have a lively and vibrant disposition, and she utilizes the shapes and fibers of unique fabrics to build intricate scenes into the weave of her work. We talk over the phone. She has a cheery voice, beaming like sunshine. She tells me that she's answered my call on her landline.

"I like the texture, so to speak. You have all these different shapes: the bushes, the cacti. It's a very attractive environment, with all kinds of different plants. And of course, when an animal comes by, that's always exciting."

As a true student of environmental art, Kagerer draws inspiration from her creative peers. After reading "Desert Solitaire" by Edward Abbey, an influential environmental essayist she describes as "kind of a rebel environmentalist, kind of a weird guy," Kagerer commemorated his poem "Sand Dunes" in one of her quilts. She intricately stitched the words of his poem into the shape of their namesake, carefully stitching each word into sandy waves as they flowed towards a vibrant oasis. Kagerer also found inspiration in the work of Ed Mell, an Arizona native whose art married the "vibrant colors and angular compositions" of the Sonoran Desert. She reinvisioned his technique in her gorgeous "Cactus Blossoms" quilt.







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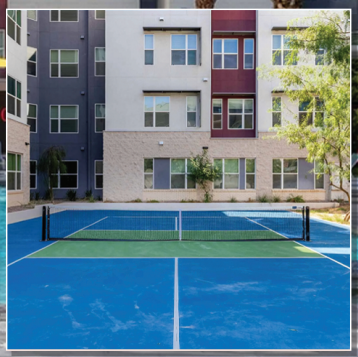
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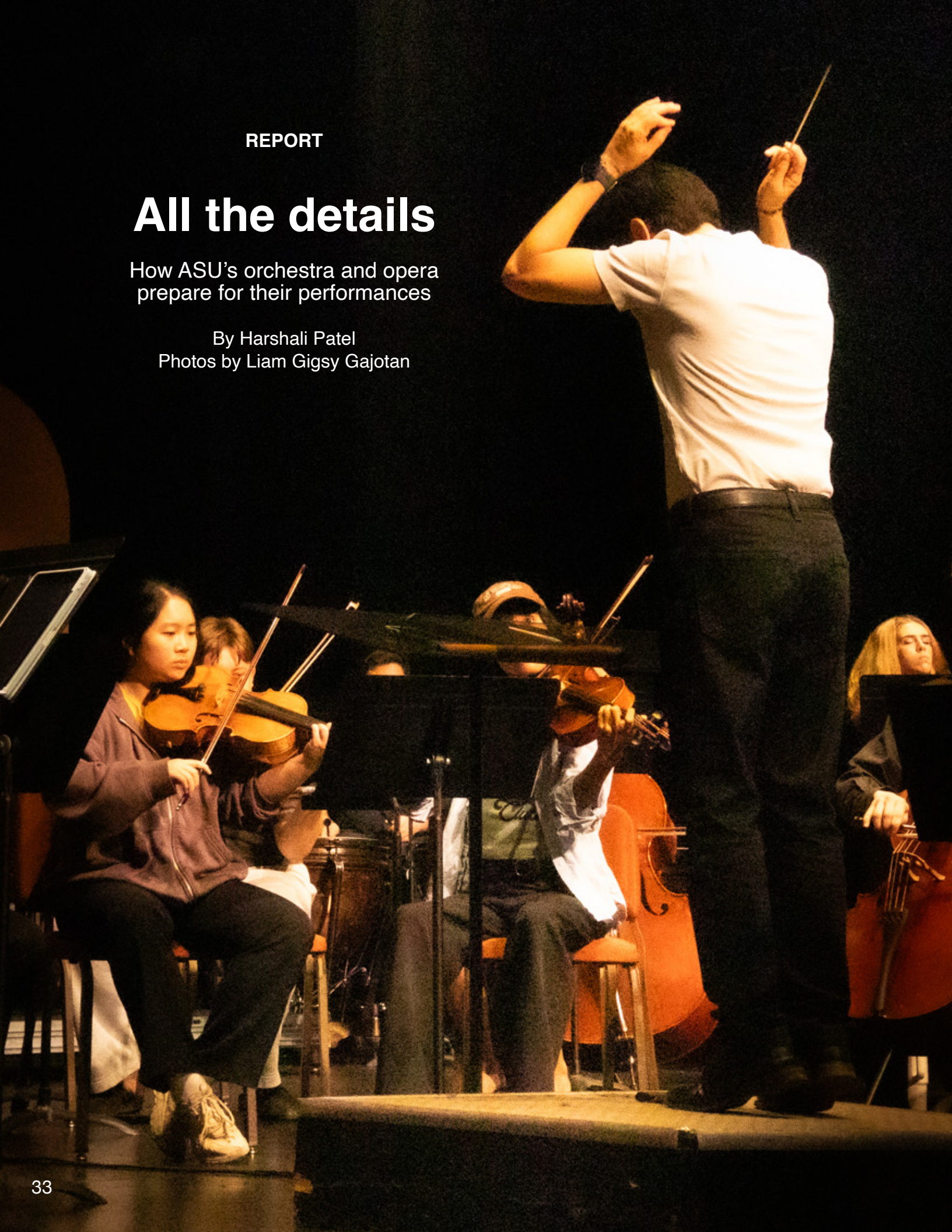
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REPORT

All the details

How ASU's orchestra and opera prepare for their performances

By Harshali Patel
Photos by Liam Gigsy Gajotan



The music moves through the room in waves, the strings creating a vibration that can be felt in the air. Musicians pause to adjust their bows or quietly leave to tune their instruments before returning to the piece. A loud break; the room goes quiet for a quick moment and soon the sound resumes, the room fills again with strings, creating a feeling that is difficult to replicate outside a live performance.

There is no audience yet. No costumes, no applause and no finished performance. Just students working through the same sections over and over, trying to make dozens of individual parts sound like one performance.

For the audience, the goal is to experience the music without thinking about the adjustments that made it possible. But behind every performance are hours of preparation, individual practice and small corrections that gradually bring dozens of musicians together.

On Oct. 20, the ASU Symphony Orchestra and Music Theatre and Opera brought Richard Strauss' "Prologue to Ariadne auf Naxos" to the stage at ASU Gammage. The concert also featured faculty clarinet professor Jeff Anderle, performing Michael Torke's "October" on bass clarinet with the orchestra.

The performances brought students, faculty and different musical disciplines together, but preparing for the stage requires more than the music. For students involved, it means balancing classes, jobs, teaching responsibilities and the physical demands of performing, all while preparing to make the final product look and sound effortless.

Learning the Role

Aliyah Harris, a second-year master's student in opera performance, is the composer, a mezzo-soprano role in the prologue. Her introduction to opera began with a donated ticket to Houston Grand Opera while she was an undergraduate at Texas Lutheran University. Watching a production featuring opera singer and soprano Angel Blue opened up a possibility Harris had not previously considered for herself.

Before that, Harris participated in theater and choir in middle and high school and later studied music education and dramatic media. She eventually shifted toward vocal performance and continued pursuing opportunities to work across musical theater and opera.

For Harris, being cast as the composer became a turning point for her. Harris said she struggled with imposter syndrome during her first year, often feeling as though she needed to catch up with classmates who already knew more about opera. Receiving the role gave her a different perspective.

"It was a big confirmation that people have seen the work that you're doing and they know that you're going to do well with it," Harris said.

The role also comes with a steep learning curve. The opera is in German, a language most students are not fluent in. In light of this, performers work to coordinate pronunciation, meaning, musical phrasing and characterization. The singers must understand not only what each word means but how to communicate it while singing across demanding vocal ranges.

Andrea Pitman Will, an assistant teaching professor of voice at ASU, works with students on the vocal aspects of their roles, including diction, breathing, technique and how to approach difficult notes. Robert Mills handles the production's musical coaching, helping students learn their notes and rhythms before the staging and orchestra are added.

Pitman Will said the combination of difficult vocal demands and foreign language makes the preparation especially challenging. Singers must coordinate the mechanics of singing with the expression of a character, often in a short period.

The work is also cumulative. As Harris and her colleagues prepare for this performance, they are drawing on years of voice lessons and practice, not simply the weeks spent learning this particular role.

Kiersten Langord, a second-year master's student studying vocal performance with a musical theater focus, plays Zerbinetta. The role requires fast, intricate German passages sung high in the soprano range. Langford said the challenge is part of what makes the character enjoyable: Zerbinetta is energetic, quick-witted and often makes fun of the people around her.



Langford is also a voice teaching assistant, teaching individual lessons on campus and working at a music studio in Scottsdale. Some days, this packed schedule means driving to Scottsdale to teach before returning to campus for rehearsal. She uses the time between commitments deliberately, sometimes listening to rehearsal recordings and other times taking a break from music altogether.

“Google Calendar,” she said when describing how she manages it all.

Her approach reflects a larger reality of student performance; preparation often happens in the small spaces between other responsibilities.

When the music starts to make sense

The rehearsal process for this production was shorter than a full opera staging. Rather than presenting the entire opera with elaborate sets and costumes, the concert features its prologue in a concert-style version with limited movement.

That format makes the collaboration possible while giving opera students the opportunity to perform with the full ASU Symphony Orchestra. Pitman Will said it’s a rare opportunity at the collegiate level to work on such a demanding piece with a full orchestra before entering the professional world.

For Langford, learning a role begins with breaking an overwhelming task into smaller, manageable steps. She described the initial anxiety of looking at a large amount of music without knowing how much work it will require. Once she begins working through it, the task becomes less intimidating.

Her experience with the production illustrates how rehearsal is not always about correcting mistakes. Sometimes, performers have to learn why a passage sounds wrong even if they are singing it correctly.

Langford describes a line in which her vocal part clashes with the orchestra. She sings a note that differs from what the instruments are playing, creating a deliberately tense sound that suits Zerbinetta’s teasing character.

Once she understood that the dissonance was intentional, she could stop trying to correct it.

The orchestra introduces another layer of complexity. A singer rehearsing with a pianist hears a simplified version of the music. When the full orchestra joins, melodies and cues can come from different instruments, and the sound may be unfamiliar enough that a singer misses an entrance.

But that change can also make the music clearer. Langford said the parts begin to fit together in a different way, and hearing her own musical line doubled by an instrument can help reassure her that she is in the right place.

Pitman Will said singers must learn to follow a conductor rather than relying on a pianist to follow them. They also have to communicate their own needs, such as taking a breath or slowing a phrase, making the relationship between singer and conductor a two-way exchange.

For Jeff Anderle, a clarinet professor at ASU, the process of bringing individual parts together is central to his performance. He performed the solo bass clarinet part in the symphony orchestra and opera's performance of Torke's "October".The piece was originally written for bass clarinet and string quartet, and the concert features the world premiere of a version for bass clarinet and string orchestra.

The orchestra had already spent several weeks learning its parts before Anderle joined for rehearsals closer to the performance. When he added the solo part, he said sections that had seemed less clear to the musicians began to make sense.

The melody moves among the bass clarinet, violas, cellos and other voices rather than remaining with the soloist throughout. Anderle said hearing the additional parts in rehearsal was especially interesting because the composer had added a bass part that was not in the original version.

A successful performance depends on how those parts work together, not just whether each musician plays the correct notes.

"A good performance is when all the details come together," Anderle said. "It's really when all the pieces are together and everything is kind of at its highest level."

The work behind the sound

For singers, preparation extends beyond memorizing music. Their instrument is their own body, which means they have to manage how much they use their voices throughout the day.

Langford experienced increased vocal fatigue while teaching classes and singing last year. She sought speech therapy through ASU's Speech and Hearing Clinic to learn how to use her voice more efficiently and prevent fatigue.

She said even short periods of vocal rest between classes can help. The problem is not always singing itself; speaking throughout the day can also contribute to vocal strain.

Learning to address the issue changed how she viewed vocal health. Instead of treating fatigue as proof that she had done something wrong, she began thinking about what she could change to use her voice more effectively.

Pitman Will said her students must monitor their "vocal load," or how many hours they spend speaking and singing. Sleep also matters because a singer's voice does not function the same way without enough rest.

The workload can be difficult to recognize from the audience. Students may receive a similar number of course credits to students in other fields while spending substantial additional time in lessons, rehearsals and individual practice.

Pitman Will said singers are often expected to make difficult work look easy. That effort is part of what students are learning at ASU: not only how to perform, but how to maintain the skills and habits that allow them to keep performing.

Making room for opera's future

The work behind the music also raises a larger question about who gets to participate in opera and whether a career in the field can be sustained.

Harris said her first experience at Houston Grand Opera came through donated tickets. Without that opportunity, she might never have considered opera as a realistic path. She also described feeling that classmates had access to knowledge about the field that she had not yet acquired.

In her opinion, making opera more accessible gives people opportunities to encounter it without assuming they already understand the art form. Langford hopes audiences recognize that opera can also be comedic and entertaining, rather than assuming it is always serious or tragic. Ariadne auf Naxos' prologue centers on the conflict between two theatrical companies forced to combine their performances after a wealthy patron's dinner runs late.

The premise itself pokes fun at artistic ego and the expectations placed on performers. It offers an entry point for audiences who may not have attended an opera before.

The question of accessibility extends beyond the audience. In an Oct. 8 NPR report, Laura Atkinson described professional opera singers who leave the stage not because they have lost their love of performing, but because travel, housing costs and the demands of the work become difficult to sustain. The report highlights pressures across the industry, even for singers whose careers are going well.

Harris said the field has long struggled with the perception that opera is exclusive or financially out of reach. She sees the current generation of performers as part of a transition, with younger artists working to keep the art form alive while changing how people encounter it.

For students, the opportunity to work on a demanding production in an educational setting offers a chance to learn before taking those skills into professional environments. Anderle said the accelerated rehearsal process can be valuable preparation because professional musicians often have even less time to rehearse.

He also hopes that working alongside a faculty performer gives students a clearer picture of what is possible. Bass clarinet is often part of the orchestra rather than the featured solo instrument. Seeing it at the front of the stage, he said, can help students imagine new possibilities for their own instruments.

Letting the work disappear

As the concert approached, preparation moved toward a point where performers could stop thinking through every individual detail and trust what they had learned.



Anderle said it is ideal for an audience to experience the music without noticing the rehearsal behind it. Once the musicians reach that point, they can let go of the effort and focus on expression.

For Harris, that is part of what makes live performance meaningful. She said she hopes people who may be unfamiliar with opera leave curious enough to seek out another performance.

Music is a physical experience, one that changes the air in a room and cannot be reproduced in exactly the same way twice.

For the singers and musicians preparing for the concert, the goal is not for the audience to notice every hour of rehearsal, every corrected note or every cue learned. It is for all that work to become something larger than the process itself: a story that lands, a moment that surprises, a sound that stays. If opera is going to reach new audiences, perhaps it starts there, not with convincing people that the art form deserves to survive, but with giving them a reason to want to experience it again.







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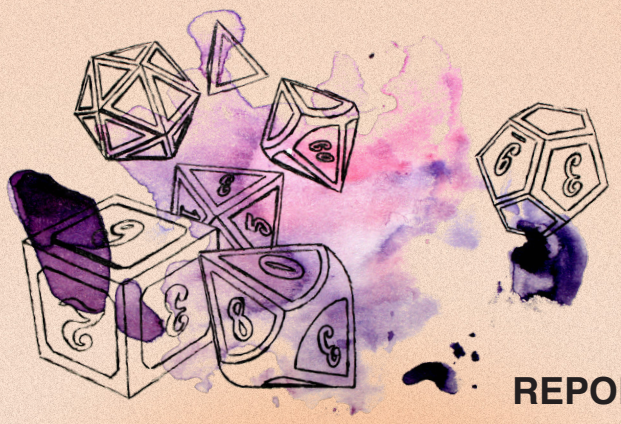
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REPORT

Between two realms

Exploring the craft of tabletop roleplaying

By Sam Luba
Illustrations by Kormac Moore

You enter a dimly lit tavern and make your way to a creaky wooden stool, nestled in front of an open bar in the center of the room.

A large green orc stands behind the counter, polishing a glass before looking toward you with a grunt, wondering what you will be having to drink.

Before you can get a word out, an elven woman, dressed in a long, dark blue cloak, slides onto the stool next to you, flipping two gold coins to the bartender in the process.

As the bartender begins fixing two drinks for you and your newly made companion, the woman pulls a map from her cloak and spreads it on the table in front of you.

You look closely at the map before realizing that you recognize what it depicts – it's a map of…

Suddenly a piercing trill rings out.

The elven woman next to you picks up her ringing phone to answer a call. Except she's no longer an elven woman. Just like the bartender in front of you is no longer a brutish orc.

Instead, you are looking at two college-aged students, in the midst of a Dungeons and Dragons campaign, with stacks of papers scattered in front of them and an arsenal of dice at their side, ready to be rolled at a moment's notice.

Multi-generational adventurers

D&D is a fantasy-based collaborative storytelling game, often referred to as the first in the tabletop role-playing game genre.

The game involves individuals role-playing as different fantastical characters who make their way through a story, known as a campaign.

The players make decisions on what their characters would do in various situations and roll dice to determine the outcome of those choices, all while being narrated and directed by another player, who is called the Dungeon Master.

D&D was first created in 1974 by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson, and, since its inception, it has gone through numerous editions and updates, releasing its fifth edition in 2026.

The growth and expansion of D&D has also sparked the launch of numerous other TTRPG games, including Pathfinder, Lancer and Mothership.

Despite its emergence over 50 years ago, D&D and its numerous offshoots have maintained their popularity and player base – even among younger generations like Gen Z.

In a generation commonly criticized for an obsession with screens and poor social skills, the popularity of a game centered around face-to-face interactions, dice rolling and the extensive use of imagination may seem unthinkable.

But for both those who began playing at the game's inception and those first picking up the dice in 2026, there are a variety of unique aspects that draw players into the world of D&D.

Derek Pacheco is a professor in the Department of English at ASU, whose introduction to D&D came in the 1980s through a television show inspired by the game. This introduction bonded Pacheco and his younger brother through a shared love of the characters and worlds that could be created within the game.

Pacheco has carried that passion into his current position, sharing information about the world of D&D in his course, "Exploring Dungeons & Dragons," which was offered at ASU in the Spring of 2026.

For some more recent D&D players, introduction to the world of TTRPGs has come through new forms of digital entertainment, which allow interested players to sit in on the experience of others playing the game.

"My first introduction to D&D was through YouTube actually," said Rebekah Farnsworth, a sophomore studying environmental engineering. "It was just a random campaign by a YouTuber that I liked, and I just really loved her character… I had been starting to do theater at the time, and so I was like, it would be so fun to be able to perform as a character, just with my friends."

Farnsworth is far from the only new D&D player drawn in from the growth of the game across social media platforms, as the streaming or live-play of D&D has exploded in popularity in recent years, according to Pacheco. Recent evidence of this can be seen with Dimension 20, a TTRPG comedy web series, which sold out a live D&D play-through show at Madison Square Garden in 2025.

These modern outlets provide possible explanations for how D&D has maintained such a strong player base over the years, but one final consideration to make comes from what is at the core of TTRPGs: imagination.

“It’s really just like playing pretend, and we do that since we’re kids,” Farnsworth said. “Being able to take that playing pretend and being able to give it more stakes… it really resonates.”

Ty Merriam, a sophomore studying film, has been playing D&D seriously since they were in sixth grade, but noted that as a younger child, as they and their friends played pretend on the playground at recess, they were really already playing a form of TTRPG.

Merriam now shares their passion for TTRPGs with other students as the president of Adventurers Wanted at ASU, which provides a space for students to play TTRPGs together on a weekly basis.

For Merriam, given the dominance of screens and Internet usage in day-to-day life, Adventurers Wanted creates an important opportunity for players to engage in collective escapism through the storytelling of TTRPGs.

The club reserves rooms across campus, where experienced players can join a campaign under a Dungeon Master and play with other students. However, Adventurers Wanted also has components catered to introducing new players to the world of TTRPGs.

“When there’s new people, we hold meetings. They’re every Friday, and, at the beginning, the PR manager and the president will stay for an hour, and we’ll hold different workshops or do mini one-shot campaigns to help introduce any first-time players,” said Farnsworth, who serves as the PR manager for Adventurers Wanted.

Farnsworth added that some of her favorite parts of the club come from watching new players come out of their shell, find a community and become immersed in the story being told through the game.

Isabella Matakas, a junior studying biochemistry, is one such new player who first discovered Adventurers Wanted through their Instagram account and has been attending meetings ever since.

"My favorite part about this is it's like you get to create a character that's all your own, and you get to role-play it," Matakas said. "Not ever knowing what's gonna come at you next is also very alluring too."

The game that keeps on giving

While methods of introduction to D&D might vary, one aspect of the game that is far more universal is the various benefits that players reap from the experience — acting as a creative outlet, a space to build community or a genuine way to develop real-life skills.

For Farnsworth, these benefits take shape in the freedom and openness that D&D and similar TTRPGs allow their players to engage in.

"It really helps people to get more comfortable, not just being themselves, but also being weird in public," Farnsworth said.

In a world that appears to be hyperfocused on fitting certain trends and styles, especially among younger generations, D&D and other TTRPGs stand in firm opposition.

Rather than pushing players toward a specific mold or character type, TTRPGs provide enjoyment for players like Farnsworth by allowing them to explore personas or styles they normally would not gravitate towards.

"I totally go for characters that I just have no connection to because it's just so much fun to be able to get into the mind space with those characters, and [to] just be able to think about what would they think about this situation, and then see how that goes," Farnsworth said.

This encouragement of experimentation and creativity in how players express themselves in TTRPGs lends itself especially well to the college environment, noted Pacheco, as branching out and meeting new people are often seen as essential parts of the experience.

"Finding a safe, supportive space to connect with others outside the classroom is important," Pacheco said. "With the right group, tabletop roleplaying games are an outlet for creativity and joy. In this respect, tabletop gaming is just as important as participating in any other hobby or extracurricular activity."

The vulnerability and unity that can come from playing TTRPGs can also help to make it an important space for players to work through things going on in their personal lives.

"In some groups I've been in, [D&D] helps to talk about and think about things that you're struggling with," Merriam said. "Some people use DND as therapy. Some people use it to talk about social issues that they're currently going through."

Beyond the tabletop

The benefits that can come from D&D extend to skills that players are able to apply even when they leave the table and enter the workforce.

Due to the way D&D and other TTRPGs are played, they can be used to build strength in probability, statistics, reading comprehension and multimodal writing, according to Pacheco.

Aside from game mechanics, the actual role-playing element of D&D can be helpful in developing relevant skills for a player's future career.

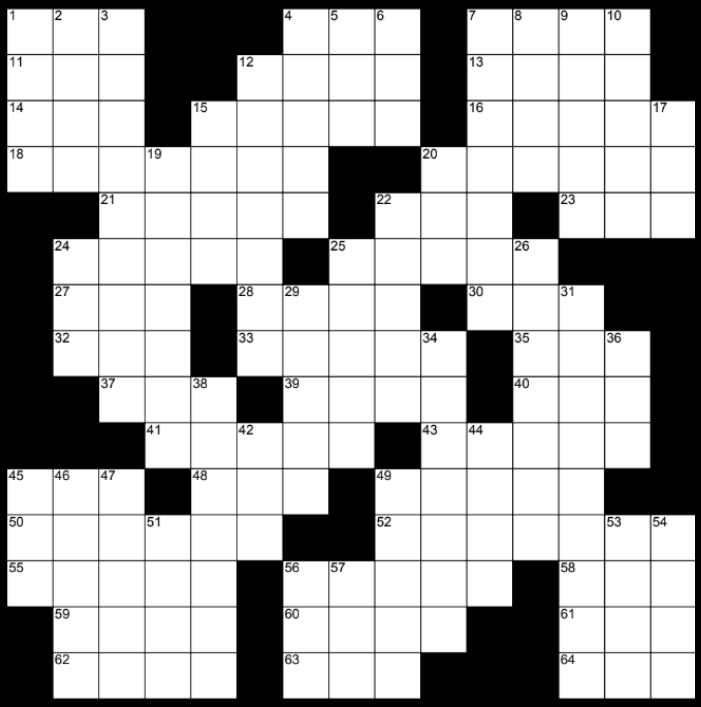
"Roleplay is a common practice in workplace training, whether it's aspiring doctors learning from actors playing patients, law school students undertaking mock trials or the military engaging in disaster preparedness training," Pacheco said. "It doesn't matter if those situations are fantastical or realistic. Your brain learns from the experiences either way."

Matakas added that in D&D, players are forced to work on their critical and spontaneous thinking skills as well, in order to formulate a response to the next portion of the story that the Dungeon Master has thrown at the players.

In the same way that role-playing allows one to try and approach a problem without the fear of real-life consequences, it also allows players to approach certain social interactions in new ways and learn from how people react.

The fact that the same ability that makes someone a fun addition to an adventuring party can also be one of the abilities that lands them a job or makes a new friend is a hallmark of why TTRPGs are so unique. The games invite players to explore new worlds and tell stories together, in an environment where collaboration and imagination reign supreme.





ACROSS

1. Equivalent of control on a Mac, for short
4. "____ Elise"
7. TV antihero who shares a name with a famous poet
11. 4-across, in English
12. Tombraider Croft
13. Declare assuredly
14. Lead-in to time or day
15. *Parton of country fame (The Elephants)*
16. Fresh start, often
18. They're often banned from many campus areas
20. "____ Company"
21. Ranged alternative, as in a video game
22. "I've got it!"
23. Commercial unit abbr.
24. Britney Spears single "____ Never Be Me" released in 2026
25. Like a celebrant in June, maybe
27. Unit for a semitruck
28. Small-ish battery types
30. "____ Misérables"
32. "I don't know..."
33. "You're going down!"
35. Narc, often
37. A long, long time
39. Sicilian peak
40. "____ takers?"
41. *Actress and singer-songwriter Janelle (Houses of Parliament)*
43. Apatow of "Euphoria" (2019)
45. Alternative question to 58-across, for short
48. Comedian Robinson of "I Think You Should Leave" (2019)
49. Promotes, as a pitch
50. Feeling one might get when listening to a Halloween pop classic
52. Like an inconvenient shelf
55. Candidate in a highly-publicized 2025 election
56. Medium mastered by the italicized clues' answers, when read phonetically
58. See 45-down
59. Key of Mozart's "Symphony No. 40"
60. "It's either her ____!"
61. Cry from a pirate
62. Despaired, as a caged bird
63. Like some DMs
64. "Mm-hmm"

DOWN

1. Money moguls, for short
2. *Enlightened one (The Scream)*
3. Suburban ideal, say
4. [Loud buzzer noise]
5. Many a modern addr., maybe
6. Pianist Charles who wore signature black glasses
7. *Battle supply, say (Mao)*
8. Declare assuredly
9. Drops, as one's marbles
10. Old post on X?
12. Name shared by three Gilmore girls
15. Computer brand
17. Lao ____
19. Like the main 12-down
20. Texter's "however"
22. Burning desire for a criminal?
24. Name comprised of three consecutive letters of the alphabet
25. Copy's counterpart
26. Standard, as settings or a skin
29. Elite squad
31. Shoos with propriety?
34. Song challenge to a band T-shirt wearer, perhaps
36. Tie follower?
38. Vague response to 45-across
42. Zip
44. It might be difficult to take in
45. "...and so on"
46. Perseveres, with "out"
47. Appeal of a pie shop, often
49. Fidgets, in modern slang
51. "Deal!"
53. Handheld harp
54. Pretend, as one who fails to 34-down
56. Awesome, in gamer slang
57. A character's is fully fleshed-out, ideally

Answer Key
Flip Upside Down

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JORDAN SCHNITZER PRIZE OF THE WEST

Celebrating & Honoring
UNCOMMON COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION IN SOLVING THE LEGACY CHALLENGES OF THE AMERICAN WEST

Having worked with the late Don Kerr to help establish the High Desert Museum, I have always taken great pride in the fact that there is a world-class museum in Bend, Oregon!

In discussions with Dana Whitelaw, Executive Director of the High Desert Museum, I suggested that we create a prize focused on the thirteen Western states and the shared challenges they face, including water rights, wildfires, best ranching practices, tribal and fishing issues.

We were honored that 12 extraordinary individuals agreed to serve on our Advisory Committee and they chose this year's Jordan Schnitzer Prize of the West winner Brad Parry, Vice Chairman of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation and a former employee of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, where he served for nearly 20 years.

Mr. Parry has been instrumental in helping reclaim his tribe's ancestral lands in Southeastern Idaho. Through collaboration and thoughtful stewardship, his work has helped restore the watershed, allowing much-needed fresh water to flow toward the Great Salt Lake, which is in desperate need of additional water.

We look forward to this award continuing for many years to come, recognizing individuals who work tirelessly and collaboratively to find solutions that benefit everyone while preserving and enhancing the remarkable Western United States!

JORDAN D. SCHNITZER
President of Schnitzer Properties and the Harold & Arlene Schnitzer CARE Foundation

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JORDAN SCHNITZER PRIZE OF THE WEST ADVISORS
John L. Blackwell, Benjamin F. Carter, Sharon Collinge, Zephyr Frank, Jon Griggs, Michael Hollern, Patty Limerick, Paisley Rekdal, Don Sampson, Jordan Schnitzer, Carly Solström, Dana Whitelaw



2026 FINALISTS

AMY BOWERS CORDALIS



KELLY DELPIT



JULIE RENTNER



LAURA VAN RIPER



2027 NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN

For more information, nominations, eligibility, and award cycles, please visit highdesertmuseum.org/schnitzer-prize

Jordan Schnitzer Harold & Arlene Schnitzer CARE FOUNDATION

HIGH DESERT MUSEUM