

SEMI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

WINTER '22
ARTS IN REVIEW

MC Art Beat

Visual, Performing, and Media Arts News at Montgomery College





Message from the Dean

DEAR FRIENDS OF MONTGOMERY COLLEGE ARTS,

The beginning of the academic year was challenging to be sure. Exhaustion, uncertainty, and even hopelessness were felt by many. Fortunately, these times of crisis led to innovation and creativity among the teachers and artists of the VPMA faculty. They continued to find new ways to innovate in their classes, offer events, and move forward.

In the classroom, they experimented with various innovative approaches and used technology to enhance their teaching. This helped to enrich the learning experience for many students and made virtual learning more fun, imaginative, and inspired than they anticipated. It also reduced some of the stress and worry caused by the health crisis and the related economic hardships.

Similarly, our faculty continued to explore new ways to offer arts events. They planned exciting co-curricular opportunities, inspiring lectures, demonstrations, and artistic experiences for our students and the community. We experimented with offering arts events in a variety of formats and modalities and learned to be flexible and nimble in the process.

For the spring semester, both in-person and remote events are being planned. In addition, many events will feature an in-person component while simultaneously being live-streamed to a wider audience. We hope you will attend our events however you feel most comfortable. The Spring 2022 Arts Calendar will be out soon. Be sure to check our exciting schedule of in-person and virtual theatre productions, dance performances, music concerts, artist lectures, workshops, gallery exhibitions, and other arts events at montgomerycollege.edu/artsinstitute. Please join us at an event in the near future.

Frank Trezza, PhD

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Special Thanks

Professor Dawn Avery

Pablo Callejo

Professor Joanne Carl

Professor Tiffany Copeland

Professor Norberto Gomez

Larry Mitchell

Will Smink

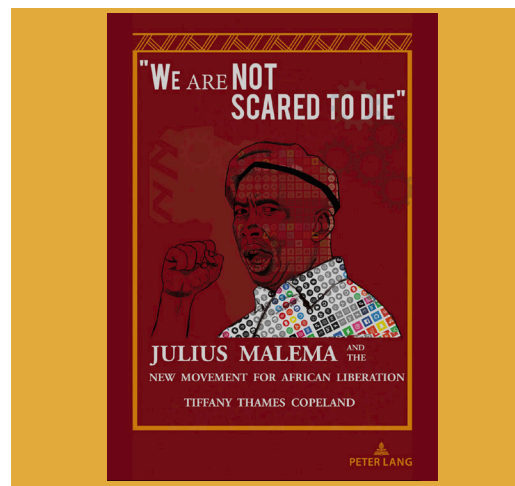
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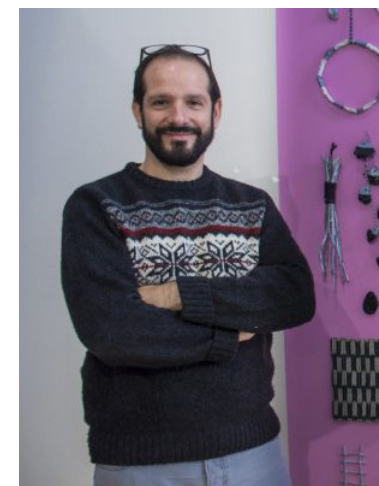
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FACULTY

Scholarship Spotlight

DR. TIFFANY THAMES COPELAND

Media Arts & Technologies Faculty and Radio Station Coordinator of MC's radio station WMCR, Dr. Tiffany Thames Copeland published her first book in 2021:

"We are Not Scared to Die": Julius Malema and the New Movement for African Liberation.

The charismatic Julius Malema and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) have descended onto the South African political scene like superheroes, vowing to liberate South Africans with their radical, militant, and revolutionary stance. Their pledge in fighting the four evils of this world including colonialism, imperialism, racism, and sexism, has given them an allure of being saviors while striking fear in the hearts of the white monopoly capitalists including their African conspirators, labeled sell outs.

The nexus of this book comprises of two social media studies on Malema's eye-opening, controversial, and at times humorous rhetoric—and his audience's unfiltered reaction to it—during the 2019 South African general election season. Malema's discourse is also assessed from South Africa's historical, cultural, and socio-political environment, with special attention given to the poor black majority.

The EFF is part of an international protest movement, and connections are, at times, drawn between the South African and the African American experience—both of which have been severely impacted by an international system of white hegemony.

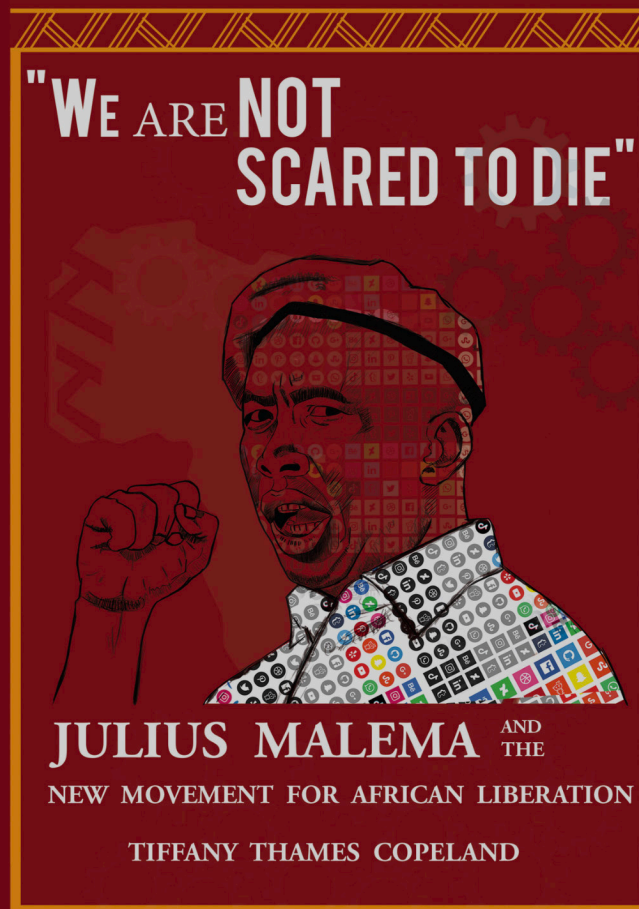
Ultimately, this research shows that Malema's fiery and witty rhetoric has firmly situated the EFF at the forefront of a new movement for African liberation. As Malema said, "The time for reconciliation is over, now is the time for justice," solidifying him as one of the most controversial political figures in South Africa, Africa, and perhaps one day, the world over.



Tiffany Thames Copeland is a professor of digital media and broadcasting at Montgomery College. She earned a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Howard University in 2020. She is also a former Smithsonian Faculty Fellow and has travelled throughout the world.



WWW.PETERLANG.COM
Cover image by Michael Osei



PETER LANG



SOUTH AFRICA
LESOTHO

Previous Spread: Dr. Copeland visits Radio Ibhonele 98.2 fm South Africa, 2017

Above: "We are Not Scared to Die": Julius Malema and the New Movement for African Liberation, Cover and Back Cover

Right: Dr. Copeland in South Africa, 2017

Professor Copeland's rhetorical analysis of Julius Malema and his mission for the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) Party in South Africa, began through research for her PhD in Communications at Howard University, and through her travels to South Africa in 2017 and 2021.

Dr. Copeland chose Malema's words, "We are Not Scared to Die" as the title for her book, and explains they form a protest anthem, born not from blood lust (*as oppressors benefiting from a negative view of EFF assert*), but from a blood reckoning—protesting the continued systemic murder, abuse, and economic ruin of African people both in South Africa and globally.

The combination of historical perspective, rhetorical analysis and personal account opens the reader's eyes not only to the importance of evaluating rhetorical styles and the utilization of social media, but to this era of South African neo-apartheid.

Dr. Copeland demystifies the *often-mislabeled* rhetoric of Malema's as Black Rhetoric, specifically Signifying, with roots in powerful, yet humorous speech. With great clarity and context, she evaluates the EFF's utilization of digital and social media to reach younger people. Dr. Copeland relates that the mis-characterization of the EFF and Malema benefits those profiting from the neo-

apartheid state in South Africa and that this mis-characterization extends across continents. This is because rectifying the socio-economic plight of African Americans, Afro-Europeans, and those with African heritage around the world threatens those who continue to profit from colonialism, racism, and degradation of those with African heritage.

Dr. Copeland witnessed firsthand the impoverished conditions experienced by most Africans in South Africa, with many households in ramshackle conditions, and without bathrooms. Attacks on women as they make their way to public toilet areas exacerbate their plight.

Professor Copeland spoke with young Africans during her travels to South Africa who appear resigned to their



This Spread: Photographs of living conditions in Khayelitsha township in South Africa, taken by Dr. Copeland, 2017



Primary school arts center in Ndebele village, north of Johannesburg, photo taken by Dr. Copeland, 2017



Dr. Copeland visits Ndebele village, north of Johannesburg, South Africa, 2017



To read more about Professor Copeland, visit: <https://www.tiffanycopeland.com/>

socio-economic plight—they own just 4% of property and make a fraction of salaries earned by other groups there. When Professor Copeland asked a young, impoverished African woman how she felt about the state of poverty faced by the majority of Africans there, the young woman answered, “It’s just how it is.” Dr. Copeland found

this response troubling, and further inspired her authorship and studies.

Dr. Copeland will share her expertise on the power of social media platforms in her Introduction to New Media class this Spring, where students will create multimedia and social media content.

“We are Not Scared to Die”: Julius Malema and the New Movement for African Liberation is available via Peter Lang Press:

<https://www.peterlang.com/document/1062257> and on Amazon:

<https://www.amazon.com/Are-Not-Scared-Die-Liberation/dp/1433183552/>



Dr. Copeland Pictured with wax sculpture of Winnie Mandela in Santon Mall at Nelson Mandela Square, 2021



**World Arts Festival Fall
2021 Artist-in-Residence:
Grammy-Award Winning
Producer, Engineer,
and Performer,**

**LARRY
MITCHELL**

During the class, Mitchell discussed chords, riffs, and finger mobility in a way that was both comprehensible to novices and useful for experienced students.

Montgomery College's World Arts Festival is an annual year-long celebration of music, dance, literature, storytelling, film, and visual art from around the world, organized by MC music professor, Dawn Avery. Now in its 19th year, the festival features workshops, lectures, and performances by internationally recognized artists and scholars. This fall's impressive schedule of events included an artist residency by Grammy-Award winning producer, engineer, and performer, Larry Mitchell.

Mitchell has toured the world playing guitar with well-known artists including Tracy Chapman, Billy Squier, Ric Ocasek, and Miguel Bosé, and has released nine solo records. In his original compositions, he skillfully weaves guitar textures that showcase his virtuosity as a solo artist and ensemble player. As a producer-engineer, Mitchell has won 26 New Mexico Music Awards in categories including pop, adult contemporary, rap, rock, country, and Native American, and a Grammy Award for producing, engineering, and performing on *Totemic Flute Chants* by artist Johnny Whitehorse. He is currently touring with his own trio as well as with Native artists Shelley Morningsong, Joy Harjo, Robert Mirabal, and MC's own Dawn Avery.

Mr. Mitchell has held several residencies at MC over the years, and his ability to

connect with students is evident in the number of alumni who return to see him every time he visits. Because this fall's events were remote, more members of the MC community than ever were able to attend Mitchell's events and benefit from his expertise. This year, he taught workshops on music production and livestreaming, and led a guitar masterclass attended by musicians from all over the country. In each session, Mitchell encouraged the participants to keep in touch and continue playing together, virtually and in real life.

In his production workshop, Mitchell demonstrated several ways to create and mix digital sounds with live instruments and led an animated question-and-answer session. He was pleased to see that a wide range of musicians, from casual to serious, were in attendance. The same was true of his livestreaming workshop, in which Mitchell shared tips for producing high-quality events on Facebook, YouTube, and other platforms. Having livestreamed weekly concerts for several years before the pandemic made it a necessity, he was able to discuss the pros and cons of a variety of apps and hardware, as well as best practices for sound, lighting, and online performance.

The guitar masterclass was a highlight of the residency. A large group of musicians,

from beginners to advanced guitarists, signed in to Zoom to interact with Mitchell in individual and group sessions. One participant was surprised at the ease with which Mitchell was able to work with such a wide range of abilities and noted that his encouragement and patience made the class enjoyable for everyone. During the class, Mitchell discussed chords, riffs, and finger mobility in a way that was both comprehensible to novices and useful for experienced students.

To end the residency, Mr. Mitchell and Professor Avery gave a concert of world music inspired by Native American, Middle Eastern, and Latin American spiritual traditions. Avery and Mitchell have known each other for more than ten years, and the songs they performed were the result of the many projects that they

have worked on together. Their recent collaborations include a new documentary called *Imagining the Indian: The Fight Against Native American Mascoting*, an opera titled *Sacajawea: Woman Of Many Names*, and the play *Ajijjaak on Turtle Island*, a contemporary Native American story.

Despite his full schedule of live and virtual performances, a new solo album, and several production projects in the works, Mitchell was happy to find time for the World Arts Festival residency this fall. He says that he finds new ways to connect and learn from students every time he visits and values the lasting relationships that he has formed at MC.

To learn more about Larry Mitchell's work, visit: <https://www.larrymitchell.com/>



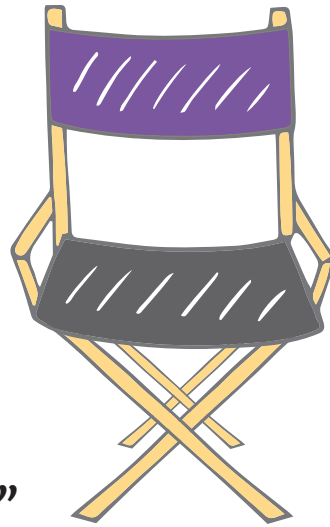
Professor Dawn Avery and Larry Mitchell

FULL CIRCLE

TVRA Graduate,
Will Smink
Earns **WUSA 9**
NEWSCAST DIRECTOR
Role Once Held
by Professor
Joanne Carl

Right: WUSA 9 Newscast Director and
MC Television Production Graduate, Will Smink

WUSA 9 Newscast Director, Will Smink Reflects that the Television Radio Program at Montgomery College “Shaped me into the director I am today.”



One of the best pieces of advice Will says he received from Professor Carl, was to not be afraid to ask a question twice, or as many times as needed until the concept becomes clear.

Will previously worked at Fox 45 Baltimore, also in a director's role. He notes that while working in TV can be stressful, it's also very thrilling and rewarding.

Though this is the first time one of Professor Carl's students filled a specific role she once held in the industry, she notes that there are many talented TVRA grads who now work for local studios and stations, as well as in other business

sectors in media production roles. Professor Carl works hard to ensure the classroom mirrors real world production and is delighted to play a supporting role in TVRA students' educational and career goals. Of her time in the newsroom, Professor Carl remembers a strong team environment, working together to bring stories to light that benefit communities and the world around us: “That’s all I wanted to do when I was in that directing chair, or in the studio or the edit booth, and that’s my main goal as an educator. May everyone in the media understand the power that comes from the ability to tell stories from your heart, and use that power for the good of others.”

Professor Joanne Carl describes a “full circle” moment when she discovered her former student, Will Smink, reached the director's chair she once held at WUSA 9 in Washington, DC. Professor Carl took time to reflect on the discovery that her bright former student now directs the same newscast she once did in the early 1990s: “The room has changed a lot since my time there, but some of the faces are the same and I know my friends there will have a big impact on his career, like they did on mine.” She adds, “Will’s student productions were top notch. He took on serious topics like bullying and diversity and always worked to make us smile, even when things were getting a little hectic.”

Will appreciates the hands-on experience he gained while studying at MC, and found the MC Television / Radio Program “Very informative and very impactful.” Will took Advanced Broadcast Journalism and Electronic Field Production from Professor Carl before graduating in 2015 with an associate's degree in Television Production.



Professor Joanne Carl working as Newscast Director
at WUSA 9 c. 1992



Will Smink poses at the News desk
of WUSA 9 in 2021

Retiree Spotlight

PROFESSOR

**PETER
ZAKUTANSKY**

**AFTER 26 YEARS AND MORE THAN 200 SHOWS, THEATRE
PROFESSOR PETER ZAKUTANSKY RETIRED FROM ROCKVILLE'S
DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS IN MAY 2021.**

In addition to teaching design and performance production courses, he has designed the **costumes, hair, and makeup** for **every student stage production and dance concert** at the college since 1995.



Professor Peter Zakutansky

Before that, Zakutansky taught for 10 years at Howard University and established himself as a freelance costumer and designer in the Baltimore-Washington area at New Playwrights' Theatre,

Signature Theatre, Studio Theatre, Woolly Mammoth Theatre, and the Kennedy Center, among many other venues.

Originally from New Jersey, "Zak" graduated with a BFA in Technical Theatre from Ohio University in 1978 and an MFA in Scenography from The George Washington University in 1981. His ties to MC date back to 1986, when he became the costume designer for the college's Summer Dinner Theatre (SDT). He has since worked on more than 70 SDT shows and mentored generations of design students. The program's alumni have gone on to successful careers at Arena Stage, Cirque du Soleil, Washington Savoyards, Woolly Mammoth Theatre, American Dance Institute, Maryland Opera Society, Atlas Performing Arts Center, and Signature Theatre. Some of Zakutansky's favorite SDT productions include *42nd Street*,



The Happy Elf Production at Montgomery College

Into the Woods, *Man of La Mancha*, *Crazy for you*, and Elton John's *Aida*. His designs for *Les Misérables* and *Seussical the Musical* received best costume design awards from *DC Metro Theatre Arts* in 2014.

When Zakutansky accepted a full-time position at MC in 1995, he was thrilled with the diversity of shows, from *The Tempest* to *In the Heights*, put on by the College. Historical costumes for *The Waiting Room* and *Nathan the Wise* meant hours of clothing research, while productions such as *Once on this Island* and *Hello Dolly* meant floors covered in feathers and sequins. One of the highlights of his time at MC was designing

the costumes for a brand-new production called *The Happy Elf* with songs by Harry Connick Jr.

Peter is a proud member of the United States Institute of Theater Technology and the Maryland Area Community College Performing Arts Collective. He was awarded the 2006 National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) Excellence Award for outstanding faculty and a 2007 Make It Happen Innovation Grant. He held a number of leadership positions at MC, including as vice chair and chair of the Rockville Faculty Senate and co-chair of the General

Education Standing Committee from 2017 until his retirement in 2021. He was the faculty advisor for technical theatre students for more than 20 years, co-chair of the Black Box Players student organization, and the faculty advisor for the College's Sexual Liberation Alliance.

Peter is especially proud of his many students who have gone on to careers in theatre (as well as those who haven't, "but can at least hem their own slacks"). These include television and theatre actor and director, Walt Frasier; founder of "Improv 4 Kids," Laurice Fattal; Tracey Stephens of the Capitol Steps; and SAG Award-nominated film and television actor, Troy Caylak. Former student, Jay Faisca, who

has worked in film, television, and theatre, and will appear at the Bristol Old Vic this year, credits Zakutansky with "setting the standard for the quality of work that I expect out of myself as well as the people I work with."

Zakutansky acknowledges his colleagues in the Department of Performing Arts, including Susan Hoffman, Gail Minor Smith, Scott Hengen, Steve Campanella, Dennis Mulligan, and Roger Bridges for encouraging him to do great things over the years. He says that nothing would have been possible without his right-hand assistant, Emilie Long. In his spare time, Peter and his husband Luigi love to travel and entertain. They are planning to move to Thailand in the near future.



Above, Top Image: MC's Production of *Seussical the Musical*

Above, Bottom Image: MC's Production of *Crazy for You*



Above: MC Theatre Production

Right: MC's Production of *The Tempest*



Above: MC's Production of *Catch Me if You Can*

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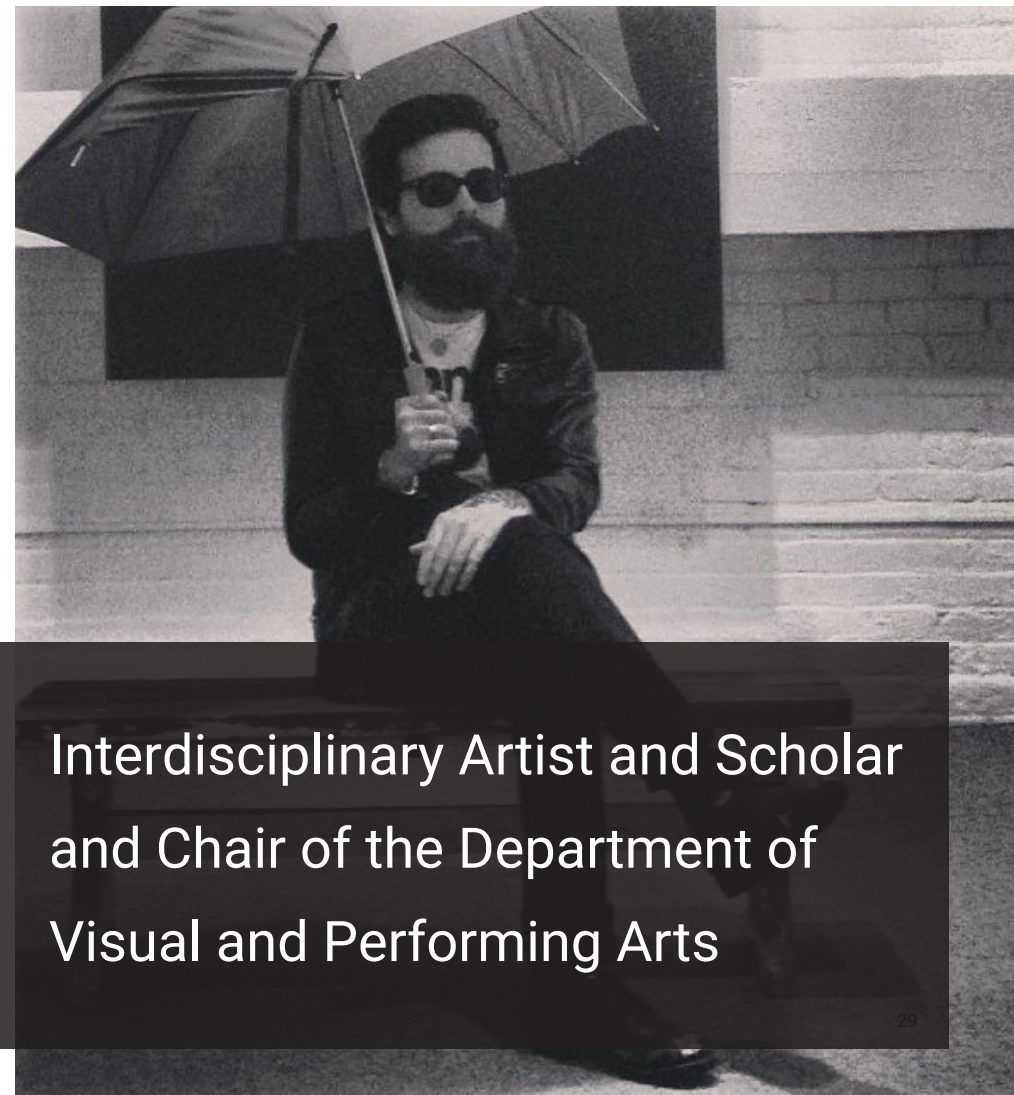
FACULTY ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Norberto Gomez Jr.



Top: *Untitled*, Painting by Dr. Norberto Gomez, 2020

Right: Dr. Norberto Gomez in front of the Spencer L Turner Gallery, Richmond VA 2013



Interdisciplinary Artist and Scholar
and Chair of the Department of
Visual and Performing Arts

When Dr. Norberto Gomez Jr. became chair of Visual and Performing Arts at Takoma Park/Silver Spring in 2018, the department was in the midst of some major transitions. The loss of several beloved faculty members meant that Gomez was responsible for safeguarding a huge amount of institutional knowledge while also setting a course for their own leadership. They got off to a great start. Working with fellow chairs, Gomez helped secure NASAD accreditation, establish important new committees, and increase transparency and communication among departments. Then COVID hit.

The sudden shift to online teaching and learning during a pandemic was a struggle for everyone, but Gomez was well-suited to lead their department through the crisis. **As a specialist in digital culture, they have spent their entire scholarly career thinking about how people communicate and interact online.** Gomez earned a doctorate in Media, Art, and Text from Virginia Commonwealth University and, as a media critic and archeologist, explores both the possibilities and dangers of our increasingly virtual world.

Over the last two years Gomez has welcomed the long-overdue reconsideration of how we teach online. They are encouraged by the recognition that one size does not fit all

when it comes to virtual education, particularly because the visual and performing arts do not always lend themselves to traditional distance-learning models. The conversations that they see developing about the creation of equitable online communities and the prioritization of mental health and wellness in virtual education mirror their own scholarly and artistic interests.

Gomez's tireless pursuit of these interests, particularly considered their role as chair and professor of media appreciation, film, graphic design, and illustration at MC, is remarkable. They publish frequently on the subjects of death, horror and technology, and the history of social spaces on the internet. They have written for

Blumhouse, Cvlt Nation, Digital America, and Fangoria Magazine, and next fall, their essay on the radical use of Facebook by Brazilian-American artist Eva Rocha will be published in *Digital Encounters: Envisioning Connectivity in Latin American Cultural Production* by the University of Toronto Press.

Gomez is also co-founder and editor of Sybil Press, a small print press specializing in handmade artist books, prints, zines, and experimental media with a focus on media theory, philosophy, esotericism, and mystical, multicultural bricolage. Their *The Book of Cannibals*, "a grimoire for the



Listening Spider, Painting by Dr. Norberto Gomez, 2019



Untitled, Painting by Dr. Norberto Gomez, Acrylic on Wood Panel, 18x18", 2020

contemporary artist and consumer," was published by the press in 2014.

When they are not writing, teaching, or attending book fairs and conferences, Gomez pursues their love of music and the visual arts. They released a new album and several music videos in 2020 and have been performing virtually throughout the pandemic. Their video for "Exegesis,"

which features virtual performances inspired by Japanese Butoh dance-theatre, and choreographed by Gomez was recently selected for inclusion in the Moving Body experimental dance festival.

Before pursuing a PhD, Gomez received an MFA in painting and drawing from the University of Houston. Their paintings have been featured in

New American Paintings and recent exhibitions include *Ritual Themes* at Box 13 in Houston, and shows at Rhizome (D.C.), Valet Gallery (Richmond, VA), Little Berlin (Philadelphia), (e)merge art fair (D.C.), Texas A&M University-Kingsville, and C.I.C.A. Museum (South Korea). An exhibition of Gomez's paintings will be on view at The Crown in Baltimore later this spring.

Growing up in a small town in south Texas, Gomez did not have much access to the arts. It wasn't until a high school trip to the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston that they started to appreciate that art is fundamentally about communication and connection. Gomez credits their high school and college teachers with challenging them to open their mind to new forms of expression, and hopes to do the same for their students at MC.

Now more than ever, Gomez believes that the arts should be prioritized at every level of education because they can be used to teach visual and media literacy. As we are inundated with information and images and increasingly unable to disconnect, recognizing how the media we consume form and manipulate our understanding of reality is essential. In classes like TVRA 134 (Media Appreciation), Gomez teaches that new technologies have always changed the way people

understand the world around them, but one need only think of the role that social media plays in their own life to understand the urgency with which we need to investigate how and why these systems work now.

This spring, Gomez will take a well-deserved break from administrative and teaching duties to focus on their scholarly and artistic work. In March, they will chair a panel titled "Techno-Terrors: Horror Cinema and Representations of Death, Flesh, and Power in the Postinternet" at the Northeast Modern Language Association's annual conference. Their proposal for an edited book of related essays as well as a chapter for Edinburgh University Press's *ReFocus* series on the work of director Wes Craven are in progress. In addition, Gomez will complete a post-baccalaureate certificate in professional Spanish at Towson University, where they will gain a specialization at the graduate level in Spanish language, Hispanic cultures, and language acquisition.

To learn more about Dr. Gomez's work, visit:

<http://www.norbertogomezjr.com>

<http://www.cannibalboom.com>

<http://www.sybilpress.org>

<http://www.lalivechat.com>



From MC Student to Artist
and MC Staff Member:

Pablo Callejo's Inspiring Journey and Work

“

Pursue your passion.

*Change the spark of inspiration into
an ongoing fire by fueling it through
practice, practice, practice.*

Never stop making art.

*Consider your student assignments as a
way to trigger that spark.*

”

Left: *The Fool* by Pablo Callejo, Oil on Canvas, 2016. 64 x 48 in.



Pablo Callejo is a source of inspiration for Montgomery College students through his artistic successes,

and through his journey as an international student studying at MC. It was at MC that Pablo discovered his love of the Arts and was inspired to change his career path from Nursing to Art.

Pablo is an inspiration. Of his own sources of inspiration he says,

“If I go to a museum, it’s a burst of inspirational energy for me. I enjoy going to the National Gallery and

especially viewing Renaissance work. Every time that I stand in front of a painting such as *Ginebra* by Leonardo de Vinci, or any Rembrandt painting, I get a lot of inspiration by just looking at it. I think about how hundreds of years ago, the artist was standing in front of the painting, like I am, and was painting it. It’s an inspirational chain.”

Pablo’s advice for students is to try different forms of art, and to “keep learning and challenging themselves.”

Pablo moved to the US in 2000, without knowing English or holding a high school diploma. His dedication led him to achieving both, as well as an associate of arts degree at

Montgomery College and on to MICA where he earned a bachelor’s degree in General Fine Arts. In 2018 he joined the Staff at MC’s Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus full time as an Instructional Lab Coordinator in the Visual and Performing Arts Department.

Pablo missed social interaction during the pandemic greatly, and credits his online church community and prayer with getting him through much of it. In terms of online efforts for the Arts, he reflects:

“I think that the pandemic has taught us that Arts education can be conducted online... these solutions have helped to broaden our audience by giving more people the opportunity to study the Arts.”

Pablo is thoughtful and specific about measures he’s ready to help implement to keep students safe, relating: “I’m excited to be returning to campus but concerned because the virus continues to surge.”

Pablo can relate to the challenges of online education, having completed his high school diploma online. He’s impressed by the innovation in online education since earning his diploma, and recommends that students be



Fortune Teller, by Pablo Callejo, Oil on Canvas, 2016, 48 x 64 in.

resourceful in their online learning.

Pablo provides poetic encouragement for MC Arts Students: “Pursue your passion. Change the spark of inspiration into an ongoing fire by fueling it through practice, practice, practice. Never stop making art. Consider your student assignments as a way to trigger that spark.”

View more artwork by Pablo at his portfolio website:

<http://www.pablocallejo.com/>



The Empress, by Pablo Callejo, Oil on Canvas, 2017, 72 x 48 in.



VPMA

