



Creativity & Innovation at Colorado College

Reflections on Collaborative Creativity

“Forget the myths about historical inventors; the truth is always a story of group genius.” — Keith Sawyer

As the world tries to shrug off the lingering effects of the pandemic and feel its way toward in-person interactions again, many people are reassessing the value of collaboration in their creative lives. We often think of the creative process – whether we are making art or cupcakes or iPhone apps – as a solo adventure. Creativity researcher Keith Sawyer calls this the ‘myth of the lone genius.’ But, as Sawyer and other researchers have shown, in reality, our best ideas are incubated in community with others, whether or not we are aware of it. As Sawyer puts it, “The mind itself is filled with a kind of internal collaboration, that even the insights that emerge when you’re completely alone can be traced back to previous collaborations.”

Although the image of the ‘lone genius’ remains central to our cultural narratives about creativity – think Albert Einstein, Georgia O’Keeffe, or Steve Jobs – arguments for collaborative creativity are gaining traction. For example, in their recent book *Synchreate: A Guide to Navigating the Creative Process for Individuals, Teams, and Communities*, authors Melinda Rothhouse and Charlotte Gullick identify collaboration as an essential part of the creative process. They write, “Community is an essential aspect of the creative process. If we engage with others trying to foster creativity, we are more likely to connect, support, and commit to our own ideas.” The work of sculptor and multidisciplinary artist Senga Nengudi supports this idea. She says, “It is so exciting to open yourself up in the sense of being generous with yourself, opening yourself up and exposing yourself to something that is totally foreign to you and to grow. Collaboration is about growing in all kinds of ways. That’s the bottom line of collaboration; you are willing to grow.”

Our Block Two newsletter celebrates the transformative power of creative collaboration with reflections and events.

- Read Cecilia Timberg’s article examining how students discovered expanded possibilities by collaborating with fellow innovators at the European Innovation Academy this summer.
- Join us Homecoming weekend for Creative / Connections: Two Decades of Art and Friendship, an exhibition that focuses on how creativity has nurtured an enduring connection between alums Teal Fitzpatrick and Giselle Restrepo (both ’02).
- Consider participating in [Creative Leadership Conversations: Motivational Interviewing Seminar](#), an extended-format workshop that invites participants to reframe leadership as a collaborative practice.

Throughout the fall, we invite you to share in Creativity & Innovation’s exploration of how growing together in community enhances creativity in all aspects of our lives.

—Jessica Hunter, Associate Director of Creativity & Innovation

Innovators in Residence and Creative Conversations Speakers Academic Year 2022-2023

Since its inception in 2016, the Innovator in Residence program has become one of Creativity & Innovation’s signature initiatives. The program welcomes creative thinkers from all disciplines into the Colorado College community to offer opportunities for students to practice creative thinking. Although diverse in their professional experiences, disciplinary training, and personal backgrounds, Innovators share the characteristics of flexibility, curiosity, and the desire to work collaboratively.

First Semester Innovators in Residence Include:



Mary Margaret (Mia) Alvarado **Blocks 1-4, 2022**

Mary Margaret (Mia) Alvarado is the author of *Hey Folly* (Dos Madres), a collection of poems, and two forthcoming nonfiction chapbooks: *Plague Year & Change* (Feel Better Books) and *American Weather* (NewLights Press), in collaboration with the artist Corie Cole. Mia is presently revising her first novel, *Love Is an Emergency* (represented by Annie DeWitt). She has published in *The Iowa*

Review, The Kenyon Review, The Rumpus, The Point, VQR, Outside, The Boston Review, Cagibi, The Georgia Review, The Hairpin, and The Beloit Poetry Journal. For more information about Mia and her work, visit her [website](#).

Jemima Neddy Organ

Blocks 1-8, 2022/2023

**Beginning in Block 3, Jemima will offer:
Creative Leadership Conversations: A
Motivational Interviewing Seminar**



About the seminar:

According to a recent article in the *Harvard Business Review*, the landscape of corporate leadership is shifting: “Large companies today have increasingly complex operations, heavier reliance on technology, more workforce diversity, and greater public accountability for their behavior. Leading, under those circumstances, requires superior listening and communication skills and an ability to relate well to multiple constituencies.” (Sadun, Fuller, et al., 2022) Regardless of the work we choose, we must develop the social intelligence needed to work effectively with others as managers, teachers, friends, political activists, parents, and/or community leaders.

This seminar will help the participants gain communication skills by using Motivational Interviewing, which is a collaborative, goal-oriented style of communication with particular attention to the language of change. (Miller & Rollnick, 2013)

Participants will learn how the tenets of Motivational Interviewing can be used as a tool for servant leadership – a philosophy built on the belief that the most effective leaders strive to serve others rather than accrue power or take control. Participants will be mentored on the use of Motivational Interviewing skills in interpersonal and leadership contexts.

The workshop is hands-on and interactive, and the participants are encouraged to practice the skills during and outside of the sessions.

Schedule:

Mondays from 3:30 - 5 pm in Armstrong, Room 233. The first session is on October 24th. The seminar completes on December 19th. There is no class during fall break.

Registration:

You can register through the event section on [Handshake](#) or email Kate Carroll, kcarroll@coloradocollege.edu, to be added to the participant list.

Jemima Neddy Organ has over twenty-six years of experience in the mental health profession and is a licensed professional counselor candidate in Colorado. She integrates her counseling skills with adult education and professional development. Her visionary personality has enabled her to initiate Motivational Interviewing as a tool for servant leaders. Jemima has a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Psychology and Counseling from the University of Nairobi and a PhD from the Organization, Information & Learning Sciences program at the University of New Mexico, with a focus on Instructional Design, Adult Education & Professional Development, and Motivational Interviewing in leadership.



Buzz Spector

Creative Conversation Series

Artist Talk with Buzz Spector

Thursday, November 3, 2022, at 4:00 pm

Cornerstone Film Screening Room

Buzz Spector is an artist, writer, and emeritus professor of art at Washington University in St. Louis. His art practice makes frequent use of the book, both as subject and object, and focuses on relationships between public history, individual memory, and perception. He has had numerous exhibits in private and institutional galleries and museums in the U.S., Europe, and Asia. Buzz has published two books, *Buzzwords* (2012) and *The Book Maker's Desire* (1994). He currently teaches in the PhD in Creativity Program at The University of the Arts. For more information about Buzz and his work, read his bio [here](#).

Myra Jackson

Blocks 3-6

Myra Jackson, often described as a Renaissance woman, has enjoyed a diverse array of hefty careers including electrical engineer, organizational development professional, systems thinker, and master trainer. She has lived abroad and studied many of the world's religious and spiritual traditions in service to her lifelong fascination with the belief structures and cosmologies that captivate people and inform their lives. Linking local and global policy-making, she is a founding wisdom council member of the Gaiafield Project and Subtle Activism Network. As U.N.



Permanent Representative in New York, Myra serves as the focal point on climate change for the Commons Cluster of NGOs. For more information about Myra and her work at the UN, [visit this webpage](#).

European Innovation Academy Porto, Portugal

While Portugal is known for its picturesque beaches and ancient castles, four Colorado College students spent the summer there for a very different reason: to learn how to launch a startup. Creativity &

Innovation awarded grants for each of the students to study at the European Innovation Academy (EIA). They spent three intensive weeks learning how to go from an idea to a detailed business concept.

Dez Stone Menendez, director of Creativity & Innovation at Colorado College, chose to send students to the European Innovation Academy in Portugal because it was an entrepreneurial incubator model with an incredible amount of diversity in the student population.

“You walk in on the first day to 100 teams of five people from all over the world,” said Bryan Tirone, a senior at Colorado College. Bryan was one of four students who traveled to Portugal on the Creativity & Innovation grant. “Either you join one of the hundred teams, or you make your own.”

“How do we empower students to work productively across differences?” was one of Dez’s guiding questions when she chose to send students to EIA. With participants from over 60 countries, Dez knew that the students would work with a diverse array of people and become stronger team members and communicators because of it.

Bryan went into the European Innovation Academy because he wanted to start a laundry detergent and shampoo refill station at Colorado College to support CC’s sustainability goals. He was able to gather a team who wanted to help him realize his refill station plans.

The other students also had business aspirations. Min Pan, CC alum ('22), wanted to start a coffee shop.

“I would never have had this opportunity to work within an international setting with people from different age groups if not for EIA,” said Min, who found the understanding of group dynamics to be the most valuable aspect of



her experience. The teams consisted of 50-year-olds getting their master's degree in business to undergraduate students who had no entrepreneurial background, and everything in between. Min enjoyed developing her communication skills to boost her team's productivity.

The schedule was designed for students to optimize their time at the academy. From 10 am to 8 pm, their days were packed with lectures by business professionals, feedback from mentors, and group work time.

“When you are focusing on one idea, it needs to be truly immersive. EIA allowed for that,” said Dez. By the end, each group had a comprehensive plan to realize their startup.

At the end of the three weeks, the start-up ideas were presented to a panel of judges. The top ten groups were chosen to pitch in the finals to an audience of hundreds. Bryan's group was chosen as one of the top ten.

“It's hard to build a business and I haven't really done that yet, but winning top ten gave me motivation and hope,” said Bryan. It was incredibly fulfilling, according to Bryan, to have his grant idea in the top ten, especially because he was representing Colorado College for its first year participating in EIA.

Besides spending the three weeks building a business, the students were also given the time and freedom to travel and engage with local communities. This, too, was an important aspect of taking a course abroad.

“I saw all the students enhance their capacities to work together and be resilient. They became very mindful of other people's ways of processing. All those skills are transferable to Colorado College and the world beyond it,” said Dez.

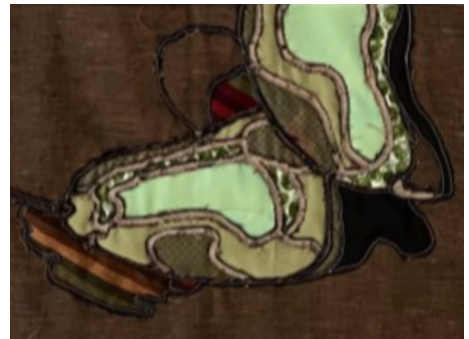
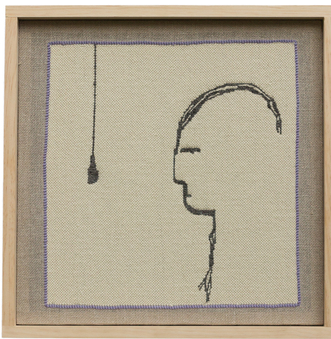
Now back in Colorado, Bryan is realizing the business that he planned while in Portugal. Outpost Refill Delivery Service will operate out of the C Store (Local Goods) providing refills for laundry detergent, soap, and shampoo. Bryan is in the process of contacting relevant companies to help him with the ideas. He hopes to have Outpost running by the end of this school year.

“That will make me feel complete as a CC student because I will have made a tangible difference in my community that will actively reduce waste, and it will be something that I created,” said Bryan.

Creativity & Innovation anticipates sending students to the 2023 European Innovation Academy next summer. If you are interested in being considered for the program, please email Kate Carroll, kcarroll@coloradocollege.edu, to be added to an EIA update list. More information about EIA 2023 will be available soon.

—Cecilia Timberg, 2024

In the spring of 2022, assistant professor and director of the Italian program, Amanda Minervini, was awarded a Creative Exploration grant “to create an ongoing Equine-Guided Learning and Healing Experience on the CC campus that will inspire students to reflect on interspecies communication. EGLH will help students learn to interact mindfully with a sentient nonhuman animal while keeping the interaction grounded in equality. Read CC student Julia Fennell’s (’21) article about the project’s development [here](#).



***Creative / Connections:
Two Decades of Art and Friendship***

Work by Teal Fitzpatrick and Giselle Restrepo

Opening Saturday, October 8 at 3 pm

The exhibit runs October 8 through December 10, 2022

What role does creativity play in sustaining a friendship? What role does friendship play in sustaining a creative practice? Teal Fitzpatrick and Giselle Restrepo (both class of '02) met at Colorado College more than twenty years ago and have nurtured a friendship in which their creative work plays a joyful and central role. This exhibit inspired both artists to create new pieces inspired by one another's CC senior thesis projects, alongside contemporary works and "creative correspondence" exchanged over the years. Highlighting diverse practices, the show includes embroidery, rug-hooking, collage, fiber arts, and clay. Join us and make a postcard to send to a creative friend!

Presented by Creativity & Innovation in collaboration with the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College, the Colorado College Alumni Office, and the CC Arts and Crafts Program.



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