

BARD COLLEGE

ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-SECOND

COMMENCEMENT



The Bard College Awards Ceremony

Friday

the twenty-seventh of May

two thousand twenty-two

6:30 p.m.

*Sosnoff Theater, Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts
Annandale-on-Hudson, New York*

PROGRAM

Welcome

Jane Andromache Brien '89
Director, Alumni/ae Affairs, Bard College

Remarks

KC Serota '04
President, Board of Governors, Bard College Alumni/ae Association

Leon Botstein
President, Bard College

James C. Chambers '81
Chair, Board of Trustees, Bard College

The Bard Medal

George F. Hamel Jr.

Leon Botstein
Trustee Sponsor

Erin Cannan
Faculty Sponsor

The John and Samuel Bard Award in Medicine and Science

Chidi Chike Achebe '92

James C. Chambers '81
Trustee Sponsor

Brooke Jude
Faculty Sponsor

The Charles Flint Kellogg Award in Arts and Letters

R. H. Quaytman '83

Mostafiz ShahMohammed '97
Trustee Sponsor

Nayland Blake '82
Faculty Sponsor

The John Dewey Award for Distinguished Public Service

Michael Zach Korzyk MAT '07

Stanley A. Reichel '65
Trustee Sponsor

Japheth Wood
Faculty Sponsor

The Mary McCarthy Award

Mei-mei Berssenbrugge

Roland J. Augustine
Trustee Sponsor

Ann Lauterbach
Faculty Sponsor

The László Z. Bitó Award for Humanitarian Service

Bryan Billings
Aseliya Utemalieva
Omar Wairich

James H. Ottaway Jr.
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Jonathan Becker
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The Bardian Award

Marcia Acita

Brandon Weber '97
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Tom Eccles
Faculty Sponsor

Thurman Barker

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Whitney Slaten
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Norton Batkin

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Daniel Berthold

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Jean Churchill

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Maria Q. Simpson
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Randy Clum Sr.

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Coleen Murphy Alexander '00
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Richard Davis

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Sanjib Baruah
Faculty Sponsor

Joseph Santore

Brandon Weber '97
Trustee Sponsor

Lisa Sanditz
Faculty Sponsor

Closing
KC Serota '04

THE BARD MEDAL

George F. Hamel Jr.

“My time at the University of Wisconsin was formative for me,” George F. Hamel Jr. says of his college years. “I learned how to advocate on my own behalf and was exposed to a diversity of thought and knowledge that helped me understand there’s truly a whole wide world out there.” Since graduating in 1980, Hamel has committed his time, energy, and resources to creating accessible pathways for young people to attend college and experience that “diversity of thought and knowledge” themselves. George worked as an administrator and coached high-school junior varsity basketball in Virginia. This solidified his dedication to the success of young people, especially those affected by discrimination. George went on to an investment career, first as a financial consultant at Merrill Lynch, and subsequently in San Francisco at Blum Capital, where he was a partner. In 2000 he cofounded the investment management firm ValueAct Capital with his long-time business partner, Jeff Ubben. Today George is a founding member of Inclusive Capital Partners, an investment firm focused on environmental conservation, governance, equity, and societal issues facing people and the planet.

George loves art, music, athletics, and community. He has supported humanitarian and charitable causes with a generosity of spirit, establishing decades-long partnerships with universities, art centers, and not-for-profits. George and his wife, Pamela, have been partners in philanthropy, giving scholarships at institutions of higher learning, providing funding for cancer research, tackling homelessness, and building music venues in communities across the country.

The Hamel spirit arrived at Bard when sons George III '08 and Luke '12 enrolled. The College’s commitment to the arts and emphasis on liberal arts spoke to George. He joined Bard’s Board of Trustees in 2011 and currently serves as vice chair. George facilitated Bard’s relationship with the Posse Foundation and encouraged expansion of its scholarship program to New Orleans; he continues to support the Posse Foundation and the Posse program at his alma mater. At Bard, George has supported scholarships, invested in

building and infrastructure projects, promoted career services, and actively engaged with admissions. He has lent expertise, guidance, advice, and good humor to Bard’s Career Development Office and created BardWorks, an immersive, career-focused workshop and mentorship program that helps students bring their liberal arts experience to the workplace.

And then there is *another* George: a vintner dedicated to sustainable, biodynamic farming at Hamel Family Wines in the Sonoma Valley. George and his family, as generous and loyal members of the community, raised \$1.3 million after wildfires destroyed businesses and other properties, including the Hamels’ own residence. George explained, “This is for people who might have lost their homes but don’t have insurance, and for the undocumented workers who are still the lifeblood of our community but are afraid to seek help.”

George’s guiding principle has been simple: support community partnerships for the long term. We honor George F. Hamel Jr. for his dedication to young people, for his commitment to make education and the arts accessible, and for his gifts as a community builder intent on making the world more equitable and sustainable.

Leon Botstein
Trustee Sponsor

Erin Cannan
Faculty Sponsor

The Bard Medal honors individuals whose efforts on behalf of Bard and whose achievements have significantly advanced the welfare of the College. The Bard Medal was the inspiration of Charles Flint Kellogg ’31, who believed that Bard should establish an award recognizing outstanding service to the College.

THE JOHN AND SAMUEL BARD AWARD IN MEDICINE AND SCIENCE

Chidi Chike Achebe '92

Chidi Chike Achebe has dedicated his career to improving the quality and accessibility of health care, beginning in the Boston area and now focusing on the African continent. His vision is global: to bring high-quality medical assistance to Africa through financial investment in health infrastructure, staffing, and targeted local needs. He founded and now, as chairman and chief executive officer, leads AIDE (African Integrated Development Enterprise), an initiative that aims to build and run eighteen hospitals, beginning in his birth country of Nigeria. The planned hospital system already has an initial \$200 million investment in place. This global venture is built upon Achebe's formidable education and twenty-five years of experience in the health-care field.

At Bard, Achebe majored in natural sciences. Mentored and advised by Professor of Physics Peter Skiff, he was also influenced by other faculty inside and outside the Division of Science, Mathematics, and Computing. Earning his medical degree at Dartmouth Medical School, now the Geisel School of Medicine, he went on to a combined residency in internal medicine and pediatrics at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.

Achebe earned his master of public health degree from Harvard University, focusing on the mechanisms behind health-care disparity. He was medical director of the Whittier Street Health Center and then led the Harvard Street Neighborhood Health Center, both in Boston. At the Harvard Street health center, his business acumen came into play: he helped reduce the debt of the organization while simultaneously building partnerships with major health-care delivery partners. He also was assistant professor at Tufts University School of Medicine. He earned his master of business administration degree from Yale University School of Management, with a concentration on health care. He has written and spoken widely about the AIDS crisis, medicine as a civil right, and the impact of cultural stereotypes on health. Achebe was recognized in 2012 when Dartmouth College awarded him the Martin Luther King Jr. Social Justice

Award for Ongoing Commitment for his service to improving health-care equity in his community. Indeed, Achebe has said he sees “the struggle against inequalities in health and health care for all vulnerable, underserved Americans as the next stage of the civil rights movement.”

With each academic endeavor and leadership experience, Achebe gathered the powerful skill set he has needed to attract international investment to wellness, with a sharp eye for returns on that investment and long-term oversight of finance and operations; he has made sure, for example, that financial transparency is a high AIDE priority. Achebe recalls that, as he was completing his MBA, his father, author Chinua Achebe, said to him, “You have had the best education in the world. What are you going to do with that?” Today the answer is clear. From his first degree earned here on the Annandale campus to implementing his vision of well-managed global health care, Chidi Achebe has forged a path in finding ways to provide care to people far beyond his personal reach.

James C. Chambers ’81
Trustee Sponsor

Brooke Jude
Faculty Sponsor

The John and Samuel Bard Award in Medicine and Science is named after two 18th-century physicians, father and son, whose descendant, John Bard, was the founder of Bard College. This award honors scientists whose achievements demonstrate the breadth of concern and depth of commitment that characterized these pioneer physicians.

THE CHARLES FLINT KELLOGG AWARD
IN ARTS AND LETTERS

R. H. Quaytman '83

For more than thirty years, R. H. Quaytman has crafted a body of work that encompasses painting, installation, writing, curating, and research. Since 2001 her exhibitions of paintings and accompanying publications, which she calls “chapters,” have taken as their subject the medium of painting as a system for knowing the world, our histories, our families, and ourselves. She sees works of art not as isolated objects but as moments of collision and dispute located in specific spaces and times. In 1987 she began working at New York’s PS1, eventually becoming program coordinator and organizing a pioneering show of works by Swedish theosophical painter Hilma af Klint.

After her education at Bard and the Institut des Hautes Études en Arts Plastiques in Paris, she received the Rome Prize in 1992, leading to work and study across Europe. She began to designate sequences of painting as “sentences” and conceived of the idea that they could grow into “chapters.” At a time when painting—particularly abstract painting—was seen as locked into a set of limited possibilities, she drew on traditions of personal narrative, history, and installation to remind us of painting’s primacy. Her genius is reconnecting paintings to their location, and showing us that the movement of our bodies and eyes through that location provides the narrative of our evolving consciousness. Her models are as much the books of W. G. Sebald, with their layerings of image and text, as they are the measured installations of Daniel Buren.

In 2005 she was one of twelve creators of the collective gallery Orchard on Manhattan’s Lower East Side. The endeavor celebrated individual artists working in eccentric ways, a welcome respite from the market-driven anxiety found in many galleries. Orchard served as another vehicle whereby Quaytman and her collaborators could make the case for complex, thoughtful art and artists that have too often been overlooked.

Quayman's work is scholarship of the highest kind. She has brought her subtle eye and far-reaching narrative sense to institutions around the world, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, Documenta 17, the 54th Venice Biennale, Vienna Secession, and most notably the Guggenheim Museum, where in 2018 her installation + *x*, *Chapter 34* hung alongside that museum's of Klint retrospective, completing a circuit begun nearly thirty years earlier.

Like of Klint's work, Quayman's various "chapters" show that painting gives us the world by bringing together the seen and the unseen, by reminding us that every image carries with it a whole freight of other images, other paintings, other glimpses, each lurking at the threshold of our consciousness. To experience one of her installations is to sit with a mind always willing to add another layer to the story, sometimes skeptical, sometimes heartfelt. In all of her work she has championed the overlooked, awakening our minds to what we have too often hurried past. This is the same spirit she brought to Bard's Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts as a faculty member.

She has always been a warm and generous friend. We are grateful for the chance to present her with this honor.

Mostafiz Shah Mohammed '97
Trustee Sponsor

Nayland Blake '82
Faculty Sponsor

The Charles Flint Kellogg Award in Arts and Letters is given in recognition of significant contributions to the American artistic or literary heritage. It honors Charles Flint Kellogg '31, an internationally respected historian and educator, and Bard College trustee. Kellogg was instrumental in establishing the award, which, before his death, was given in the name of noted journalist and biographer Albert Jay Nock (class of 1892), who was also a College faculty member.

THE JOHN DEWEY AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE

Michael Zach Korzyk MAT '07

The most successful math teachers develop lessons that help them see how their students think when solving a problem, and they use that information to shape the next problem set. Michael Zach Korzyk's curiosity about mathematical thinking is fundamental to the invaluable contributions he has made to the field of math education.

After completing his undergraduate education in computer science and theater arts at Boston College, Zach came to Bard as a Math for America fellow in the Master of Arts in Teaching Program. His passion for the subject was evident in his research project, "Patterns of Fibonacci Sequences Modulo m ," in which he investigated periodicity in abstract structures inspired by the famous rabbit problem in the 1202 *Liber Abaci* by mathematician Leonardo of Pisa (also known as Fibonacci). Zach used his expertise in computer science to generate data sets and to explore many promising conjectures.

That knack for solving complex problems was matched by his investment in bringing mathematical problem-solving to life with his middle and high school students. After graduating from Bard, Zach taught for more than a decade at the Manhattan Village Academy, where he oversaw students with a wide range of interests and abilities—from algebra through AP calculus—in the classroom, after-school tutorials, and Saturday enrichment programs. Zach's excellence as an educator quickly became apparent. By his third year in the profession, he was a Math for America master teacher and mentor, providing not only instruction for young people but also mathematics pedagogy for teachers.

In 2009, frustrated with students' struggles with math homework, Zach wrote a simple computer program for his Algebra 2 class to use in substituting values into the quadratic formula. Positive student response led him to develop computer-guided practice for subsequent lessons, which formed the basis of DeltaMath, an online mathematics teaching and learning program. In its first full year as a functional site, DeltaMath was used by one hundred teachers and

five thousand students. In the ensuing years, Zach worked nights, weekends, and summers, adding content and features. He taught himself database management, web servers, and JavaScript. By 2019, the site was serving more than one hundred thousand teachers and four million students. For his “brilliant” teaching and his work on DeltaMath, Zach received a 2019 Sloan Award for Excellence in Teaching Science and Mathematics.

From the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, DeltaMath has enabled thousands of adolescent learners to access high-quality mathematics content despite school closures. Teacher and student testimonials attest that each problem offered on DeltaMath is accompanied by a carefully written solution and excellent instructional videos. “The kids like it!” an Oregon teacher states. “They are becoming more independent learners because of it.” The 2021 research-based text *Teaching Math with Examples* by Michael Pershan describes DeltaMath as an exemplar of student-guided instruction.

Zach Korzyk is a model teacher and public servant who has made a lasting contribution to mathematics education.

Stanley A. Reichel '65
Trustee Sponsor

Japheth Wood
Faculty Sponsor

The John Dewey Award for Distinguished Public Service was established in 1990 to recognize extraordinary contributions by Bard alumni/ae and others to the public sector or in the public interest. It continues Bard’s tradition of honoring public service embodied in the Episcopal Layman Award, which was given until 1983. The Dewey Award honors the eminent philosopher and educator John Dewey, the father of progressive education and an outspoken advocate of a system of universal learning to support and advance this country’s democratic traditions.

THE MARY McCARTHY AWARD

Mei-meï Berssenbrugge

In our troubled moment, it is perhaps difficult to remind ourselves that attention to the world can be understood as a political act, where the idea of politics is released from the daily barrage of news and given its ancient sense of a gathering; a meeting place for dialogue, not only with each other but with the universal currents that circulate around and through all space-time. Such an awareness can be the foundation of an ethics that informs our political reality; an affirmation of the human call to make meaning through perceived relation; to understand.

Mei-meï Berssenbrugge is a poet of astonishing attention. Across fourteen books, she has created a poetics of engagement that reminds us of how entangled we are with all phenomena, and of how our lives are bound and guided by receptivity to their variety and particularity, from the closest leaf and ant to the farthest star. Her characteristic long lines, often extended across an entire page, act as horizons of perception, each folding onto the next not as narrative story but as contingent sequence, by turns declarative, descriptive, meditative, and speculative. The breath of thought is transformed into a music at once abstract and lyrical; language becomes an instrument of a precise and uncanny apprehension. Fellow poet Ben Lerner says her poems “seek to make the process of perception perceptible.” Her work reminds us to be patient, to listen and to watch, to wait, and in that attitude of reception to find new bearings and more profoundly felt connections. Informed by her readings in philosophy and the sciences, as well as by her long involvement with contemporary aesthetics, Berssenbrugge brings to the language of poetry a vital knowledge, where empirical fact unfurls onto the greatest mysteries of nature and spirit.

Mei-meï Berssenbrugge was born in Beijing to a Chinese mother, a mathematician, and a Dutch-American father, who worked at the US Embassy in Chongqing; she grew up in Massachusetts. She earned a BA from Reed College and an MFA from Columbia University. She lives in New York and also in northern New Mexico, where she has been an active member of the artistic

community. Among her many honors are the 2021 Bollingen Prize for American Poetry for her most recent book, *A Treatise on Stars* (which also was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize, a National Book Award, and a Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award); two American Book Awards; and two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts. She is a longtime contributing editor of *Conjunctions*, a literary journal published by Bard College. Her books also include *Hello, the Roses*; *Empathy*; and *I Love Artists: New and Selected Poems*. She has collaborated with numerous artists, including Kiki Smith and Richard Tuttle, and she has worked with theater, music, and dance companies, including the Morita Dance Company, dancer Blondell Cummings, artist Davide Balula, writer Frank Chin, and composer Alvin Lucier. Her daughter, Martha Tuttle '11, is a visual artist.

Roland J. Augustine
Trustee Sponsor

Ann Lauterbach
Faculty Sponsor

The Mary McCarthy Award is given in recognition of engagement in the public sphere by an intellectual, artist, or writer. Mary McCarthy taught at Bard from 1946 to 1947 and again in the 1980s. The award honors the combination of political and cultural commitment exemplified by this fearless, eloquent writer and teacher.

THE LÁSZLÓ Z. BITÓ AWARD FOR HUMANITARIAN SERVICE

Bryan Billings
Aseliya Utemalieva
Omar Wairich

Bryan Billings, from Bard College; Aselia Umetalieva, from the American University of Central Asia (AUCA); and Omar Waraich, from the Open Society Foundations (OSF), have earned the first László Z. Bitó Award for Humanitarian Service for their work in leading the evacuation of students from Afghanistan in fall 2021.

In the summer and fall, staff from Bard; AUCA, Bard's dual-degree partner in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan; and OSF developed plans to offer master's degree opportunities outside Afghanistan to AUCA graduates in that country whose lives would be threatened under the Taliban. With the Taliban takeover, plans grew to include students from the American University of Afghanistan. After several failed attempts at evacuation, the team decided to drive several students at a time from Kabul to Islamabad. When the border closed, the team took advantage of a brief opening for flights to evacuate more students. In all, 177 students, mostly women, were rescued. With the support of Kyrgyz authorities, the majority went to AUCA. Others went to the American University of Beirut, Bard's campuses in New York and Berlin, and Central European University. Billings, Umetalieva, and Waraich represent an organizational team, in Amman, Bishkek, Kabul, Helsinki, Islamabad, and New York, who assisted the evacuation. They are fitting first recipients of the award in memory of László Z. Bitó '60, a Hungarian freedom fighter who came to Bard in 1956 after the Soviet invasion, and who cared deeply about students' well-being.

Billings is director of global outreach at Bard College, where he has worked since 2004. His numerous domestic and international projects include, notably, Bard's collaboration with the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences (Smolny College) at St. Petersburg State University, and Bard's other partners in the post-Soviet world.

Umetalieva is director of the International Students Office at AUCA. She also is institute director for the AUCA–Critical Language Scholarship Program, a study-abroad immersion for American college students sponsored by the US Department of State. Umetalieva has an undergraduate degree with honors in international relations from Kyrgyz National University and a master’s degree in sociology from AUCA.

Waraich is a human rights advocate at OSF. He worked at Amnesty International until 2021. Previously, he covered South Asia for *Time* magazine and *The Independent*. He has written on Islamist insurgencies and press freedom, among other topics. Among his accolades is the 2015 South Asian Journalists Association Award for editorial commentary. He holds a master’s degree from the University of London and is a graduate student in international human rights law at the University of Oxford.

We honor these courageous awardees for their perseverance, reasoned judgment, and organizational skill in helping students restart their educations and their lives in safety.

James H. Ottaway Jr.
Trustee Sponsor

Jonathan Becker
Faculty Sponsor

The László Z. Bitó Award for Humanitarian Service recognizes extraordinary work by members of the Bard community on behalf of individuals threatened by injustice, violence, and tyranny. It honors László Z. Bitó '60 (1934–2021), a Hungarian freedom fighter who came to Bard in 1956 and graduated with a degree in biology. Bitó was a scientist, author, and humanist devoted to the ideals of the liberal arts and a just society.

THE BARDIAN AWARD

Marcia Acita

From the inception of Bard College’s Center for Curatorial Studies and Art in Contemporary Culture (CCS Bard) nearly thirty years ago until today, Marcia Acita has played a pivotal role in the development of this influential institution. Not only did Marcia steward the acquisition and care of the CCS collection, now comprising more than three thousand works, she contributed her finely honed talent to every aspect of the center’s collection, from its growth and management to its role in the CCS Bard graduate program and Bard College as a whole. Marcia has taught, counseled, and influenced every student in CCS’s history. She has established—both at CCS Bard and through the Hessel Museum of Art—exceptional museum standards, and she has influenced many, if not all, of the hundreds of exhibitions produced during her time at Bard. There is no staff member to whom CCS Bard is more indebted than Marcia Acita for her tireless efforts and guiding hand.

As a member of the team that developed the original curatorial graduate program at Bard, Marcia anticipated and crafted the central role that the Marieluise Hessel Collection, foundation of the permanent collection at the Hessel Museum, plays in the education of Bard’s candidates for the degree of master of arts in curatorial studies. Her wise and meticulous attention to detail has conveyed a strong sense of empathy and an intuitive ability to understand how to nurture a student’s vision. As Norton Batkin, the center’s inaugural director, put it, Marcia and her colleagues “found ways to give reality to the program’s best intentions.”

Marcia received her master of fine arts degree from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and her bachelor’s degree from the University of Colorado Boulder, where she studied art and art history. She was director of collections at CCS Bard and the Hessel Museum of Art until 2021, when she retired. In her thirty years at the College, she has organized the production of more than four hundred exhibitions and projects. Before her directorship at CCS, she served as acting director, assistant director of the museum, and director of exhibitions and operations. She also lectures and conducts

workshops on the pragmatic aspects of exhibition making and design, as well as programming logistics.

She has been a mentor to many. Her impact can be found throughout CCS Bard, its collections, and the museum itself, but most important, her influence is embodied in the curatorial work of the program's MFA graduates, all of whom developed and honed their curatorial skills and their individual visions for boundary-expanding exhibitions under Marcia's inspired guidance.

A capstone to Marcia Acita's career is the completion of the full catalogue of the Marieluise Hessel Collection, both in print and online. She extended her time at CCS to see this enormous project to its conclusion, in order to present in its entirety the complete Hessel Collection to coming generations of curators, art historians, and the world at large. There is no better tribute to her life's work.

Brandon Weber '97
Trustee Sponsor

Tom Eccles
Faculty Sponsor

The Bardian Award formalizes the Bard College Alumni/ae Association's tradition of honoring the service of longtime members of the Bard community.

THE BARDIAN AWARD

Thurman Barker

In the morning, from Thurman Barker's office, a sustained sound would emanate that brought the listener to consider the word "hush," a homophone. He would be there, practicing the snare drum not with brushes but with sticks, precision, and mastery. Listening for a homophone would acknowledge an oft-forgotten African diasporic legacy of percussive sounds as surrogates for words, though the practice has been veiled in the United States. In light of this, Barker's artful assertion remains a radical act, hundreds of years after the 1740 South Carolina Slave Code and similar legislation outlawed enslaved peoples' possession of drums; twentieth-century uses of the snare drum quietly conjured older associations with militancy in the worlds of art and music. Ever aware of choices, wise, and generous, Barker—percussionist, improvising composer, and beloved professor of music—has been a champion for the "freedom principles" of experimentalism that invite high regard for the dignity of creative musicians.

Barker has demonstrated an equal commitment to experimental, jazz, and classical music. The sounds of 1950s Chicago are central to his creative approach, from his professional performance debut at age seventeen to his current compositional projects. Reviewer Daniel Gewertz described Barker's performance style as making "time, counterpoint and rhythm serve as the glue." Critic and Bard music professor Kyle Gann has written of Barker's "elegantly intuitive precision." Barker's gift for bonding different styles and groups flourished with the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, of which he is a founding member; he helped lead the organization from its inception in the 1960s to its second generation of artists. This groundwork led him to SUNY Empire State College for his BA, then the American Conservatory of Music and Roosevelt University, where he studied classical percussion. Such range, including his artistry for more than a decade as a percussionist at Chicago's Shubert Theatre, made him an indispensable collaborator. He has recorded as a sideman on more than fifty albums. The National Endowment for the Arts, *DownBeat*, and *Modern Drummer* have recognized Barker's performances with artists including Muhal Richard Abrams, Henry Threadgill,

Cecil Taylor, Mighty Joe Young, Billy Eckstine, Bette Midler, Roscoe Mitchell, and Marvin Gaye.

As a composer, Barker is uncompromising. In the 1980s, shortly after moving to New York, he founded Uptee Productions, which allowed him to create and distribute his compositions without sacrificing his artistic principles. He has six recordings under his label: *Voyage* (1987), *The Way I Hear It* (1999), *Time Factor* (2001), *Strike Force* (2004), *Rediscovered* (2008), and *South Side Suite* (2017), a long-form work for twenty-three musicians. Awarded a New York State Council on the Arts grant, he shares the legacy of percussionist composers Warren “Baby” Dodds and Max Roach.

When he joined Bard’s faculty in 1993, Thurman Barker expanded and stabilized jazz studies at the College through his legendary jazz history course and assemblages of jazz performance faculty and students he has led. His students have gone on to study jazz in literature, pursue performance and music composition careers, and apply his lesson to seek freedom in every part of their lives.

Brandon Weber ’97
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Whitney Slaten
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THE BARDIAN AWARD

Norton Batkin

This is what colleagues say about Norton Batkin: “Consultant and companion.” “Brings the logic of a philosopher.” “Incredibly and constantly concerned about my career and well-being.” “Amazing generosity, powerful intellect, talent for listening, gracious.” “Has great faith in the College.” “Always had my back.” “Keeps his equanimity and generosity through hard times.” “Not afraid of going out of the box.” “Really good at details.” “Spirit of experimentation and collaboration.” “Sees things clearly.” “Guides people not in his field.” “He loves Bard.”

Norton came to Bard in 1991, after earning a BA at Stanford University and MA and PhD at Harvard University, and teaching for a decade at Yale University and Scripps College. His book *Photography and Philosophy*, out the previous year, is reflective of his wide-ranging, interdisciplinary approach to thinking.

At Bard, Norton created a new graduate program in curatorial studies—one of the first in the world—at the freshly minted Center for Curatorial Studies and Art in Contemporary Culture (CCS Bard), now housed with the Hessel Museum of Art. He organized a powerful, innovative curriculum that set the direction of CCS Bard. Norton saw the curatorial program as international. He forged links to artists in Latin America and other parts of the world. He built a mix of faculty, of excellent teachers and high-profile practitioners. He hired prominent critical and curatorial voices and formed a distinguished advisory board. He established the Audrey Irmas Award for Curatorial Excellence, which is awarded annually to leading curators from around the globe. He made CCS Bard a place where, as he put it, “Curators must think.” The program’s alumni/ae are now in leading curatorial roles: Cecilia Alemani ’05 is curator of the 2022 Venice Biennale.

In 2005, Norton moved on to become the dean of graduate studies at Bard. For more than fifteen years he was focused on building the finest graduate programs. He offered steady guidance to the growing number of graduate program directors. Bard is grateful for his management and for his handling of

all the complex issues of regulation and documentation. He zealously protected Bard's programs from what seemed to us directors as intrusions by state bureaucrats. During his three decades at the College, Norton was also associate professor of philosophy and art history. He taught and advised Senior Projects, and chaired the Philosophy Program.

One story speaks to Norton's character. When his friend and colleague Daniel Berthold was fighting to recover from a terrible cancer (which he did), Norton would visit with him and just sit with him, quietly.

We thank Norton Batkin for his influential contributions to Bard College, and we will miss his creativity, wisdom, and guidance.

Brandon Weber '97
Trustee Sponsor

Eban Goodstein
Faculty Sponsor

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THE BARDIAN AWARD

Daniel Berthold

“We must first agree that one trait of the philosophical nature is ever to be in love with knowledge.” So begins Plato’s definition of the philosopher in his masterwork *The Republic*. Professor of Philosophy Daniel Berthold is living more than two thousand years later, yet he would have fit into Plato’s description perfectly. Across the span of nearly forty years at Bard College, Daniel has shown countless students, colleagues, friends, and the larger philosophical community what Plato’s definition looks like when exemplified to the highest degree and placed right in front of them.

Daniel holds BA and MA degrees from Johns Hopkins University and a doctorate from Yale University. Arriving at Bard in 1984, he became a legendary teacher, as students across decades have attested—and years later, have so frequently reiterated. The power of his presence in the classroom has been insightful and immeasurable. Ideas are taken with utmost seriousness, a student’s verbal articulations are gently yet exactingly sculpted to ever-finer contours, and one learns not only to feel a personal philosophical responsibility for what one says but also, perhaps even more so, for the unspoken larger significance or conceptual ramifications of what one has put forth. The knowledge with which Daniel is in love is not often captured in direct declarative propositions; he is a philosopher inspiringly allergic to oversimplification. Rather, like his beloved Kierkegaard, he shows that knowledge can also be found in and expressed through implication, or in meaningful indirection, or in subtle reformulation, or in the well-chosen analogy.

In one of his books, Daniel wrote of the ways that some authors, particularly Hegel and Kierkegaard, entice readers, lure readers, even seduce readers into their narrative worlds. But once a reader is contained within those worlds and their authors begin to recede or conceal themselves, where then is the forthright, trustworthy Virgilian guide, and whose voice is really speaking? The texts, as Daniel shows so lucidly, give rise to these questions, but—tellingly—the questions do not arise in Daniel’s own books. *He* is always there, always present,

always engaged, always gently guiding, and always respectfully listening for and attentive to divergent points of view. As is his teaching.

So, while many have spoken of transformative education, we can say with great admiration and equal certitude that Daniel is one of its finest practitioners. He shows what tireless devotion to this universal ideal can mean for particular individuals, certainly for all Bard students, but exceptionally so in his extensive work with the Bard Prison Initiative, where he has expertly guided the readings, and where the freedom of the mind truly transforms lives.

With intellectual generosity that acknowledges students' achievements and propels them to still greater heights, and with scholarly writings that have opened doors to ever-deeper human understanding, Daniel Berthold has redefined what philosophy at Bard has been, is, and will be. With heartfelt congratulations and profound gratitude, we celebrate his indelible contribution to the realization of our highest aspirations as teachers, scholars, and friends.

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THE BARDIAN AWARD

Ken Buhler

Art critic Roberta Smith has written in the *New York Times* that Ken Buhler’s paintings are “distinguished by an ambition to reduce nature to a state of luminous abstraction.” To stand before one is to be transformed into a sensual, atmospheric, other-worldly space, one that is at once micro and macro, fire and ice, water and air. His surfaces embody infinity, yet also demand up-close, focused looking, as we are drawn in by textures accrued from nuanced layering, stamping, marbling, scratching, and mark-making. It is color, however, that defines his work, where chroma, value, and hue are delicately weighed in relation to one another to create visually dazzling, contemplative spaces. Poet and essayist Tom Sleigh remarks on the power of Buhler’s *Notes from the Edge of the World* series, describing “those in-between moments when one state of being passes into another.”

In his faculty seminar entitled “The Scarlet Sweater: A Hue’s Hue of Color History,” Ken stated, “Color has the ability to embody the potency of the natural world; its extraction is an instinctive desire.” He spoke of color across disciplines—optically and scientifically, symbolically, geologically, spatially—and above all extolled its sensory and emotional potential. Such overall range has been his approach to teaching. Ken offers context for each assignment while emphasizing how meaning is transmitted through the processes of making art.

Ken’s BFA is from University of Iowa and MFA from Indiana University; he came to Bard’s Studio Arts Program in 2000. His life as a teacher became entwined with his own explorations in the studio, most notably his research on color interaction and theory, monotype printmaking, and drawing from nature. Each of these distinct disciplines evolved into rigorous studio courses that provided a base of arts education for all Bard students. *Colorama*, *Drawing from Nature*, and *The Painterly Print* have been wildly popular courses. His students have made observations through microscopes and made marbled paper in the Italian tradition; all have studied Josef Albers’s *Interaction of Color*. They have traced their artistic lineages and interests through generations in what he calls

the Atlas project. But above all, they have found their individual voices as artists who can move forward on their own.

Some highlights of Ken's career include numerous exhibitions at Lesley Heller Workspace, ongoing editions of prints with Jungle Press, and receipt of numerous grants including a New York Foundation for the Arts fellowship and Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant, as well as a National Endowment for the Arts award. Ken has participated in artist residencies across the United States and in Ireland.

A former student, Sam Bornstein '05, writes, "There are teachers who bring their full humanity to the task of teaching without ego, and they show you that it's possible to be a success while also meeting people as equals with respect. Ken Buhler was all of those people to me, and a true role model."

A team player, a voice of reason, a steady hand, Ken Buhler's legacy will continue through his many students and friends.

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THE BARDIAN AWARD

Jean Churchill

Jean Churchill started taking modern dance classes when she was four and enrolled in ballet classes at the Boston School of Ballet at the age of seven. By thirteen she was a paid apprentice of the Boston Ballet Company and member of the dancers' union. Jean loved ballet but was consistently cast in the company's modern dance pieces. "For ballet companies in those days, a modern dance was the necessary garlic in the dish," she has said.

She studied at American Dance Festival at Connecticut College with members of the Martha Graham and Alvin Ailey dance companies and Meredith Monk. Toby Armour, founder of modern dance company New England Dinosaur, took notice of Jean and invited her to join the troupe. Jean danced, choreographed, and eventually became the group's artistic director; after four years she moved to New York City. There, she danced with Sara Rudner, Carolyn Brown, Rosalind Newman, and others, and her choreography was produced by Dance Theater Workshop (which later became New York Live Arts), Ethnic Folk Arts Center (now Center for Traditional Music and Dance), and other experimental venues.

While holding an audition for an antinuclear arts festival she was co-organizing, Jean ran into Armour's best friend, Aileen Passloff, then codirector of Bard's Drama/Dance Department. In spring 1980, Jean started teaching part-time at Bard; she received tenure in 1986, became professor of dance, and was director of the Dance Program from 1990 to 2008. When asked what she is most proud of, Jean highlights the many students she has worked with and her collaborations with fellow dancers.

Jean embedded herself in the life of the College, from faculty governance to memberships on many working groups including, in 1985, the HIV/AIDS committee. She loved working with her colleagues, and in 2002 traveled to Moscow for the premiere of *Cinderella's Bad Magic*, an opera she choreographed and codirected, with music by Kyle Gann, then associate music professor at Bard, and libretto by Jeffrey Sichel, assistant professor of theater.

Jean had the opportunity to work with noted architect Frank Gehry’s team on the design of The Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College in the early 2000s. They were lucky to have her: the process required a deep understanding of the infrastructures and environments necessary to support artists’—especially dancers’—creativity. Jean characterizes the experience as one of her most exciting at Bard.

Anyone who has studied with Jean, seen Jean dance, or performed her work knows that she is particularly drawn to keen articulation of the hands and feet—often simultaneously. No one, then, should be surprised that she decided to learn how to drum. In 2016, Jean joined Tin Horn Uprising, a band of musician activists that performs at rallies in the Hudson Valley.

Jean restored an old barn on her Ulster County property that she now uses to rehearse new dance projects. Having grown up sailing on Cape Cod, she bought a sailboat. When she is not making dances in the barn, you will likely find Jean coming about on the Hudson River.

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THE BARDIAN AWARD

Randy Clum Sr.

The significance of outdoor space has never been clearer than in the past few years. The COVID-19 pandemic required people to distance, isolate, and live, learn, and work apart from one another. Bard was no exception. We did, however, have two things in our favor to help navigate the restrictions and uncertainty: an abundance of open space that served our campus population in crucial ways, and Randy Clum Sr., the person who understood and maintained that space for the past four decades.

Randy came to Bard forty-two years ago, following his mother, Isabelle, and father, Edwin, who worked in housekeeping. Shortly after Randy started working here, Director of Buildings and Grounds Richard “Dick” Griffiths hired him as a full-time groundsman. Randy’s work ethic, natural leadership, and love of the physical campus soon became obvious. He was quickly promoted to grounds foreman and built a dedicated crew of twelve hard-working individuals. Over the next decade, Randy rose to grounds manager, then assistant director/grounds manager. In 2015, Randy assumed the role of director of Buildings and Grounds even though, after some thirty-five Commencements and just as many Annandale winters, he was starting to plan for retirement. He held the position until June 2021, when he became director of capital projects, before fully retiring in December.

Directorship of the Buildings and Grounds (B&G) department’s more than eighty-five employees, with responsibilities ranging from trades to transportation to horticulture, was not something Randy sought. However, when the College needed him most, he put his personal plans on hold and led B&G through a time of change. Randy was uniquely suited to unite his department because he had long ago earned the respect of those he was now tasked to lead. Never one to add work to others without taking on the bulk of it himself, Randy’s responsibilities increased tremendously, as did the College’s reliance on him. Furthermore, for several years Randy maintained his previous duties of overseeing the Grounds Department, and took an active role in campus building projects, oversight of the Montgomery Place campus, and

master planning. If ever there was a long, winding, off-the-beaten-track path to retirement, this was it!

Under his watch, Bard College has acquired a new campus and built dozens of new buildings and multiple athletic fields; and Randy has personally managed hundreds of snowstorms, answered countless middle-of-the-night emergency calls, and, of course, led a campus community and large department of essential workers successfully through a global pandemic. Randy's commitment to Bard College is too vast to sum up in its entirety. He did whatever was needed—without complaint or expectation of recognition but with a profound sense of integrity.

So every time you come to campus and see the care that has gone into maintaining the land, or sit in a chair at Commencement and look up at the stage perfectly set back from the front row, or visit the Bard cemetery, park your car in a safe lot, or watch a baseball game at Honey Field, and certainly every time you see a white tent, think of Randy Clum.

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THE BARDIAN AWARD

Richard H. Davis

Richard H. Davis, a prominent scholar of Indian religions, came to Bard in 1997—the same year that his award-winning book *Lives of Indian Images* was published. During his decades at Bard, Richard continued to publish important works and distinguish himself as an accomplished teacher and a generous mentor to students.

In *Lives of Indian Images*, Richard explores the “biographies” of Indian religious icons; it employs as its organizing metaphor the Hindu theological idea that religious images are animate beings. The book recounts stories of well-known objects at different moments in their histories: as religious incarnations, prizes of war or colonial conquest, art displays in museums, and symbols of national patrimony. Richard avoids privileging an artwork’s moment of creation, and in doing so, says art historian Frederick M. Asher, he shows that its subsequent life can be “the richest and most interesting.”

His talent for presenting complex arguments in the form of captivating stories marks some of Richard’s other writings as well. Preeminent scholar of Hinduism Wendy Doniger, in the *New York Review of Books*, says his 2014 book, *The Bhagavad Gita: A Biography*, is a “masterful” examination of the spiritual masterpiece that “shows us, in subtle and stunning detail, how the text of the *Gita* has been embedded in one political setting after another, changing its meaning again and again over the centuries.”

Richard has always pursued new intellectual challenges, including those kindled by student interest. The circumstances that led him to write *Global India circa 100 CE* are revealing. In an interview, he said he was disconcerted by the sense that he was unwittingly presenting a picture of South Asia as a self-contained civilization. His students had questions about Alexander the Great’s India campaign or the spread of Buddhism from India to other parts of Asia; they were curious about India’s contacts on a global scale. He wrote *Global India* as a teaching resource to present “the other side—a more accurate side—that India

was always linked up with other parts of the world in ways that had deep and profound impact.”

With BA and PhD from the University of Chicago and MA from the University of Toronto, Richard came to Bard to join the Religion Program (now the Interdisciplinary Study of Religions), and became professor of religion. But for many his arrival was signaled by a new addition to the campus’s musical soundscape: he played a key role in the study and performance of gamelan, the percussion music from Indonesia.

During the long periods of time over his career that Richard spent in India doing research, he collected mass-produced posters of religious images. He donated approximately fifteen hundred of them to Bard’s Charles P. Stevenson Jr. Library. The Richard Davis God Poster Collection, now digitalized, is a valuable resource for teaching about Indian popular arts.

Bard honors Richard Davis for his commitment to excellence in teaching and scholarship. He introduced generations of students to worlds of thought that will continue to inform their thinking for years to come.

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THE BARDIAN AWARD

Joseph Santore

The colorful and vibrant, chaotic and still paintings of Joseph Santore erupt from a deep, rich, and active life filled with painting, people, and stories. Santore grew up on the streets of Philadelphia. He readily tells anecdotes of fists flying and spirited boys finding joy and trouble from corner to corner. A free local art school and a gifted older brother, renowned illustrator Charles Santore, sparked his lifelong interest in painting.

With a BFA from Philadelphia College of Art and MFA from Yale University, Santore was introduced to Bard by esteemed colleague Judy Pfaff, Richard B. Fisher Professor in the Arts, in 2001; he also has taught at the New York Studio School, School of Visual Arts graduate program in New York, and Anderson Ranch Arts Center in Colorado. In addition to solo shows at the Edward Thorp Gallery and elsewhere, his work has appeared in the Whitney Biennial and is held in many public collections. He is a recipient of Guggenheim, National Endowment for the Arts, New York Foundation for the Arts, and American Academy of Arts and Letters awards.

Santore's studio is like a stage (his wife works in the theater). Here, a jumble of objects, and lengthy sittings with models—all observed and rendered through Santore's almost devotional painting practice—become part of the production. An enduring reverence for Italian film and art also color these sessions; he's an omnivore of Italian painting with a hearty appetite for medieval, Renaissance, Rococo, Mannerist, and Modernist masterpieces. As artist in residence at Bard, he led students to use luscious paint and luminous palettes. Paintings featuring richly hued skins with bold, moody shadows shimmered in the Fisher Studio Arts Building hallways after students' work with models. Santore's rigorous classes have been a cornerstone of the Bard Studio Arts Program.

Homer Shew '12 writes, "Joe is the only professor whose words will live rent free in my mind forever. He joked in his Painting 2 class that he could just leave a recording of his same several phrases and walk out of class because that was all he needed to say. Phrases like: pay attention to the light, follow the geometry,

don't draw—put color next to color, **don't** mix on the palette—mix color in to color, and **don't** think about body parts or that *that* is a can. Today, I find that I often live and see my paintings through his words, and sometimes the warmth of the memories floods me with serotonin.” As Santore himself has said, “I don't know if art can save us, but it will outlive us and hopefully be there in years to come for humanity to contemplate and marvel over.”

The absence from Bard of Joseph Santore's treasure trove of ideas, artistic histories, and compassion will be palpable. Countless students carrying on his legacy have stronger, sharper, and more sensitive painting and perceptual muscles. He is adored by Bard's faculty, staff, and students.

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