

Excellence and Diversity

At recent alumni gatherings in Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco, I spoke with Otis graduates from no fewer than seven decades. It was gratifying to hear their consensus that the rigorous studies at Otis prepared them well for life after college. The vastly different journeys they have taken since Otis were also impressive. Indeed, excellence and diversity, two defining values of Otis College of Art and Design, are reflected throughout this issue of OMAG.

Educational excellence at Otis is amply demonstrated by our renowned Fashion Design Program, which has just celebrated its 25th anniversary. Since the inception of the program, a stunning array of top professionals has come to the Otis studios to mentor our talented and hard-working students. Having learned to balance real world industry concerns with blue-sky creativity, our alumni become creative leaders who enjoy career success and shape the fashion design landscape with their own paths and visions. Congratulations and kudos to Rosemary Brantley, Founding Chair of Fashion Design, and her dedicated faculty. Other departments throughout the College share this commitment to excellence.

Diversity at Otis goes beyond the standard racial/ethnic framework. Our goal is to foster a diverse educational environment where each student's individual voice can come into its own; in which creative individuals learn from each other, collaborate, and contribute to a future of openness and possibility. Learning across disciplinary boundaries and across the traditional divide between academic and real life contexts is increasingly important in preparing our students for a constantly changing and more global future. Since the next generations of thinkers and makers carry our hope for a better world, Otis has also become more mindful of teaching the impact of responsible art and design. Otis alumna and mentor Wanda Weller guides her students to consider the impact their action will have seven generations from now. The world-bridging Tanzania project and the local community-based Integrated Learning project at Ballona Wetlands are two other examples of Otis' forward-looking curriculum. The diverse practices and achievements of our alumni around the world are directly enabled by this unique education.