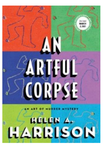
BROOKMARKS

CREATIVE ACTS

A look at the latest works by our faculty, staff and alumni.



AN ARTFUL CORPSE

BY HELEN A. HARRISON

Helen Harrison uses her knowledge of the New York art world as the setting for her latest murder mystery, *An Artful Corpse*. This is the third art-themed murder mystery written by The Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw Director of the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center. In this whodunit blending fact and fiction, the action is set in the 1960s. Harrison vividly recreates New York's venerable Art Students League where a formerly famous painter (once a mentor to Jackson Pollock) is soon found dead after alienating various professors, models and students. A few art students band together out of concern for a friend who is a suspect to search for the murderer. Kirkus Reviews says the novel is "a brisk and breezy romp packed with celebs from a half-century ago."

Harrison, who once studied at the Art Students League, is a former *New York Times* art critic and commentator with NPR. According to a review on BookTrib, she "effortlessly conjures Manhattan during the 1960s, leading the reader from the West Village to Stuyvesant Town, the sprawling postwar apartment complex just north of the Lower East Side, where one of the heroes lives with his police detective parents.

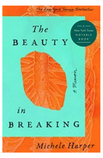
Visit Harrison's website to learn more about her other books in this trilogy, *An Exquisite Corpse* and *An Accidental Corpse*.

WHITE CHICK

BY NANCY KEATING '19

Alumna Nancy Keating's second book of poetry was recently published by Elixir Press. The book was born out of Keating's work for her M.F.A. thesis, which helped her earn her degree in Creative Writing from Stony Brook Southampton Arts. In *White Chick*, Keating announces her most obvious demographic characteristic, then explores what it is to be female and white — barriers rubbing against privilege. She touches on her reactions to works of art, as well as ruminations on aging, society, politics and women's issues, most notably in her series of "prayers" to the "patron saints of knitting."

All of the ekphrastic poems — poems written in response to arts created in other media — were written in a specific Southampton Arts poetry class, which focused on field trips to New York City museums, Keating revealed. And all of the "prayers" to the patron saints of knitting (some real saints, some made up) began as part of a class homework assignment that took on a life of its own. "So you could say the work is all related to Stony Brook," Keating said, "because Stony Brook professors took us to places — actual or metaphorical — that we wouldn't have otherwise gone."



THE BEAUTY IN BREAKING

BY MICHELE HARPER '05

This memoir is the first book by Michele Harper, who graduated with her MD from the Renaissance School of Medicine in 2005. It details her journey to becoming an emergency room physician and how through her life of service to others she learned to heal herself from the trauma of growing up with an abusive father. *The New York Times* described her work as "riveting, heartbreaking, sometimes difficult, always inspiring" while *Ms. Magazine* said it was "a book for our times, Harper's debut is a compelling memoir about her life as a Black woman emergency room doctor and how that work overlaps with the complexities of life. Harper explores hurt and healing, race and gender, justice and hope with candor and compassion."

Harper has worked as an emergency room physician for more than a decade at various institutions, including as chief resident at Lincoln Hospital in the South Bronx and in the emergency department at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Philadelphia.

HALFTIME WITH DON

BY KEN WEITZMAN

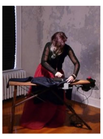
This play by Ken Weitzman, an associate professor in the Departments of English, Theatre Arts, Program in Writing and Rhetoric, has recently been published by Broadway Play Publishing. It tells the tale of retired NFL player Don Devers, who has had over thirty surgeries, experiences violent outbursts, and relies on a blizzard of yellow Post-It notes to offset his ravaged memory. When a long-time fan appears at his doorstep, Don seeks to salvage his life with a single act of heroic self-sacrifice.

A review in Broadway World called *Halftime with Don* "a timely and outstanding theatrical experience. The play portrays a serious subject with just the right touches of humor and heart...It is a theatrical experience you will truly relish."

LIVING WEAPON

BY ROWAN RICARDO PHILLIPS

This latest book of civic poetry by Rowan Ricardo Phillips, professor, Department of English, was published last year by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. It is described as "a love song to the imagination, a new blade of light honed in on our political moment." In his third collection of poems, Phillips offers ruminations on violins and violence, on hatred, on turning forty-three, even on the end of existence itself. *Living Weapon* reveals the limitations of our vocabulary, that our platitudes are not enough for the brutal times in which we find ourselves. In a review in the *New York Times*, Phillips is said to have "a brooding eye that can render landscapes as more than pretty passages of nature."



WOMEN'S LABOR: EMBEDDED IRON

Winner of the 2021 Ruth Anderson Prize given by the International Alliance of Women in Music

BY JOCELYN HO, DMA '16

This feminist activist project repurposes domestic tools to become new musical instruments. Using embedded technologies, these domestic-tools-turned instruments are explored in interactive installations, commissioned compositions, and performances.

***Housework Lock (her) Down* (2021)** by Ho and Margaret Schedel, associate professor Department of Music, is one of four interactive performances of *Embedded Iron* that highlights the unequal burden of housework and expectations on women that have been especially spotlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ho, Schedel and their collaborators explore the gestures and frustrations of housework, elicited by the different gesture-sound mappings of items of clothing. Text chosen from oppressive 19th-century marriage manuals are mapped to a special "white apron" for ironing. While the text may seem ludicrous and outdated, the intentions behind the text is still eerily prevalent today. The interaction and listening between the players are an intersection between choreographic gestural performance and Deep Listening Practice, inspired by Pauline Oliveros' Sonic Meditations (1974) for Ensemble as a continuation of her feminist creative work through music activism. *Housework Lock (Her) Down* has had telematic performances at Nownet Arts Conference, the UCLA Music Performance Studies Today Symposium, and will appear in *Women and Music Journal*, vol. 25 (2021). It was also recently performed on Governors Island as part of the Women's Labor project.

Participants in the *Embedded Iron* project also include Robert Cosgrove, DMA '21; Omkar Bhatt, MS '21 (Computer Science); Niloufar Nourbakhsh DMA '21; Chelsea Loew DMA '21; and Matthew Blessing.

Learn more about the project and hear how the artists made the tools come to life by watching this short highlight video by artist Jocelyn Ho.

Brookmarks welcomes submissions of books, albums or films by SBU faculty, students, staff or alumni that have recently debuted or will debut within the year. Email with the details: SBUMagazine@stonybrook.edu.