



Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

October 2017

[Print this page ›](#)

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Conference Registration is OPEN!
- Member Spotlight: Rich Dionne
- LiNK 2017
- Rigging Safety Initiative
- Early-Career Mentorship Program
- More Early-Career Opportunities
- Awards
- Grants & Fellowships Updates
- In Memoriam

INTERNATIONAL:

- International Opportunities

NEWS FROM:

- Sound Commission: Call for Papers
- Executive Director
- Spotlight on Giving
- President

LAST WORD:

- Ahoy, Matey! Beware of Housing Pirates

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

[VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF ›](#)

[CONTACT THE EDITOR ›](#)

[Search the Archives](#)

[GO](#)

[SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE ›](#)

[HAVE A JOB TO POST?](#)

[JOBS USITT ›](#)

[Tweet](#)



[Share](#)

[Lead story ›](#)



Conference Registration is Open!

Registration for the 58th Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Fort Lauderdale is NOW OPEN!... [more ›](#)



Member Spotlight: Rich Dionne

Q&A with Rich Dionne: Technical Director, Professor at Purdue University, and VC for Programming for USITT's Technical Production Commission... [more ›](#)



LiNK 2017: Where Recruiters and Candidates Meet

Looking for an advanced degree theatre program? Come to LiNK 2017 and meet recruiters from more than 50 schools... [more ›](#)



Rigging Safety Initiative

The RSI offers free stage rigging inspections and safety training for secondary schools across America. Applications for the next funding cycle are due... [more ›](#)



Early Career Mentoring

The Fellows mentors and USITT 2017 Early Career Mentoring recipients reflect on their Conference experience and beyond... [more ›](#)



Early Career Opportunities

Mentorship opportunities provide lasting relationships and advice that can be used throughout your career... [more ›](#)



Awards Opportunities

Awards season is in full-swing at USITT. Take advantage of these opportunities to be recognized for excellence and artistic achievement... [more ›](#)



Grants & Fellowships Update

New and improved opportunities for member funding are on their way in the coming months... [more ›](#)



In Memoriam

Celebrating the lives of Willa Kim, Pat Larmer, and Jonathan Resnick—luminaries of the Institute and the industry... [more ›](#)



International

USITT provides opportunities nationally as well as internationally. Take a peek at the many ways you can get involved overseas... [more ›](#)

USITT Executive Director



David Grindle on the term “biomimicry” and the thought-provoking question of what ‘bio’ we are mimicking... [more »](#)



Spotlight on Giving

Jim Streeter on why he continues to give to USITT... [more »](#)



USITT President

Mark Shanda on the benefits of networking and the value of knowing friendly advice is just a phone call away... [more »](#)



Last Word: Housing Pirate Scams

Book your USITT 2018 housing through our housing partner, Connections Housing. All other sites will have you walking the plank... [more »](#)

[Lead story ›](#)

Volume LVII, Number 10



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Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

October 2017

[Print this page ›](#)

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Conference Registration is OPEN!
- Member Spotlight: Rich Dionne
- LiNK 2017
- Rigging Safety Initiative
- Early-Career Mentorship Program
- More Early-Career Opportunities
- Awards
- Grants & Fellowships Updates
- In Memoriam

INTERNATIONAL:

- International Opportunities

NEWS FROM:

- Sound Commission: Call for Papers
- Executive Director
- Spotlight on Giving
- President

LAST WORD:

- Ahoy, Matey! Beware of Housing Pirates

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

HAVE A JOB TO POST?

[Tweet](#)

[Share](#)

[Next story ›](#)

News & Notices

Conference Registration is OPEN!

Registration is now open for the
**USITT Annual Conference & Stage
Expo in Fort Lauderdale March 14-17!**



Register at usittshow.com or by calling 800-938-7488.

With 260+ sessions, 300 exhibitors, and tons of networking and hands-on training opportunities, why not register TODAY?

[Register here!](#)

[‹ Front page](#)

[Next story ›](#)



Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

October 2017

[Print this page ›](#)

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Conference Registration is OPEN!
- Member Spotlight: Rich Dionne
- LiNK 2017
- Rigging Safety Initiative
- Early-Career Mentorship Program
- More Early-Career Opportunities
- Awards
- Grants & Fellowships Updates
- In Memoriam

INTERNATIONAL:

- International Opportunities

NEWS FROM:

- Sound Commission: Call for Papers
- Executive Director
- Spotlight on Giving
- President

LAST WORD:

- Ahoy, Matey! Beware of Housing Pirates

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

HAVE A JOB TO POST?

[Tweet](#)



[Share](#)

[Next story ›](#)

News & Notices

Member Spotlight: Rich Dionne

Q&A with Rich Dionne: Technical Director, Professor at Purdue University, and VC for Programming for USITT's Technical Production Commission.

How did you get your start in technical theatre?

There was a girl when I was in college in theatre and I wanted to get to know her better so I got a job working in the scene shop. I kept going back. My major was English and I thought I was going to be an English professor. I got a master's degree in English and even taught as an adjunct at a couple universities but found that I kept doing theatre.



Is that how you ended up at Purdue?

Absolutely. I knew early on in my life that I wanted to teach. I knew I was going to end up there eventually. The thing that kept drawing me back to theatre was I love storytelling and I also love tinkering around and making stuff. That made theatre a good match for me. I get to tell stories and I get to make stuff.

Tell me about your time at Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey

I was there for about four years early in my career. When I finally left, I said to the artistic director there, "You must have been insane to hire me at age 26 to be the Production Manager with relatively little experience on my resume...I wouldn't have done that if I were you."

I lucked out in that it was the right position for me at the right time in my career and it was a great time of growth for me as well as the theatre.

We expanded to greater year-round operations and added an outdoor venue. I believe our production values increased. I learned a lot while I was there. I had background in sound design and technical direction but I was young. I learned about how good management skills are necessary. I dedicated my time there to learning systems and when I started at Purdue, that's been a big part of my

teaching.

What is the difference between working as a professional and working with students at Purdue?

The first thing that comes to mind is when I'm working professionally, the project I'm working on is the production and I think a lot in terms of project management and project work. When I'm a TD professionally or a sound designer professionally, the project I'm doing is the show.

When I'm at Purdue, the shows are a tool for the project I'm really working on, which is the student. I had to learn to willingly allow things onstage here that I might not allow professionally because it's a good learning step for the student. They're not going to know that it's wrong until they see it and say, "Holy cr*p, that's wrong."

Of course, there are boundaries to that. Never do we put safety at risk onstage. A student may make a construction technique decision that I know is probably not the most efficient, the most cost effective, or the most quality controlled and I'll talk to them about it. In the end if they're the TD for the show that's their call and I must let them do it. Sometimes that means that the shows may not always be the kind of quality work that I would put onstage professionally.

Because you have this dual role, as far as USITT goes, tell me about your role in the Institute

I have been attending USITT since 2000. During that time, I've been an attendee and a recruiter for both Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey and Purdue. I've been a panelist and a chair of sessions and now I'm the outgoing Vice Commissioner of Programming and the incoming Associate Commissioner for the Technical Production Commission.

What brings you back to the Conference every year?

The biggest draw is the people I get to converse with and the networking. I meet new people each year and learn new things, make new connections, and renew old connections with colleagues who I consider good friends. The only time I get to see some of them is at the Conference.

There are sessions where I get to learn new things or learn techniques I didn't know about and that's always exciting for me. Plus, Stage Expo is an extravaganza of sights and sounds.

The Technical Production programming serves a variety of constituents. Last year we had a session roundtable called "Early Career and Student Roundtable" and it featured seven young professionals on the panel, most of whom were young women, all of whom were from different cultural backgrounds. The room was full of people like that. That was exciting and the energy was exciting and hopeful and that's great. USITT is a great community, and I'm happy to be a part of it.

Suggest a USITT Member for the Spotlight!

If you know of USITT members whose work should be in the Spotlight, please feel free to suggest them. Contact Jenn Shuron at jenn@usitt.org.

[Previous story](#)

[Next story](#)

Volume LVII, Number 10



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Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

October 2017

[Print this page ›](#)

[FRONT PAGE »](#)

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Conference Registration is OPEN!
- Member Spotlight: Rich Dionne
- LiNK 2017
- Rigging Safety Initiative
- Early-Career Mentorship Program
- More Early-Career Opportunities
- Awards
- Grants & Fellowships Updates
- In Memoriam

INTERNATIONAL:

- International Opportunities

NEWS FROM:

- Sound Commission: Call for Papers
- Executive Director
- Spotlight on Giving
- President

LAST WORD:

- Ahoy, Matey! Beware of Housing Pirates

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

[VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »](#)

[CONTACT THE EDITOR »](#)

Search the Archives

[GO](#)

[SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »](#)

[HAVE A JOB TO POST?](#)

[Tweet](#)



[Share](#)

[Next story ›](#)

News & Notices LiNK 2017

Looking for your dream grad program?
Come to LiNK 2017 and meet recruiters from more than 50 schools offering advanced degree theatre programs.

Participating schools from across the country will meet master's degree candidates through interviews and demonstrations of work across theatre disciplines including design, technology, and management. Candidates can explore options for advanced education and connect with more than 50 graduate school programs in one affordable and convenient location.



When: November 10-12, 2017

Where: Atlanta, GA

Candidates: connect with recruiters from over 50 schools and showcase your skills and portfolio of work. [Register here.](#)

Recruiters: represent your school and join your colleagues from leading graduate programs while identifying top candidates for your program. [Register here.](#)

Programs and tracks are available in these areas:

- Acting
- Arts Management
- Costume Design
- Costume Technology
- Directing
- Lighting Design
- Lighting Technology
- Makeup and Wig Design – NEW in 2017!
- Media Design – NEW in 2017!
- Production Management
-

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- Properties Design – NEW in 2017!
- Scene Design
- Sound Design
- Stage Management
- Technical Direction

LiNK 2017 is presented in partnership by [SETC](#) and USITT and sponsored by [Routledge](#).

For audition related questions, contact claire@setc.org. For all other LiNK related matters, contact christine@usitt.org.

[« Previous story](#)

[Next story »](#)

Volume LVII, Number 10



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FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Conference Registration is OPEN!
- Member Spotlight: Rich Dionne
- LiNK 2017
- Rigging Safety Initiative
- Early-Career Mentorship Program
- More Early-Career Opportunities
- Awards
- Grants & Fellowships Updates
- In Memoriam

INTERNATIONAL:

- International Opportunities

NEWS FROM:

- Sound Commission: Call for Papers
- Executive Director
- Spotlight on Giving
- President

LAST WORD:

- Ahoy, Matey! Beware of Housing Pirates

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

HAVE A JOB TO POST?

[Tweet](#)

[Share](#)
[Next story ›](#)

News & Notices

Rigging Safety Initiative

USITT's Rigging Safety Initiative is open for applications for the fall funding cycle. The RSI offers free stage rigging inspections and safety training for secondary schools across America.

The school gets a detailed status report on their rigging -- what's working properly and what potential safety problems can be prevented with routine care. Free safety training for up to eight staff and students helps ensure safe operation of a complex system. Thanks to our sponsors and donors, we can promote safe stages for students at little or no cost to schools.



Applications for the next funding cycle are due **November 15, 2017**. Previous applications not yet funded will be retained and automatically considered in the next cycle.

To learn more about RSI and to apply, click here.

The Rigging Safety Initiative is sponsored by **H&H Specialties Inc.**, **ETC**, and **JR Clancy**.

[‹ Previous story](#)
[Next story ›](#)



Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

October 2017

[Print this page ›](#)

[FRONT PAGE »](#)

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Conference Registration is OPEN!
- Member Spotlight: Rich Dionne
- LiNK 2017
- Rigging Safety Initiative
- Early-Career Mentorship Program
- More Early-Career Opportunities
- Awards
- Grants & Fellowships Updates
- In Memoriam

INTERNATIONAL:

- International Opportunities

NEWS FROM:

- Sound Commission: Call for Papers
- Executive Director
- Spotlight on Giving
- President

LAST WORD:

- Ahoy, Matey! Beware of Housing Pirates

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

[VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »](#)

[CONTACT THE EDITOR »](#)

[Search the Archives](#)

[GO](#)

[SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »](#)

[HAVE A JOB TO POST?](#)

[Tweet](#)



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[Next story ›](#)

News & Notices

Early-Career Mentorship Program

Fellows Early Career Member Mentoring: A Great Success in St. Louis.

By: Timothy L. Kelly

The USITT Fellows were pleased to sponsor two early career mentees (ECMs) at USITT 2017 in St. Louis by awarding them a complimentary Conference registration and a \$1,000 stipend to assist with expenses. Through an application process **Katie Gruenhagen** and **Korey Lamb** were selected as last year's winners. In addition to the registration and stipend, Katie, an up-and-coming lighting designer, was paired with one of our newest Fellows, **Rich Dunham**, as a mentor. Korey who has started his professional career in stage management and sound design, worked with both **Joe Drummond** (recently retired after 42 years with the Goodman Theatre) and **Elynmarie Kazle** as his mentors. Time was spent with both ECMs learning about their aspirations, attending sessions, meeting other members and providing career guidance.



Rich, in his follow-up report said:

"I was able to make some important introductions for her many of them being Fellows of the Institute. We had a couple of one hour just-getting-to-know-one-another sessions where we were able to informally talk about both our careers. We went to several sessions together allowing me to introduce her to the Lighting Commission and several folks who are doing important things there. I believe that she will be getting involved in Institute activities on multiple fronts over the years and that she has a bright future in designing."

Katie reports:

"Prior to the Conference, I spoke with Rich on the phone to plan an initial meeting. It was great to jump right into conversations about

USITT, freelance life, and the shows we were both working on. I was very thankful and humbled by the amount of time Rich spent with me. My most memorable experience was our last conversation during one of the last days of the Conference. We met at the Fellow's Lounge at Stage Expo and spoke about the mentoring experience and goals in my career. Rich shared insight, gave advice, and offered opinions on some of my thoughts for future USITT involvement."

Joe in his follow-up report said in part:

"Since Korey was torn between pursuing a career as a stage manager and / or sound designer we had plenty to discuss. On Friday, Korey attended the events that I was participating in and we were able to catch up between sessions. On Saturday, we met for lunch and he shared all the conversations he had with fellow stage managers and sound designers. Elynmarie Kazle had introduced him to Distinguished Achievement in Sound Design & Technology winner, Richard Thomas. I found Korey to be a very smart young man and eager to take advantage of every second of the USITT convention. I assured him I wanted to continue our relationship and was always available via email and cell phone to answer any questions or provide advice he needed."

Korey's follow-up report included:

"The Early Career Mentorship Program helped me beyond measure at this year's Conference. From the moment I arrived in St. Louis I felt like I was more prepared than the last Conference I attended. Upon meeting Joe, I knew that I was in the right hands. The second day Joe introduced me to Elynmarie, who proceeded to take me around the Stage Expo and introduce me to several people and offered to introduce me to anyone else I was interested in. From the moment I met these mentors (Joe & Elynmarie) I knew that they were greatly interested in my career and wanting to help me in any way possible. I know that as I progress in my career they will both help me with any roadblocks or barriers I encounter."

The Fellows' ECM mentoring is a career enhancing leg-up for young professionals just getting started, and in many ways, provides guidance they could not otherwise find.

Apply for Early Career Mentorship at USITT 2018

[« Previous story](#)

[Next story »](#)

Volume LVII, Number 10





FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Conference Registration is OPEN!
- Member Spotlight: Rich Dionne
- LiNK 2017
- Rigging Safety Initiative
- Early-Career Mentorship Program
- More Early-Career Opportunities
- Awards
- Grants & Fellowships Updates
- In Memoriam

INTERNATIONAL:

- International Opportunities

NEWS FROM:

- Sound Commission: Call for Papers
- Executive Director
- Spotlight on Giving
- President

LAST WORD:

- Ahoy, Matey! Beware of Housing Pirates

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

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[Share](#)

[Next story ›](#)

News & Notices

Early Career Opportunities

Mentoring provides guidance and the opportunity to collaborate and develop a life-long bond between mentor and mentee. USITT provides many mentorship opportunities throughout the year. Below is a selection of mentorship and early career opportunities for USITT members.



The Gateway Program:

Participate as a Gateway mentee or mentor at **USITT 2018** through the Gateway Program. The Gateway Program provides professional mentoring to students and early-career professionals from underrepresented populations involved in theatre production.

Twelve mentees will be selected to receive Conference registration, travel and housing support to USITT 2018, and will be paired with a mentor working professionally in a similar field. In addition, Gateway mentees take part in special receptions and sessions on diversity and inclusion in the production industry.

“The inclusivity that theatre allows is unlike any other art form,” said **2017 Gateway mentor Josafath Reynoso**. “I think that’s what the Gateway Program is about. Emphasizing that need for different voices and opinions that bring new and diverse work beyond whatever labels and credentials you’re going to apply to them.”

To learn more about the Gateway Program and to nominate, click here.
Deadline to nominate: November 24, 2017.

Board Mentorship Program:

The Board Mentorship Program is a year-long endeavor during which a student can participate as a “full non-voting member” of the USITT Board of Directors. The chosen Board mentee will sit on at least one committee, and attend all functions that the Board is expected to attend at the Conference. Mentees are free to take as many sessions as they can, make suggestions for future sessions, and jump in to assist just like all other members of the Board.

[To learn more about the Board Mentorship Program, click here. Deadline to apply: October 13, 2017.](#)

Stage Management Mentor Program:

The USITT Stage Management Mentor Program offers students and young professionals interested in stage management the opportunity to participate in a practical training experience.

With the support of professional stage managers, selected participants will coordinate and manage the major events of the Annual Conference & Stage Expo. Students and mentors work together to prepare and realize the various events.

[To learn more about the Stage Management Mentor Program at USITT 2018, click here. Deadline to apply: November 15, 2017.](#)

Early Career Mentoring Program:

The USITT Fellows offer the opportunity for two Early Career Members to connect one-on-one at USITT 2018 with a professional in their field. During their time together, mentors will discuss career opportunities, future goals, and introduce mentees to USITT members and exhibitors.

[To learn more about Early Career Mentoring at USITT 2018, click here. Deadline to apply: January 15, 2018.](#)

Young Designers/ Young Technicians Forums at USITT 2018

The Young Designers' Forum (YDF) brings together talented students with established designers and directors for a review and discussion of the students' work. Participation is by juried selection and is limited to no more than 12 students.

The Young Technicians' Forum, (YTF) brings together talented students with established shop heads, technicians/artisans, and designers for a review and discussion of the students' work. Participation is by juried selection and is limited to no more than 12 students.

Both the Young Designers' and Young Technicians' Forums begin Friday, March 16, with set-up at 8 a.m., and run through Saturday, March 17.

[To learn more about YDF/YDT, click here. Deadline to enter: January 6, 2018.](#)

[« Previous story](#)

[Next story »](#)

Volume LVII, Number 10





FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Conference Registration is OPEN!
- Member Spotlight: Rich Dionne
- LiNK 2017
- Rigging Safety Initiative
- Early-Career Mentorship Program
- More Early-Career Opportunities
- Awards
- Grants & Fellowships Updates
- In Memoriam

INTERNATIONAL:

- International Opportunities

NEWS FROM:

- Sound Commission: Call for Papers
- Executive Director
- Spotlight on Giving
- President

LAST WORD:

- Ahoy, Matey! Beware of Housing Pirates

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

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[Tweet](#)

[Share](#)
[Next story »](#)

News & Notices

Awards & Recognition

Each year USITT, along with industry sponsors, provide award opportunities for students, early career members, and professionals within the industry. Two of USITT's most sought after awards, The Young Designers, Managers, & Technicians Awards and the Rising Star Award are currently open for nominations.



The Young Designers, Managers, & Technicians Awards bring recognition and support to young designers and technicians at the beginning of their careers. They are made possible by generous gifts to USITT from their sponsors. Students can be nominated by a faculty member or can self-nominate.

For information on eligibility and nomination criteria for each individual award, click the corresponding links below:

Graduate Awards

- [KM Fabrics, Inc. Technical Production Award](#)
- [Robert E. Cohen Sound Achievement Award](#)
- [Zelma H. Weisfeld Costume Design & Technology Award](#)
- [Bernhard R. Works, Frederick A. Buerki Scenic Technology Award](#)
- [Barbara Matera Award in Costume Making sponsored by Judy Adamson](#)
- [USITT Lighting Design Award sponsored by Barbizon Lighting Company](#)
- [USITT Scene Design Award sponsored by Rose Brand](#)
- [USITT Makeup Design Award sponsored by Kryolan Professional Make-Up](#)
- [USITT Stage Management Award sponsored by Clear-Com Communications Systems](#)

Undergraduate Awards

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- Master Craftsmanship Award sponsored by Bernhard R. Works
- USITT Lighting Design Award sponsored by Barbizon Lighting Company
- USITT Makeup Design Award sponsored by Kryolan Professional Make-Up
- USITT Stage Management Award sponsored by Clear-Com Communications Systems
- USITT W. Oren Parker Undergraduate Scene Design Award

To learn more about the YDMT Awards and to nominate, [click here.](#)

The Rising Star Award recognizes excellence and artistic achievement in these design disciplines: scenic, lighting, sound, video, or a convergence of these disciplines. **The Rising Star Award** sponsored by LDI/Live Design is presented annually to a young designer in the first five years of his or her career, after completing their graduate or undergraduate degree. Nominations will remain open through November 30, 2017.

To learn more about the Rising Star Award and to nominate, [click here.](#)

[Previous story](#)

[Next story](#)

Volume LVII, Number 10



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FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Conference Registration is OPEN!
- Member Spotlight: Rich Dionne
- LiNK 2017
- Rigging Safety Initiative
- Early-Career Mentorship Program
- More Early-Career Opportunities
- Awards
- Grants & Fellowships Updates
- In Memoriam

INTERNATIONAL:

- International Opportunities

NEWS FROM:

- Sound Commission: Call for Papers
- Executive Director
- Spotlight on Giving
- President

LAST WORD:

- Ahoy, Matey! Beware of Housing Pirates

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

HAVE A JOB TO POST?

[Tweet](#)



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[Next story ›](#)

News & Notices

Grants and Fellowships Update

With the launch of the Institute's Innovation Grants, the Board of Directors chose to suspend our typical Grants & Fellowships program to allow for a review of our procedures, improve the impact of our funding, and develop greater clarity of our purpose in this type of funding. The Grants & Fellowships Committee is hard at work rethinking all of this. Look for a new and improved opportunities for member funding in the coming months.

[‹ Previous story](#)

[Next story ›](#)



Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

October 2017

[Print this page ›](#)

[FRONT PAGE »](#)

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Conference Registration is OPEN!
- Member Spotlight: Rich Dionne
- LiNK 2017
- Rigging Safety Initiative
- Early-Career Mentorship Program
- More Early-Career Opportunities
- Awards
- Grants & Fellowships Updates
- In Memoriam

INTERNATIONAL:

- International Opportunities

NEWS FROM:

- Sound Commission: Call for Papers
- Executive Director
- Spotlight on Giving
- President

LAST WORD:

- Ahoy, Matey! Beware of Housing Pirates

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

[VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »](#)

[CONTACT THE EDITOR »](#)

[Search the Archives](#)

[GO](#)

[SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »](#)

[HAVE A JOB TO POST?](#)

[Tweet](#)

[Share](#)

[Next story ›](#)

News & Notices

In Memoriam

Jonathan Resnick

USITT sadly notes the death of [Jonathan Resnick](#), president of Barbizon Lighting Company. Jonathan was a great supporter of the Institute and one of the driving forces behind the annual Young Designer Award for Lighting which Barbizon has sponsored for many years.



USITT mourns his sudden death along with his family and the Barbizon community.

Pat Larmer

USITT mourns the loss of Pat Larmer. Pat served the Institute for many years as a trouble-shooter at the Annual Conference. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Willa Kim

A celebration of life took place October 3, 2017, at the Bruno Walter Auditorium of the New York Library for the Performing Arts. The event welcomed friends and colleagues.

Willa Kim's over 60-year career spanned ballet, theatre, opera, and television. Among her many honors were two Tony Awards for outstanding costume design, for Duke Ellington's *Sophisticated Ladies* and Tommy Tune's *The Will Rogers Follies*. She also received Tony nominations for Peter Allen's *Legs Diamond*, Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Song & Dance*, Bob Fosse's *Dancin'*, and Joel Grey's *Goodtime Charley*. She won Drama Desk Awards for Jean Genet's *The Screens*, Irene Fornes' *Promenade*, and Sam Shepard's *Operation Sidewinder*. She received Obie Awards for Robert Lowell's trilogy *The Old Glory* and Lanier Robertson's *Woman Before a Glass*, and an Emmy Award for Michael Smuin's *A Song For Dead Warriors*, broadcast on PBS.

She was honored with lifetime achievement awards from the Fashion Institute of Technology and USITT. The Theatre Development Fund honored her with the

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Irene Sharaff Lifetime Achievement Award, and the League of Professional Theatre Women presented her the Ruth Morley Designing Woman Award. She was inducted into the Theatre Hall of Fame in 2006. From 1955 until his death, Ms. Kim was married to the late author, illustrator, and Paris Review co-founder William Pene du Bois.

She passed away peacefully on December 23, 2016, at the age of 99.

[« Previous story](#)

[Next story »](#)

Volume LVII, Number 10



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FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Conference Registration is OPEN!
- Member Spotlight: Rich Dionne
- LiNK 2017
- Rigging Safety Initiative
- Early-Career Mentorship Program
- More Early-Career Opportunities
- Awards
- Grants & Fellowships Updates
- In Memoriam

INTERNATIONAL:

- International Opportunities

NEWS FROM:

- Sound Commission: Call for Papers
- Executive Director
- Spotlight on Giving
- President

LAST WORD:

- Ahoy, Matey! Beware of Housing Pirates

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

HAVE A JOB TO POST?

[Tweet](#)

[Share](#)
[Next story ›](#)

International

USITT/USA Prague Quadrennial 2019 Exhibit Design Competition – Call for Entries

USITT is seeking conceptual design submissions from individual designers and teams for the USITT/USA National Exhibit and Emerging Artist Exhibit for Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space 2019. USITT is accepting design submissions for both the National Exhibit and the Emerging Artist Exhibit, through October 2017.

The Prague Quadrennial (PQ) is the largest performance design event in the world. By exhibiting thousands of designs from dozens of countries, and by bringing together designers, directors, students, as well as the general public, the PQ provides an unprecedented exchange of ideas that goes beyond the narrow confines of theatrical design and style.

The working theme of the 2019 exhibit is **Porous Borders**. The goal for the exhibition design is to create an evocative and interesting architectural and sculptural space that merges cohesively with multimedia work and engages with the audience for an immersive experience.

In keeping with the theme of **Porous Borders**, the design needs to reflect an open concept (no fully enclosed pavilions), be accessible to all visitors, creatively address sonic and visual intrusion from other exhibits, and be adaptable to exhibiting the content in smaller venues in the future.

Any theatrical designer, exhibit designer, interior designer, interior architect, or architect may submit a design concept. You do not need to be a member of USITT to enter.

The winning designer/teams will work closely with the artistic director and the exhibit curators to create the final design of the two exhibits.



[For more information regarding specifications and submissions, click here.](#)

Vortex of our Dreams: American Theatre Performance Design Exhibit on Display in Syracuse

Opening Reception on Tuesday, October 17 from 4 to 6 p.m.; exhibit runs from October 17 to December 20

Wilson Art Gallery, in the Noreen Reale Falcone Library at Le Moyne College

Free and open to the public

The photographs and videos in this gallery are highlights from USITT's exhibition at the 2015 quadrennial, which was installed in the 14th-century Church of Saint Anne and visited by 180,000 people. The U.S. has been represented at every quadrennial since 1972 by USITT. In its submissions to the quadrennial, USITT aims to showcase the best in both student and professional design.

The iPads include images, video, and interviews which allow you to engage in many ways with the featured productions. QR codes can also be used to access the online catalog of the exhibition as a whole to learn more about the designers and teams behind these productions.

The costumes, lighting, scenery, projection, and sound create an environment that invites the audience to meet the performer and engage in environments from the real to the surreal. In this exhibit, you are invited to focus on one or more aspects of design.

Designed by Klara Zieglerova, with lighting design by Kevin Rigdon, the exhibition was guided by the quadrennial's theme of weather, evoking the most American of meteorological phenomena — a tornado.

The productions in this exhibition were curated by Tony Walton (scenic design), Carrie Robbins (costume design), Kevin Rigdon (lighting design) and Veronika Vorel (sound design). Markéta Fantová served as artistic director of the project.

The opening reception for the exhibit will be held on Tuesday, Oct. 17 from 4 to 6 p.m., and the exhibit will run through Wednesday, December 20. There is no charge for the reception or the exhibit, and it will be open during regular business hours. For more information, call 315-445-4153.

Thank you to:

[Wenger Corporation](#) — Sponsors of the touring version of this exhibition

The USITT-USA Exhibition at the 2015 Prague Quadrennial was presented by USITT with support from [ETC](#), [Gantom Lighting & Controls](#), United States Embassy, and Prague, Czech Republic

International Travel Grants

Do you have a research or continuing education project that can benefit from international travel?

Applications are now open for the 2018 International Travel Grants.

These grants provide up to \$2500 support to USITT Individual/Professional and Student members for international travel to conduct advanced research and education in theatre related fields. Some possible projects include: research for productions or scholarly pursuits; attendance at theatre exhibitions, theatre festivals, theatre related events, seminars, or workshops. All grant recipients must share their experiences with the USITT membership via methods such as an article for TD&T, a Conference presentation, or other method.

Complete requirements and guidelines are available, [here](#).

Applications close December 1, 2017 and grant recipients will be recognized as a part of the USITT Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Fort Lauderdale.

[Previous story](#)

[Next story](#)

Volume LVII, Number 10



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[FRONT PAGE »](#)

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Conference Registration is OPEN!
- Member Spotlight: Rich Dionne
- LiNK 2017
- Rigging Safety Initiative
- Early-Career Mentorship Program
- More Early-Career Opportunities
- Awards
- Grants & Fellowships Updates
- In Memoriam

INTERNATIONAL:

- International Opportunities

NEWS FROM:

- Sound Commission: Call for Papers
- Executive Director
- Spotlight on Giving
- President

LAST WORD:

- Ahoy, Matey! Beware of Housing Pirates

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

[VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »](#)

[CONTACT THE EDITOR »](#)

Search the Archives

GO

[SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »](#)

[HAVE A JOB TO POST?](#)

[Tweet](#)



[Share](#)

[Next story ›](#)

Call for Papers from the Sound Commission

The USITT Sound Commission is seeking new and innovative work and is soliciting technical and creative contributions. The Sound Commission developed this new platform to encourage the sharing of research and provide an avenue for new voices in the field.

All papers submitted will be peer reviewed- and accepted papers will be published electronically. Selected papers will be invited to present at the "Current Research in Sound" session at USITT 2018. Presentations of papers at the Conference is neither required nor guaranteed with acceptance.

Many educational institutions recognize peer-reviewed papers that are presented or published at the national level as impactful and valuable scholarly contributions.

The deadline for submitting abstracts (60-120 words) and précis (500-750 words) is November 15, 2017. Applicants will be notified about provisional acceptances by December 1, 2017. Full papers must be submitted by February 1, 2018, after which time they will be reviewed by a jury of peers. Applicants will be notified about official acceptances by February 15, 2018.

Typed abstracts should be 60-120 words and should provide a brief but concise summary of the topic of research. The précis should be 500-750 words, and should provide additional detail and supporting information. Web links and supporting documentation may be included.

[Submit your proposal, here.](#)

For questions and additional information, contact:

Nicholas Drashner
VC of Research
USITT Sound Commission
ndrashne@kent.edu

[‹ Previous story](#)

[Next story ›](#)



Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

October 2017

[Print this page ›](#)

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Conference Registration is OPEN!
- Member Spotlight: Rich Dionne
- LiNK 2017
- Rigging Safety Initiative
- Early-Career Mentorship Program
- More Early-Career Opportunities
- Awards
- Grants & Fellowships Updates
- In Memoriam

INTERNATIONAL:

- International Opportunities

NEWS FROM:

- Sound Commission: Call for Papers
- Executive Director
- Spotlight on Giving
- President

LAST WORD:

- Ahoy, Matey! Beware of Housing Pirates

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

[GO](#)

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

HAVE A JOB TO POST?

[Tweet](#)



[Share](#)

[Next story ›](#)

Thoughts from **David Grindle** USITT Executive Director

Biomimicry is the process by which science and industry look at the natural world to find efficient processes and structures for everyday problems. It is an industrial design concept. Honeycomb structures, spider web design, the division of labor in an ant colony, all of these are examples of things that people who study biomimicry have used to make human structures and processes more efficient.



As I listened to a speaker talk about their work in biomimicry, I started to think about the meaning of the term: mimicking life--the idea that we look at the world around us and reflect what we see in other people or things in our work. That then led me to scoff because I think that would be an apt word for what we do as entertainment design and technology professionals. We take aspects of life and mimic them for people to watch. This "incredible" science concept has been around for thousands of years they are just using it in a slightly different manner.

Designers do this each time they approach a show. They create a world using what they know to reflect the life of the people in the story. Whether it is a sternly realistic set or highly representational, designers mimic life. The challenge we see in that mimicry is that audiences (and sometimes casts) don't want to see the world around them reflected back. Each of us love to see the idyllic world we want to exist because escaping reality is a nice thing once in a while. But designs that bring an untainted reflection of the world are often far more engaging because they allow us to question ourselves. Untainted reflections need not be steeped in realism, because realism is, honestly, relative. That which is real to one person is not to another. Perhaps the characters see nothing "wrong" if there are no right angles in door frames or windows because their world is skewed, but others may see something horribly off.

So, what "bio" are we mimicking? The one we see in others, or in ourselves?

To the other side of this coin, we see biomimicry in the construction of designs all

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the time. The irony of scenery and costumes is that we want them light and moveable, but they should also sit firm and hold their shape when we want them to. A little incongruous in our needs, I've seen amazing people pull this off with structures and materials found in nature. We imitate those properties that occur naturally because ultimately nature wins out. And the people that realize the designs that are reflecting the world are using the structures of the world to make it happen.

People in our industry have been watching behaviors of humans and non-humans alike for centuries. So, yet again, people in the arts are ahead of the curve, we just didn't come up with a cool scientific term like biomimcry to describe it. We call it design, construction, show management, audience flow, you name it. But here we are, biomimics since 700BCE!

[« Previous story](#)

[Next story »](#)

Volume LVII, Number 10



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Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

October 2017

[Print this page ›](#)

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Conference Registration is OPEN!
- Member Spotlight: Rich Dionne
- LiNK 2017
- Rigging Safety Initiative
- Early-Career Mentorship Program
- More Early-Career Opportunities
- Awards
- Grants & Fellowships Updates
- In Memoriam

INTERNATIONAL:

- International Opportunities

NEWS FROM:

- Sound Commission: Call for Papers
- Executive Director
- Spotlight on Giving
- President

LAST WORD:

- Ahoy, Matey! Beware of Housing Pirates

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

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[Tweet](#)



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[Next story ›](#)

Spotlight on Giving: Jim Streeter

"I give to support the work of the institute in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. I believe that the organization can make viable change within the industry."

- **Jim Streeter**, Production Manager, Princeton University



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[Previous story](#)

[Next story](#)

Volume LVII, Number 10



© United States Institute for Theatre Technology, Inc.



Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

October 2017

[Print this page ›](#)

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Conference Registration is OPEN!
- Member Spotlight: Rich Dionne
- LiNK 2017
- Rigging Safety Initiative
- Early-Career Mentorship Program
- More Early-Career Opportunities
- Awards
- Grants & Fellowships Updates
- In Memoriam

INTERNATIONAL:

- International Opportunities

NEWS FROM:

- Sound Commission: Call for Papers
- Executive Director
- Spotlight on Giving
- President

LAST WORD:

- Ahoy, Matey! Beware of Housing Pirates

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

HAVE A JOB TO POST?

[Tweet](#)



[Share](#)

[Next story ›](#)

Thoughts from Mark Shanda USITT President

Whenever the Institute surveys members about what they value in our organization, “networking” is always near the top. Through my years with USITT I have taken advantage of my network many a time. Whether connecting a student to an internship, helping myself or others in review situations, brainstorming design challenges, or taking advantage of international travel, the Institute has served me well.

People in our Institute networks often share the common language of production. From architect and planners, academics and commercial workers, we share an understanding of what it takes to put on a show. What I find fascinating is that all of us work so hard to make sure that our work goes unnoticed, to support the production, that simply sharing a conversation with someone who understands can be very gratifying.

Years ago, I was challenged on a production to provide a *deus ex machina* type entrance for a character in a Greek drama. The god was to enter, “from the sky,” land on the stage, perform a scene, and then exit “to the sky”, all... “as if by magic.” Despite the production being staged in our large proscenium theatre, with what some believed to be, ample overhead rigging space, the desired god entrance proved to be extremely difficult. Although an elegant flying god holder (think Glinda’s entrance in *Wicked* only without the bubbles), available tracking for lateral movement, safety harness challenges for the nearly naked actor, and the double-purchase counterweight rigging, all looked good on paper, once testing began, the system I designed simply would not work.

Of course, the whole effort had taken far more time than I had planned, so with each small advance and subsequent failure, we were getting closer and closer to technical rehearsals and opening. Finally, about 10 days before the show was about to open, I was forced to declare that I just couldn’t make it work and I called the director to explain my inability to safely bring god on and off from the sky. That was a difficult phone call to make. But my next call helped me get through the whole situation.

My next call was to a fellow technical director, who, at the time, was working at a major regional theatre. Although we had not talked for a couple of years, he was the first person in my network that I knew I could call who had the shorthand language and rapport to rapidly understand my feelings and provide some words of comfort. He supported me in a time when I was down and ultimately made the

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rest of the production go so much better, despite the god being grounded.

From time-to-time, all of us need the support of an understanding colleague who simply "gets it." -- the colleague who doesn't need the full explanation, knows why you feel the way you do about not getting the job done, and simply listens. Because USITT has those types of people that I know I need, I remain a proud member of this Institute.

We'd like to hear your comments on this story.

Please e-mail Mark at mark.shanda@uky.edu.



[« Previous story](#)

[Next story »](#)

Volume LVII, Number 10



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Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

October 2017

[Print this page ›](#)

[FRONT PAGE »](#)

[Tweet](#)



[Share](#)

[Front page ›](#)

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Conference Registration is OPEN!
- Member Spotlight: Rich Dionne
- LiNK 2017
- Rigging Safety Initiative
- Early-Career Mentorship Program
- More Early-Career Opportunities
- Awards
- Grants & Fellowships Updates
- In Memoriam

INTERNATIONAL:

- International Opportunities

NEWS FROM:

- Sound Commission: Call for Papers
- Executive Director
- Spotlight on Giving
- President

LAST WORD:

- Ahoy, Matey! Beware of Housing Pirates

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

[VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »](#)

[CONTACT THE EDITOR »](#)

[Search the Archives](#)

[GO](#)

[SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »](#)

[HAVE A JOB TO POST?](#)

Last Word

BEWARE OF PIRATES!!!!!!

We all love a good “Talk like a pirate” day, but housing pirates are a real problem.

Every year at the Conference, attendees and exhibitors get emails from people telling them to book their housing through company X because all of the rooms are sold out and only company X can get you this special rate.

Company X usually wants a credit card number and will charge the full amount up front. They might even go so far as to send you a confirmation number.

Then you appear at the hotel and that confirmation number has been cancelled. Your money is gone and you’ve got no room. That is what a housing pirate does.

Housing pirates are a problem across the conference and trade show industry. As the Conference & Stage Expo has grown, we are now on the radar screen of some of these companies. [We have a list of known housing pirates and urge you to check this list if you get emails.](#) As much as we try to help when problems arise, it is almost impossible for USITT or its housing partner, [Connections Housing](#), to solve a problem if rooms are incorrect or cancelled.

All email correspondence from Connections Housing has this badge so that you know it is officially from our provider that works on behalf of USITT.

While we know that every dollar saved on Conference costs is important, we urge you to watch out for pirates. They might have handsome and charming emails with seductive prices, but just like in the movies, they are trouble.

[Register for housing, here.](#)

[Previous story](#)

[Front page ›](#)





FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Conference Registration is OPEN!
- Member Spotlight: Rich Dionne
- LiNK 2017
- Rigging Safety Initiative
- Early-Career Mentorship Program
- More Early-Career Opportunities
- Awards
- Grants & Fellowships Updates
- In Memoriam

INTERNATIONAL:

- International Opportunities

NEWS FROM:

- Sound Commission: Call for Papers
- Executive Director
- Spotlight on Giving
- President

LAST WORD:

- Ahoy, Matey! Beware of Housing Pirates

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

HAVE A JOB TO POST?

For the Record:

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FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Conference Registration is OPEN!
- Member Spotlight: Rich Dionne
- LiNK 2017
- Rigging Safety Initiative
- Early-Career Mentorship Program
- More Early-Career Opportunities
- Awards
- Grants & Fellowships Updates
- In Memoriam

INTERNATIONAL:

- International Opportunities

NEWS FROM:

- Sound Commission: Call for Papers
- Executive Director
- Spotlight on Giving
- President

LAST WORD:

- Ahoy, Matey! Beware of Housing Pirates

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

HAVE A JOB TO POST?

For the Record:

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- [Contributing Members »](#)
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-

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Volume LVII, Number 10



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