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Faculty & Staff Newsletter

Vol. 1, No. 7 - April 15, 2002

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Tibetan Buddhist monks create a traditional sand mandala (representing wisdom) at the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum during their recent Skidmore residency. The three-foot by three-foot sand mandala took the monks three days to complete, working up to 10 hours a day. Eight monks from South India visited the campus in early April. (Andy Camp photo)



A scene from *Passage*, a video by Shirin Neshat in collaboration with composer Phillip Glass. Neshat will give this year's Malloy Visiting Artist Lecture at Skidmore. [Story](#)

Welcome -- The Skidmore *Intercom* Faculty-Staff Newsletter is a production of the Office of College Relations. All members of the campus community are invited to submit story ideas or news items, using the contact information provided below. Department chairs and office directors are asked to please print a copy of this document to share with colleagues who do not have regular access to a computer.

We hope you enjoy this electronic newsletter and encourage you to share your impressions via email or telephone.

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New grants to support curricular enrichment

Recent grants from the Freeman and Henry Luce foundations will enrich Skidmore's curriculum in exciting new ways.

A \$909,000 from the Freeman Foundation's Undergraduate Asian Studies Funding Initiative will enable the College to launch a new study-abroad program ([Freeman News Release](#)) based in Beijing, China; while the Henry Luce Foundation's \$350,000 grant will support the development of an innovative Program in Object Exhibition and Knowledge ([Luce News Release](#)), which will use exhibitions at the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery as a catalyst for curricular innovation.

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Vol. 1, No. 7 - April 15, 2002**Islamic Culture to Be Focus of Malloy Lecture**

Artist Shirin Neshat will focus on issues of Islamic culture when she delivers this year's Malloy Visiting Artist Lecture at Skidmore.

Free and open to the public, the talk is scheduled at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 18, in Gannett Auditorium of Palamoutain Hall. The illustrated lecture will incorporate slides and video to explore ideology and identity in post-revolutionary Iran.

Art in America writer Amei Wallach has written, "In a highly productive three-year period, Shirin Neshat has produced a series of stark, visually arresting films that reflect the tensions of Muslim society and her own conflicted role as an Iranian woman living in the West."

Neshat's films are rare in their ability to tell a particular story that conveys universal meaning. They do not contain dialogue; instead stories are told with poetic devices, with images, and with music. For *Passage*, her most recent video, Neshat collaborated with composer Phillip Glass. Belinda Luscombe, writing in *Time* magazine, notes, "It's difficult to pin down exactly what makes Neshat's videos so astonishing. Part of their freshness must be that they offer a view of life few Westerners understand, in a way that emphasizes its beauty and passion rather than its oppression. But her work is not simple reportage. The people in her videos are vehicles for expressing universal human emotions: desire, love, grief, loneliness."

Neshat consistently has used architecture to articulate space. The artist transfers her 16mm and 35mm films to DVD and typically projects them in carefully designed spaces that engage the viewer on an emotional and physical level. In this way, she invites the viewer to become part of the work.

Born in Qazvin, Iran, in 1957, Neshat moved to the U.S. in 1974 and lives and works in New York City. Her recent solo exhibitions have included shows in Japan, Florence, Vienna, London, and Hamburg, as well as at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Skidmore's Malloy Visiting Artist Lecture is made possible through the support of Susan Rabinowitz Malloy, a member of the Class of 1945 who is a philanthropist and a widely exhibited artist. The program brings contemporary artists of international stature to work closely with Skidmore art students, in addition to giving a lecture on their work.

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Vol. 1, No. 7 - April 15, 2002**Turkish Ambassador to Close IA/ES Lecture Series**

The Hon. Umit Pamir, ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to the United Nations, will visit Skidmore Thursday, April 18, to discuss international perspectives on Turkish foreign policy.

The lecture, titled "Turkish Foreign Policy: Perspectives from Ankara, Brussels, and New York," will begin at 8 p.m. in Davis Auditorium of Palamountain Hall. Admission is free and open to the public. The talk is the final event this year in a lecture series coordinated by the International Affairs and Environmental Studies programs, and supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

An Istanbul native and graduate of Ankara University, Pamir has been a career diplomat in the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1965. He has been Turkish ambassador to Greece, Algeria, and the International Civil Aviation Organization in Montreal. In addition, he served as senior diplomatic advisor to the Turkish prime minister and chief of cabinet to the Turkish president, and held leadership positions in the Middle East and Africa Department and in policy planning at the Turkish Foreign Ministry. He also served in the Turkish embassies in London and in Budapest.

In August 2000, Pamir was named ambassador and permanent representative of the Turkish mission to the United Nations, where he most recently spoke in favor of a coordinated effort to combat international terrorism during a week-long United Nations debate on terrorism, held last October.

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Vol. 1, No. 7 - April 15, 2002**Economics and Gender Norms to Be Weiss Lecture Topic**

"The Invisible Heart: Economics and Gender Norms" is the title of this spring's William E. Weiss Lecture in Economics at Skidmore, to be delivered by Nancy Folbre, professor of economics at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Free and open to the public, Folbre's talk gets under way at 8 p.m. Monday, April 22, in Davis Auditorium of Palamountain Hall. Folbre will focus on the interface between feminist theory and political economy, with a particular interest in caring-giving and other forms of non-market work.

In addition to her UMass appointment, Folbre is a staff economist with the Center for Popular Economics (CPE) in Amherst, a non-profit collective of political economists that teaches economic literacy to activists for progressive social change. CPE creates and communicates economic theories that challenge systems of oppression based on class, race, gender, and nation.

Folbre's Skidmore lecture will draw on the research contained in her newest book, *The Invisible Heart: Economics and Family Values* (New York: The New Press, 2001), in which she considers how the market values — or doesn't value — care-giving, which women often provide for free. According to Folbre, every society must confront the challenge of balancing self-interested pursuits with care for others — including children, the elderly, and the infirm. Using the image of "the invisible heart" to evoke the forces of compassion that must temper the forces of self-interest, Folbre argues that if we don't establish a new set of rules defining our mutual responsibilities for care-giving, the penalties suffered by the needy — and our families — will increase. Intensified economic competition may drive altruism and families out of business.

Folbre earned a Ph.D. degree at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and has taught there since 1984. She was a post-doctoral fellow at Yale University and a visiting scholar at the London School of Economics, and taught at the New School for Social Research. She has done economic research in Kenya and Zimbabwe and has consulted for the World Bank. She is the editor of two CPE publications, *A New Field Guide to the U.S Economy* (1995) and *The War on the Poor: A Defense Manual* (1996) along with Randy Albelda, and is the author of *Who Pays for the Kids? Gender and the Structures of Constraint* (London: Routledge, 1994). She is associate editor of the journal *Feminist Economics*.

In 1998, Folbre was awarded a five-year fellowship, otherwise known as a "genius grant," from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation in recognition of her work.

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Vol. 1, No. 7 - April 15, 2002**Denzey Wins NEH Grant**

Assistant Professor of Religion Nicola Denzey will travel to the American Academy of Rome this summer for an intensive summer seminar on Roman Religions, with support from a National Endowment for the Humanities summer study grant.

In preparation for the seminar, Denzey is currently working on an article that examines the Capella Graeca in the catacombs of Priscilla, under Rome's ancient Via Salaria. The project had its genesis from an independent study and senior thesis that Denzey directed in 1999-2000 for Sarah Madole '00, who is currently pursuing post-baccalaureate work in classics at UCLA. Denzey reports, "Sarah and I interpreted the chapel as a rare example of early Christian women's sacred space.

"By focusing on the rather unusual iconography and physical layout of the Capella Graeca, we can draw some interesting conclusions about the nature of ritual experience for a community of heterodox ('heretical') Christians in the beginning of the third century," Denzey continued. She hopes to emphasize elements in a Roman ritual culture that Christians and pagans shared, drawing on material from such areas as burial chambers and other forms of sacred space.

Denzey will present her research during the seminar and hopes to publish a paper on the project. She is also working on a book on Christians in the Roman Empire.

In addition, material from the summer study will be incorporated into current courses that Denzey teaches, including those on "Women and Religion," and "Christian Scriptures," and an advanced interdisciplinary seminar titled "Roman Death." She hopes to teach a future course on "Religions in Ancient Rome."

Academic Festival Around the Corner

Skidmore's fourth annual Academic Festival -- a celebration of the richness of the College's academic program -- is scheduled Wednesday, May 1, throughout the campus.

A kickoff celebration and reception will take place from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 30, in the atrium and on the roof of the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery. The event will include refreshments and entertainment by the Rust Brothers. All are welcome.

This year's festival will involve approximately 125 students representing a wide range of disciplines and presenting a variety of activities: theater, dance, and music performances; fiction and poetry readings; and papers, panels, and poster presentations. Presentations will include a typical ancient Roman household, to be displayed in the Intercultural Center; "Dressed to Express: Costume in Victorian Illustration," in the Pohndorff Room of Scribner Library; a presentation on beliefs and attitudes about math held by elementary-school students, in the lobby outside of Gannett Auditorium; and "The Musical Mural," a therapeutic experience on the healing power of art, to be presented in the Tisch Learning Center.

Associate Professor of English Linda Simon, a member of the Academic Festival's Planning Committee, said that the committee was "really impressed" by the range and quality of the program. "Many of the presentations are senior projects and represent sophisticated work," she explained.

Academic Festival was launched to provide an opportunity for students to share their work with others and for the entire College community to reflect upon the achievements of the student presenters. This year's festival begins at 9 a.m. May 1 at locations around the campus and wraps up at a reception to start at 5:30 p.m. in the Tang. Schedules with detailed information are available in the Admissions Office.

Sponsors of Academic Festival are the Honors Forum, Periclean Honor Society, SGA, and the Office of the President.

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Francisco J. Gonzalez, associate professor of philosophy, presented a paper titled "The Pleasures of Socrates" at the Pacific Division meeting of the American Philosophical Association March 27-31 in Seattle.

Judith Halstead, associate professor of chemistry and director, Environmental Studies, gave an invited presentation at the national American Chemical Society meeting April 9 in Orlando, Fla. Her presentation, part of the symposium on "Opportunities in Analytical Chemistry: Focus on the Environment," was titled "Balancing the Demands: Teaching, Research, and Management at a Predominately Undergraduate Institution."

Two members of the Skidmore community have been elected to leadership positions in the Division Street Elementary School Parent-Teacher Association. **Bill Jones**, sports information manager, is the organization's new president and **Lori Parks**, administrative assistant in Campus Safety, is the group's new secretary. Each will serve a two-year term.

Ruth Andrea Levinson, associate professor of education, presented a paper at the 31st annual meeting of the Society for Cross-Cultural Research Feb. 23 in Santa Fe, N.M. Titled "Cultural Context and the Impact on Brazilian Adolescent Sexual Practices and Condom Use," the paper was co-written with Clesia Sadigursky, M.D., at the Universidade Federal de Bahia and **Gerald M. Erchak**, Skidmore professor of anthropology. The paper reports the findings from a qualitative study that Levinson and Erchak conducted in June 2000 with six focus groups totaling 76 teenagers attending three high schools in Salvador, Brazil. The participants constitute a sub-sample from 400 questionnaire respondents.

President Studley is one of five newly elected members of the board of directors of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), the leading national association devoted to advancing and strengthening liberal learning for all students, regardless of academic specialization or intended career. Founded in 1915, AAC&U has a membership that includes more than 750 accredited public and private colleges and universities of every type and size. The organization works to reinforce the collective commitment to liberal education at both the national and local levels and to help individual institutions keep the quality of student learning at the core of their work as they evolve to meet new economic and social challenges.

In addition, President Studley was among approximately 30 presidents from independent and public colleges and universities in upstate New York participating in "Upstate Partners: Strengthening the Campus-Community Connection." Held April 8 and 9 at Union College in Schenectady, the conference was sponsored by the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities, the State University of New York, and Union College.

Alan Wheelock, visiting associate professor of English, read a paper at the Northeast Modern Language Association's 2002 Spring conference April 13 in Toronto. His topic was "Too Many Turns? Film Adaptations of *The Turn of the Screw*." He complemented his talk with video clips of scenes from the different versions.

Publications & Exhibitions

Francisco J. Gonzalez, associate professor of philosophy, has an article titled "The Socratic Elenchus as Constructive Protreptic" published in a volume of essays titled *Does Socrates Have a Method? Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and Beyond*, edited by Gary Alan Scott (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).

David Miller, Ella Van Dyke Tuthill '32 Professor of Studio Art, and **John Moore**, senior artist-in-residence, have been invited to participate in a special invitational exhibition July 6-30 at the Southern Vermont Arts Center in Manchester. The exhibition will feature works by art faculty from schools and institutions throughout New England and New York State. Both Skidmore artists will have large-scale paintings to the exhibition. Miller's works are titled "High Tide," 2001, and "Untitled," (2002), both oil on canvas; Moore's works are "Red No. 1" (*Fire Painting*) and "Red No. 2" (*Fire Painting*), oil on canvas paintings completed in 2001.

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