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ALUMNI IN THE ARTS



A scene from the 2013 world premiere of 410 [GONE] by playwright and 2001 ISB graduate Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig.



The Pursuit of Extreme Happiness

China's modernization provides artistic inspiration for playwright Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig in her newest production.

China's rapid urbanization in the decades since its reform and opening-up has provided one of the world's most captivating modern stories. However, it's a story with multiple narratives weaved together against a constantly evolving cultural, social, and economic backdrop. Migrant workers are finding their fortunes in sprawling metropolises, yet society's wealth gap is growing at an alarming rate. Urban women are challenging the stigma of being "leftover," yet gender attitudes in the countryside have remained relatively unchanged over the past century.

Capturing the complexity and contradictions of modern China on stage is a daunting challenge for any playwright, but Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig ('01) aims to achieve just that with her newest play *The World of Extreme Happiness*.

The play follows Sunny, a young Chinese factory worker who strives to overcome adversity that begins at birth when her disappointed parents dump her in a slops bucket. Despite its heavy subject matter, the play is topical, tragic, and bracingly funny.

Many gripping moments in the play are inspired by news stories and social phenomena including female infanticide, the Foxconn factory suicides, and pursuit of the nationally celebrated "Chinese Dream."

"It takes three to five years for me to bring material from an idea to stage production. Because of that, I choose topics that I find deeply compelling and complicated; things I can get obsessed with and keep turning over and looking at from different vantage points for years," said Frances, whose journey in life has been as nomadic as her play's migrant worker protagonist.

Born in Philadelphia and raised in Northern Virginia, Okinawa, Taipei, and Beijing, the 32-year-old is currently based in New York ahead of her upcoming move to California, where she is poised to assume the position of assistant professor of playwriting at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

She describes her five years in Beijing as a "formative experience" that exposed her to rich inspiration as a budding artist. It was an exciting and, at



times, tumultuous period to be in Beijing. National confidence grew in 2001 with China's entry into the World Trade Organization and successful bid for the Beijing Olympics, but two years earlier tensions had flared when NATO bombed the Chinese embassy in Belgrade.

The World of Extreme Happiness isn't Frances's first play inspired by China. She made her debut at Brown University with *The Golden Lotus*, which explores one woman's defiance of foot-binding in ancient times.

But it is China's modern story that holds strongest appeal, not just to the playwright herself but to curious audiences around the world.

"The story of contemporary China is compelling to international audiences specifically because so much of it has been censored and hidden, so there is a deep desire to understand what is going on and to see it illuminated from different perspectives," she said.

"The theater, by which I mean the staggering change and different worlds colliding happening in daily life in Chinese cities, is far more interesting and important than Chinese historical dramas or mainstream Western musicals."

In 2014-15, ISB staged *Mulan Jr.* and *High School Musical* in addition to its usual host of creative plays in January for the One-Act Festival. However, Frances noted artistic offerings were limited during her days as a student to classics from previous generations,

“The story of contemporary China is compelling to international audiences because so much of it has been censored and hidden.”

including *Grease*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and *Guys and Dolls*.

“Mainstream musicals produced at that time catered to a very narrow range of what theater could be; it was mostly an outlet for singing and acting, and not a way into the other roles one could have in the theater,” she said.

“Maybe it was just my warped middle and high school brain, but to me then it very much felt like a popularity contest. The plays we looked at in drama class were equally dull, giving me no exposure to what I find to be the most interesting things contemporary drama grapples with: gender, sexuality, class, race, and politics.”

Drawn to the world of theater by her playwriting professors in college, Frances described her profession as “more of a calling and a path.”

Although now a critically acclaimed playwright with an impressive catalogue of work, she said key challenges of her craft include financial instability that can lead

some to compromise creativity to make ends meet. However, the rewards of collaborating with world-class artists and being “a producer, not just a consumer” make it all worthwhile.



Playwright Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig (bottom right) found inspiration in China's booming urbanization for her play *The World of Extreme Happiness*, which tells the story of migrant worker heroine Sunny played by Jennifer Lim (above right), and scenes from her cross-cultural afterlife drama *401 [GONE]* (below left, opposite).



Following the Path of the Unicorn

Carnegie Mellon junior Chloe Chia is living her dream bridging gaps between cultures and disciplines

The unicorn is revered as a legendary symbol of mythological beauty. That reverence for rarity has led “unicorn” to also become an industry buzzword for a talented person with a unique “mythically rare” skillset, which reflects the aspiration of many upstarts seeking to make their mark in an increasingly competitive, innovative, and globalized world.

“For many, [a unicorn] means a designer who also knows how to code, but I personally prefer the idea of a tech-savvy designer who knows how to make the best out of anything, anywhere, anytime for anyone in need,” explained rising designer Chloe Chia (’12).

Her mission to “become as much of a unicorn as possible” is what drives her interdisciplinary studies in Design, Global Systems, and Human-Computer Interaction at Carnegie Mellon University, where her department’s mascot is a unicorn.

Chloe became fascinated with design at a young age as a fan of animated films and video games. While some parents try to steer their children away from the arts due to its financial instability, Chloe said her parents were always encouraging of whichever path she chose – provided she realized her full potential.

“Many parents in the infamous ‘mommy network’ [at ISB] used to interrogate my mom about her unconditional support for my passion in the arts, and questioned why I didn’t have that same vigor for ‘secure’ careers as a businesswoman, lawyer, or doctor. Although I highly respect those paths, I didn’t want to settle for a career that didn’t suit my personality and skillset,” she said.

Together with classmates Fred Chang, Alan Chen, and Horace Hou, and with the support of high school art teacher Ms. Kendra Farrell, Chloe became a founding member of the Draxonic Design Studio in 2011. The studio provides graphic and web design services to organizations on campus, showcasing the artistic and marketing talents of students.

Chloe also gained valuable experience as the founding art director of Unit-E Magazine, a collaborative

publication run by a team of students from 15 international schools in Beijing with a mascot of, you guessed it, a unicorn.

“We were a very close team, with each student contributing their unique talent to regularly publish the magazine. We also held workshops to share our knowledge and had a small library for migrant children under our stewardship,” she said.

After her first year at CMU, Chloe secured an internship at IBM with its newly formed Design Group. Despite being one of the youngest members in a team of seniors and graduates, she wasn’t fazed by the experience.

“The most important thing I learned with this experience was to not let anyone look down on you because you are young, as well as staying humble, being open to learning, and letting the integrity of your work speak for itself,” she said.

The following year she spearheaded the concept and production of marketing materials, including an award-winning [promotional video](#) she directed, for the 2014 Ford College Ambassador Challenge.

A freelance photographer and videographer on the side of her studies, Chloe is preparing to spread her wings further as a “unicorn” with a summer internship at Deeplocal, a small Pittsburgh-based advertising agency.



Inside the Editing Suite

VICE video production editor Joseph Algranti cuts into a career that aligns with his passion for film



On any given day, you will find ISB students staying after school for many different reasons. Some are training with their sports team, some are tutoring other

students, and some are deeply focused on a computer game in the MS/HS Cafeteria as they wait for the 6:00 pm bus.

But Joseph Algranti ('09) would often stay back for hours after school editing videos he shot on clunky DV cameras, adding soundtracks, and experimenting with features on iMovie in the performing arts wing's film classroom.

"I would stay there for hours, leaving school way later than everyone else and awkwardly passing by those suited security guards. It was thrilling knowing that I was there late after everyone and that time had passed so quickly. That was when I knew I was obsessed with editing and post-production, but at the time I think I just called it 'making videos,'" explained Joseph, better known to classmates as Jose during his school days.

Joseph was part of a "wave" of filmmakers during his years at ISB that included film director Steven Ye ('06) and advertising and music video director Lawrence Chen ('05). After graduating from ISB, Joseph studied at New York University's (NYU) Tisch School of the Arts for Film and TV along with Anita Gou ('09), who is also featured in this edition (see p. 8). Minor in East Asian studies, he honed his craft as a video editor by mastering post-sound, directing, and editing.

As is common with many careers in the arts, most of his learning was done on the job through post-production internships that included editing for fashion Nylon Magazine and directing videos for NYU. He also dabbled in what he describes as his "true passion" of music production, but it was the thrill of creating compelling videos under tight deadlines that

eventually opened the door to freelance work.

However, the 24-year-old Houston native's big break proved elusive. A series of unsuccessful job interviews and ignored applications led him to move back to his parents' home and take a menial job with a fledgling startup.

"It was hard work and I was pretty miserable. I ended up quitting," he recalled. "About a month later, I randomly asked my old boss if I could use her as reference on my new job applications. She casually mentioned that VICE was looking for assistant editors and put me in touch. I started working there about twice a week as an assistant editor, and quickly moved into a more permanent position."

Having secured two promotions over the past five months, Joseph's fortunes have firmly rebounded through his impressive work with VICE, a new media outlet reshaping the way many young people get their news. Many VICE videos on YouTube have tens of millions of views, with its bold brand of gonzo journalism bringing viewers face to face with compelling subjects from Liberian cannibals to real-life Ukrainian Barbie dolls.

"I think VICE is popular for a lot of reasons. They have retained the ability to tell stories that are engaging and smart. The millennial generation isn't stupid; we can tell when something is authentic and when something is disingenuous. A lot of VICE's viewers react positively or negatively based on how real their content is," he explained. "When it isn't real, the backlash is toxic."

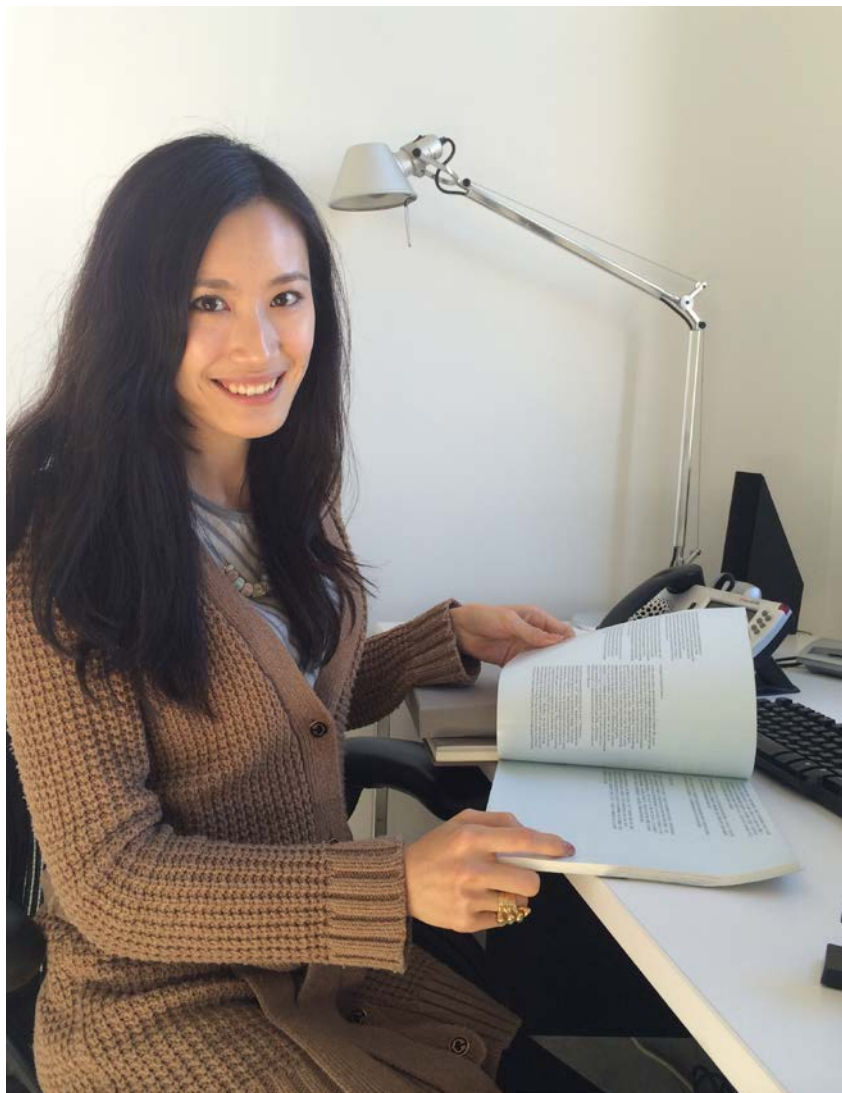
Joseph's success as a video editor is perhaps all the more remarkable considering he never actually studied IB film at ISB. During the first semester of his junior year, he left ISB for a few months to attend school in another country only to return and be told it was too late to enroll in IB film.

But this minor setback didn't deter him from following his passion.

"ISB prepared me for the future by making me work hard, maybe a little too hard at times. But I will say college at NYU was a breeze compared to ISB," he joked.

Seeing the Bigger Picture of Art in China

Jessica Zhang shares insight from the frontline of China's booming art market



Many people spend the first part of their work day checking emails and catching up on the latest with friends on social media. Jessica Zhang ('07) is no exception, but the news she is most interested in isn't found in Facebook status updates or Twitter feeds.

Jessica, the Greater China director for online art service provider artnet, spends the first part of her day digesting the latest market and world news related to art. Having grown up in Beijing, she has intimate knowledge of the ever-evolving place China holds in the art world.

Jessica's parents and family friends had a strong influence on her career choice. However, she admitted facing a crossroads before pursuing her Bachelor of Arts in Art History and Economics from Tufts University and Master of Management Studies from Duke University's Fuqua School of Business.

"When I was a senior at ISB, I spent quite some time staring at the blank boxes next to the 'majors' with a pile of college applications in front of me. I think that's when I started thinking seriously about the future and thinking about what I really wanted to do. I realized at the same time that I wanted to do something that combined art and business," she said.

The 26-year-old began working at New York-based artnet in its analytics department in January 2013, managing its database and computing art indices and analysis. When the company eyed expansion into emerging markets, she emerged as the go-to person to assess the potential of China.

"A few months later, I brought the CEO and vice presidents on a trip to China to meet with key industry experts and potential partners. From there, our China operation started," she explained.

China stands out as a unique market in the art world. Its primary and secondary markets, respectively galleries and auctions, both appeared on the scene at roughly the same time. The lack of a robust, regulated gallery system led artists to represent themselves or directly submit their works to auctions.

Many of these works fetched astronomical prices, leading the domestic market to overheat in 2008 and fueling speculation as Chinese buyers swarmed to invest in art. The situation is better now, with Jessica saying cooling over recent years reflects market maturation as buyers make "more rational decisions."

China is nurturing a new generation of homegrown artists focused on art rather than Chinese symbolism, she said, and there are other optimistic signs. Technology is making a bigger impact and government funding for art museums and districts, coupled with favorable policies, is helping the art market rebound.

"More and more new buyers are tech-savvy with a better understanding about art and art history. The government is also supportive of the industry, where we have already witnessed the gradual opening-up of various policies. These are all good signs that the

market will mature and foster more healthy growth in the near future," she said.

Being tech-savvy is a prerequisite for art collectors in the 21st century. But even though many of us think nothing of buying new clothes or appliances on eBay or Taobao without observing them up close and personal beforehand, it begs the question: would you do the same for a million-dollar artwork?

The answer for a growing number of artnet clients is "yes." "In 2011, we sold Andy Warhol's [1978 painting] *Flowers* for US\$1.3 million directly even though the buyer had never seen the piece before we shipped it to him," said Jessica, who believes the hammer is falling on traditional auction houses.

"Buying and selling online is much more efficient for both sides, with lower costs. [Auction houses] Christie's and Sotheby's spend half a year organizing one sale, while at artnet we can put up a theme sale in two weeks and several at the same time, giving buyers the comfort to make the purchases with a few clicks at home."



Andy Warhol's *Flowers*, which sold at an artnet auction for \$1,322,500 on July 20, 2011.



Detail of a Tibetan thangka painting purchased by a Chinese collector for \$45 million at Christie's in November 2014.

Transformers: More than Meets the Eye

Film producer Anita Gou shares the secret of creating award-worthy visual effects



Anita Gou worked as visual effects coordinator on the latest Transformers epic.

We're used to hearing directors and actors speak at awards ceremonies and strut the red carpet at film premieres, but behind the scenes of every blockbuster is a team of creative masterminds responsible for the stunning visual effects we take for granted in modern films.

From hair-raising action scenes that put us on the edge of our seats to mythological beasts so real you can almost feel their breath, the artistry of visual effects in cinema today is unparalleled. While the directing and producing might be a one-person job, visual effects depend on teamwork and collaboration.

"Next time you watch a Hollywood movie, wait until the visual effects section in the ending credits and you'll be bombarded with a seemingly never-ending wall of names," said Anita Gou ('09), whose own name appears at the end of *Transformers: Age of Extinction* as visual effects coordinator.

Anita, who now works as a film producer in her native Taipei, was inspired to pursue

her career in cinema while she was at ISB. A passionate storyteller from a young age, she used short films produced at ISB to seal her admission at New York University's (NYU) Tisch School of the Arts. "It wasn't until junior year of high school when I decided to take IB film and got a real education in the film industry that I realized that my passion could also be my career," she said. "If it weren't for Mr. O'Reilly's IB film class, it's likely I wouldn't have decided to pursue a career as a filmmaker. I was already interested in film, but needed to learn from someone who was just as passionate about movies as he wanted his students to be."

Being a visual effects coordinator requires being somewhat of a Transformer autobot on and off the set. In *Transformers: Age of Extinction*, Anita was the point person between the director, editors, producers, visual effects supervisor, and visual effects artists to facilitate the constant flow of information from different teams.

Despite all the meticulous planning and countless hours that go into creating signature spectacles, there is inevitably an anxious wait before post-production. One of the more memorable scenes Anita worked on in *Transformers: Age of Extinction* involved Mark Wahlberg and his co-stars navigating their way down cables linking their broken spaceship to Chicago's Willis Tower 90 floors up.

"Being a 3D movie, we had a lot of tools at hand to play with the crazy setting. It was a great experience being witness to our digital reconstruction of Chicago from bird's-eye view, then compositing the actors on top to add the illusion of depth. The moment we put on the 3D glasses in the review room and felt afraid of heights, we knew what we did had worked," she recalled.

Before graduating from NYU in 2013, Anita landed a programming internship at the internationally renowned Tribeca Film Festival and a job with Warner Brothers as a visual effects production assistant. Later that year she began as a production coordinator with Method Studios, the visual effects company used in *Transformers: Age of Extinction*.



Making the Curatorial Connection

Art curator David Xu Borgonjon needs a sharp eye and prescient taste in his profession

Painting and English might seem like an odd combination for a double degree, but David Xu Borgonjon ('09) has managed to leverage his expertise in both fields as a curatorial fellow at New York public garden and cultural center Wave Hill.

"Curation seemed like a useful way to put both the half of me which studied painting and the other half which studied English literature to work," said David, who graduated last year from Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design.

"As a curator, I make exhibitions happen and create contexts for art. Providing useful, effective contexts seems to me like art in itself. Even after I am drained from emailing all day, I feel that my work has been important."

Wave Hill might be David's first curation job since graduation, but his first foray in the arts was in 2009 as an administrative assistant at Ai Weiwei's Beijing studio. A few years later during his sophomore year, he gained further valuable experience as a coordinator at Brown University's Sarah Doyle Gallery.

The Beijing native has always had a passion for art, which first revealed itself in his drawings of robots and video game characters. One of his early opportunities for expression came during Grade 8, when he provided Joan Miró-inspired album artwork for an upperclassmen jazz trio.

“Now that contemporary art has done away with older standards ... it's hard to identify works or artists worth looking at.”

"I kept at paints feverishly for two years before dropping it to focus on the IB," recalled David, who didn't study visual arts. Instead, he found artistic inspiration from Mr. Tom Rosevear's theater class, where he was introduced to Brazilian director Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed, which encourages audiences to analyze, reflect, and protest.

ISB students might even recall *Mirage* and *Mirror*, two plays staged by David and his classmates. "They were, in retrospect, mind-bendingly horrible," he sighed. "But I don't regret them for a second. Really, mathematical jazz with live abstract painting and poetry recitations, all under flashing lights?"

Over the last decade, the contemporary art world has boomed in sync with the growth of galleries, fairs, art-selling websites,



New York curator David Xu Borgonjon is also the managing editor of online media art portal [Screen](#), which provides coverage of art news, criticism, and projects.

museums, and biennials. Curation has naturally become a competitive field, with success often hinging on an individual's sharp eye and ability to predict the next big thing in the art world.

"Now that contemporary art has done away with older standards of skill, medium, and subject matter, it's hard to identify works or artists that are worth looking at. The obvious need to edit out the dross has led to the boom in curation since the 1970s, but the difficulty of judging 'good' contemporary art holds true not just for the untrained viewer, but also for the overeducated curator," David said. "That's partly why so much art is social. You might not be sure if this is a good painting until you hear the artist talk about it."

Sketching the Blueprint of a Promising Career

Lucy Yip has discovered there are no shortcuts to living the industrial design dream

Like an unsightly blot on a canvas, there are some outdated stereotypes about art schools that can be hard to wipe away. The students are all hipsters or emos who don't actually study; the teachers are all crazy and incompetent; and the degrees are more like art "diplomas" that have no real value other than to hang on the walls of profitless studios.

But Lucy Yip ('14) has discovered these myths could hardly be further from the truth at one of the world's top design schools. As she prepares to finish her freshman year at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), the industrial and product design major spoke of her rigorous routine that includes three day-long studio classes that assign a minimum of 10 hours of weekly homework and two days of liberal arts classes each week.



Former member of ISB's Draxonic Design Studio Lucy Yip (left) and one of her inkwash drawings (below) sketched in her freshman year at the Rhode Island School of Design.



"Art school is definitely not the 'easy way out.' The workload can get way beyond your imagination, and good works always require extra effort and creativity. This is a place where memorization skills, or 'test-taking skills,' will rarely help you," she explained. "People often say we exaggerate, but art students all know that once you've decided on this path, you have diverged from the 'normal' world."

Lucy came to ISB in Grade 6, but connected with her passion for art at an even earlier age. She focused on industrial design before the start of her senior year at ISB, noting that an RISD summer program and IB art with Mr. Brian Reverman paved the way for her current studies. She described industrial design as her "most reasonable major" because of its vast field that allows students to work with almost anything.

"I knew from the very beginning that [art] is one of the few things that will constantly inspire me throughout my life," said Lucy, a former member of ISB's Draxonic Design Studio whose works include the Forensics team logo. "Deciding on a major was actually really hard for me because I don't exactly love one specific art medium over others. I work with all types of materials, ranging from traditional to contemporary (digital), as well as 2D, 3D or even conceptual/philosophical."

Folk Musician's EP a Five-Star Success

Madison Hockaday ('12) is a folk singer-songwriter who celebrated the release of her debut five-track EP, appropriately titled 5, on April 30. She continues to embrace ISB's core value of service through her music, with proceeds of the album going toward the Anthony Rizzo Family Foundation, an organization that supports cancer research as well as cancer patients and their families. In a creative example of post-ISB collaboration, the artwork for Madison's EP was done by fellow alumnus Kathy Summers ('12). Here Madison shares insight into her love for music and its synergy with her passion for philanthropy.

I'm currently ... a junior at Berklee College of Music in Boston, majoring in music therapy with a psychology minor.

As a child, I was most curious about ... basically everything! More specifically, I was curious about people. I was always trying to make new friends.

At school I ... spend most of my time working on school work, recording sessions, songwriting, and leading our Christian Fellowship on campus.

My best experience at ISB ... was with some of the best teachers I believe have ever existed who changed my life. My rugby coach, Michael "Robbo" Roberts, taught me not to limit myself and instilled a confidence in me that has been instrumental in my life as a musician.

If I had my time at ISB over again I would ... do everything exactly the same way. Those things that

seemed like mistakes or could have turned out better for me at ISB have challenged, pushed, and changed me, so I would not give them up for anything.

At university I am inspired to ... do anything I can to help people through one of the things I love most: music.

Today I'm motivated ... to continue writing and hopefully inspire people through my music. I am really looking forward to what my next step will be after the release of my EP.

In my profession it is ... important to be very sensitive to the needs of others, both as a music therapist and as an overall musician.

The biggest misconception about my profession is ... that it is a lot more work than one would imagine.

I never dreamed ... I would write a song, let alone release an EP. This has been a dream come true.

The biggest influence in my life is... my brother, Connor. Every decision I make I think, "Is this something I would want my brother to see me doing? Is this something I would want him to be doing?" He is the most important person in my life, my best friend, and my inspiration.

I'm most proud of ... my EP 5. My hope is to change lives through my music and if I accomplish that, I can't think of anything that would make me happier or more proud.

The best piece of advice I ever received was ... to remember you're not in control of everything, so just relax and live life to the fullest.

One last thing ... I would not be where I am today and would not be accomplishing what I am accomplishing without the guidance and support of my family and friends. I also never would have been prepared for any of this if I had not attended ISB. More specifically, in my last two years of high school Dr. Razik was a complete blessing. He always had the right things to say at the right time, and I still talk to him, look up to him, and strive to make him proud to this day.



Becoming a Big Hero in the World of Animation

Creativity and collaboration have been key ingredients to Abraham Tseng's success as a Disney animator

You might not know the name Abraham Tseng ('06), but if you've seen Disney blockbuster *Big Hero 6* you'll be familiar with the assistant technical director's work. The Marvel comic-based movie about a teenage robotics genius and his inflatable robot was last year's highest grossing animated film. It also won the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature, but Abraham's main pleasure from work doesn't come from a gold statue.

"The greatest reward is seeing the final product on the screen for the first time, and then hearing about the impact that it has on people around the world. There's nothing quite like it," he explained.

Abraham wasn't drawn to animation until relatively late in his studies. After graduating from ISB, he studied electrical engineering at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in New York, but he soon realized his passion lay elsewhere.

"I never really enjoyed it," he said of electrical engineering. "In my senior year, I took an artificial intelligence class and fell in love with computer science."

His turning point came during early into his Master of Computer Science course at Columbia University. A professor mentioned that a colleague had worked as a consultant for the cloth and hair simulation on 2010 Disney film *Tangled*, flicking on an animated light bulb in Abraham's head.

"At that moment, I realized [animation] was a career option for me and I took every computer graphics-related course I could. Even then, I never really imagined myself working at someplace like Disney. I always thought it would come in useful at a startup or a game studio," he said.

After graduation, Abraham found it difficult to enter the competitive animation industry. Rather than give up on his ambition, he spent most of his savings to attend the Special Interest Group on GRAPHics and Interactive Techniques (SIGGRAPH) computer graphics and animation conference, where he sat in on an open

career Q&A session with Disney. In January 2014, he began as a trainee assistant technical director at the company's Burbank studios.

With its theme parks billed as places "where dreams come true," Walt Disney Animation Studios has similar appeal for its creative masters who are firmly connected with their inner child.

"If you wander around the studio, you'll find that nearly every desk has some toys or artwork. The only person I've met who is a bigger fan of comics than me was my supervisor on *Big Hero 6*. Having a sense of wonder gives you the drive to accomplish what others wouldn't think is possible," said Abraham, who followed up the success of *Big Hero 6* by working on *Frozen Fever*, an eagerly anticipated follow up to the highest grossing animated film of all time *Frozen*.

Although the sequel is only seven minutes long, the time and effort that went into its production was enormous.

"Not many people know just how difficult it is to bring an animated film to life. Part of the reason they are so magical is because every single detail is put there by an artist. Even for a short film like *Frozen Fever*, it took a team of more than 100 people half a year to produce it," he said.

Disney's animated films have come a long way since Mickey Mouse made his grainy black-and-white debut in *Steamboat Willie* nearly a century ago. Nowadays, animation is a visual medium that requires scrupulous precision and attention to detail. *Big Hero 6* features vibrant imagery from start to finish. For example, the city of San Francisco is reimagined as San Fransokyo, retaining landmarks of the city while giving it an Asian makeover.

But as audience expectations grow higher with each animated film, so too does the pressure in creating such masterpieces.

"There are daily challenges in bringing every image to the big screen. You get to see data start from nothing and become these beautiful images all the time.

However, because everyone at the studio is incredibly talented and working at the studio is a joy, there is also a lot of self-imposed pressure to perform that can result in unnecessary stress,” said Abraham, who noted some of ISB’s core values and L21 skills are essential in his profession.

“Computer science is all about problem solving and creativity. A lot of people have a picture in their minds of people just furiously typing away at their keyboards non-stop, but most of us spend a lot more time thinking about how to approach the problem rather than typing. As for collaboration, when you work on a project the size of a movie, you absolutely need to learn to be able to work as part of a team,” he added.



Abraham Tseng poses with Big Hero 6 co-director Chris Williams (top left) and with the Oscars (above) awarded to the film for Best Animated Feature at the 2015 Academy Awards.

Alumni Reunion in Shanghai

Seven ISB alumni reconnected at The Nest bar and restaurant in Shanghai on March 23, marking the first of what organizer Amy Dalaroy hopes will be a monthly gathering for alumni living or passing through the city. Joining Amy for the March mini-reunion were Peter Sun, Matilda Wong, Stephanie Sun, Heywoo Lee, Jackson Cheng, and Harrison Kim.

If you would like to attend the next ISB alumni reunion in Shanghai, please email Amy for details at amy.dalaroy@gmail.com.



10-Year Reunion at ISB

A reminder that it's not too late to join us on May 28-29 as we celebrate the 10-year reunion for the class of 2005. All alumni are welcome to attend this reunion, which offers a great opportunity to take a stroll down memory lane by heading back to school.

This year's reunion starts with an alumni dinner downtown on Thursday, May 28 at 6:30 pm. It will be followed by a day of activities on campus on Friday, May 29. This will be a great opportunity to connect with old friends and teachers as well as to meet current students and see the new changes on ISB's campus.

For more information, please click [here](#).

Contact Us

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Visit the alumni page on the ISB website, which appears under the Our Community tab:

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