Celebrating its 18th season, Modfest 2020 is Vassar College’s annual exploration of the arts of the 20th and 21st centuries. This year’s theme, “reflect to project,” asks us to look backward to move forward in myriad ways. Just as a dancer takes a plié before a large leap, or a clarinetist glances at the measures ahead to see what’s in store, this year’s festival invites us to examine divergent perspectives through celebrations of expression across disciplines and forms. Explore the arts through the Grammy Award-nominated vocal ensemble New York Polyphony, Jeff Snyder with Princeton’s Laptop Orchestra, and stunning performances by our spectacular faculty and students.

Join us as we reflect on the accomplishments of musical and visual artists alike, including the remarkable work of Louise Bourgeois, Tony Award-winner Celia Keenan-Bolger, and the Hudson Valley Philharmonic’s celebration of renowned violinist Joshua Bell. Bring questions to exciting lectures and conversations about the future of musical notation and instrumentation and help us project better ways the community can affect change with the arts in an open conversation with local organizations.

Christine Howlett & Tom Pacio, Modfest co-directors


All events are free and open to the public. No reservations are necessary unless otherwise noted. For more information about ticketed events, please email: boxoffice@vassar.edu or call (845) 437-5599.

Directions to the Vassar campus in Poughkeepsie, New York, are available at www.vassar.edu/directions.

For additional information, call (845) 437-7294 or visit arts.vassar.edu. People with disabilities requiring accommodations should contact the Office of Campus Activities at (845) 437-5370.

Exhibitions

Music Library Online Exhibit
Sarah Camino, music librarian, curates Modfest’s online exhibit highlighting this year’s composers and musicians. Visit: http://libguides.vassar.edu/modfest2020.

Metal, Acid, Line: Etchings from the Loeb
January 16—April 19, 2020
Spanning time and geography, this exhibition features more than a dozen etchings and was co-curated with Christina Tenaglia (Department of Art) in conjunction with Art 209, a studio course that teaches the fundamentals of intaglio printing. Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center

Self-taught and Outsider Art from the Private Collection of Arthur F. Jones
January 21—February 16, 2020
Reception: January 30, 5:00pm-7:00pm
Arthur F. Jones, an art history professor, collector and also an artist, spent most of his career in places where major art museums were lacking. The works included in this exhibition are all from Jones’ teaching collection and reflect his long-held interest in art made by individuals not formally trained, but who are nonetheless highly motivated to express themselves visually. James W. Palmer ’90 Gallery, College Center

Louise Bourgeois: Ode to Forgetting, from the Collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer and His Family Foundation
January 24—April 5, 2020
With over 500 shows to his credit, Tony Award winner Fitz Patton offers a composition workshop focused on Sound Design for the Theater. Students should visit the Music Department website to register for the workshop, as space is limited. Music Library Classroom

Saturday, February 1 at 1:30pm
Projects: Community Arts Panel
Join us for a panel and conversation that will engage current practitioners and future hopes for community engagement and the arts, featuring Chris Silva, Executive Director, Bardavon, and other members of Vassar and local organizations. Theca Hall in Skinner Hall

Saturday, February 1 at 1:30pm
Reflect: An Artist’s Life, Onstage and Off
Tony Award winner Celia Keenan-Bolger shares stories about Broadway, acting, and art, as well as the importance of developing a well-rounded life that includes family, friendship, and activism. This event is sponsored by The Cappella Festival Music Library Fund. The Martin Theater, Vogelstein Center for Drama and Film

Saturday, February 8 at 5:30pm
Honorary Adjunct and Richard Wilson Concert
Featuring faculty members Danielle Farina, viola, Anna Elashvili, violin, Frank Cassara, percussion, Trevor Babb, guitar, Marija Rzi, piano, and Grammy-nominated vocal ensemble New York Polyphony. Skinner Hall of Music

Wednesday, February 5 at 1:30pm
Open Rehearsal: Opposite Earth
Join visual artist Jeff Snyder for an open rehearsal of his piece that will be performed with students and faculty during his lecture on February 6th. These events are part of a collaboration between Modfest and The Humanities in Cognitive Science. Skinner Hall of Music

Thursday, February 6 at 6:00pm
Lecture: Jeff Snyder
Build, Destroy, Build: Spontaneous Creation of Structure. Jeff Snyder, composer, improviser and instrument-designer, who also directs Princeton’s Laptop Orchestra, PLOrk, will give a lecture and performance about his interdisciplinary research and practice. These events are part of a collaboration between Modfest and The Humanities in Cognitive Science. Skinner Hall of Music

Friday, February 7 at 7:00pm
Dance Performance
Vassar Repertory Dance Theatre
An evening of works selected from the current repertory by faculty, students and guest choreographers. This is a free but ticketed event. Reservations for general seating are required and are available online at https://vassartickets.tix.com. For additional information please email: dance@vassar.edu or call (845) 437-5541. Frances Daly Ferguson Dance Theater, Kenyon Hall

Saturday, February 8 at 4:00pm
Future Voices: Choral Greeting
Cappella Festiva, Treble Choir, and Cor Capriccio Children’s Choir. Matt Zydel and Elizabeth Clifton, conductors. Skinner Hall of Music

Saturday, February 8 at 5:30pm
Exhibition Opening Lecture and Reception for Louise Bourgeois: Ode to Forgetting
Art historian Donald Kuspit will give a lecture titled “The Benefit of Art According to Louise Bourgeois: ‘Art is a Guarantee of Sanity.’” Taylor Hall, Room 102. Reception at 6:30pm in the Loeb Art Center.

Saturday, February 8 at 7:00pm
Future Voices: Orchestral Song
The Vassar College Orchestra performs works by Barber, Delio, Joe, and Hagood. Students from the Music Department perform songs from the great American songbook that reflect on the past and hope for the future. David Asher, piano, and Jennie Litt, director. Skinner Hall of Music

Sunday, February 9 at 3:00pm
Chamber Music from the Hudson Valley Philharmonic
To honor the Hudson Valley Philharmonic’s 60th anniversary season, Modfest presents members of the orchestra in a concert of chamber works. Skinner Hall of Music