



College
of Fine Arts

FOCUS ON
Young Alumni

TCU

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THESE STORIES OF YOUNG ALUMNI WERE TAKEN FROM OUR 2017 TCU COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS NEWSLETTER AND UPDATED AND REPRINTED IN 2018.

College of Fine Arts graduates put their passion into practice

One of the greatest myths is that students in the arts don't get jobs. Here at TCU, we are in the business of myth-busting. For example, our design students have had incredible success in the professional world, with a 100% job placement rate for students with a BFA in Graphic Design or Fashion Merchandising several semesters in a row. In short, arts students go on to enjoy amazing careers, having been well-prepared for their future by TCU.

Here we gather together profiles that show our students forging dynamic future pathways, building their careers and giving back to their communities.

Our alumni may become self-employed, establishing their own design, dance

or art studios. They may be touring with an off-Broadway show, as many of our theatre alums are currently doing. Featured in this newsletter are Anthony Fortino, who graduated with degrees in accounting and theatre and is now a nationally touring artist with shows such as *Fun Home*, and Tristian Griffin, BFA Ballet, who joined the Garth Fagan Dance company.

Faculty mentorship is a key theme in these alumni profiles. Our dedicated teachers help our students at every step in their journeys. Kristen Keiser, a graphic design major now working for the leading design firm Pentagram, still remembers the skills and concepts she learned from each and every faculty member in her program. A sense of community and support also comes through these stories as young professionals recall feeling buoyed by faculty

and staff as well as friends and classmates during their time at TCU.

Many of the highlighted alumni also point to the crucial role internships played in their professional development, as in the case of Fashion Merchandising alumna Marybeth Taylor. The College of Fine Arts is proud to partner with businesses and arts organizations that have consistently provided these stellar learning opportunities.

TCU is a values-centered university, and that ethos also informs the journeys our students take upon graduation. Many of our music students are also education majors and are eager to instill the love of music in others; read about Margaret Granado, BME, who has held multiple band director positions in Texas schools. Art student

Sarah Bisnette travelled halfway around the world to teach English in Morocco, embodying TCU's mission to "educate individuals to think and act as ethical leaders and responsible citizens in the global community."

The TCU College of Fine Arts is proud of our alumni and the mark they are making on the world while busting the myth about earning a degree in the arts.



Catherine Roe '14
now works at
Texas Ballet Theatre as
Community Enrichment
and Summer Intensive
Coordinator.
Susan Vogel photo

ON THE
COVER

Anthony Fortino in
TCU's 2014 production
of *Spring Awakening*
Amy Peterson photo

How to succeed in business and Broadway | a 2017 interview with

Anthony Fortino

'15 BA/BBA | '16 MAC

Briefly describe your current job/career path. What makes it exciting for you? I'm currently in the cast of the first national tour of the Broadway musical *Fun Home*, which is the winner of the 2015 Tony Award for Best Musical. It's exciting because it is my first national tour, and I have the opportunity to see America doing what I love.

What inspired you to take the path you are on after graduation? I graduated from TCU in 2015 with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting and a Bachelor of Art in Theatre. In 2016, I earned my Master of Accounting degree. I moved to New York shortly after graduation to start my accounting career as an auditor with Ernst & Young. My plan was to audition for Broadway shows as much as possible, with accounting as my "day job." That plan lasted a month. After my third audition, I was cast in the *Fun Home* national tour.

My performing career started at seven years old when I joined the Heart of America Barbershop Chorus in Kansas City.

Since then, I have loved being on stage entertaining others. I never thought it would be possible for me to have a career in theatre. I'm intrigued by the business world, and accounting excites me, which explains the double degree in accounting and theatre.

Why did you choose TCU? First, I fell in love with TCU the moment I walked through the archway of the Brown-Lupton University Union into the Campus Commons. TCU's campus is the best. Second, TCU allowed me to earn two very different degrees in four years. Third, I knew TCU was a school on the rise in terms of academic and athletic recognition, which I loved. Finally, the Dallas-Fort Worth professional theatre scene is booming. A dozen reputable professional theaters within an hour drive was a major selling point to me.

How has your TCU education created a path for your career? My TCU education is one of the main reasons why I'm in a Broadway national tour. The Neeley

School of Business helped me connect with the top accounting firms in the country, earning me an internship and full-time job with Ernst & Young in New York City. The TCU theatre faculty is top notch. Every professor in the department takes a personal interest in every single student. The "theatre hallway" in Ed Landreth Auditorium feels like a second home. You can walk down the hallway and step into any professor's office knowing they will help you with anything. They're your academic, personal and professional advisors. I would not be where I am without the personal attention I received from the theatre faculty.

How has TCU faculty made a difference for you? As I mentioned above, the TCU faculty took a personal interest in my career. When I met with my advisor, Dr. Harry Parker, every semester, we didn't just run through the classes I needed to take and check off the necessary boxes. He always asked about my semester, classes, accounting degree, and family.

Beyond the theatre faculty, TCU's School of Music also had an impact on my college experience. Any student can audition for several of the choral ensembles. During my time at TCU, I was in the Concert Chorale, Jazz Ensemble and Frog Corps. I had incredible experiences with every group. Dr. Dennis Shrock, Dr. Amy Stewart, and Brad White all took a personal interest in every member of their ensembles. My voice teacher, David Brock, helped my voice grow exponentially over my five years at TCU. Angela Turner Wilson gave me the opportunity to perform at the Festival of American Song and work with renowned composers. I never took a single class in the School of Music, and yet I consider all of these professors and mentors as friends because of the personal interest they took in me.

One of my favorite examples of TCU faculty going above and beyond is when two of my accounting professors, Dr. Renee Olvera and Dr. Pat Walters, drove to Addison, Texas, to see me perform in *Bonnie and Clyde* at WaterTower Theatre. My accounting professors carved time out of their personal lives to drive to the other side of Dallas-Fort Worth to watch

me perform in a musical. If that doesn't speak to the care and interest that TCU faculty take in their students, I don't know what does. I owe the TCU faculty more than I can state.

How have fellow TCU alumni helped you in your career? TCU alumni have helped me adjust to living in New York City. There's a great contingent of TCU theatre graduates living in New York, and they have given me advice about places to live, trains to take, and even cheap grocery stores. They also helped me with the audition process and introduced me to other actors in the city.

What has been your greatest professional accomplishment thus far? My greatest professional accomplishment thus far is being a part of the national tour for *Fun Home*. Our director won the Tony Award in 2015 for his direction of the Broadway production, and the show itself won the Tony Award for Best Musical in 2015. It's been an unbelievable blessing to be involved with this production. ♦

FUN HOME
A NEW BROADWAY MUSICAL



"I would not be where I am without the personal attention I received from the theatre faculty."



SUCCESS AT TIFFANY & CO

MaryBeth Taylor '12

When MaryBeth Taylor was looking into her next steps after high school graduation, she knew she wanted to attend a private university with a strong fashion merchandising program. Her dad is an alum of Texas Christian University, and she grew up immersed in the Fort Worth culture, so TCU seemed like an obvious fit. After visiting several schools, she knew TCU was home.

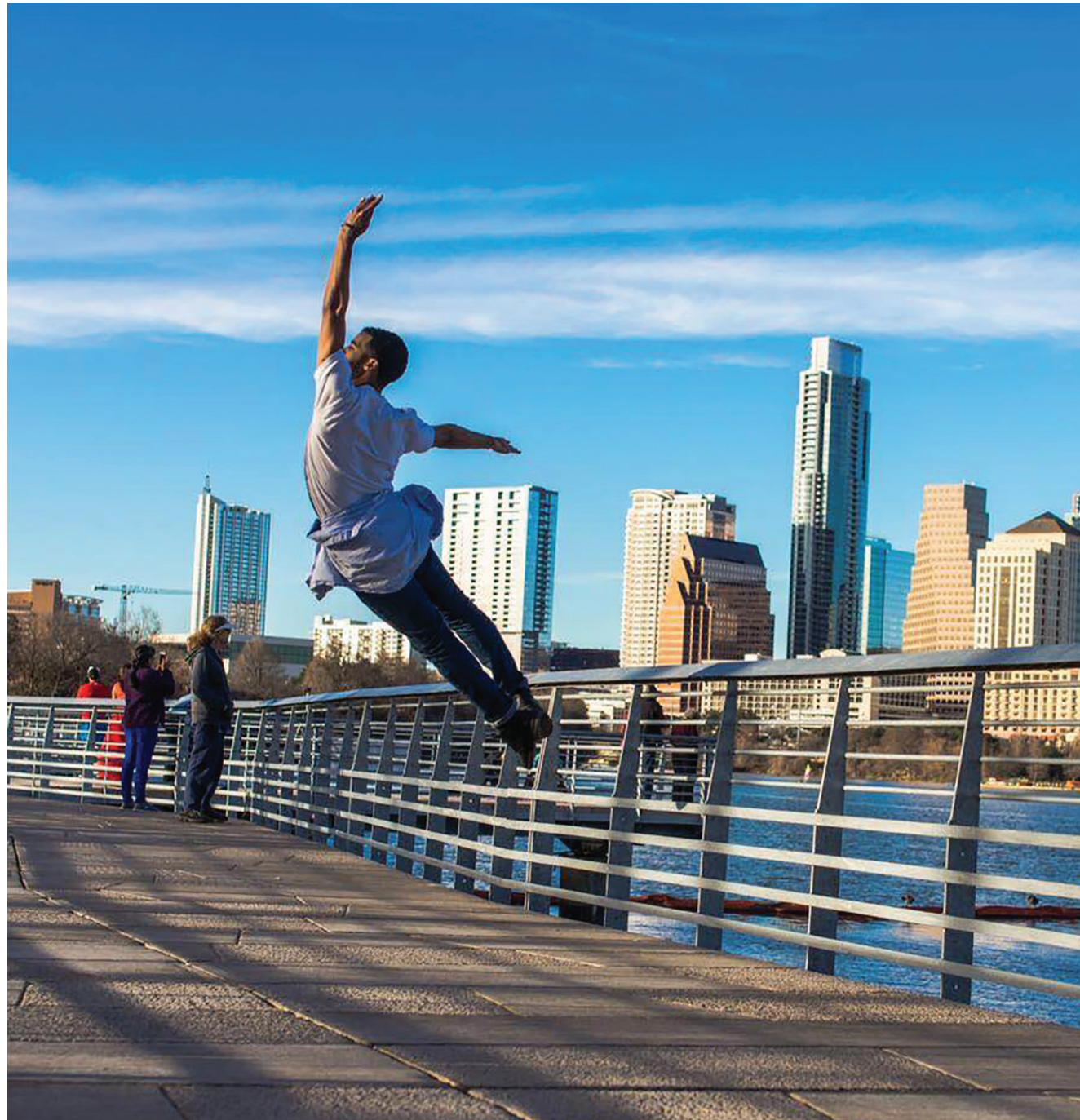
The Fashion Merchandising program at TCU provided a well-rounded education for her future career in the fashion industry. Because of its focus on many facets of fashion, she was able to make an educated decision on the best career for her. The personal attention the faculty provided was also available outside the classroom, helping her with her career path. "It gave me the opportunity to explore so many different avenues," said Taylor. "Additionally, the summer internship program was an invaluable experience that ultimately led me on the path that I continue on today."

During the summer of 2011, Taylor interned with Stuart Weitzman, a high-end shoe

company, in New York City, and the experience inspired her future career. After her internship, she was eager to work full time in New York City. In the spring of 2012, she was hired at Stuart Weitzman by the CEO to fill the newly created position, Major Accounts Business Analyst. In the next four years at Stuart Weitzman, she progressed to become the Business Analyst and right hand to the CEO in areas of reporting and analysis. In November 2016, Taylor was hired at Tiffany & Co. as Senior Analyst-Product Life Cycle & Obsolescence, allowing her to witness the life cycle of products and product categories.

One of her greatest professional accomplishments was having a position created for her at Stuart Weitzman, a high-caliber company, right out of college. Working for more than four years directly under the long-time CEO presented her with unparalleled experiences. Taylor was able to use that knowledge to become a Senior Analyst at Tiffany & Co. Reaching that senior level and applying all she has learned at a respected company is something she always aspired to do. ❖





“
I am living
my dream.
”

Nordan
scholar

Tristian Griffin '14 BFA Ballet

Since eighth grade, Tristian Griffin had his sights set on Texas Christian University. Although he auditioned and applied to several schools, after meeting the dance professors and a few students at TCU, Griffin said, “I knew that TCU was going to be my new home for the next four years.”

The School for Classical & Contemporary Dance (SCCD) provided Griffin with the education and experience he needed to plan for his future as a professional dancer. He considers the SCCD faculty as “one of the best in the nation” and recognizes the role of mentorship as critical to his preparation. In his interview to prepare this profile, he spoke of a long conversation he had with adjunct professor and TCU alumna Laura Barbee, who helped Griffin plan for the multiple choices he had post graduation. Griffin notes that not only have SCCD alumni entered the field as professional dancers,

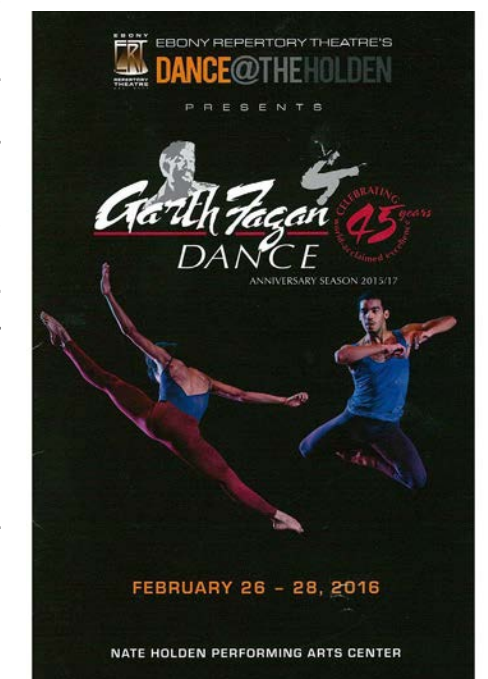
but they are also successfully engaged as choreographers, teachers, Pilates/Gyrotonics®/yoga instructors, and arts administrators.

The comprehensive education Griffin received prepared him for his current work with the legendary Garth Fagan, choreographer of *The Lion King* musical and winner of numerous awards including a Tony Award, Drama Desk Award, Guggenheim Fellowship and Dance Magazine Award. Griffin says, “The majority of my dance experience is classical ballet, but Mr. Fagan’s technique is almost the polar opposite. TCU equipped me for any dance career path by giving me the tools to become a well-rounded dancer.”

In April 2017, Tristian Griffin will have been with Garth Fagan Dance for two years. Griffin expresses gratitude for the strong foundation he received from TCU. “Thank you to all who

laid a brick on the path of the journey I am experiencing,” he said. “All of the people I interacted with over my TCU career helped me to become the person and artist I am today. I am living my dream.” ❖

Tristian Griffin is currently a professional dancer, teacher and choreographer in Kansas City.



**A hometown
Horned Frog
passes the
torch of music
education**

A 2017
interview
with

Margaret Granado '13

BME

Briefly describe your current job/career path. What makes it exciting for you? I am currently the Director of Bands at Meadowbrook Middle School and the Assistant Director of Bands at Eastern Hills High School in Fort Worth ISD. Both programs have grown exponentially since I started in my position. It's so exciting to watch students start as beginners and grow and perform in ways they never thought they could!

What inspired you to take the path you are on after graduation? I knew in middle school I wanted to become a band director. My band directors in middle and high school were incredible mentors who helped keep my life on track when I went through difficult times. I knew I wanted to follow in their footsteps.

Why did you choose TCU? When I was little, my parents and I would drive through the campus, and they would say, "Someday, you're going to go here." They meant I would go to college, but being a kid, I understood it literally. When the time came to finally

decide on a university, I was impressed with the music education department and heard that Mr. Whitman was an incredible clarinet professor. When I saw the TCU Marching Band and met Brian Youngblood, there was no question where I belonged!

How has your TCU education created a path for your career? I realize how thorough my education was when I speak to others. My classes did not just scratch the surface of what I would need to know but also gave me a realistic view of what mattered. On top of my education, the networking I've done with both staff and classmates has opened doors for me to change and grow in the music education profession.

How has TCU faculty made a difference for you? All of my professors at TCU are just a phone call or email away. They have worked with my band, given advice for contests when I sent them recordings or provided guidance when I called. They still always make time to help me, even though years have passed since I was their student.

How have fellow TCU alumni helped you in your career? I still speak with fellow TCU alumni on a daily basis. We help each other with anything from what to play for University Interscholastic League (UIL) to what to wear to our beginner band concert. We give advice on each other's jobs. I know I can always reach out to other Horned Frogs if I ever need anything.

What has been your greatest professional accomplishment thus far? I took my Meadowbrook band to a UIL contest for the first time last year. Prior to that, I had been building the program to be big enough to even attend UIL. I took 14 kids that day, and we received the first 1st Division rating at the school since 1987! I had a similar experience in 7th grade, and it greatly affected me. It was INCREDIBLE for me to see the pride and excitement from my students when we took home our trophy. ❖

Margaret is now a band director at Ferris ISD.

"There was no question where I belonged!"





Sarah Bisnette photo

Global viewfinder

Sarah Bisnette'16

Studio art major, Film-TV-Digital Media minor

After graduating in May 2016, I decided to move to Morocco, where I now live and work as an English teacher. This career path has allowed me the opportunity to travel around the country and meet inspiring people. It has also allowed me to explore my own interests in the arts and develop my eye for photography and film.

I have always had a passion for travel and learning about different cultures. After college, I was seeking a path that would allow me to live in a foreign country. I studied abroad in Paris, France, while attending TCU with a program called the Center of International Educational Exchange (CIEE). The program offers teach-abroad programs, and once I discovered there was a position in Morocco, I leapt at the opportunity.

TCU's mission to educate individuals to become responsible citizens in a global community is one of the reasons why I chose to attend TCU. I considered TCU a leader in global education, after discovering numerous opportunities provided to students like lectures, clubs and study abroad programs. Throughout college, I felt TCU's desire to shape world-



class citizens inside and outside of the classroom. I also valued the personalized education that was created for students through small class sizes and hands-on faculty and staff.

TCU has provided the skills and confidence necessary to thrive in a global community. My professors always encouraged me to think individually and outside of the box. This innovative education helped me realize my goals by encouraging me to explore the unknown and become knowledgeable about the world at large.

The TCU faculty has supported and encouraged me in my endeavors throughout my college career. I developed sincere relationships with the faculty that I will have for a lifetime. It was their commitment to my success that inspired me to want to become a leader in my field.

My brother and fellow TCU alum, Paul Bisnette, was the first person to inspire me to travel and work abroad. After studying and working for the TCU film department, he decided to move to Japan where he also worked as an English teacher. His path to become a globally aware citizen inspired me to carve out my own path as well.

My greatest accomplishment thus far has been learning to adapt and thrive in an environment foreign from my own. I believe the most responsible thing an individual can do is gain a better understanding of various cultures. With this newfound awareness, I believe I will become a successful artist.

TCU has played a major role in shaping me into the global citizen I am today. After Morocco, I plan on continuing my education of the wider world by living and working in various countries. My future plans include combining my interest in photography, film and travel by documenting my knowledge of the world and the amazing people in it. ❖

Kristen Keiser '11

Graphic designer at Pentagram

I transferred to TCU after spending two and a half years at Oklahoma State University in various majors. When I decided to study graphic design, my advisor said most design majors tend to work in Oklahoma City or Tulsa after graduation. But I didn't picture my future in those cities. After researching graphic design programs in Texas, I was impressed with the curriculum offered at TCU. The small class size and the competitive nature of the program spurred me to excel.

Starting out in the program, Jan Ballard's direct approach to teaching provided a glimpse into a career in graphic design. Early on, we were instructed to consider the best solution to a problem and not to immediately gravitate toward trendy design. Although it frustrated me at the time, Dusty Crocker pushed us to learn new software and programs. As technology rapidly changes, it is a necessary skill in my career. Not only did this teach me to keep up with the newest technology but also to acquire new skills to advance my career and to position myself as a valuable asset. Bill Galyean encouraged a sense of humor in design and helped me see being serious may not be the best solution for

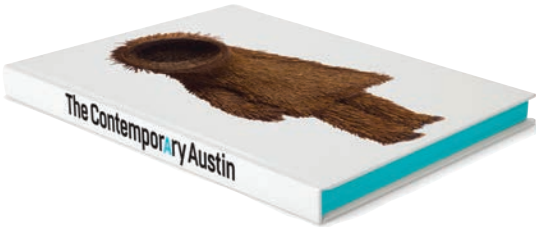
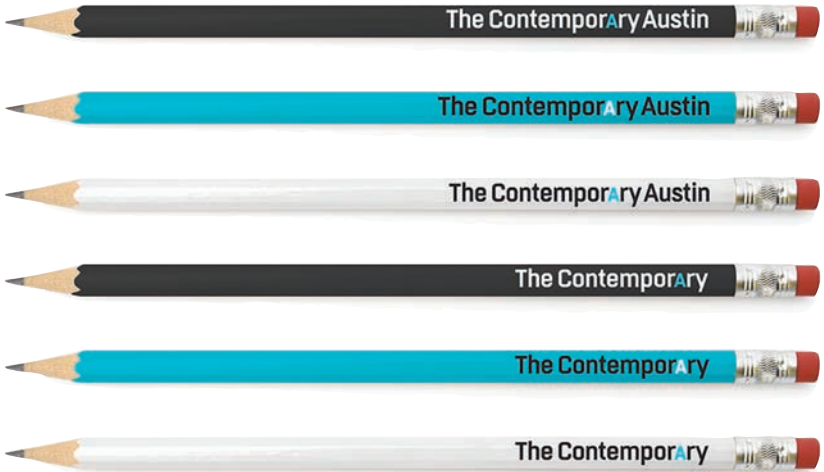
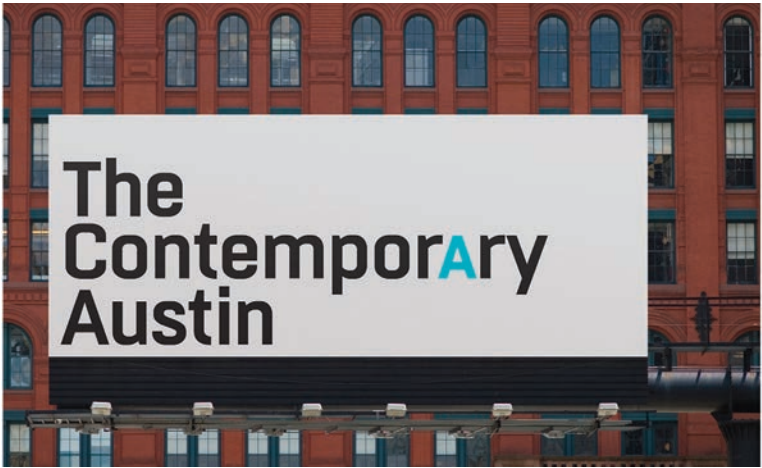


every problem. Lewis Glaser taught us to continue digging and never settle for the first big idea. Overall, the faculty at TCU were personally invested in my education and future as a professional, which drove me to do my best.

I've been working full time as a designer at Pentagram in Austin for around four years. Pentagram is one of the oldest and largest independent design firms in the world. It's exciting to work here because I work on a wide range of projects and help clients on a local, national and global scale. During my time in the graphic design program at TCU, Pentagram's work was constantly shown as an example of timeless and strategic design solutions. I knew I wanted to move to

Austin, and as graduation approached, DJ Stout, the Pentagram partner in the Austin office, met with me for a portfolio review. With that foot in the door and the luck of good timing, I was offered an internship the summer after I graduated, which eventually led to a full-time designer position. Even though my formal education is complete, I will never stop learning design, and I am confident I'm giving clients smart design solutions that work for them. Working for a firm with such a strong reputation for problem solving has been a great professional accomplishment.

Now as a professional, I've been able to look back and really get a great sense of how my education at TCU and the support of the faculty and fellow students helped me to get where I am today. The TCU alumni network of graphic designers in Austin is fairly small, but growing rapidly and I'm proud to be a part of it. I know that TCU alums are willing to go the extra mile and I hope I give the same impression to future alums looking for support. ❖



Keiser was lead designer on Pentagram's re-branding of The Contemporary Museum in Austin. Images: Pentagram.com

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