What a summer it has been! Barely a day has passed without some reminder of the extraordinary times in which we live. From the breathtaking phenomena of the eclipse, to the induced facsimile of a sun and moon obscured by smoke, to the unsettling images and stories of a devastating hurricane season, we are reminded of the ephemeral sensitivity and power of nature. Staying aware and observant of the societal shifts wrought by economic and political forces has taken on a new sense of urgency and become part of our daily discourse.

Clear skies and seasonal temperatures brought a welcome sigh of relief this week when — for the first time in months — the weather pattern, at least here in Seattle, began to return to normal. Cool, moist air warmed through the afternoon and the hazy skies have parted leaving welcoming blue skies. Other familiar and reassuring patterns have also reappeared with the start of the 2017–2018 school year. School buses are back on the streets and crosswalks are once again the purview of watchful crossing guards. Although we are still two weeks away from the 156th commencement of classes at the UW, we are anticipating the arrival of new and returning students to campus and the responsibility and privilege it is to help them achieve their goals and aspirations. We welcome this familiar routine, which brings us together as an inclusive and creative community: a community that is engaged in questioning, expressing, and shaping the ideas of our time.

Of course, these routines are not static; the means, methods, and people that propel the School are dynamic in nature. While we celebrated the graduation of some 280 students in June, we also said goodbye to a number of esteemed colleagues. Katherine Gold and Catherine Ruha in our Academic Advising and Student Services Office moved on along with our first ever dedicated Marketing + PR Specialist, Leena Joshi. Joining us this year will be staff members Ariana Ortiz (Advising) and Mariama Salia (Fiscal Office). We wish Associate Professors Ivan Drpić and Tad Hirsch well as they begin new appointments at the University of Pennsylvania and Northeastern University, respectively. We welcome the arrival of Lacey Baradel, who will be teaching in the Division of Art History as the Allan and Mary Kollar Endowed Fellow in American Art, and Michael Kritzer, who will teach in the Division of Design as a full-time lecturer in Industrial Design. After an illustrious 23–year career as faculty in Painting + Drawing, Professor Denzil Hurley retired and is looking forward to working full time in his new Seattle studio. Hurley’s exhibition, Disclosures, is on view at the Seattle Art Museum until November 5.

During the summer, while the School offers a limited number of courses, most faculty use the time to focus on their research and develop or revise their upcoming courses. Students embarked with faculty on study abroad programs to the Netherlands and London/Paris, and the twentieth Studio Art Program in Rome is set to launch with the start of autumn quarter. During these deceptively "quiet" months, there is much behind-the-scenes activity as we do our best to adapt the Art Building to our current and future needs. Throughout the summer, staff have been busy prepping, revising, and improving business and academic processes, refining technology, adapting classrooms for new purposes, and making sure the School is ready to receive new and returning faculty and students. The School has been actively seeking funding to enhance our mission, and we are very excited to announce our first ever grant from the NEA — in support of the Jacob Lawrence Legacy Residency — and a generous grant from the Dale and Leslie Chihuly Foundation. The Chihuly grant, when added to the third year of support from The Boeing Company, will make possible our annual public lecture series Critical Issues in Contemporary Art Practice. Additionally, the always impressive level of individual gifts from alumni and friends is invaluable in helping us realize the School’s mission.

It is with anticipation of the familiar, the new, and the unknown that we begin the 2017–2018 academic year. Through our newsletter and website, you can find out much more about who we are and what we are doing. I encourage you to attend one of our many public events and look forward to seeing you in the coming year.

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Division:
Art
Art History