Wake the Arts Welcomes President Rodriguez

Wed, Sep 30, 2026 at 10:03 AM

Dear Friends of Wake the Arts,

What a week it's been! I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who joined us for the opening weekend of ***The Firebugs***. Seeing our team bring this show to life and having President Rodriguez in attendance on opening night to support the production made for an unforgettable premiere. The energy in the theater was electric, and we couldn't be prouder of the hard work our cast and crew have put into this performance.

Written originally in the late 1940s and rewritten throughout the 1950s, Max Frisch's *The Firebugs* was initially a response to the Communist takeover in Prague. Later versions of the script make direct references to complacency during the rise of fascism. Sounds like a gritty, in your face drama, right? Nope. Frisch has crafted his funny play to address life and death situations with over-the-top characters, physical comedy, and plenty of silly humor. Until it is no longer funny.

If you haven't had a chance to see *The Firebugs* yet, don't worry: you still have one last chance! We are kicking off our second (and final) weekend of performances this Thursday, running through our closing night on Sunday, October 4th. It has been a thrill sharing this timely story with our community, so please be sure to reserve your tickets soon.

Looking ahead, the momentum across our arts community shows no sign of slowing down. Beyond our stage, we are thrilled to anticipate the upcoming performance by Actors From the London Stage, who will be bringing their high-energy presentation of Shakespeare's **Much Ado About Nothing** to Brendle Recital Hall on October 22nd as part of the Secrest Artists Series. While on campus, the troupe will be working with students in Theatre, Communications, and the Law School.

There is so much creativity, reflection, and passion taking root across our campus this semester. Read on below to explore upcoming gallery exhibitions, faculty features, and grant opportunities — and we hope to see you in the audience again this weekend!

Brook Davis
Professor of Theatre,
Department of Theatre and Dance
Director, *The Firebugs*



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President Peter Rodriguez and Mrs. Kathleen Rodriguez at opening night for *The Firebugs*



A group of 50 faculty, staff and students warmly greeted President Peter Rodriguez and Mrs. Kathleen Rodriguez at a reception in the Scales lobby before the production of The Firebugs. The play continues this week with performances Thursday through closing night on Sunday, October 4. Don't miss the show! ***Tickets are available here****.*

View the photostory



The Firebugs
Written by Max Frisch
Directed by Brook Davis
Oct. 1-3 at 7:30 p.m.
Oct. 4 at 2 p.m.
Tedford Stage, Scales Fine Arts Center

The Wake Forest University Theatre will present Max Frisch's caustic political parable "*The Firebugs*," from September 25 to October 4. The show's protagonist, Gottlieb Biedermann, is a hair tonic mogul who is terrified of the arsonists who have plagued his town. Yet, ignoring the warnings of a chorus of firefighters, he allows two strangers to talk their way into his house and pack it with explosives. He placates the strangers with a lavish meal and even assists, not realizing what he's doing, as they measure the fuses.

More at theatre.wfu.edu



Fall of Freedom
Friday, Oct. 2, 6-7:15 p.m.
Hanes Gallery

Join us for an evening of creative expression and connection exploring themes of freedom, activism, protest, and collective expression through visual art, sound, performance, conversation, and theater.

Fall of Freedom is a nationwide initiative bringing arts and cultural organizations together to explore and celebrate freedom of expression through creative programming. At Wake Forest, Fall of Freedom invites our community to consider the role of art, performance, and dialogue in engaging with questions of freedom, democracy, activism, and civic life.

Following the Fall of Freedom program, guests are encouraged to stay for the 7:30 p.m. performance of *The Firebugs* on the Tedford Stage in Scales Fine Arts Center. The Fall of Freedom program is free and open to the public (a separate ticket is required to attend *The Firebugs*, **available here**).

RSVP



Setan Jawa: silent film screening with live music
Wednesday, Oct. 14, 7:30 p.m.
Brendle Recital Hall

Join the WFU Department of Music for a multi-sensorial celebration of Indonesian filmmaker Garin Nugroho's work, featuring the iconic silent film Setan Jawa accompanied by a live score composed and performed by Peni Candra Rini (with Andy McGraw). Nugroho's Setan Jawa evokes Javanese mythology through the genre of contemporary horror as inspired by the perennial silent film classic, Nosferatu by Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau. The film explores Indonesia's pre-orthodox Islamic stories of the seven deals man makes with the devil to gain wealth. The live score dramatically underpins the mysticism and sensuality of Nugroho's tale of love and sacrifice. Get there early for the WFU Gamelan Giri Murti opening act at 7:15 p.m. Free and open to the public.

Read more



The Secrest Artists Series is on a roll:
Isidore String Quartet with Sterling Elliot, Cello

What an incredible start to this year's Serest Artists Series! The Isidore String Quartet, with cellist Sterling Elliot, filled a sold-out Brendle Recital Hall with the sheer beauty of Schubert, Haydn, and Frank Bridge.

We can't wait for our next artists, Actors From the London Stage, coming on October 22.



Actors From the London Stage present Much Ado About Nothing
Thursday, Oct. 22, 7:30 p.m.
Brendle Recital Hall
Free to Students, faculty and staff; **Tickets available here**

Experience the wit and wordplay of Much Ado About Nothing as brought to life by Actors From The London Stage, one of the world's oldest and most prestigious touring Shakespeare companies. Co-founded by Sir Patrick Stewart and featuring elite talent from the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Globe, this ensemble delivers a high-energy, actor-driven tour de force that makes the Bard's work feel immediate and accessible. Don't miss this extraordinary opportunity to see Shakespeare's timeless comedy performed with the mastery and vibrancy that only these world-class artists can provide.

Read more



Hank Willis Thomas: High Visibility
Through Dec. 2
Hanes Gallery of Art
Opening Reception: Sept. 10, 5-8 p.m.

Conceptual artist **Hank Willis Thomas** (b. 1976) addresses themes of race, identity, history, and mass media through his multidisciplinary practice. For over a decade, Thomas has worked with retroreflective vinyl, the material used to make highway and street signs, to illuminate histories past and present. When light hits the surface of this medium, it is reflected back toward the source, like car headlights striking a traffic sign. **Hank Willis Thomas: High Visibility** is presented in tandem with **Flash Point: The Civil Rights Photography of Danny Lyon**.



Flash Point: The Civil Rights Photography of Danny Lyon
Sept. 17 - Jan. 3, 2027
Reynolda House Museum of American Art

Flash Point will debut more than fifty gifts promised to Wake Forest University by James and Wendy Agah, parents of a current student and a recent alumnus. The collection represents the largest single gift of photographs in the university's history and allows a comprehensive understanding of the civil rights movement in the early 1960s. Danny Lyon photographed the violence, but he was also able

to elevate the organizers, planners, orators, scribes, and publicists of a complex national network of youthful patriots engaged in direct, non-violent action. For their own sake — and the nation's — they courageously pursued a course charted by Dr. King: "The way of nonviolence leads to redemption and the creation of the beloved community." The exhibition is co-curated by Phil Archer, Betsy Main Babcock Deputy Director, and Ashley Givens, adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Art at Wake Forest University and includes several photographs from the WFU Art Collections.

More about Hank Willis Thomas: High Visibility

More about Flash Point: The Civil Rights Photography of Danny Lyon

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Who's Making Things Happen

Art Department faculty exhibitions:



Joel Tauber's Social Practice Project & Performance Screening of "Razor-Sharp: When Arguing Is A Good Thing," Performance and special guest Russ May
Oct. 1, Oct. 15, and Oct. 29
7-8:30 p.m., MUSE Winston-Salem
226 S. Liberty Street

MUSE Winston-Salem is hosting the U.S. premiere of Chavruta: A Model for Discourse Today, a social practice project and performance by Joel Tauber, artist, filmmaker, and Department of Art Professor of Filmmaking and Video Art.

Read more

Lydia Smith Featured in Two FotoFocus Biennial Exhibitions



Professor of Studio Art, Lydia Smith, is a featured artist in two exhibitions by FotoFocus Biennial. The first exhibition, Haunting, is currently up at the Columbus College of Art & Design: Beeler Gallery in Ohio, Sept. 3 until Nov. 11. The second exhibition, Natural Fictions, will run from Sept. 30 through March 6, 2027, at The Carnegie Gallery in Covington, Kentucky. Both exhibitions feature works by various artists, including Lydia Smith.

Read more

Evan Harris ('26) receives Fulbright Scholarship



Studio Art minor Evan Harris ('26) is one of four Wake Forest students who have been awarded Fulbright Scholarships to conduct research and teach English during the 2026-2027 academic year. Since 1946, the Fulbright U.S. Student Program has provided nearly 450,000 students, scholars, scientists, professionals, teachers, and artists with life-changing opportunities to study, conduct research, and teach in over 160 countries and territories worldwide.

While he was a student, Evan's photography work was shown on campus in solo exhibitions at **stArt Gallery** and the BRC Gallery.

Read more about the Scholarship

Watch our interview with Evan from last year

Alumni spotlight: Nora Resk (’25)



“The community at Wake was really important for me. Chamber Choir was especially inspirational because there were only a few music majors and everyone had a lot of other things going on. That inspired me to do what I want to do and follow my passions. Wake gave me the tools to forge my own path, from my custom concentration, advice from career advisors and more. Use your resources; ask alumni your questions; don’t be afraid to try new things. This industry takes some grit, so you need to make opportunities for yourself.”

Read the profile

Coming Soon

Thursday, Oct. 1
Chavruta: A Model For Discourse Today
(7-8:30 pm, MUSE Winston-Salem)

The Firebugs
(7:30pm, Tedford Mainstage)

Friday, Oct. 2
Family Weekend Art Department Open House
(2-4pm, Hanes Gallery)

Fall of Freedom
(6pm, Hanes Art Gallery)

The Firebugs
(7:30pm, Tedford Mainstage)

Chimes of Freedom Performance Series: Concert Series
(7:30-9:30pm, Reynolda House Museum of American Art) Tickets: $75, $60 for Museum Members

Saturday, Oct. 3
The Firebugs
(7:30pm, Tedford Mainstage)

Chimes of Freedom Performance Series: Concert Series
(7:30-9:30pm, Reynolda House Museum of American Art) Tickets: $75, $60 for Museum Members

Sunday, Oct. 4
The Firebugs
(2pm, Tedford Mainstage)

Chimes of Freedom Performance Series: Concert Series
(2-4pm, Reynolda House Museum of American Art) Tickets: $75, $60 for Museum Members

Saturday, Oct. 10-Tuesday, Oct. 13
Fall Break

Wednesday, Oct. 14
WFU Music Film Screening: Setan Jawa
(7:30pm, Brendle Recital Hall)

Thursday, Oct. 15
stArt Gallery opening reception
(5-7pm, stArt Gallery)

Chavruta: A Model For Discourse Today
(7-8:30 pm, MUSE Winston-Salem)

Sunday, Oct. 18
Oktoberfest Sunday Salon Concert
(3pm, Brendle Recital Hall)

Tuesday, Oct. 20
Relax and Craft
(3-7pm, Visual Resource Center, Scales 110)

Wednesday, Oct. 21
WFU Wind Ensemble Concert
(7:30pm, Brendle Recital Hall)

Face to Face Speaker Forum with Ken Burns
(7:30-8:45pm, Wait Chapel)

Wednesday, Oct. 21-Saturday, Oct. 24
SECAC National Conference

Thursday, Oct. 22
Actors From the London Stage: "Much Ado About Nothing"
(7:30pm, Brendle Recital Hall)

SECAC Open House (5-7pm, Hanes Art Gallery)

Friday, Oct. 23
WFU Symphony Orchestra Concert: Dvořák's Symphony No. 9 in E minor
(7:30pm, Brendle Recital Hall)

Tuesday, Oct. 27
Guest Artist: Awadigan Pratt, piano
(7:30pm, Brendle Recital Hall)

Wednesday, Oct. 28
'Flash Point' Curator Talk with Dr. Ashley Givens
(2pm, Charles H. Babcock Auditorium, Reynolda House Museum of American Art) Cost: $25, $20 for Museum Members

Thursday, Oct. 29
Chavruta: A Model For Discourse Today
(7-8:30 pm, MUSE Winston-Salem)

Student Showcase Recital
(7:30pm, Brendle Recital Hall)

Saturday, Oct. 31
Organ Spooktacular
(1-3pm, Reynolda House Museum of American Art) Free with admission

Tuesday, Nov. 3
Guest Artist Voice Recital: Joshua Conyers, baritone
(7:30pm, Brendle Recital Hall) Caroline Culp Alumni Lecture (5pm, Scales 103)

Wednesday, Nov. 4
Dance Nation
(7:30pm, Tedford Mainstage)

Caroline Culp: Alumni Coffee Chat
(11am, Scales 110)

Thursday, Nov. 5
Dance Nation
(7:30pm, Tedford Mainstage)

Drinks @ Dusk
(6-9pm, Reynolda House Museum of American Art) $30, Ages 21+ only

Friday, Nov. 6
Dance Nation

(7:30pm, Tedford Mainstage)

Saturday, Nov. 7
Dance Nation
(2pm, Tedford Mainstage)

Dance Nation
(7:30pm, Tedford Mainstage)

Sunday, Nov. 8
Dance Nation
(2pm, Tedford Mainstage)

Learning From the Navajo Nation: Meet and Greet + Beading Workshop
(3-5:30pm, Lam Museum of Anthropology)

Monday, Nov. 9
Faculty Recital: Caryn Greco, soprano
(6:30pm, Brendle Recital Hall)

Wednesday, Nov. 11
Learning From the Navajo Nation: beading, creative design, traditional games
(6-7:30pm, Wakerspace)

Thursday, Nov. 12
Vox Luminis: Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610
(7:30pm, Brendle Recital Hall)

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