



INTERSECTIONS

A dialogue between two alumni, one established, one emerging, whose work is making an impact on the arts around the world.

PICTURE THIS! A GENEROUS FOCUS



Peter Olson BFA '77 (Photography)



Jess Landau BFA '14 (Photography)

She could not believe her eyes -- the trunk was empty. **Jess Landau BFA '14 (Photography)** was unloading her gear at her apartment in South Philly when she realized it had all disappeared: cameras, lenses, film, everything she used to create her art and earn her living. "The theft stopped all of my photographic activity," says Jess. She did not lose focus. Jess had fine art photography projects in progress and freelance jobs scheduled, but she needed to purchase a new camera to proceed.

When **Peter Olson BFA '77 (Photography)** learned of the theft through the UArts Alumni Relations Office, he looked up Jess's work. "She needs to be shooting," he thought. Olson is a successful commercial photographer and a talented fine artist. He felt a sense of connection to Jess -- both of their work engages in the superimposition of fine photographic images onto recognizable objects through innovative techniques.

A UArts family is nothing new to Peter. He met wife **Penelope Malish BFA '77 (Graphic Design)** during their studies; daughter **Skye Malish-Olson MFA '14 (Museum Exhibition Planning + Design)** is the exhibition designer at the Dallas Museum of Art and his son, **Eno**, is a third-year student in Industrial Design. It was only natural that Peter considered Jess a member of his extended UArts family, and he wanted to ensure that she could keep working. He invited Jess to his home and studio and offered her a Canon 5D Mark III, the camera she had longed for but had not been able to afford. "I sent him a message to thank him for welcoming me so warmly and letting me borrow the camera," she says. "The camera is yours," he responded. "I know she'd do the same for someone else in the future," he says.

The tools are necessary, Peter acknowledges, but photography is about a way of seeing. "That's the critical lesson I learned at UArts," he says. "Photography documents the experience of history," says Jess. "At UArts, I learned that artists can create social change." It's not hard to see why Peter and Jess are kindred spirits in how they reflect the University's commitment to the development of expert technical skills in the service of a unique creative vision. Many other UArts alumni and friends offered to help as well, including Jess's thesis advisor John Carlano BFA '78 (Photography) and Kat Stein BM '14 (Piano Performance), who organized a fundraiser to help replace the remaining stolen gear and accessories.

Jess is embarking on an exciting career that includes an exhibit at Blick Art Materials in Philadelphia. Peter, whose images are seen every day across the country, is an accomplished professional artist with more than 40 years' experience. Peter and Jess have more than a UArts education and extraordinary talent in common -- both believe that how we see the world matters.

Top: Story art by Jess Landau BFA '14 (Photography).

Please send all comments, kudos and criticism to alumni@uarts.edu.