

uncg research

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Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity



RESEARCHERS TRADE A CLEAN LAB FOR JUST THE OPPOSITE, AND DOZENS OF BUDDING SCIENTISTS REVEL IN THE DISCOVERIES

THE BIG MUDDY

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The Next Time You See Me

Holly Goddard Jones
Touchstone (386 pp)



TO HEAR HOLLY GODDARD JONES TELL IT, her fiction writing career has been at best a modest success.

"It used to be that I'd do a reading and maybe two or three people would show up," says Goddard Jones, an assistant professor in English who regularly makes the rounds of literary festivals in the Southeast. "Now I'll get about five or six people. If I keep doing this for a few more decades, maybe I'll get up to 20."

She's humble enough not to mention that she's already won over the critics.

Since its release by Touchstone in February, Goddard Jones' debut novel "The Next Time You See Me" has received enthusiastic reviews from The New York Times, USA Today, which called it "a genre-defying novel filled with mystery and suspicion," and Gillian Flynn, author of the runaway best-seller "Gone Girl."

Set in Goddard Jones' native small-town Kentucky, the book centers

on the disappearance of a young woman and the family members and town residents whose lives intersect, unpredictably and sometimes violently, with hers.

Goddard Jones' short story collection "Girl Trouble," published in 2009 by Harper Perennial, marked her as a hot new talent in Southern fiction. Her work has appeared in The Best American Mystery Stories, New Stories from the South and numerous literary magazines. She was a 2013 recipient of The Fellowship of Southern Writers' Hillsdale Prize for Excellence in Fiction.

Goddard Jones teaches fiction writing to undergraduates and graduate students, along with courses on the contemporary novel and creative nonfiction. She sees herself as a demanding instructor who likes to challenge her students to push themselves.

She's at work now on a new novel and continues to write short stories, but she's not rushing them into print.

As an over-eager writer earlier in her career, Goddard Jones says, her mistakes taught her to work patiently and persistently on her craft. It's an approach that has clearly worked – and that she shares regularly with her students as well: "You want to wait," she says, "until you can present the best possible version of yourself to the world."

Brand new

Fulbright scholar Claudia Aguilera hands you her stylish red and amber business card. One lesson she's obviously learned? How to brand herself as a designer.

"decode. translating ideas. interior product design," it says.

It suggests other things she has learned. A designer can fill their work with information ready to be decoded, but what the viewer or the customer gets out of it depends on their experiences.

When her master's thesis project was on exhibition, she saw this firsthand.

"El Salvador is the culture I know." She went through a process where she looked at traditional crafts, which she infused into her own design process.

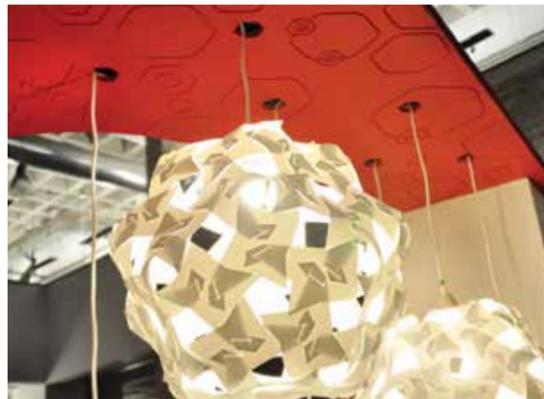
"The weaving of baskets became the inspiration of everything."

She displayed glowing oblong and round lamps woven with white polystyrene strips. Modern meets traditional. Did everyone see weaving? "Looks like a pineapple," one said. Decoding, indeed. But many "got it."

"Ancient technology was translated to new technology and new processes — to create something new," she explains.

After completing her undergraduate program in El Salvador and teaching, she'd been selected to be a Fulbright Scholar. The Fulbright leaders helped her choose the right American university.

"UNCG was the best opportunity," she said. The Triad has the



twice-yearly Home Furnishings Market, and the Interior Architecture program is highly rated.

"As graduate students we have lots of opportunities." There are workshops, competitions and internships. And they have real projects with clients. "UNCG really prepares us well - with experience in the classroom and in the field."

From professor Jonathon Anderson she has discovered new technologies. From thesis chair Stael Burrowes she has better learned how materials she chooses will inform the finished shapes.

As part of her thesis design exploration, "Decoding Crafts," she also created stools, drawing inspiration from a petate rug. "A big challenge," she said. "Creating a 3-D object from a 2-D object."

The cardboard stools are collapsible and flat-pack. "It comes in a box, ready to assemble - like IKEA."

Her innovative stool won first place in the 2012 UNCG Graduate Research Expo in the Creative Arts category and won honorable mention at the Annual Chair Competition hosted by Appalachian State.

Upon graduating in December, she will return to El Salvador to teach at Dr. Jose Matias Delgado University.

"I'm trying to have my own identity, my future brand. Everything is about decoding."

Virtual becomes reality

LIKE A BADLY COMPROMISED KNEE JOINT, DR. CHRIS RHEA could have gone in any number of directions.

His BS degree in physical education might have meant a career in sports coaching or training. But abiding interests in mathematics and computer programming spurred him toward advanced degrees in biomechanics, which in turn could have taken him anywhere from computer game design to military engineering.

But Rhea chose something better, at least for those hoping for faster and more complete recoveries from traumas that affect their ability to walk or run. He combined his interests, knowledge and research skills, and brought them to UNCG in 2011 to establish the VEAR Lab (Virtual Environment for Assessment and Rehabilitation Laboratory) in the Department of Kinesiology.

Under Rhea's guidance, the VEAR Lab is bringing virtual reality to bear on the recognition and rehabilitation of injuries and other problems, such as strokes and the effects of aging, that affect balance, leg muscle and joint strength, and endurance.

It's one of only about 10 such labs in the US, according to Rhea, and in combination with its neighboring Applied Neuromechanics Research Lab in the HHP Building, the VEAR Lab is adding new power to UNCG's already established reputation as a center for the study, rehabilitation and improvement of human mobility.

The lab, like much of the work done there, looks deceptively simple. It's furnished with a single, albeit expensive and multi-functional, treadmill. Mounted high on the walls at regular stations are multiple cameras pointed at the treadmill. And in one corner rests a small cluster of computers and video equipment, including a dual-monitor headset. Most often, the image generated by the equipment

and beamed either to the wall in front of the treadmill or the headset is of an animated human figure — an avatar — strolling endlessly on virtual pavement, back turned to the viewer.

The set-up can capture impressively detailed, three-dimensional information about the gaits of those who walk the treadmill, thanks to the cameras and the sensors they follow, placed at strategic points along hips and legs. That helps Rhea understand the often subtle ways subjects compensate for the pain and weakness by altering the way they walk, thus delaying optimal recovery, or thwarting it altogether.

Not only that, the lab's equipment can then be programmed to nudge a subject toward a more normal gait.

"Sometimes it's just a matter of encouraging them to watch the avatar, and to align their steps with it as closely as they can, while they're on the treadmill," Rhea said. "That's the Guitar Hero effect." The treadmill also can be programmed to alter its speed, stop momentarily or shift briefly into reverse, causing a subject (safely harnessed) to experience and quickly recover from the effects of slipping and tripping, gradually strengthening those responses.

Plus, Rhea said, he and his graduate student staff are always busy designing virtual landscapes that subjects, wearing the headset, can be asked to negotiate, requiring a wide range of motion and actions designed to restore strength and agility.

Early results of his work suggest to Rhea there's a real place for virtual reality in physical therapy, and he'll soon be testing his lab's approaches with patients from a Greensboro clinic, with a goal of freeing therapists — armed with his computer-aided diagnostic tools and therapies — to see and help more patients.

Not a bad direction for a guy who could go anywhere.



Think of it as applying the Guitar Hero computer game method for learning how to play an instrument — you know; following the moving dots — to relearn how to walk." Dr. Chris Rhea

