



Creativity & Innovation at Colorado College



Creativity and Doubt

Jessica Hunter, PhD

Associate Director of Creativity & Innovation

To have doubt is to be in a vulnerable position, uncomfortable, unsafe, and potentially threatened. But for anyone trying to discover, create, imagine, or feel, doubt marks the territory of operations. It gives us access to perceptions, interactions of the senses and the mind.

—Christopher Bardt, Material and Mind

For decades, Oprah Winfrey began the final column of her monthly magazine with the phrase, “What I know for sure.” These end-of-issue musings typically

narrated her process of understanding something new or reevaluating something she thought she knew. While I'm not sure that she would consider an exploration of any question fully resolved, "What I know for sure" offers a comforting ritual of closure.

I have to confess: I love closure. Sometimes, when I'm reading a book in which the dramatic stakes feel exceptionally high, I skim the last page just to be sure that there WILL be a plot resolution. (Oh, the agony of the trilogy!) After all, if the protagonist—or worse yet, the dog—dies at the end, I want to know before I get too attached. I also have been known to watch the series finale of a television program that I never before followed just to have the satisfaction of seeing the threads of a story neatly come together with no loose ends.

Yet the impulse to "know for sure" also has a dark side in a complex and often contradictory world, as our desire to avoid ambiguous situations stops us from seeking information that might lead to new or different insights. As Jamie Holmes describes in *Nonsense: The Power of Not Knowing*, "When our need for closure is high, we tend to revert to stereotypes, jump to conclusions, and deny contradictions." (Holmes, 2015)

Not knowing for sure has a Janus-like effect on our thinking processes. Sometimes uncertainty can trigger a desire to double down on the knowledge and beliefs we currently hold. Yet, if we can cultivate our tolerance for ambiguity, we may discover new possibilities for understanding and being in the world.

The Art of
PERSEVERANCE
sounds of hope and restoration

Mark Fewer, *violin* · Phillip Ying, *viola* · David Ying, *cello*
Susan Grace, *piano*
and Jennifer DeDominici, *mezzo-soprano*

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5
7:30 PM • PACKARD HALL

Intermezzo Season

COLORADO COLLEGE
SMf Summer Music festival

Wednesday, April 5

Summer Music Festival

Intermezzo Series

7:30 pm, Packard Hall

Creativity & Innovation is honored to partner with the Summer Music Festival for this unique program. In a collaboration that focuses on perseverance, student musicians will play alongside world-class professional musicians while poetry and literature students read text that speaks to the theme. Student poet, Janeiya Porter, writes:

I will be performing 'Caged Bird' by Maya Angelou. When I first heard the concert theme, perseverance, I knew I wanted to perform a poem highlighting my cultural history because I can't think about perseverance without thinking about the history of Black people. It will be an honor to channel my ancestors and bring their feelings to light on stage. 'Caged Bird' is a majestic, descriptive poem that fits beautifully with the theme. I can't wait to put myself out there and be a part of this concert.

Program details:

The concert is Wednesday, April 5 (the first Wednesday of Block 7) at 7:30 pm in Packard Hall. The concert is free, but tickets are required. You can reserve tickets [here](#).

The concert features performances by Mark Fewer, *violin*; Phillip Ying, *viola*; David Ying, *cello*; Susan Grace, *piano*; Jennifer DeDominici, *mezzo-soprano*; and Jerilyn Jorgensen, *violin*.

The concert also includes a wealth of CC student participation. Poetry that corresponds to the music will be read by Jane Hilberry's poetry students: Mary Andrews, Iyanla Ayite, Henry Freedman, Anna Heimel, Keiko Ito, and Janeiya Porter.

Music students Lillie Gray on violin, Jacob Lynn-Palevsky on cello, and Forrest Tucker on piano will play Carlos Simon's piano trio *be still and know*. Tucker and Lincoln Grench will perform Shostakovich's *Concertino for Two Pianos*. Student vocalist Willa Abel Burglechner, baritone, will perform *Everything Else* from *Next to Normal*.



Water Course: A Creative Research Project on Monument Creek

Cecilia Timberg

“Monument Creek is unique because it is long enough to start in the mountains, run through the center of town, hold many layers of life, and be an important cultural landmark for Colorado Springs. At the same time, it is only 27.2 miles, short enough for people to wrap their heads around,” said Erin Elder, a Creativity and Innovation resident at Colorado College. Raised in Colorado Springs, Erin has spent over a year studying Monument Creek through the lens of art. Erin identifies as a writer, artist, educator, and curator. She creates artwork about sense of place. Identifying her Monument Creek project as a “creative research project,” she hopes that art will provide a medium for capturing the complexity of the river’s ecosystem.

To capture this complexity, Erin collects oral histories from people she calls “creek stewards.” These creek stewards include everyone from conservationists and ecologists to the unhoused population. She hopes to create a consolidation of stories about the creek that will be publicly available for anyone interested in the future. She wants to honor the people doing important work along Monument Creek.

Erin has also been doing her own engagement with the creek through photography and painting. She has learned a lot about the creek from observing it directly. She has spent time with the parts of the creek that are

well-maintained and healthy and the parts that are trash-ridden and unhealthy.

Erin also traveled to the source of Monument Creek. “I had only ever read that a spring was coming out of the mountain at the source of Monument Creek. I didn’t even know exactly what a spring was or looked like. I was surprised to find these huge marshy areas with birds. It was so moist. That was profound for me,” Erin said.

She has begun creating a river soundscape to continue her work on this project. She will work with the Environment and Sound class to record the creek and the accompanying sounds. She is also working with Creativity and Innovation student workers to interview the campus community about how they engage with Monument Creek while at Colorado College.

Tentatively titled *Water Course*, she hopes to run an exhibition of the project next fall. The exhibition would not be a conclusion for the project but instead “a midway point to continue the conversation,” said Erin. She hopes that the exhibition will highlight comparisons, juxtapositions, and disparities in a single body of water and make students think critically about how bodies of water can have cultures and histories.

“My ambition is to learn as much as possible in a way only art can. I am not a scientist, a historian, or a reporter. There is something important about inviting in the imagination,” said Erin.

If you are interested in learning more about Erin Elder’s project, she will be holding a talk on April 20th about her work (see below). To get involved with her project, visit [her website](#).



Source Material: Learning Monument Creek
Thursday, April 20, 4 pm
Cornerstone Screening Room

*What is Monument Creek? What does it mean?
Who is it for and how was it made?*

Artist and writer Erin Elder has been making place-based work for 20 years and now turns attention to her hometown's primary waterway. By learning to relate to this particular creek in real time and space, her new creative research project is actively revealing unexpected layers of cultural history, hydrologic infrastructure, water science, public utility, personal memories, fears, and dreams. In this illustrated talk, Erin will trace the lines of her creative practice, inviting listeners to journey along Monument Creek from source to confluence and everywhere in between.

Erin Elder is an artist, writer, and curator guided by interests in land use, experimental collaboration, and non-traditional modes of expression. Her research-driven projects take highly participatory forms, working with a broad definition of art to bring audiences into a direct experience of particular places. She is currently in residence with Creativity & Innovation.

Millennium Stage

**Dominic Shodekeh
Talifero: Ideations
of Hope**



Shodekeh Talifero
C&I Innovator in Residence, Block 5
***Ideations of Hope* at the Kennedy Center**

Creativity & Innovation's Block 5 Innovator in Residence, Shodekeh Talifero, performed his 60-minute concert testimonial on his personal and professional journey in February at the Kennedy Center. The link to the performance is [here](#).

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