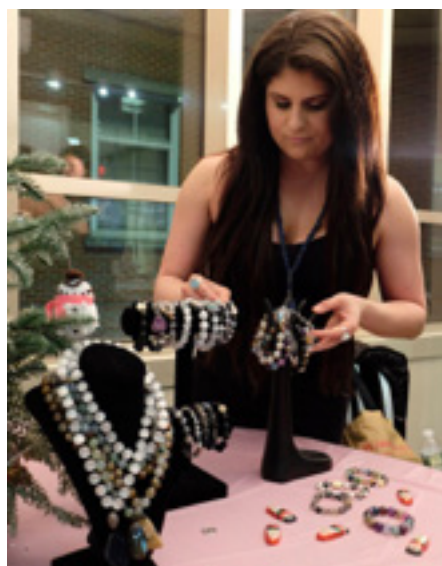


WOMEN OF THE COMM DEPT. TO WATCH

by Julissa Valerio

From small business owners to big-time bloggers, these three female powerhouses are the women to watch of the Manhattan College Communication Department. These students are creating content and personal brands that reflect their creativity and innovation.



Senior Gina Di Mauro hosts a pop-up shop at Lotus Magazine Fall 2017 release party.

Gina DiMauro (Class of 2019)

Creator of skincare and jewelry line Suds and Studs, Gina DiMauro loves to design her homemade soaps, which are gentle on the skin, inspired by her own struggles with eczema. She expanded her brand when she re-discovered her passion for accessory-making and the growth of her love for crystals. Her passion for women’s empowerment is obvious from her frequent collaborations with Lotus Magazine, a student-run women’s magazine on campus.

What is the most memorable moment of your career?

I had a few different ones. The first one is having the pop-up shop and being supported by so many people. I didn’t expect [it to go] so well... The immense support from people around me was overwhelming. Also, retailing my bracelets in my hometown.

As a woman, what changes do you want to see for women growing a business today?

Overcoming the stigma that men have to be bosses and having the confidence to believe in yourself, especially in a field where men hold positions of power. Women should have their own voice and they should have the opportunity to speak about what they disagree and what they agree with. And women taking a chance on themselves. This comes from the experiences I’ve had: People discouraging me and saying “let’s talk about it later.” Always do what is right and trust your gut.

How has your experience in the communication department helped you in creating your small business?

Digital Print Design taught by Bob Coleman from the Communication Department helped me to create business cards and a catalog for my business, Suds and Studs.

Victoria Buri (Class of 2019)

Beauty influencer Victoria Buri created her blog, Victoria’s Vanity, as a platform to rate and review skincare products for men and women. Her curated lists of beauty favorites have been a hit among readers on her website and Instagram. With about almost 20 thousand followers on Instagram, she has garnered the attention of beauty companies with her “#shelfies” and minimalist aesthetic.

What do you think is the biggest challenge as a blogger?

Time management! The hardest thing to do is balance school work and dedicating quality time to my blog and Instagram. The thing that has helped me most with this is having an agenda. I write down everything. I never miss a deadline or meeting.

What do you think is the biggest challenge as a woman in business?

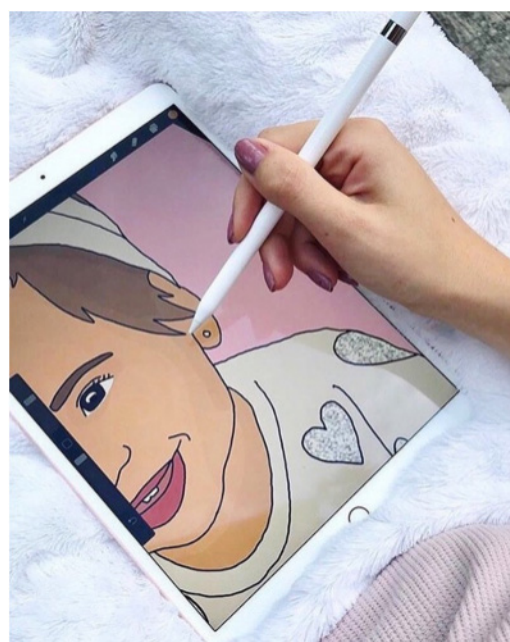
The biggest challenge, in my opinion, would be letting yourself get defeated. It’s easy to become jealous of other women who are doing better than you in school or in the workplace. The best advice I give for that is to let those women inspire you to be just like them. Take notes on how they got so successful and why it worked for them.

How has your experience in the communication department helped you in creating your small business?

Through my experience as a communication major, I have gained a lot of insight about social media and making a brand for yourself. With the rise of social media, public relations companies have had to tailor their campaigns and create whole teams to connect with their customers. Influencers play a huge role in sales and creating the reputation of a brand. And I’m thankful that I get to see both sides of this by studying it from an agency perspective as well.



Victoria Buri, Class of 2019, creator of the Instagram account, @skincareciaries.



To commission your own selfie, visit @selfiedbysteph on Instagram.

Stephanie Zmuda (Class of 2018)

For this 2018 graduate, a passion for the arts turned into a unique business. Zmuda offers hand-drawn portraits of yourself or loved ones. Stephanie’s renaissance painting business proves that you can turn a part-time hobby into profit. Her Instagram, @SelfiedbySteph, features hand-drawn selfies of her clients.

What advice can you give to the younger generation of business owners?

Find what you love and give it 150%. Invest in your passions, it will be worth it in the end. I spent almost a thousand dollars on an iPad Pro. That has been the greatest investment I have ever made. Although it was a lot of money for me, I now have the ability to create digital art anywhere. Stay ten steps ahead of trends, too.

In creating your business/blog, where did you draw inspiration?

I’m always looking for a new way to do an old thing. I try not to look at what other people are doing in order to not compare myself, but I do look at what others are buying into in order to see what trends are forming and how I can possibly adapt to what is to come. For example, I used to make my art in Photoshop on my Mac with a mouse as my “Stylus”. I saw how I was working was becoming outdated and there was an easier way to do the same thing on my iPad. It’s a new way to do an old thing -- the same goes for selfies, when I am paid to draw someone. It is a new way for people to commission portraits of themselves, just like hundreds of years ago.

What are your plans for future collaborations/projects?

I would love to have my work shown in a gallery. I have drawn almost 400 people so far. It would be interesting to print all of the selfies out and display them as they do classic Renaissance portraits.

How has your experience in the communication department helped your create your small business?

Building a community around an art brand has been challenging, but everything that I know about building a brand is from the classes that I took at MC. In Strategic Planning in P.R., I learned how to target an audience and tailor unique content. In Writing for P.R., I learned how to deliver clear and concise messaging. And in Advanced P.R., I learned how to bring it all together. Selfied by Steph first started while I was taking Advanced P.R. - my background from those classes is what really helped me form an identity from the start. •