

April 2015

# Where's Your Phone?: If You're Lost Without It, You May Have Nomophobia

Jacob McCarthy  
*Colby College*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/colbymagazine>



Part of the [Social Media Commons](#), and the [Theatre and Performance Studies Commons](#)

## Recommended Citation

McCarthy, Jacob (2015) "Where's Your Phone?: If You're Lost Without It, You May Have Nomophobia," *Colby Magazine*: Vol. 103 :  
Iss. 3 , Article 12.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/colbymagazine/vol103/iss3/12>

This Feature is brought to you for free and open access by the College Archives: Colbiana Collection at Digital Commons @ Colby. It has been accepted for inclusion in Colby Magazine by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Colby. For more information, please contact [mfkelly@colby.edu](mailto:mfkelly@colby.edu).

# 手机恐惧症

启灵剧社

¥ 1.00  
5 MIN

演出地点

曹禺剧院

编剧·导演

袁野

主演

白冠男 | 毕猛 | 李阳俊龙 | 刘亦心

齐德胜 | 祝安琪 | 朱丽琨

# Where's Your Phone?

If you're lost without it, you may have nomophobia

Do you feel anxious when your phone battery is low? Check your messages more often than you'd like? You might be a nomophobe.

That's the word, an elision of "no-mobile-phone phobia," applied to people who have a fear of being out of mobile phone contact. It's a fairly common affliction these days, and when Maggie Zhao '16 began working with high school students in Tianjin, China, on a citizen theater project, it was a clear interest of theirs.

"I was trying to get people to discover their own voice and discover what they can do themselves," said Zhao, who, along with Sujie Zhu '15, spent last summer in China producing a socially engaged art project. "This methodology is to have the community members decide what they want to talk about and create a space where they can talk about it. The students chose nomophobia."



Maggie Zhao '16, above, helped high school students in Tianjin, China, produce vignettes about technology-induced anxiety. At left, an actor breaks up with his girlfriend due to a misunderstanding caused by poor phone service. At right, a rock band commemorates a concert with a selfie.

“Students come into our world and ask for learning, ask for experience, and then take it out and make something with it.”

—Professor of Theater and Dance Lynne Conner

Zhao worked with the students for eight weeks to pull together the play, which featured six vignettes about people's struggles with technology-induced anxiety. After they finally performed the piece, on Aug. 1, Zhao said many in the audience told her they had experienced in their own lives many of the themes the play addressed.

Zhao is a psychology major with a concentration in neuroscience. She does research with Professor of Psychology Martha Arterberry, plays percussion in the Colby Symphony Orchestra, and works backstage at many Colby theater productions. That's where she made the connections with Professor of Theater and Dance Lynne Conner that resulted in her nomophobia theater project.



Following her work on a production of *Lysistrata*, Zhao was interested in the application of theater to social change and signed up for Conner's Citizen Artist course. Zhao's nomophobia project is an excellent example of the research being done at Colby in the humanities, Conner said, because Zhao applied concepts and skills introduced at Colby to a socially engaging, real-world project.

"What's really so exciting for me as a professor and as a socially conscious, socially active art maker," Conner said, "is that you see this beautiful way in which students come into our world and ask for learning, ask for experience, and then take it out and make something with it."

Zhao said her parents, an engineer and an accountant in Tianjin, China, initially thought that an internship or a laboratory job would be a better way for her to spend her summer, but that once she secured funding for her project through Colby's Goldfarb Center for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement they were on board. She's planning to study Butoh, a modern dance style, in Japan. Until that time she'll be here on campus, where she said she checks her phone a bit more often than she'd like.

—Jacob McCarthy