

vcuarts

Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts
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Studio

2010

Dean Richard Toscan Retires



Our guiding force, Richard E. Toscan has stepped down as dean of VCUarts.

In his 14 years as dean, Toscan brought international recognition to the School, which has risen in the *US News & World Report* graduate rankings to the nation's number 1 public university arts program. Rising in those rankings was the result of his position that "local excellence leads to national recognition."

Toscan also has served as VCU's vice provost for international affairs and led the establishment of the university's art and design campus in Qatar 11 years ago. "The Middle East campus helped put VCU's arts program on the map," he said. VCU was the first to open a campus there.

Susan King Roth has been appointed interim dean of the School of the Arts. She previously served as dean, faculty of design at the Ontario College of Art & Design; associate dean for research and academic affairs at VCUarts; interim director of VCU da Vinci Center; and in administrative positions at Parsons and The Ohio State University.

Hollywood Luminaries Enlighten VCUQ Students



(Above, L to R) Mark Gordon, Jeremy Thomas, Michael Andreen, Emilie Burnham, Peter Chomowicz, and Ahmed Al Hashemi with the VCUQatar presenters (L to R) Wafaa Al-Saffar, Sarah Kamal Eldin, Asma Al-Thani, Hadeer Omar and Nada Al Saadi

Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar played host to leading figures from the world of film who were in Qatar as speakers at the Financial Times Business of Film Summit in March.

The speakers, who read like a who's who of Hollywood, interacted with faculty and students at VCUQatar as **students presented their work and were critiqued by the film legends**. Mark Gordon, producer of The Mark Gordon Company (*Patriot, Day After Tomorrow* and *2012*), Bill Mechanic, founder, Pandemonium Films and former chairman of Fox (*Titanic, Braveheart* and the animation *Coraline*), Jeremy Thomas CBE, producer and founder, Recorded Picture Company and HanWay Films (*Crash* and *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*), Ivan Dunleavy, chief executive, Pinewood Shepperton plc. (*Sherlock Holmes* and *Quantum of Solace*), Greg Coote, chairman and CEO, Dune Entertainment (recently co-funded *Avatar*) and Michael Andreen senior vice president, International Production, Walt Disney were in attendance at an afternoon session with students.

After the presentations, students asked the film makers about their favorite and least favorite movies, the challenges they faced in the industry and their proudest accomplishments. Mark Gordon said his favorite films were *It's a Wonderful Life, Godfather I, The Rules of the Game, Sullivan's Travels, Days of Heaven*, movies that he had seen at different times in his life that had inspired him. Jeremy Thomas said, "I love cinema in general, if you can use it well, that is what I like, that it has impacted my brain, moved me."

Another VCUarts Faculty Member Wows the Guggenheim Judges



Congratulations to Sculpture + Extended Media Assistant Professor Michael Jones McKean, who has been awarded a coveted Guggenheim Fellowship (2010 Creative Arts/ Fine Arts). McKean is the 5th with ties to VCUarts to receive a Guggenheim Fellowship since 2002.

Often characterized as midcareer awards, Guggenheim Fellowships are intended for those who have already demonstrated exceptional capacity for productive scholarship or exceptional creative ability in the arts.

The purpose of the Guggenheim Fellowship program is to help provide Fellows with blocks of time in which they can work with as much creative freedom as possible, so grants are made with no special conditions attached to them.

The Foundation receives between 3,500 and 4,000 applications each year and approximately 220 Fellowships are awarded annually.

www.michaeljonesmckean.com
www.gf.org

Alumni: Keep in Touch!

ester

Three years ago, VCUarts unveiled *ester*, a web site that features School exhibitions, performances, guest artist visits, and more. We've just unveiled a new, more robust version, where **alumni can upload their picture and bio** for possible inclusion on the new Where Are They Now section. We hope you'll try it out yourself so your classmates, friends and former faculty can see what you've been up to.

esterknows.com



Imaging South Africa: Collection Projects by Siemon Allen

August 27 – October 31, 2010
Anderson Gallery, VCUarts. Gallery hours are: Tuesday – Friday, 10 am–5 pm; Saturday and Sunday, noon–5 pm.

For the past decade, South African artist and VCU faculty Siemon Allen has been accumulating mass-produced materials—tens of thousands of postage stamps, thousands of newspaper pages, and hundreds of record albums (along with the music that is on them). Like an archivist, Allen culls through his collections, researching and cataloguing these artifacts, which he ultimately assembles into expansive, room-filling installations. The installations that make-up Imaging South Africa: Collection Projects by Siemon Allen **illuminate how South Africa has presented itself, both internally and externally, and how it is, and has been, represented by others**. Through the social critique revealed in his collection projects, Allen investigates what he describes as "the contradictory and complex nature of South African identity."

Filling all three floors of the Anderson Gallery, this exhibition is the most comprehensive presentation to date of Allen's collection projects. Visitors to the exhibition will encounter vast numbers of artifacts—newspapers, stamps, records—often arranged in striking grid-based patterns. Also on view will be a series of monumental prints created from scans of records in Allen's collection. Nearly seven feet square, each image intricately captures the record's topographic vinyl surface, distressed from years of use. These images uniquely reassert the primacy of music in South African cultural history.

Siemon Allen's work has been exhibited at the 2nd Johannesburg Biennale, the Renaissance Society in Chicago, the Corcoran Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Durban Art Gallery and BANK Gallery in Durban, South Africa. Allen currently teaches in the Department of Sculpture + Extended Media in VCU's School of the Arts.

Imaging South Africa: Collection Projects by Siemon Allen will remain on view at the Anderson Gallery through October 31, 2010. A full-color catalogue, documenting the installations at the Anderson Gallery, will be available. Support is generously provided by VCU School of the Arts and media sponsor WRIR 97.3 FM.

ABOVE: Sculpture professor Kendell Buster speaks with visitor about Allen's exhibition

vcu.edu/arts/gallery
siemonallen.org



Senior Dance Student Gives Memorable and Award Winning Performance



The National Conference of the Mid-Atlantic Regional American College Dance Festival Association (ACDFA) was recently held in Washington, D.C. where Department of Dance and Choreography Chair James Frazier, faculty members Christian von Howard and Michael Jarett traveled with several students – graduating seniors Corrine Bates, Melodie Fais and Felix Cruz; rising seniors Allison Meyer, Jasmine Domfort, Courtney Cook, Kimberly Palmer and Kyoko Ruch; and rising junior AJ Guevara.

Our very own senior dance student, Felix Cruz, received a Notable Performer award, which is a big deal because...

The ACDFA has 10 regions across the entire USA. In total, 431 works were adjudicated in the regional conferences. Of those 431, 30 dances were selected for inclusion in the national gala. From the 30 best works, VCU Dance's Felix Cruz was singled out for recognition.

What they said about Felix (pictured above, photo by Sarah Ferguson): *"Mr. Cruz had beautiful mastery of his body, particularly in floor movements that were surprising to the eye and difficult to execute. An amazing series of floor rolls that looked like a film played in rewind are especially memorable and emblematic of his connection to the floor."*

Vitiello's Sonic Exploration

Stephen Vitiello, associate professor in the Department of Kinetic Imaging, and his recent sound installation, *A Bell For Every Minute*, have been making some noise in the press. Since late June, this site-specific work has filled the High Line's 14th Street Passage, a semi-enclosed tunnel between West 13th and West 14th Streets in New York City, with sound recordings of bells taken from all over that city and beyond. It runs through Spring 2011. Sounds range from the iconic rings of the New York Stock Exchange bell, the historic Dreamland bell days after it was discovered in the water off Coney Island, and the United Nation's Peace Bell, to the more everyday sounds of bike and church bells.

During park hours, an individual bell rings each minute, fading out as the next bell begins. A chorus of all of the bells plays at the top of each hour, filling the space. The sounds are represented on a physical sound map that identifies the location of each bell, allowing the listener to follow the geographic journey of the recordings. The site, much like a bell tower, becomes activated by the composition, inviting the passersby to engage with the High Line and its historic connection to the city around it.

Made possible by a generous grant from The Rockefeller Foundation's New York City Cultural Innovation Fund. Additional funding and in-kind support provided by Vital Projects Fund, Inc. and JBL by Harman. Commissioned by Creative Time, Friends of the High Line, and the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation.

www.stephenvitiello.com

Graphic Design Students Learn Without a Net



"In late 2009 I was excited and a bit terrified to be thrown in the deep end of a rather ambitious project headed by Andrew Innicki (*Graphic Design MFA, 2005*). Andrew had this crazy idea that all of us who had enrolled in his advanced web design class were somehow already advanced students of web design capable of taking on an entire website of our own. We were each given the job of building a pro bono website for Special Olympics of Virginia. Client meetings and reviews were now on the calendar as Andrew shoved us all into the water.

What he seemed to know that none of us realized was that there are some things you can only learn by doing without a net. Despite some scares and few brick walls, we all managed to put together a professional website for one of nine Special Olympics Areas here in Virginia. The clients were extremely happy with the end product and quite shocked to get their hands on nine websites in a month, versus their current site which spent two years in development.

Having an opportunity to learn how design works in the real world while working for a worthy client was a real treat. This project gave us the confidence to head out in the world and actually land jobs. What once terrified us became a manageable and daily part of life. Typical classwork is great for theory and critiques but nothing compares to staring down a deadline with an actual client on the other end."

Mark Luetke
Graphic Design BFA, 2010

Upcoming at TheatreVCU

October 1–10, 2010: Dead Man's Cell Phone
Written by Sarah Ruhl. Directed by Barry Bell.

November 12–21, 2010: Les Liaisons Dangereuse
A play adapted from the 1782 Pierre Choderlos de Laclos novel of the same title by Christopher Hampton. Directed by Tawnya Pettiford-Wates.

www.vcu.edu/arts/theatre/dept



VCU Music sponsored more than 30 guest artist residencies/performances and faculty released 7 CD recordings during the last year. For performance schedules, sign up for the VCUarts weekly events email on esterknows.com.

Undergraduate Student Honored with PACME Award



VCU President Michael Rao and Vreni Michelini

Painting and Printmaking BFA student **Vreni Michelini was the only student recipient** at this year's Presidential Awards for Community Multicultural Enrichment (PACME). Four from the VCU community were selected for contributing significantly to multicultural relations and diversity.

VCU President Michael Rao and Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Beverly J. Warren, presented the annual PACME awards during a ceremony in April. These awards recognize university and health system members with \$500 awards to an individual or organization in each of four groups: faculty, administrators, staff and students. In addition, one recipient earns the Riese-Melton Award, a capstone award that includes an additional \$250.

Painting and Printmaking's Michelini won both the student award AND the capstone Riese-Melton Award. "Vreni's efforts are a tremendous model for other VCU students to follow," Rao said. While at VCU, Michelini, a dean's list student, has fought for the rights of immigrants, African-American and Hispanic prisoners and underprivileged children.

"I'm honored to be here with these wonderful people who work for social justice," Michelini said.

Middle East Meets Southeast



Eighteen Art Foundation students and six faculty from VCU Richmond and VCU Qatar participated in a campus exchange during two weeks in March 2010. In addition to taking part in workshops with artists Max Goldfarb in Richmond and Faraj Daham in Doha, the exchange students had the opportunity to interact with students on each campus and visit significant cultural sites like Monticello and I.M. Pei's Islamic Museum (above). The exchange was designed to not only be a cultural and educational one, but to facilitate future exchanges and collaborations between campuses. What may have been the VCUQ students' most exciting experience? Experiencing snow for the very first time!



Congratulations to the 2010 VCU Qatar Graduating Class



Tommy, Yes We Saw You. Tommy, Yes We Liked You.

TheatreVCU presented The Who's *Tommy*, in April at the Singleton Center for the Performing Arts.

The electrifying musical, which traces a young boy's journey from tragedy to triumph, was born out of The Who's famous 1969 rock opera, *Tommy*, composed largely by Pete Townshend. Theatre VCU's raucous performance included a live band, the Interrogatives, that played *See Me Feel Me*, *Pinball Wizard*, *I'm Free*, and *Tommy*, and other songs ingrained in our memories. The musicians have opened for Willie Nelson, Greg Allman among others and were very well received by enthusiastic *Tommy* audiences.

WCVU's John Porter wrote, "I just caught a performance from Theatre VCU of The Who's *Tommy* and the polished professionalism that the cast and crew showed makes me wish it wasn't closing this weekend so I could see it a few more times... Several of the actors in this production stand out, and in an ensemble of 31 that can be difficult to do."

Barry Bell, assistant professor of acting and directing at VCU, directed the performance. He previously has directed *Dracula*, *HAIR*, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* and *Wait Until Dark* for TheatreVCU.

vcu.edu/arts/theatre/dept

Virtual Heritage Grant Becomes a Reality

Department of Kinetic Imaging Associate Professor Semi Ryu and participants from other universities have received a **Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)**. The project, entitled *Egyptian Ceremony in the Virtual Temple – Avatars for the Virtual Heritage*, utilized Ryu as a senior advisor, interactive designer, as well as script writer and choreographer for the virtual performance rituals, which will be presented at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History.

A Curiouser Conference



VCUarts is proud to host the joint meeting of the Southeast College Art Conference (SECAC) and the Mid-Atlantic College Art Association (MACAA). *Curiouser: Where Cerebellum meets Antebellum* will take place in Richmond from October 20–23, 2010.

Keynote Speaker Pablo Helguera is a New York based artist working in installation, sculpture, photography, drawing, and performance. His work focuses on a variety of topics ranging from history, pedagogy, sociolinguistics, ethnography, memory and the absurd, in formats that include the lecture, museum display strategies, musical performances and written fiction.

curiouser.vcu.edu



Joan Mitchell Foundation Taps Bruhn

Painting and Printing MFA candidate Janet Bruhn has received the prestigious Joan Mitchell Foundation award for Painting. Grants from the Joan Mitchell Foundation are awarded annually to acknowledge painters and sculptors nationwide creating work of exceptional quality.

www.janetbruhn.com
www.joanmitchellfoundation.org

VCU Qatar Grad Makes History



Sahar Mari, a 2010 graduate of the Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar, is the first Qatar-based student to be awarded a University Leadership Award from VCU Richmond.

The award is presented to students who display academic excellence, leadership and service. Mari was a double major in graphic and fashion design with a minor in art history and graduated with university honors.

"It is an honor to receive this leadership award," said Mari, adding: "Only now do I realize how much I have contributed throughout my time at VCUQ – I am very thankful because these activities and experiences helped me become the well-rounded person I am today."

"Sahar has been an exemplary student leader and we are proud that she was identified, from among all VCU students including the 32,000 on the home campus, to receive this award," said Assistant Dean for Student Affairs at VCU Qatar Valerie Jeremijenko.

Graphic Design Professor Collaborates Globally



Graphic Design Associate Professor Laura Chessin's and Adjunct Professor Christine Coffey's Print II classes worked in collaboration with St. James' Episcopal Church mission in Haiti to coordinate a public showing and auction of original student posters. This was one of many projects and papers for Chessin this year which included "Children Leading the Way as Designers: Presenting a co-constructive project with preschoolers to demonstrate children's innate abilities for conflict resolution," at the Designing for Children Conference in Mumbai, India.



HOPE GINSBURG

This summer, Hilary Wilder, artist and assistant professor in the Department of Painting and Printmaking, and Hope Ginsburg, refocused their ongoing dialog about contemporary art making to take a closer look at Hope's work. An Assistant Professor in the Art Foundation Program and the Department of Painting and Printmaking, Hope works with graduate and undergraduate students and has introduced courses in "live-art" and research-based art making.

HW: Hope, your projects take on a number of different forms, all of which can be described as "art with people in it." Can you talk a little bit about what your artwork entails?

HOPE: Sure, I come from a sculpture and performance art background, so many of the pieces are presented in the form of interactive events. When I don't present "live" work, or if viewers encounter a project after it's happened, they may see an installation, a video, or the objects generated by a given event.

I began the Sponge project in 2006; Sponge is workshop-based and always includes a hands-on component, such as felt-making. Each event is organized around subject matter that fascinates me, but which I may know little about. So I need to learn with the experts: the beekeepers, the designers, the farmers—and I learn best through interaction and immersing myself in the thick of things.

Some projects have involved an investigation that generated bottles of "Bearded Lady" honey, a piece about biodegradable textiles, and a stint rehearsing and auditioning to be an on-air QVC program host. With these, the process of making involves a kind of "lived research," where the works begin and end with other people.

HW: Can you discuss a couple of recent projects and how they reflect your interest in lived research?

HOPE: When I started to work on the Bearded Lady project, I needed to go from being a civilian, to someone who could wear a swarm of bees on her face. The process took a few years, during which I connected with two beekeepers, one of whom became my mentor in New York. I staffed beekeeping displays at state fairs with him and joined him as a member of the Connecticut Beekeeping Association. When it came time to do the beard, it was the president of that association who acted as the "barber" to sculpt the live bees on my chin. By the end of the project I had worked with beekeepers, photographers, videographers and editors.

About ten years ago, I worked in a New York textile design company, Designtex. I became absorbed by their process to develop completely biodegradable commercial upholstery. The product and the story of its development struck me as incredibly artful. I wanted to put it in an art context to propose questions about where we look for creative practice and to challenge assumptions about corporate culture. So, I worked with a sculptor and builder to create a display unit that would show the upholstery at each phase of its life cycle: wool, yarn, woven goods and salvage waste. One half of that unit was a working compost bin into which viewers could peer at composting worms decomposing the fabric before their eyes. Information sheets that I made for the piece became company marketing materials. And when the piece wasn't on view in art contexts like P.S.1 in New York and Real Art Ways in Connecticut, it lived in the company headquarters.

And Sponge, which is about mixing disciplines and scrambling hierarchies between experts and learners, grew out of an approach to lived research.

HW: It seems from what you're saying that a lot of your work is born out of being imbedded in various roles, tasks, or even locations. Do you see your position at VCU as feeding your research in a similar way?

HOPE: Yes, definitely. Shortly after I arrived at VCU, I was offered a show at Solvent Space in Richmond, which I transformed into a space to host three Sponge workshops. Sponge gained support and traction at VCU and in the fall of 2009, I was offered a space in the VCUarts Anderson Gallery to host a new Sponge headquarters, which just opened.

While that space was incubating, I experimented with my first semester-long Sponge, a course called Colablalab. In keeping with my interest in the potential of mixing areas of study and my desire to challenge the roles of experts and learners, I registered as a VCU student so I could enroll in a Biology 101 lecture and lab. The Colablalab was open to any art or biology student who

would enroll in the science classes with me. Colablalab became an experiment in curricular ecology, and a way of teaching research-based art making. We worked together not only on producing exhibitions of the class's work, but also on our biology homework.

HW: Your projects don't always fit within the conventional parameters for showing art...in galleries, museums, etc. So where do they go? How do they function within art spaces and, by comparison, in non-art contexts?

HOPE: I've always been interested in the way art crosses over into non-art territories. I'm also curious about models of commerce. How does the meaning of the transaction shift when an art object is sold in a commercial gallery, a museum shop, a craft market, or a design store? And furthermore, how does the meaning of the object itself shift?

When I first showed the Bearded Lady piece, at P.S.1, I chose the café as the site, not the gallery. Viewers could purchase jars of honey, priced as commodities. I also played with these notions of commerce by selling the honey at a specialty store, which sold craft and design objects. I recently presented the Sponge felt items at Incident Report in Hudson, NY, an experimental gallery that consists of two illuminated shop windows on the main street of the town. I was interested in the way the space, which is visible to passers-by 24 hours a day, acts as a provocative foil to the galleries, antique stores and restaurants that also line the block.

This June, the participants in the Colablalab class and I exhibited as a collective in a "science fair" in Long Island City, NY. The Science Fair exhibition was a showcase for the experiment my "collaborators" and I had conducted with the biology department at VCU in the spring. We displayed artifacts, objects and documentation from the class. The "Most Empirically Rebellious" trophy was awarded to our booth.

HW: The opening of your space, Sponge HQ, at the Anderson Gallery is a much-anticipated event. What would you eventually like Sponge to be?

HOPE: I'm just back from a trip to upstate New York to gather a customized top bar beehive to install at Sponge HQ this summer for the opening. In the spring, we'll move the bees in. Meantime, there'll be a video and sound installation. The hive has a surveillance camera that'll send live bee coverage to a monitor. There will also be a felt-carpeted library and an observation perch to watch the bees coming and going at the window.

As far as events, I envision flexible programming that includes at least one major Sponge workshop a year and other lectures, panels, performances on an ongoing basis. The focus will be on creating open waters for mixing disciplines within the university and amongst local and visiting experts. I'll also invite proposals for projects, especially from the students, who will be welcome to host screenings and performances. And I will certainly continue to offer classes like Colablalab and feel stirrings towards a Sponge class that focuses on research and project-based artmaking. Continuing to open classes at Sponge to students beyond the School of the Arts is also a goal of mine.

Oh! And there'll be Sponge Yoga each week, which we started last semester.

HW: And, in addition to that, you have other projects coming up as well. Tell us a little bit about those.

HOPE: The first Sponge on the docket will be for Curiouser, this fall's Southeastern College Art Association Conference at VCU. The overarching theme will be alternative pedagogy; I'm hoping we'll hear from local experts on sea sponges and accomplish a project together. Speaking of alternative pedagogy, over the last decade I've been traveling to the home of artist friends Mark Dion and J. Morgan Puett in Northeastern Pennsylvania, who've since turned their compound into a living museum and educational institution called Mildred's Lane.

Performances and projects that I've conducted there are also quite relevant to our conversation about exhibiting in non-traditional venues. In fact, a group of VCUarts Foundation honors students had the chance to produce a costume performance and feast at Mildred's Lane for their final class project. This fall, I'll be participating in an exhibition at Tufts University Art Gallery called "Mildred's Lane/Renovating Walden."

And to bring it all back around, a solo show that I have coming up this March at the CUE Foundation in Chelsea will comprise several small installations from these "lived-research" projects and alternative contexts. There'll be evidence of the Makers Market booths, the Colablalab "Science Fair" display, artifacts from the Sponge HQ and, once again, a nod to the bees.



Photo credit: Terry Brown

Stunning Creations in Fabulous New Venue



The tickets went on sale. Blink. The tickets were sold out.

The Department of Fashion Design and Merchandising's annual juried fashion show was a spectacular feast for the eyes once again this year. **The show was one of the first events to be held in the newly renovated Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.** When your eyes left the garments, there was much to behold.

With categories including Japanese Anime, End of the World, and Military, jaws dropped and eyes popped. Student Shannon Kesler took home the Best in Show Prize for her stunning blue layered dress (above).

If you plan to attend next year's show, buy tickets early.

More good news in Fashion... the department again received an educational grant from Cotton Incorporated, the trade association that promotes the use of cotton in fashion apparel. The program provides financial support for a wide array of needs including scholarships and the cost of the fashion show (and allowing for reduced price student tickets). We love cotton!

www.vcu.edu/arts/fashion/dept

VCUarts Sweeps VMFA Fellowships

Once again, the coveted Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Fellowships have been awarded to many VCUarts students, alumni and faculty – this year, it's 29 out of 35 (not that we're counting). Recipients with ties to VCUarts are below.

PROFESSIONAL AWARDS

SunTek Chung, Sculpture + Extended Media BFA alumnus and adjunct faculty

Bill Fisher, Painting and Printmaking BFA alumnus and adjunct faculty

Janet Grahame, studied Printmaking and Drawing at VCU

Chris Mahonski, Sculpture + Extended Media MFA alumnus

Jeff Majer, Painting and Printmaking BFA alumnus

Michael Jones McKean, Sculpture + Extended Media faculty

Natalya Pinchuk, former Craft/Material Studies faculty

Aaron Sanders, Photography and Film alumnus

Stephen Vitiello, Kinetic Imaging faculty

Kendra Wadsworth, Painting and Printmaking BFA alumna

GRADUATE AWARDS

Leilani Gonzales, Craft/Material Studies

Sarah Kreiger, Painting and Printmaking

Justin Kroman, Painting and Printmaking

Jon-Phillip Sheridan, Photography and Film

UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS

Amber Bender, Photography and Film

Samantha Cooper, incoming Art Foundation student

Blair Condon, Photography and Film

Jessica Dodd, Sculpture + Extended Media

Luke Harman, Sculpture + Extended Media

Julianne Jamora, Art Foundation

Michael Muelhaupt, Sculpture + Extended Media

Phillip Nesmith, Sculpture + Extended Media

Rachel Rainer, Photography and Film

Allison Smith, Communication Arts

Erin Sonoda, Photography and Film

Irena Stanisic, Art Foundation

Dena Sussman, Photography and Film

David Thompson, Photography and Film

Chris Underwood, Photography and Film

Image by Jon-Phillip Sheridan

Tennessee Dixon & Kerry Brown Receive Fulbright Awards



Tennessee Dixon, Theatre



Kerry Brown, Art History

Third year MFA candidate in Theatre Scene Design, Tennessee Dixon, has received a Fulbright award for 2010–11. She will spend nine months in Budapest, Hungary, designing the projection and scenic elements for the productions of two dance companies. She was set and projection designer for *The Who's Tommy* at TheatreVCU, and most recently created projections for *Triple Crossing*, a new dance work by VCU's Robbie Kinter at the Grace Street Theatre, *Funny House of the Negro* directed by Ida Onyedike at the Shafer Street Playhouse, and designed the set for *Well* at Richmond's Barksdale Theatre.

Ms. Kerry Brown, a Ph.D. Candidate in Art History, specializing in Asian Art, was also honored with a Fulbright. Her Fulbright Fellowship allows her to conduct field research in Nepal for a year, where she will work on her dissertation topic on art and ritual performance. She is the first Fulbright Fellowship recipient in the Department of Art History.

Congratulations to Dixon and Brown for their impressive accomplishments.

McLennan Takes Top Prize



Judgment. 42"x45" acrylic and graphite on paper, 2010. Collection of Sandy Besser.

More than 2,000 artists of all types submitted work to the second annual 2010 West Prize, but there could be only one winner. **The artist who most impressed the jurors was our very own Ryan McLennan**, 2002 Painting and Printmaking BFA alumnus. He was awarded the grand prize in the second annual 2010 West Prize Grand Prize winner – \$25,000 along with the \$10,000 sale of his art.

McLennan says. "Political and social issues come through in the narrative but are not the focus. I am telling a story, creating a world that in many ways reflects our own." The 29-year-old Norfolk native says that keeping in touch with other VCU alumni was instrumental to growing his career in the arts.

Since graduating, McLennan has exhibited in Los Angeles, New York, Boston and Richmond. He is a recipient of a 2008/2009 Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Fellowship and was featured in the 2008 Mid-Atlantic issue of *New American Paintings*. A new collection of McLennan's works, *The Cost of Comfort*, comprised of loose prints was released this summer, published by Triple Stamp Press. This collection of 20 archival prints come housed in a handmade, wooden box. He lives and works in Richmond.

www.ryanmclennan.com

Awards for Schreffler

Michael Schreffler, our new Art History chair, has received the most prestigious U.S. research prize in his field, the CAA Arthur Kingsley Porter Award. He was also the recipient of the Ailsa Mellon Bruce Senior Visiting Fellowship from the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, for the 2009–10 academic year.

Competition Chooses Caskey's Design



Department of Fashion Design and Merchandising Associate Professor Kristin Caskey received first place in the International Peacock Standard Thai Silk Design Competition. The competition's design brief called for "Work Wear for Women of the World."

30 Years of Body Wrapping



Marie West, who studied fashion at VCU, is the founder and president of Body Wrappers®, which she founded in 1980 in her Queens, New York apartment with \$1000. Her first design, which put her company on the map, was called Le Wrap. It was a one piece, one-size-fits-all wrap leisurewear garment.

Today, Body Wrappers' showroom and corporate office is located on Broadway in New York City. "We are right here where all the action is," says Marie West, "and through our model Maria Kowroski, principal dancer of the New York City Ballet, we know first-hand what the professional dancers like to wear. We then take those ideas and adjust them for our young hopefuls."

In June 2011, Body Wrappers will celebrate its 30th anniversary. With more than 100 employees, it has become one of the prominent names in dance apparel.

www.bodywrappers.com



Fourth Islamic Art Symposium is Set for Fall, 2011

The Hamad bin Khalifa Symposium on Islamic Art, organized by Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, is a leading international conference on Islamic art and culture. It is co-sponsored by Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts, VCU Qatar and the Qatar Foundation. The first symposium was held in Richmond, Virginia in 2004. The second symposium, *Rivers of Paradise: Water in Islamic Art and Culture*, was held in Doha, Qatar in 2007. And *Diverse Are Their Hues: Color in Islamic Art and Culture* was the third biennial symposium and was held in Córdoba, Spain in November, 2009 (pictured above).

The fourth biennial Hamad bin Khalifa Symposium on Islamic Art will be held October 29–31, 2011 in Doha, Qatar at the Museum of Islamic Art, designed by I.M. Pei, where speakers will discuss specific objects in the Museum's collection.

The title of this Symposium is *God Is Beautiful; He Loves Beauty: The Object in Islamic Art and Culture*, and the keynote address will be given by Paul Goldberger, the Pulitzer-Prize winning architecture critic and writer for the New Yorker, who will discuss the Museum building as a work of Islamic art.

www.islamicartdoha.org

Four Win VCUarts Fountainhead Fellowship



Living space. Studio. Stipend. Teaching experience. A solo exhibition. They're all part of the VCUarts Fountainhead Fellowship. Launched in 2005 by the Department of Painting and Printmaking, this fellowship now includes the departments of Sculpture + Extended Media and Craft/Material Studies. Artists of significant potential who recently graduated from somewhere other than VCU were eligible. This year, there are four Fellows; two representing Craft: Andrea Keys Connell and Lacey Jane Roberts (work shown above); one selected by Painting and Printmaking: Lumin Wakoa; and one artist for Sculpture: Sam Ekwurtzel. All the fellowships are made possible by Fountainhead Development. In addition, Craft/Material Studies received a sizable gift from the Windgate Foundation to support the Craft fellows.

MoMA Senior Curator Visits VCUarts



Design visionary Paola Antonelli, senior curator in the Department of Architecture and Design of The Museum of Modern Art, was this year's guest speaker in the Windmueller Lecture Series in April at the Grace Street Theater.

Antonelli is a recipient of the Smithsonian Institution's national design award, "the Design Mind," and was named one of the 25 most incisive design visionaries by *Time* magazine in 2007. Antonelli, a senior fellow with the Royal College of Art in London, has lectured worldwide on the influence of design, and she has served on several international architecture and design juries.

Antonelli spoke to a full house about the power of the curatorial method as a way to approach the contemporary world, discussing its influence in a range of fields.

The Windmueller Series was established through a gift from the estate of Otti Y. Windmueller. Windmueller received her BFA from VCU, taught fashion for 29 years at VCU, and served as chair of that department. The Series each year hosts prominent national experts who share their expertise in the arts with VCU students and the Richmond community. Past speakers have included Paul Goldberger, Kevin Kling, Christo and the late Jeanne-Claude, Lawrence Weschler and Lewis Hyde.



Students Touch Lives Halfway Around the World

We never cease to be amazed by our students' courage and compassion.

In 2006–07, students Awer Bul, (Kinetic Imaging & Painting and Printmaking) and Gabriel Williams (Kinetic Imaging, above) were awarded an Undergraduate Research Grant to help rebuild individual and community identities for African refugees worldwide. They proposed to produce a video documentary about the African Refugee Art Club in Kenya. The club was founded by artists from Sudan, including Awer Bul, who fled the country seeking safety.

It's doubtful that even those who select our grant recipients truly realized all that this entailed.

The students traveled to Kenya and filmed nearly 20 hours of footage documenting extreme poverty, hunger, disease, rebel violence and socio-economic and political corruption. The team delivered art supplies to the camp and held a powerful workshop. This amazing project provided an outlet and opportunity for disenfranchised African refugees to speak out about their exceedingly poor conditions.

Support for projects such as this come from the School's grant program and donations to VCUarts. To support such initiatives, please visit www.givenow.vcu.edu/arts.

VCUarts Congratulates the 2010 UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH GRANT WINNERS



PROJECT PERSEPHONE

Students from Cinema, Music and Theatre will create Pomegranate, VCU's first musical film based on the Greek myth of Hades and Persephone. Students will compose a visual and musical work exploring sacrifices made for love.

Players: Mary Cox, *Cinema*; Savannah Berry, *Music (Vocal Performance)*; Jennifer Anne Ducharme, *Theatre (Costume Design)*

Award: \$2,400



THE PRACTICAL USES OF ELECTRONIC AIDS IN FRENCH HORN PERFORMANCE

Two Music majors will discover whether or not electronic aids and multimedia will pave a new frontier for the French horn in solo performance and ensemble performance. By focusing on the use of microphones, click tracks, digital and analog effects, and computers, the students will conduct research that will educate horn players and music educators on the possibilities of non-traditional electro-acoustic and multimedia uses in French horn performance.

Players: Benjamin Faught, *Music Education*; Jesse Williams, *Music Performance*

Award: \$1,200



ECO-CHIC: RECYCLED FASHION

One Sculpture + Extended Media and one Craft/Material Studies student will marry their love affair with fabric in Eco-Chic. The central theme of this project is to take pre-existing fabrics such as curtains, upholstery or sheets from second-hand shops and transform them into new and original fabrics which will then be used to create a collection of one-of-a-kind clothing. A series of unique garments will be created drawing inspiration from the lines and shapes of intricate furniture.

Players: Grace Johnston, *Sculpture + Extended Media*; Anne Douglas Shaw, *Craft/Material Studies*

Award: \$1,800



TECHNOLOGICALLY CHARGED MODERN DANCE EVENT

Four students will create a full evening-length multimedia modern dance event to be held at the newly renovated Dogtown Dance Theatre. The theme for the piece is the study of the human subconscious. The starting point will be the investigation from Quadrifrons, a complete collaborative dance work based on hypnosis and the human subconscious.

Players: Amy Kaeberle, *Interdisciplinary Studies (Dance and Choreography and Kinetic Imaging)*; Alyssa Gregory, *Dance and Choreography*; Amanda Patterson, *Kinetic Imaging*; Nathan Altice, *Media, Art + Text*

Award: \$3,000



ECO-FASHION: RE-FASHIONING THE FUTURE

Five students from Communication Arts and Fashion Design & Merchandising will create their own line of sustainable fashion made from previously worn garments and eco-fabrics appealing to the millennial generation. Research will be conducted to determine what marketing materials will best inform this group of consumers to understand and appreciate eco fashion.

Players: Laurel Rodriguez, *Fashion Design*; Meredith Janos, *Fashion Design*; Jennie Onisk, *Fashion Design*; Hannah Wray, *Fashion Merchandising*; Lindsay Bellomo, *Communication Arts*

Award: \$1,570



THE YELLOW HOUSE

Seven students from various disciplines will create an art educational television program titled *The Yellow House*. Puppets will play a major role in the development of this program designed to teach audiences of all ages about artists and the inspiration found in their work. Vincent van Gogh will be one of the program's reoccurring characters. The title references van Gogh's house in the south of France that became a sanctuary for artists.

Players: Kay Milne, *Art Education*; Gerry Perez, *Art Education*; Warren A. Hamilton II, *Kinetic Imaging*; Dennis Williams, *Theatre and Art History*; Rebecca Rudolph, *Theatre (Scene Design)*; Brian Glass, *Kinetic Imaging and Computer Science*; Emily Rosko, *Theatre/Stage Management*

Award: \$2,500



VCU'S FIRST AFRICAN BAPTIST CHURCH (1876-2010): A CULTURAL CROSSROADS

Art History and Cinema students will examine the former Old First African Baptist Church, one of the most historic buildings in Richmond and the first place a black clergyman was able to conduct services without white supervision. The church embodies legacies from most major ancient and medieval cultures, but has never been researched in detail. The project will result in a written report to be deposited at Cabell Library and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

Players: Kalitah Crawford, *Art History*; Thomas Flanagan, *Art History (Architectural History)*; Sophia Minnerly, *Cinema*

Award: \$1,950



KINETIC REACTIONS TO SOUNDS OF PUBLIC SPACES

In an ongoing Kinetic Imaging and Sculpture + Extended Media collaboration, two students will create a kinetic sculpture, which visually reacts to the sonic landscapes of public spaces in Richmond. Using audio-sensitive technology, programming, and robotics, parts of the sculpture will react to city noises. The piece will have a form suggestive of organic life and its sensitivity to our environment. Through this reaction, the project will increase awareness of the prevalence of sound and the importance of silence. Students will build on knowledge acquired in their separate robotics and sound classes, to learn about Richmond and interactive public art installation.

Players: John Dombroski, *Kinetic Imaging*; Joshua Bennett, *Sculpture + Extended Media*

Award: \$2,400

National Rankings

VCUarts is Ranked #1 among Public Art Schools in America by US News & World Report

VCUarts GRADUATE PROGRAM	RANKING AMONG ALL US PROGRAMS PUBLIC & PRIVATE	RANKING AMONG US PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES
OVERALL	#4	#1
SCULPTURE Department of Sculpture + Extended Media	#1	#1
GRAPHIC DESIGN Department of Graphic Design	#4	#1
FIBER ARTS Department of Craft/Material Studies	#4	#1
GLASS Department of Craft/Material Studies	#5	#1
PAINTING Department of Painting & Printmaking	#8	#3
MULTIMEDIA/ VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS Likely a combination of our departments of Communication Arts, Graphic Design, Photography and Film, and Kinetic Imaging	#9	#3
METALS/JEWELRY Department of Craft/Material Studies	#10	#5
CERAMICS Department of Craft/Material Studies	#12	#6
PRINTMAKING Department of Painting & Printmaking	#17	#10

OTHER VCUARTS RANKINGS INFORMATION

DesignIntelligence 2010 National Rankings: **Department of Interior Design** named "Hidden Gem of Interior Design Education."

Dance and Choreography is an invited member of the Council of Dance Administrators (CODA), a forum of the nation's 25 leading dance programs.

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Your gift to VCUarts supports the remarkable emerging visual and performing artists and designers that make up our student body.

Last year, gifts to VCUarts...

- brought MoMA senior curator Paola Antonelli to campus to meet with students and present the annual Windmueller Artist Lecture (page 12)

- established a new **emerging artists residency fellowship program** in the department of craft/material studies

- provided students in the department of Fashion Design and Merchandising with fabric to bring designs for the annual spring fashion show to life (page 10)

- supported TheatreVCU's senior acting showcases in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Washington, DC

- contributed to **critical student scholarships** supporting education for over 700 VCUarts students

The School of the Arts relies on the generosity of alumni and friends to support programs and experiences like these. You can enrich the lives of our students. Give to VCUarts today.

Unrestricted gifts to VCUarts support all aspects of the school and touch the experiences of students in each of our 16 departments and programs. Gifts can also be designated directly to the department or program of your choice. See envelope insert for further detail.

Contributions to VCUarts through bequests and other planned gifts allow you to have a meaningful impact on the School far into the future. Contact (804) 828-6491 to learn more about planned giving.

New Administrators Announced

Dr. John Guthmiller, chair of Music for more than ten years, has moved into the new position of VCUarts interim associate dean, student and program development. Darryl Harper is now interim chair of the Department of Music.

We welcome Pamela Turner to her new position as Kinetic Imaging chair. Former KI chair Bob Kaputof is on research leave until January, when he returns to teaching.

Sara Wilson McKay is interim chair of Art Education. Pamela Taylor, former chair, has been provided with more time to work on her \$1 million+ Qatar National Priorities Research Program grant.

We're also pleased to announce that Michael Schreffler is now the chair of Art History.