Arts + Design Research at the University of Yes
"VCU is one of America’s premier urban public research universities. It is also among its most comprehensive. That is, in part, because our top-ranked School of the Arts continues to flourish in the space where inspiration meets innovation. Research in the arts is not only a unique part of our research university, it is fundamental to our mission of advancing the human experience everywhere: evoking thoughts and emotions that have never been felt, creating that which has only been imagined, and sharing with the world our commitment to discovering new knowledge in all its forms."

MICHAEL RAO, PhD
President, Virginia Commonwealth University
Research in art and design not only contributes to the development of new knowledge, it is an essential tool for ordering the world and providing new ways of comprehending the world. Original creative works shape our perceptions and experiences. While the arts connect fields of study to break open new possibilities, they also create and support communities. Such new knowledge supported by artfully thriving communities can come together to make landmark contributions to human health. Arts research, in all its forms and varieties, expands aesthetic knowledge to heighten human experience and generate new insights.

What makes arts research at VCUarts distinctive?

The faculty here break new ground every day, raising new questions and finding answers. At VCUarts, our faculty’s research has led to significant discoveries. These discoveries matter, not just to the researcher, but also to other scholars and the world at large.

Sketches for community-based design projects at Middle of Broad Studio.
For information on this initiative, see page 20.
Greetings from VCUarts Dean

JOSEPH H. SEIPEL

In 2011, we launched the first VCUarts Office of Research, to build and develop our faculty research capacity. Certainly, faculty were already distinguishing themselves nationally and internationally by producing works of outstanding creativity. In the last few years, VCUarts has made greater efforts to build a research portfolio to celebrate and expand faculty opportunities, connect with national partners and exploit new technologies.

We are proud to say that today, VCUarts faculty work is at the leading edge of their fields; creating films that demand us to look more closely at social norms, connecting disciplines to develop remarkable sculptural forms, inventing new ways to think about color and allowing artistic thinking in animation to inform seniors’ quality of life. In fact, we recently opened a new facility, The Depot, exclusively devoted to leveling silos in favor of a vital scholarship community.

One remarkable feature of the VCU research community is an uncanny generosity toward research collaboration. Every day, faculty from different disciplines — including VCU researchers in business, life sciences, medicine, engineering and physics — find themselves ignited to work with VCUarts on new projects. The collaborative spirit travels between Doha, Qatar and Richmond, Virginia, as researchers at sister campuses develop solutions to support Qatar national development. The collaborative spirit travels between Durban, South Africa and Richmond to develop cross-cultural understanding through jazz. And, the collaborative spirit will be connecting us to our neighbors in the Richmond region, when the new VCU Institute for Contemporary Art opens its doors to exhibit artist-researchers from throughout the world. Whether locally, nationally or internationally, we’re proud that VCUarts faculty improve our lives and communities by artistic means while continuing to demonstrate the value of aesthetic knowledge to general research.

In these profiles, we hope you can hear the diversity of the many research voices within the VCUarts faculty. Arts research is not one thing; it is a spectrum of creative approaches to the world that produces the unexpected possibility. The spirit of collaboration and cross-campus connections thrives at the “university of yes.”
In recent years, the United States has seen promising developments in the field of arts and design research. New arts research grants analyze existing data related to arts, arts education and the creative economy. Federal healthcare agencies now recognize arts as an essential partner for improved patient care. Arts education research powerfully demonstrates the role of dance, music, theater and visual art to contribute to youth development. It is clearer than ever that the arts and design disciplines, and the research they generate, empower an imaginative citizenry and fuel a healthy society. At the forefront of these developments, you will find remarkable VCUarts faculty pushing the envelope through their creative works, interdisciplinary experimentation, community engaged research and health investigations.

In these pages, we invite you to explore VCU’s definition of arts research. Our faculty embodies a diverse and reflective mastery of aesthetic knowledge, including the historical and educational expertise that allows artistic mastery to thrive. A studio artist conducts research by diligently crafting and forming new and old materials. A musician conducts research through new compositions, which juxtapose expressions of the past and the present. A dancer develops acute understanding of human mechanics through a choreography that produces a new method of balancing the body. An educator versed in the art of game design trains next generation teachers in artistic conceptions of analog and digital games.

In the depth of their aesthetic excellence, VCUarts faculty honor the richness of their disciplines, while stretching the horizons of possibility. Through the vital efforts of Senior Associate Dean Susan Roth, Director of Grants Coordination and Entrepreneurship, David Holland, and myself, the VCUArts Office of Research provides underlying architecture for faculty research by supporting project conception, strategic planning, partnership development, funding strategy development and evaluation design. We provide vision and infrastructure, assisting faculty to realize their most ambitious goals.

National and international research partners expand collaborations and allow our research to mature and flourish. In 2013, VCUArts joined Cumulus International Association of Universities and Colleges of Art, Design and Media to share research with the global community. In 2015, VCUArts will host the Alliance for Arts in Research Universities “Emerging Creatives” conference, welcoming students from 30 universities for a studio-style think tank on the future of cities. And in March 2015, VCUQatar will host the biennial Tashmeem conference, an international art and design festival designed to celebrate the strange and playful in art and design.

These efforts are supported by tremendous partnerships with community members, local arts leaders, arts organizations, philanthropists, fellow universities, national affiliates and many campus partners. While research might appear a solitary endeavor, arts research at VCU is truly a community effort. Thanks to supporters and partners, VCUArts researchers are pushing the limits of the imagination to fuel more inspired and inventive citizens.

Greetings from VCUArts Executive Director of Research

DR. SARAH BAINTER CUNNINGHAM
Sonali Gulati is an independent filmmaker, feminist, grassroots activist and educator whose documentaries explore contemporary social and cultural issues of her native India. Her films have achieved critical acclaim internationally.

Grants, fellowships, awards:
- Third Wave Foundation Grant
- World Studio Foundation Grant
- Robert Giard Memorial Fellowship
- Creative Capital Foundation Grant
- John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship

Indian Patient
Gulati’s film project, Indian Patient, is a nontraditional documentary that uncovers the growing underground medical industry of “curing” homosexuality in India. The film creates a dialogue between factions with differing points of view by exploring the story of one individual in-depth: the gay patient, his family, gay and lesbian activists and reactions by medical professionals. The process of making the film will address the subjects of authorship, spectatorship and representation.

What inspired you to become a filmmaker?
“I was drawn to filmmaking through ethnographic films where I saw ‘others’ (usually people of color in developing countries) being represented by mainly white men. And I began to wonder and ask the question: who has the power to represent whom? And what would happen if one got to represent one’s self? Would that representation change? So I began to make films about representing one’s self.”
Award-winning artists and designers extend our knowledge and understanding of the world through creative expression. VCU artists, designers, and performers generate creative works that speak to our changing world and contemporary art making practices, while gaining national and international recognition for their endeavors. The scholarship of VCU art historians and art educators examines historical and contemporary practices in art making and develops new models of arts education, adding to new knowledge in these fields.
Critics have described Rex Richardson as “an artiste with an exceptional talent who has made a name for himself as one of the finest trumpet players in the world today.” He has become one of the busiest crossover trumpet virtuosos on the international scene. Since 1995, he has recorded and toured around the globe with the critically acclaimed ensemble Rhythm and Brass. He also toured internationally as a member of the late jazz legend Joe Henderson’s Quintet and with William Russo’s Chicago Jazz Ensemble.

**Grants, fellowships, awards**
- Theresa Pollak Prize for Excellence in the Arts
- Brass Herald International Personality of the Year
- VCU School of the Arts Award of Excellence

**Rex Richardson Quintet and Big Band Double Album Release**
Richardson will soon release a new CD, *Bugles Over Zagreb*, with music composed and conducted by VCU Music Faculty Doug Richards and featuring the Croatian Radio and TV Jazz Orchestra. At the same time, Richardson will be releasing a CD collaboration with saxophone legend Steve Wilson (a VCU alumnus) on Summit Records.

**What do you aim to achieve through your work?**
“I love finding new sounds within the context of established formats, both as an improviser and a composer...that is, I love working with chromaticism within traditional harmony; what new dissonances could I create, and how do I resolve them? That being said, I think it would be presumptuous of me (or perhaps any musician) to think that what I find is entirely new; rather, it is simply new to me. And yet, when each of us is continually exploring, these new finds are always filtered through our unique musical personalities. In that sense, we all have the potential to become innovators simply by being seekers.”

**REX RICHARDSON**
Professor, Music
DMA, MM, Louisiana State University
BA, Northwestern University
rexrichardson.net
Elizabeth King is a sculptor whose work combines precisely movable figurative sculptures with stop-frame animation in works that blur the perceptual boundary between actual and virtual object. Her work reflects her interests in early clockwork automata, the history of the mannequin and the puppet and literature’s host of legends in which the artificial figure comes to life.

**Grants, fellowships, awards:**
- Anonymous Was a Woman Award
- American Academy Arts and Letters Award in Art
- John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship
- Fellowship in the Visual Arts at the Mary Ingraham Bunting Institute, now the Radcliffe Institute of Advanced Study at Harvard University

### A Machine, a Ghost and a Prayer: The Story of a Sixteenth-Century Mechanical Monk

King and clockmaker W. David Todd are currently co-authoring a close study on a 16th century automaton, a small iron and wood figure of a Franciscan monk in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution. Their essay will explore the nature of this object, among the best preserved and earliest of surviving automata that predate and anticipate the famous mechanical androids of the Enlightenment.

### How would you describe the research culture at VCUarts?

“Here at VCU, the design arts, the fine arts, the performing arts, the history of art and art education itself, are gathered into one of the largest schools of its kind in the country. Each discipline is unique in its nature and language, and bears its own legacy. What binds us together is our interest in perception, shape and form; in the languages of the eye, the ear and the body; in the relational nature of thought itself; and in the discovery of the ways things might go together.”

Toni-Leslie James is a Tony-nominated designer who has designed award-winning costumes nationally for feature film, television, opera, dance, industrials, regional theatre and numerous Broadway productions including Lucky Guy, The Tempest and Footloose, as well as off-Broadway productions.

Grants, fellowships, awards:
• Obie Award for Sustained Costume Design Excellence
• National Black Theatre Festival Outstanding Costume Designer of The Year Award

Current projects
Toni-Leslie is currently creating costumes for three musicals: Bull Durham: A New Musical (pre-Broadway) directed by Kip Fagan at The Alliance Theatre, Atlanta, GA; Amazing Grace: A New Musical, (pre-Broadway) directed by Gabriel Barre at the Bank of America Theatre, Chicago IL; and The Scottsboro Boys, (West End) directed by Susan Stroman at the Garrick Theater, London UK.

How has your role as an educator contributed to your work?
“Teaching at VCU has been a very rewarding experience and has made my work better in all aspects. Being at VCU has been extraordinary because I had lost energy creatively, felt my design work had become stagnant and many of the directors I had worked with in the past were retiring or hiring new designers. Teaching made me take design risks I would not have taken in the past, experiment with new materials and resources and develop new formats for production. Teaching has required me to continually revise my own process and to see my own work in a different light, which brought new colleagues and assistants into my life and a tremendous revival of my career.”
Stephen Vitiello is an electronic musician and media artist. According to the Cartier Foundation, “as an installation artist, he is particularly interested in the physical aspect of sound and its potential to define the form and atmosphere of a spatial environment.”

Grants, fellowships, awards:
- Creative Capital Foundation Grant
- John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship
- Alpert/Ucross Award for Music

**Captiva**
Vitiello recently collaborated with Taylor Deupree on Captiva, four pieces created while in residence at the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation’s new Rauschenberg Residency Program at his estate and studio compound in Captiva, Florida. Captiva is presented as a beautifully realized double 10” album graced with a pair of Polaroid photographs taken of the Fish House and its surrounding waters. The audio work and their photography was shown at the Rauschenberg gallery space in Chelsea in New York City in 2013. This is the duo’s first full-length collaborative recording following a series of performances, a song recorded with Ryuichi Sakamoto and a multi-channel sound piece for the touring exhibition, With Hidden Noise, organized by Independent Curators International.

**What do you aim to achieve through your work?**
“I hope to create experiences for people in which sound changes the way they perceive the space they are in. To go further, perhaps to encourage that they leave one of my installations and listen to sounds that they had previously tuned out or thought of as insignificant, and now hear them with more awareness. Perhaps they will start to find some of these sounds beautiful or perhaps they will realize how much the soundscapes of everyday life affect their emotional and creative brains.”

Michael Schreffler studies how the reconstruction of urban spaces was used as part of the program of establishing Spanish colonial rule in Latin America. He explores how the architecture and urban forms introduced by the Spanish and constructed by indigenous laborers facilitated Spanish colonial governance.

**Grants, fellowships, awards:**
- Program for Cultural Cooperation between Spain’s Ministry of Education and Culture and United States’ Universities grant
- National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship at the Newberry Library
- J. William Fulbright Fellowship
- J. Paul Getty Postdoctoral Fellowship in the History of Art and the Humanities
- Ailsa Mellon Bruce Senior Fellowship, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

**Current Project: Inca Cuzco, Spanish Cuzco**
Schreffler was awarded an NEH fellowship at the Newberry Library, Chicago, for work on his project, entitled *Inca Cuzco, Spanish Cuzco: Space and Time in Early Colonial Peru.* This book studies architectural and urbanistic transformation in Cuzco during the long first century of Spanish colonial rule there (1533–1650). Little of Cuzco’s sixteenth and early-seventeenth century architecture remains visible today and it is perhaps for that reason that its early colonial built environment has not been the subject of extensive research. The lack of surviving structures from the pre-1650 period thus requires the historian to draw from early texts and images to study the early-colonial city’s buildings and spaces.

**What do you aim to achieve through your work?**
“I aim to advance knowledge on the visual and spatial components of Spanish Colonial rule in the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Americas. Through the close examination of this topic, I contribute to knowledge on the ways in which the visual representation and organization of urban space can promote political ideals and facilitate governance.”
Research in every field possesses both a practical and an aesthetic aspect. The arts are unique only in their prioritization of the aesthetic. So, there are at least two sides to arts research: (1) aesthetic: the creation of new work that challenges, changes, or expands our perception of the world; and (2) practical: the application of this work to inform our understanding of the world and each other.

AARON ANDERSON, PhD
Associate Chair, Theatre and Affiliated Faculty, Internal Medicine
With training as a microbiologist, Kendall Buster’s sculptures suggest organic architecture by expanding biologic forms into large-scale site-responsive sculptures. Membrane surfaces and bending spines give these impressive constructions a lightness and sense of transformative, evolutionary mobility. Buster’s work has been exhibited in numerous venues nationally and internationally, including the Hirshhorn Museum and the Bahnhof Westend in Berlin. She has also produced numerous commissions for public spaces such as the Nevada Museum of Art, the San Francisco International Airport, the Frick Chemistry Laboratory at Princeton University and Gilman Hall at Johns Hopkins University.

Grants, fellowships, awards:
• American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in Art

*Patterned Flow, Commissioned Sculpture for U.S. Embassy Building in Rabat, Morocco*
Buster has just completed a large-scale site-responsive permanent sculpture commissioned for the U.S. Embassy in Rabat, Morocco. Ephemeral forms built with lightweight armatures and semi-transparent scrims, the work, titled *Patterned Flow*, was created to converse with the particulars of the new embassy architectural space, referencing both geometric grid patterns and topographical maps.

How do you define arts research?
“Studio investigations can be seen to operate as a laboratory for experimentation, both in terms of design and material explorations. For example, in my own work I am engaged with model building, sketching, researching through printed material, web based sources and physically being in a given architectural space. I have learned about research both from looking under a microscope and by my exposure to the models used for "idea generation" by many of the architects I have worked with and observed. The studio is the place where the charrette happens, where lateral thinking can occur and discovery can be made without a set trajectory.”
Visionary artists find inspiration in and make connections with other fields to push the frontiers of art making. Many VCUarts faculty examine scientific processes, environmental concerns and mathematical models in exploring these new vistas. Their explorations result in new processes of art making, new design tools and works of exceptional aesthetic interest.

Exploring Interdisciplinary Connections in Arts and Design
Exploring Interdisciplinary Connections in Arts and Design, continued

In partnership with physics professor Peter Martin, Robert Meganck and Matt Wallin have been collaborating since 2011 to create a more effective color model for use across industries.

Grants, fellowships, awards:
• VCU Presidential Research Incentive Program Award
• Virginia Innovation Partnership i6 Challenge Award

**ROBERT MEGANCK**
Chair and Professor, Communication Arts
MFA, Cranbrook Academy of Art
BA, Center for Creative Studies
meganck.com

**MATTHEW WALLIN**
Associate Professor, Communication Arts
Industry experience at Industrial Light & Magic, Warner Brothers, Sony Pictures Imageworks, Tippett Studio, MPC and Weta Digital
BA, San Francisco State University
mattwallin.com

Color Gamut
This innovative model rewrites color theory by using three dimensions to interactively map color space. An interactive tool including web based software and mobile applications for use by artists, engineers, scientists and educators will allow users to more accurately identify, select and match colors. This pioneering effort overcomes the natural shortcomings of standard 2-D color models.

How have the VCU and VCUarts communities contributed to your work as an artist/designer/researcher/scholar?
“Working collaboratively with the School of Engineering, Department of Computer Science and the Department of Physics has been critical to our research. Without their support and co-authorship of all our research, we’d just be artists with a pretty software tool that seems to manipulate colors. With the real science, math and programming tools in conjunction, with our “out there” idea about color theory and manipulation, we’re able to get significant grants and fund our research to make a toolset that could really change lives across multiple disciplines from the arts to the sciences.”
-Matt Wallin

mappingcolor.com
As co-founder and director of Radical Jewelry Makeover, Susie Ganch’s international jewelry mining and recycling project invites artists to rework unused or discarded jewelry. While these events invite the public to re-imagine their jewelry, the project intends to make over our dependency on the toxic processing of gold and precious metals. As vice president of the Ethical Metalsmiths board, Ganch works with other activists to support responsible mining, sustainable economic development and verified, ethical sources of materials used in making jewelry.

**Grants, fellowships, awards:**
- Virginia Commission for the Arts Fellowship in Craft
- VCUarts Faculty Award for Distinguished Achievement in Teaching

**Radical Jewelry Makeover**
Since 2007, Ethical Metalsmiths has organized Makeovers in new locations throughout the U.S. and abroad. Radical Jewelry Makeover (RJM) reveals the stories behind our personal collections and encourages re-consideration of our habits of consumption. Over 540 artists, both student and professional jewelers, have created 1,320 pieces from hundreds of pounds of donated jewelry. The project is both performance and event, linking recycling, reuse and collaborative work sessions with the creation of unique, innovative, handmade jewelry, culminating in an exhibition.

**How does your work contribute to the generation of new knowledge?**
“Ethical Metalsmiths changes the jewelry industry by creating sustainable transparent supply chains for the materials used to make jewelry. We also educate jewelers, consumers and suppliers by teaching new ways to consider how we make, wear and collect jewelry.

**RJM raises awareness of the connection between mining, metalsmithing, activism and art. RJM involves volunteer ‘miners,’ ‘smelters,’ ‘refiners,’ jewelers and metalsmiths to create a new supply chain of used metals. RJM contributes to new ways of thinking when students and professional jewelers alike change their practice to reflect the values gained by their participation in RJM.”

Tied, exhibition at the Visual Arts Center of Richmond. From foreground to background: Bale, mixed media, collected detritus, 50 x 45 x 45” (2014); Labor, steel, brass, dimensions variable (20' in gallery image), (2013–2014); Pile: Starbucks on Robinson, April – December 2012, mixed media, collected detritus, 120 x 84 x 12” (2013). Photo by David Hunter Hale.
Hope Ginsburg is a visual artist with a background in sculpture and performance whose project-based work is informed by curiosity about the natural world, knowledge exchange and a deep interest in materials. She has exhibited her work at venues such as MoMA P.S.1, The Baltimore Museum of Art, Wexner Center for the Arts, Sculpture Center, Socrates Sculpture Park, American Fine Arts and KW Institute for Contemporary Art.

Grants, fellowships, awards:
- Art Matters Fellowship
- Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Residency

Sponge
Sponge is Ginsburg’s ongoing, participatory artwork. The project is sustained by a network of co-artists, collaborators and visitors. Since the project began in 2006, Sponge has generated experimental approaches to learning and teaching, providing open waters for the conspicuous mixing of disciplines. Sponge can be thought of as an evolving ecosystem of workshops, events and classes that enable opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaboration in the arts and sciences that lead to the production of artistic work.

How does your work contribute to the generation of knowledge?
“Because learning about the natural world is something I return to in my work, I have operated as a kind of “public amateur,” which affords rich territory for critique. In this translational role, there is also the possibility for inserting humor and metaphor, which remixes information and constructs a different kind of knowledge.”
The variety of art and design research is staggering. Research in art and design can be as simple as the creation of objects for everyday use. The practice of some is theoretical, pushing boundaries to find newness. All making is valid, as long as it is a decisive process and consistent practice with intention and energy.

KRISTIN CASKEY
Associate Professor, Fashion Design and Merchandising
KRISTIN CASKEY
Associate Professor, Fashion Design and Merchandising
MFA, Cranbrook Academy of Art
BFA, Parsons New School of Design
BSS, Cornell College

Caskey is a fashion designer and fiber artist whose pieces are often sewn, embroidered, perforated, constructed, worn and inhabited in a zone between fashion, fiber and performance.

JOHN MALINOSKI
Associate Professor, Graphic Design
MFA, Rochester Institute of Technology
BA, SUNY Fredonia

Malinoski is a graphic designer with diverse interests, which include typography, exhibition design, furniture, hand puppets, constructions, photographs, poetry and the making of a fence and gates, cabinets, gardens, a shed and re-contextualized articles of clothing.

CAMDEN WHITEHEAD
Associate Professor, Interior Design
MArch, Virginia Tech
BA, Art, Averett College

Whitehead’s practice as an architect is characterized by work that is sensitive to the site and program, enables the mundane, demonstrates a thoughtful, responsible use of materials and mediates design solutions on a range of scales.

Grants, fellowships, awards:
• VCU Community Engagement Grant
• VCU Quest Innovation Fund Grant

Middle of Broad
middleofbroad.tumblr.com

Together, this trio of designers formed Middle of Broad (mOb), an organic interdisciplinary studio of graphic, fashion and interior design students and teachers working for non-profit and community organizations. This experimental design lab explores the potential of design to shape the urban environment. mOb shares a space and partners with The Storefront for Community Design, Richmond’s non-profit design assistance center, which facilitates public access to design and planning resources. Their partnership joins the energy, enthusiasm and expertise of VCU students and faculty with Storefront’s community connections, making mOb a model of community engagement.

How does your work contribute to the generation of knowledge?
“Design can generate new relationships and partnerships within communities by empowering citizens to be part of a process of co-design. Often the most apt solution is one in which all stakeholders are represented and design research by its very nature allows for this.”
-Kristin Caskey
Community-engaged research in the arts creates and disseminates knowledge and creative expression in ways that strengthen the well-being of the community. Through research and practice, VCU artists, designers, performers and arts educators expand access to high quality arts education experiences, involve community members in the creation of artistic works and share cross-cultural perspectives.
Ryan Patton is an art educator who taught high school art in the South Bronx and animation and game design with the Smithsonian Summer Associates. His current research interests include: technology in art education, new media, games-based pedagogy, physical computing, data visualization, visual culture and urban education. As part of his research in new media art education, Dr. Patton co-created an augmented reality game called “CitySneak,” which explores disrupting conventions of public space and surveillance with smart phone devices. Dr. Patton has also designed and produced a set of modular electronic switches intended for youth to design video game controllers.

Grants, fellowships, awards:
• National Endowment for the Arts Art Works: Art Education Grant
• VCU Presidential Research Quest Fund Grant

CurrentLab: Game Design Institute
Dr. Patton is director of CurrentLab, a program that seeks to engage technology more centrally within arts education. His recent research trajectory has led him to design and deliver a teacher institute providing professional development for K-12 art educators teaching digital game design as an art form. The institute engages teachers in the development of a game design curriculum that can be delivered in elementary, middle and high school art classrooms to instruct students in the creation of digital games.

What do you aim to achieve through your work?
“I hope to show how art can be at the center of the K-12 curriculum rather than living at the margins. While the majority of my work has been focused on digital making and digital processes, what drives me is exploring how people can be empowered (through art) to understand and investigate the world around them and make those connections relevant.”
Antonio García is an accomplished jazz musician and educator who has received numerous commissions for jazz, symphonic, chamber and solo works – instrumental and vocal. His music has aired internationally and has been performed by such artists as Sheila Jordan, Arturo Sandoval, Denis DiBlasio, James Moody and Nick Brignola.

Grants, fellowships, awards:
• Meet The Composer Grant
• The Commission Project Grant
• The Thelonious Monk Institute Grant

Jazz Bridge to Greater Understanding
Jazz Bridge is a collaborative research and performance project, funded by a grant from VCU’s Global Education Office, bringing together students and faculty of the Jazz Studies programs of VCU and the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa. Participating musicians meet in person, compose original works and rehearse in person and through digital collaboration. The project improves cross-cultural understanding of underserved communities by bringing scholars and students of African-based music to VCU’s campus, and then to UKZN’s campus, to examine curricula that prepare students for a global future and deliver concerts and recordings that highlight the African influence on jazz. As a result of this collaboration, musicians were invited to perform at the official U.S. memorial service for Nelson Mandela, held at the National Cathedral in Washington D.C.

How do the arts contribute to society?
“The arts, and perhaps various musical genres in particular, provide the bridge that allows representatives from different cultures to trust each other so as to make new inroads of exploration and study possible. After dialoguing with non-music colleagues overseas, I am convinced that researchers in the sciences would do well first to establish community links via the arts, even if their ultimate goal is then to proceed towards scientific data and action. The arts speak to everyone; and without community trust, little else is possible.”
Sonya Clark is a textile artist whose work has been exhibited in more than 250 solo and group exhibitions on every continent, and who has developed collaborative arts projects that have engaged thousands of participants internationally. Samella Lewis wrote in her book, *African American Art and Artists*, “Cultural customs and objects we have regarded as commonplace take on new significance and value in Sonya Clark’s artwork. Its complexity, breadth of expression and depth of symbolism enable us to extend our perceptions of art and life.”

**Grants, fellowships, awards:**
- United States Artists Fellowship
- Pollock-Krasner Award
- Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship
- Civitella Ranieri Fellowship
- Center for Craft, Creativity, and Design Research Grant
- Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Fellowship
- 1858 Prize for Contemporary Southern Art
- Theresa Pollak Prize for Excellence in the Arts
- ArtPrize 2014 Juried Two-Dimensional Award
- ArtPrize 2014 Juried Grand Prize (Co-Winner)

**Hair Craft Project**
Clark’s recently completed *Hair Craft Project* is based on hairdressing as the earliest manipulation of fiber toward an aesthetic and functional purpose. The project bridges multiple communities: African American hair salons; students, faculty and recent alumni of VCUarts; and the broader art community. It looks at the complex craftsmanship, engineering and skill of hairstylists specializing in African hair braiding techniques in cultural, historical and contemporary art contexts. The *Hair Craft Project* is innovative in its methods of attracting, building and bridging audiences, while supporting and acknowledging the parallel skills of artists, hairdressers and researchers.

**How does your work contribute to the generation of knowledge?**
“Often it is what is most familiar that is hard to see. I think that the most artful moments are ever-present. My challenge as an artist is to take the most familiar activity (hairdressing) or quotidian object (combs, cloth, flags), hold them ear-close and give voice to each story in a new context. The framework I use is rooted in history, materiality and cultural critique. The vigorous investigation of the mundane in a new light yields new knowledge.”

*The Hair Craft Project* is a collaboration between the artist and various hairdressers (in this case, Jamilah).
Funding and support affords artists both the time and means to break free of constraints and find new means of expression. It is through their efforts that we can arrive at an as yet unknown place of understanding. Funded research opens the door to exploration on a scope and scale that is difficult to attain under most everyday circumstances.

MATT WALLIN
Associate Professor, Communication Arts
In addition to his research and teaching in theatre and drama and practice as a fight director, Aaron Anderson specializes in qualitative and mixed-method research design, pedagogy and curriculum design, theories of the body and methods of movement analysis. He is a recognized expert on the use of theatre training and performance studies in applied social science, and has designed the curricula for several national and international teacher certification programs. For the past 10 years, Anderson has also conducted pioneering research in the field of healthcare communication by applying theatre techniques to medical and nursing education to improve the patient experience.

**Grants, fellowships, awards:**
- VCU President Research Incentive Program Grant
- VCU Quest Innovation Fund Grant
- VCU School of Medicine Award for Innovation in Medical Education
- VCU School of the Arts Award of Excellence

**Standardized Patient Program**
Anderson is the Founding Director of VCU’s Standardized Patient Program, a joint venture between the School of the Arts and The Center for Human Simulation and Patient Safety that provides training in communication and clinical empathy to healthcare professionals. Traditionally, medical students’ first encounters with patients occur when they begin training in the hospital’s different units with faculty physicians. But this program allows students to practice complex skills in simulated environments with actors trained to behave as patients or healthcare workers. Active role-playing provides feedback so that students can practice a range of skills such as taking a patient’s history, performing physical examinations and working on interprofessional teams.

**How does your work contribute to the generation of knowledge?**
“What I enjoy most about the Arts-Health collaborations I participate in is that they start on either side of the aesthetic-practical scale and move back and forth powerfully. For instance, you need to understand the aesthetics of performance to train in acting, but you can also use those same skills to perform the role of standardized patient to train physicians practically. For me, this movement between fields is arts research at its best. I often describe it as a type of shamanism. In ethnographic terms, shamans have no “magic” of their own. They derive power from an ability to communicate between otherwise disconnected worlds. This movement between worlds is precisely what I do when I work in healthcare: I enter the hospital as an outsider and view their communication problems through the lenses of my training in theatre and performance studies. I then try to translate how we in the arts go about solving similar problems. The difficult part is finding solutions that do not require specialized training in art so that the results can be replicated under other conditions. Artists often value uniqueness, but work on the practical end of the scale requires repeatability.”
Across the world, researchers and practitioners are expanding research between arts, design and human health. In collaboration with the VCU School of Medicine and Health System, VCUarts drives pioneering projects to improve patient care, innovate medical education, and facilitate public health efforts. Faculty in 14 of our 16 departments currently engage in innovative projects that apply expertise in art and design to health-related challenges in bold new ways.
Semi Ryu is a multidisciplinary artist whose works explore experimental 3-D animations and the subject of interactivity in Korean shamanistic ritual and oral traditions of storytelling. Her animations have been widely presented internationally. Her interest in interactivity has led her to utilize interactive media in virtual puppetry performances that investigate the psychological and emotional states of the performer and spectators. Her academic papers have been extensively published in international journals and conferences. She is one of the authors of the book *The Point of Being* published by Cambridge Scholars, UK, 2014.

**Grants, fellowships, awards:**
- The Best Young Animated Film Award, International Festival of Animated Film, Stuttgart
- Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants from National Endowment for the Humanities
- VCU Presidential Research Quest Fund

**VoicingElder**

*VoicingElder* applies cutting-edge electronic arts research to a therapeutic environment for older adults. The project seeks insight into older adults’ emotional engagement with virtual puppets that aim to assist the life review process. As the senior speaks about their life, facial-recognition cameras automatically track their facial expressions and lip movement, and map that movement in real-time onto the face of an on-screen virtual puppet, also known as an avatar.

The older adult sees their facial movements mirrored in the on-screen puppet and can thus speak “through” the puppet. *VoicingElder* utilizes cutting-edge interactive technology to create a virtual puppetry medium designed specifically to promote an emotional engagement with life review.

*VoicingElder* aims to assist older adults to develop rich stories from their own life. They can communicate their stories verbally and non-verbally through the virtual puppet, thus fostering a new and innovative form of communication among the older adults, caregivers and family members. The senior’s virtual puppet performances can be live, or video recorded for posterity. This unique combination of puppetry and life review assisted by interactive technology provides a new reminiscent therapy platform for the 21st century that promotes Quality of Life (QOL) for the older adults. The project fosters interdisciplinary collaboration between art, gerontology, theatre, computer science, etc.

**How do the arts contribute to academia?**

“The arts hugely contribute to the academy in terms of its flexibility and openness to bridge with other disciplines. Artists have been working in the science laboratory, surgery rooms and spaceships as well as in traditional gallery settings. The arts have been connected with philosophy, psychology, sociology and many other areas. The arts critically contribute to transdisciplinary discussion in academia.”
Scott Putman seeks to shape energy in space through his choreography with Amaranth Contemporary Dance. A dynamic educator, Scott teaches throughout the world, including directing and teaching at the Accademia dell’Arte in Arezzo, Italy as well as teaching for the Richmond Ballet and the California State Summer School for the Arts. His research trains the body as a vehicle for the expression of the human experience, weaving technical training with the creative process to produce kinetic storytelling.

**Elemental Body Alignment System (EBAS)**
The Elemental Body Alignment System (EBAS) is a series of exercises designed for structural integrity and supported range of motion. Putman developed EBAS for dancers that tirelessly exhaust themselves and their bodies simply for the love of movement. Students take time to feel movement rather than imitate visual representations of movement. Learning the exercises and understanding how one’s body works within the context of technique, encourages success on stage. The system helps the learner to override the central nervous system creating new neuromuscular firings to support a greater understanding of sensorial technique. Putman is now engaged in sharing this work across the world to help students more deeply understand their individual training, translating EBAS into various techniques from the dance world to sports like running, swimming and golf.

**What are the future directions for your research?**
“EBAS can assist in physical therapy and other neurological healing modalities. I have seen therapists share the exercises to help knee and hip recovery and rehabilitation. While working with EBAS exercises, an 85-year-old client with Parkinson’s disease was able to improve balance and independence. There are many possibilities for this work, including preventative care practices and educating people to make conscious physical connections to their health. If our stories are written in the language of our movements and the very essence of the vibrations of our cells, then training in EBAS can help anyone use their body to improve their health and self-expression.”
Sara Wilson McKay, Ph.D. is an art education scholar and researcher who works on the politics of vision, exploring how artworks create new seeing, the dialogic process of looking and the possibilities of seeing more of the educational process in and through art. In leading journals of art education, Dr. Wilson McKay’s publications examine how the arts encourage democratic participation toward social action.

Grants, fellowships, & awards
• VCU Presidential Research Quest Fund

The Art of Nursing
Led by Wilson McKay, Art Education graduate students and faculty work with the School of Nursing to develop a program that explores the usefulness of art criticism – the ability to observe, interpret and evaluate works of art – as a way to enhance nurses’ clinical reasoning and perceptual skills to improve patient outcomes. Results suggest that students’ clinical reasoning skills benefit from the museum-based experience, particularly in precise and thoughtful communication, consideration of diverse points of view, awareness of contextual details and collaborative critical thinking.

How does your work contribute to the generation of knowledge?
“The Art of Nursing research team asks how dialogic engagement with works of art in a museum setting develops clinical reasoning in beginning nursing students. We employ mixed methods to gauge change in the students’ metacognitive awareness as a result of their participation in the program. Art educator facilitators examine pedagogical processes to determine effectiveness and areas for growth in their professional practice. This inter-professional education research is groundbreaking for its cross-disciplinary analysis of impact in both healthcare and art education.”
Arts research is the production and distribution of new knowledge attained through any arts-related process – including making, dialogue, philosophy and historical investigation. Often mixed methods combine with creative scholarship to present more complete representations of a phenomenon under investigation.

SARA WILSON MCKAY
Chair, Art Education
VCUarts seeks to facilitate an entrepreneurial culture amongst its faculty and students and to maximize the potential of the School’s knowledge and research. This team, led by Executive Director of Entrepreneurship Matt Woolman, has developed a new curriculum in creative entrepreneurship for undergraduates; designed a new post-baccalaureate program in advanced media production; launched the interdisciplinary, project-based course CoLaboratory, in which students work on innovative design and technology projects; and connected faculty to resources that have helped them take their creative ideas to market or develop their research into prototypes that can be commercialized.
An internationally recognized curator, Lisa Freiman transformed the experience of contemporary art in Indianapolis through her work at the Indianapolis Museum of Art (IMA), where she created a dynamic and widely renowned contemporary art program that has become an influential model for encyclopedic museums as they engage with the art of our time. In 2011, Freiman served as commissioner of the U.S. Pavilion in the 54th International Art Exhibition, la Biennale di Venezia, presenting six newly commissioned, site-responsive works by artists Allora & Calzadilla.

The VCU Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA)
Embedded in a research university and a thriving creative city, VCU’s ICA plans to open in late 2016. As a presenting institution, ICA’s exhibitions will share how artists today are developing new knowledge, experimenting with new ideas and materials, and conceiving the human condition. At the same time, innovative exhibition strategies, created in partnership with local community members, promise to re-conceive the museum experience. In this sense, the ICA will be a research institute with expertise in the intersections of the citizen and the artist, the city and the learner, and the past and the future. Programs under development include curatorial training in partnership with VCU art history; art, food and farming collaborations with city partners countering Richmond’s food deserts; and a vibrant, cross-disciplinary performance program with extended museum hours that will provide a time and a place to test out new social configurations in the city.

How does your work contribute to the generation of knowledge?
“We are facing a crisis of conformity. We need to find more public places to celebrate and encourage imagination rather than reinforce sites of conformity, where we present things in the same way. We all know there is an imperative to conform, but we’re facing an excess of standardization. In every century, there have been people fighting conformity. Art has always been a free zone for creativity and experimentation, the purest form of innovation that we can have in our society. The ICA will act with partners and researchers to make the public sphere more magical, wondrous and marvelous while celebrating the complexities and paradoxes that disrupt standardization.”
Dr. Jonathan Bloom and Dr. Sheila Blair (pictured sixth and fifth from the left) organize the biennial Hamad bin Khalifa Symposium on Islamic Art and Culture, the sixth conference of which is scheduled for Doha in November 2015. Entitled *By the Pen and What They Write*, the conference focuses on the role of writing in Islamic art and culture. The Symposium is sponsored by Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) School of the Arts, VCUQatar and the Qatar Foundation.

**How do the arts contribute to society?**

“Human beings express themselves in many ways, ranging from speech and writing to the visual and performing arts. All of them are windows into the human experience, and the study of the arts of the Islamic lands illuminate aspects of Islamic societies that are often overlooked or obscured.”

**What do you aim to achieve through your work?**

“We aim to introduce the largest possible audience -ranging from students, scholars and curators to the general public -to the wide range of expression in the Islamic lands over the past 14 centuries.”

**SHEILA BLAIR**
Hamad bin Khalifa Endowed Chair in Islamic Art
PhD, Harvard University

**JONATHAN BLOOM**
Hamad bin Khalifa Endowed Chair in Islamic Art
PhD, Harvard University
In 1996, a worldwide search began for universities that were regarded as the top schools in their fields, so that an educational center could be created in the Middle Eastern state of Qatar. VCUQatar, originally known as the Shaqab College of Design Arts, operated by VCU, opened its doors in 1998 to a class of 33 female students. Today, VCUQatar boasts nearly 300 co-ed students. The school has made significant contributions to the state of Qatar and the region by providing outstanding design (interior, graphic, fashion) education, producing innovative research, advancing the design profession and participating in the community. The campus now offers a Painting and Printing BFA, a BA in Art History with an Islamic focus, as well as a master’s degree in Design Studies.

Tasmeem Doha is the international art and design conference held biennially at VCUQatar in partnership with its home campus, VCUArts. Started in 2004 by a small, energetic group of faculty at VCUQatar, the conference presents contemporary topics on art and design and brings to Doha international designers, artists, academics and industry professionals for a week of innovation and dialogue. During Tasmeem, students and faculty from VCUQatar and VCUArts take part in workshops with peers from regional universities and discover firsthand the value of intensive collaboration and creative output. Over the years, the ambitious themes of Tasmeem have gained the university widespread attention and praise, while fostering sustainable university-community partnerships that enhance the educational, economic and cultural vitality of Qatar.
SUSAN KING ROTH

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Susan King Roth leads the VCUarts Research & Entrepreneurship team. She previously served as Dean, Faculty of Design at Ontario College of Art & Design (OCAD University), Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Research at VCU, Chair of Design at The Ohio State University and in other administrative and faculty positions. At OSU she co-founded the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Art & Design, partially funded by a grant from the Battelle Endowment for Technology & Human Affairs and participated in collaborative research and design projects with Ford, Thomson Consumer Electronics and others. In 2007–2008 she participated in development and served as Interim Director of VCU’s da Vinci Center for Innovation, a partnership of the Arts, Business, and Engineering in collaboration with corporate and government affiliates. At OCAD in 2009 she initiated a design research centre for sponsored projects in healthcare design, accessible housing, new media, and was invited by the Design Exchange in Toronto to serve as co-chair of a committee developing a national design policy.

Professor Roth is an elected member of the Commission on Accreditation for the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) and has served as Vice President and member of NASAD’s Working Group for the Future of Design Education. She consults on design research and interdisciplinary education for government and academic institutions and has published and presented nationally and internationally on human-centered design research, curriculum development, and interdisciplinary education. She is a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of the international Journal of Communication Design: Interdisciplinary and Graphic Design Research (2015) and previously served as Consulting Editor for the international Journal of Visual Literacy. She has a Master’s degree in Design from The Ohio State University and BFA in Art from Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art.

SARAH BAINTER CUNNINGHAM

Executive Director for Research
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Dr. Sarah Cunningham works with university, school, faculty and student partners to expand VCU’s presence as an international leader in arts research. Internationally, Cunningham serves as a U.S. representative to the Council of Europe’s Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe, as well as the author of the United States Profile for the World Cultural Policy database hosted by the International Federation of Arts Council and Cultural Agencies. Domestically, she serves on the boards of the National Guild for Community Arts Education, the Strategic National Arts Alumni Survey (SNAAP), and the Alliance for Arts in Research Universities (A2RU). In 2012–2013, Cunningham co-chaired the policy committee for the CA CREATE initiative, an effort of State Superintendent Tom Torlakson’s office to improve and increase arts education in California’s public schools.

From 2005–2011, Cunningham held the post of Director of Arts Education for the National Endowment for the Arts, founding the NEA Education Leaders Institute to develop arts education policy and strategy in 29 states. In addition, Cunningham was responsible for numerous research reports including “Improving the Assessment of Student Learning in the Arts,” as well NEA’s investment in the Strategic National Arts Alumni Survey. In 2011 and 2012, she was named in the top 30 most influential leaders in non-profit arts.

Cunningham received her PhD and MA in philosophy from Vanderbilt University, and continues to write and speak on aesthetics, political philosophy and education. Her most recent research explores continental philosophy, creative cities and arts education, imagination in American arts education and presidential politics and the arts.
DAVID HOLLAND

DAVID HOLLAND
Director of Grant Coordination and Entrepreneurship
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David guides and counsels faculty through the development and submission of proposals for national and international grants, fellowships and awards, manages internal grants programs for faculty and students, and collaborates with other faculty and administrators on the development of a new curriculum in creative entrepreneurship. David also teaches a new course, The Creative Economy, in the creative entrepreneurship program, which examines the economics of arts and design fields.

Prior to his current position, David worked in fund development in the arts and culture field after returning to the U.S. in 2010. David lived and worked in London, England from 2002–2010, establishing expertise in arts research and creative entrepreneurship. He began his career at the London-based BOP Consulting, where he became a Senior Consultant leading strategy and research projects for national and international clients including Arts Council England, the British Council, the UK Department for Culture, Media, and Sport, the European Cultural Foundation and the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

David went on to serve as a Learning Manager for the UK innovation funder NESTA (National Endowment for Science, Technology, and the Arts) and later joined Arts & Business as a Commercial Consultant where he worked to establish a commercial consulting practice serving FTSE 100 and Fortune 500 companies, including Bank of New York Mellon and American Express. He later joined B3 Media, a film and media company, as a strategy and development consultant and is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, an Evan Carroll Commager Fellow and a review panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts. His education includes MA degrees in international studies and art history from University of London, SOAS and a BA in economics from Amherst College.

MATT WOOLMAN

MATT WOOLMAN
Executive Director of Entrepreneurship, Associate Professor of Graphic Design
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Matt leads a school-wide mission to transform entrepreneurship from a supplementary activity to an integrated culture that maximizes the exploitation of creativity, knowledge and research into innovative products and sustainable ventures. He defines potential fields of collaboration with academic disciplines and industry; and develops dynamic intra-curricular and co-curricular programming to prepare students and alumni to utilize their arts education in unique and rewarding ways.

Previously, Matt served a similar role as the first Director of Design Entrepreneurship & Industry Affiliations on the VCU campus in Qatar for two years. Prior to that, Matt served as Chair of the Department of Graphic Design on the Richmond campus for six years. As Director of Design Entrepreneurship & Industry Affiliations at VCUQatar, Matt developed and implemented an overall vision of design entrepreneurship through curriculum, programs and other institution-wide efforts. He designed and implemented strategies for collaboration between VCUQatar and external organizations, and collaborated closely with the Associate Dean for Research and Academic Affairs and the Director of the Center for Research in Design on research-oriented activities, practices and projects. Matt’s key accomplishments include establishing the VCUQatar Industry Affiliate Program, a model for structuring mutually beneficial relationships with industry and community organizations. Student-led projects in this program generated over $150,000 in scholarships and other revenue for the university in during Matt’s tenure.

Matt’s books, writings and art/design projects have been published and exhibited internationally; included in private collections; and have received awards from PRINT Magazine, AIGA and Art Director’s Club. His education includes MFA and MBA degrees from Virginia Commonwealth University and a BA from Oberlin College.
Every day, we see the spirit of collaboration and cross-campus connections thriving at the “University of Yes.” It is with great enthusiasm that we share this small fraction of VCUarts faculty’s creative energies. Thank you for joining us in affirming the place of art, performance and design within scholarly research and discovery.

JOSEPH H. SEIPEL
Dean, VCU School of the Arts
We invite you...

to get to know VCUarts as a distinctive contributor to national and international arts research. Please join our conversation by connecting with our research or entrepreneurship team if you would like to partner on projects that might hold research potential for your institution.

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VCUarts thanks our tremendous local and university partners for their role in research development. These partners include community members, arts organizations, local arts leaders, museums, philanthropists and fellow universities. We would especially like to thank the following VCU offices and schools for their support: VCU Community Engagement; VCU daVinci Center; VCU Development; VCU Global Education Office; VCU Life Sciences; VCU Office of Research; VCU Office of Sponsored Programs; VCU President’s and Provost’s Office; VCU Quest Innovation Fund; VCU Medical Center; Schools of Medicine, Nursing, Allied Health and other partners on the VCU Health Sciences campus; School of Business; Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs; and VCU Tech Transfer. While research might appear a solitary endeavor, arts research at VCU is truly a community effort.