vcuarts
Studio
VCUarts has a unique opportunity as a top-ranked arts school embedded in a comprehensive doctoral university. This position gives VCUarts interdisciplinary opportunities that stand-alone art schools can only wish for. I can think of no other time in my long history at VCUarts where the conversation has been so focused on the wealth of opportunity that can be provided by our connections across disciplines. The era of disciplinary silos is passing and the new frontier is ripe with potential as we find connections in the fertile space between the arts disciplines and those across the campus. We’re taking these notions of collaboration and discipline-crossing, and creating some very interesting channels for our students. Take the new internship model called Collaboratory (CoLab), whereby students are developing skills by working on projects they initiate, or joining start-up teams who need their type of creative thinking. This interdisciplinary focus continues at our community-focused design initiative, Middle of Broad (MoB), where our art and design students interact directly with the community; the VCU daVinci Center where we continue to partner with engineering, business and humanities; and our unique collaborations between VCUarts and the School of Medicine.

Our new VCUarts Depot building is also about crossing disciplines and will be in full operation this fall. With great care to keep the historic value of the building intact, we have just completed renovating the 35,000 sq. ft. historic former trolley station on West Broad Street. The Depot will house the spacious Depot Gallery which will focus on student art work and give our students exciting new exhibition opportunities. Along with the gallery, the Depot complex provides a much-needed expansion for the Department of Dance and Choreography and the Department of Kinetic Imaging. A soundstage and motion capture studio will be available for use by all of our departments as well as classrooms for our CoLab and our Creative Entrepreneurship program. For the first time in the School’s history, the Depot Building will afford us a 6,000+ sq. ft. space for interdisciplinary and cross disciplinary research. If you’re in Richmond, please come check it out beginning this fall.

Please savor this new issue of Studio. You’ll quickly see we’ve been up to a lot, and this newsletter just scratches the surface. For up-to-the-minute details, visit esterknows.com or follow us on all that social media stuff.

Kind regards,

Joe Seipel
Dean, School of the Arts

VCUarts Cinema Program has been admitted as a candidate member and proposed for full membership at the upcoming CILECT worldwide congress in Los Angeles. CILECT is the top academic cinema and television production association in the world and includes more than 160 audio-visual educational institutions from 60 countries. Congratulations, Cinema Director Rob Tregenza for leading this charge and for this impressive accomplishment.

STAY CONNECTED
Alumni, upload your bio and image so we can tell your story at esterknows.com

VECUarts. Ranked the #1 public arts & design program in the U.S. Still. U.S. News & World Report

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VCUarts Family Reaps VMFA Fellowships

Again this year, many artists with ties to VCUarts have been awarded a Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Visual Arts Fellowship.

The VMFA Fellowship Program is a vital source of funding for the visual arts and history in Virginia. The VMFA has awarded more than $4 million in fellowships to Virginians.

Undergraduate Students
Remy-Katherine Ciuba – Sculpture + Extended Media
Carson Jones – Communication Arts
Catherine Samples – Communication Arts
Michelle Selwyn – Craft/Material Studies
Danya Smith – Sculpture • Extended Media

Graduate Students
Stephen Fuller – Sculpture • Extended Media
Corey Piper – Art History
Nils Westergard – Photography and Film

Professional Recipients
Ryan Crowley – MFA Sculpture • Extended Media, Asst. Professor Sculpture
John Dombroski – BFA Kinetic Imaging, Adjunct Faculty Kinetic Imaging
Michael Lease – MFA Photography and Film, Head of Exhibitions
for the VCU Anderson Gallery
Molly McFadden – Art Education Advisor/Coordinator
Paul Norton – BA Cinema
Mark Strandquist – BFA Photography and Film

Former Dean Richard Toscan Wins NCAA Lifetime Achievement in the Arts Award

During Dr. Richard E. Toscan’s fourteen years as dean, VCUarts gained national and international attention. He helped create the School’s branch campus in Qatar. Under his leadership, the U.S. News & National Report ranking of VCUarts rose from 25th to the number one public university visual art and design program in the United States and the top four overall. Prior to joining VCU, he served as dean of Portland State University’s School of Fine & Performing Arts and the University of Southern California’s School of Theatre.

His handbook, Playwriting Seminars, is used by playwrights, screenwriters, and literary managers in the U.S. and abroad. Toscan has received fellowships from the Woodrow Wilson Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities as well as recognition by the Japan Foundation in addition to other awards and recognition. Some 15 years ago it was Toscan and a group of Richmond visionaries who said this art school needs a world class Institute for Contemporary Art, and we get closer to this goal each day.

We are pleased that the National Council of Arts Administrators Lifetime Achievement in the Arts Award has gone to Richard Toscan and that we were able to present this prestigious award to him during the annual conference at VCUarts in Fall 2013.

VCU Jazz Performs at Nelson Mandela Memorial Service

VCU Jazz was invited to perform at the Nelson Mandela Memorial Service on Wednesday, December 11, 2013 at The National Cathedral in Washington. Their joint project with the University of KwaZulu-Natal, A Jazz Bridge to Greater Understanding, co-sponsored by VCU’s Global Education Office, VCUarts, and VCU Music, has led to their musical contribution in tribute to a man who truly changed the world.

Pictured above: Brendan Schnabel, saxophone (VCU Africa Combo alumnus); Victor Haskins, trumpet (VCU Africa Combo alumnus); Antonio García, trombone (VCU faculty, co-leading the VCU/UKZN partnership); Reggie Pace, bass trombone (VCU alumnus)
Following its premiere at the Brooklyn Museum, LaToya Ruby Frazier’s exhibition A Haunted Capital opened on January 17th, with the opening reception preceded by a conversation with LaToya. Through her photographs, prints and videos, Frazier creates an intensely intimate portrayal of her family, as well as an unflinching depiction of her hometown’s decline in the wake of deindustrialization and governmental abandon.

An installation by Ester Partegàs, assistant professor in Sculpture + Extended Media, addressed themes relating to urban transformation and the experience of place. Viewing the city as a provisional and packaged phenomenon in You Are Here, she interrogated the certainty and singularity of the urban spaces we occupy. Ester’s exhibition, which ran through March 9th, was accompanied by a new artist book.

As always, our spring schedule focuses on student exhibitions, though for the first time both the undergraduate presentations and the MFA thesis shows are taking place at two locations: the Anderson Gallery and the Depot, the new VCUarts multidisciplinary facility at 814 W. Broad Street, between the Fine Arts Building and the forthcoming VCU Institute for Contemporary Art. These exhibitions inaugurate the Depot, which has just undergone a renovation that has transformed it from the old Richmond Glass building into an innovative educational facility with a wide array of expanded opportunities and services for students and faculty. This enabled us to install all the MFA shows in one all-encompassing round, rather than two smaller rounds, offering the most comprehensive presentation of student creativity ever mounted by the School of the Arts.

The Anderson Gallery’s popular summertime series returns Wednesday evenings in June and July (beginning June 11) with refreshments, an international mix of live music, film screenings, gallery tours, and more.

Free, open to the public, and definitely the coolest thing happening in Richmond on Wednesday evenings.

Gamelan Raga Kusuma perform outside as part of the Anderson Gallery’s 2013 Happy Hour series. Photograph by Tom Kopcsich, VCU Creative Services.
RYAN SMITH JOINS KATE WEARE COMPANY

Ryan Smith, 2013 alumnus, has accepted a position as company member with Kate Weare Company. Smith (pictured, top center) worked with Weare during her fall 2012 residency at VCU Dance. During that time, Weare created a new work, Murder Your Darlings, assisted by Douglas Gillespie and 2003 VCU Dance alumna Leslie Kraus. Murder Your Darlings was presented as part of the VCU Dance NOW February 2013 concert series at the Grace Street Theater.

Photograph by Sarah Ferguson

ART ED STUDENTS & ALUMNI SPEAK AND INSPIRE

The 3rd Annual SPEED Symposium was a tremendous success. Co-sponsored by the National Art Educators Association (NAEA) student chapter and organized by VCUarts Art Ed faculty Molly McFadden, more than 45 Art Ed students attended and heard internationally themed presentations by undergraduates Alyssa Kelly and Haley Garvis (South Africa), and alumni Sarah Mays (travel & teaching), Julie Crowder (Guatemala), and Jan Wolf (Thailand & Zimbabwe). The NAEA Student Chapter also hosted a student success lunch, inspiring students to share tips ranging from grant getting to internship landing.

VCU FASHION IN NYC FASHION WEEK

We’re thrilled that VCU Fashion was part of New York Fashion Week for the first time. Seven fashion design graduates, including one graduate from VCUQatar, showed their Spring 2014 Collections designs during Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week. These recent graduates had the opportunity to showcase their work on September 9th at Alger House. The Department invited VCU Fashion advisory board members, alumni, Council of Fashion Designers of America members, Cotton Incorporated, fashion professionals from all areas of the industry, human resource representatives and media.

Design above by Grace Hazelgrove, modeled by Latasha Dunston.
NEW STUDIO ANCHORS ARTS DISTRICT

Anchor Studios is a new artist co-operative in Richmond’s Art District at One East Broad Street with the goal of serving as an anchor for the east end of the First Fridays Art Walk. With plans to build a gallery, host resident artists, and offer workshops and educational opportunities, Anchor artists strive to engage the community and integrate them into their creative process. Anchor’s founding members come from backgrounds in painting, photography, filmmaking, tattooing, graphic design, fashion, and fiber, and all are active in the Richmond art community.

Anchor Studios founders: Thomas J Condon, MFA Photography & Film ’06; William Connally, BFA Photography ’09; Harrison Moenich, BFA Photography ’11; Michael-Birch Pierce, BFA Fashion Design ’07; Larry Thacker, MS VCU Adcenter ’05; Ross Trimmer, BFA Painting • Printmaking ’04

THEATRE VCU ASSISTS WITH DC PRODUCTION

Fourteen Theatre Pedagogy MFA graduates worked with actress Kathleen Turner in Bertolt Brecht’s musical Mother Courage and Her Children. The production ran February 1 to March 9th on Washington’s Arena Stage. Our own Theatre Chair David Leong (shown at left) was movement director and was assisted by MFA student Brad Willcuts. The veteran actress Turner said, “I’m learning a great deal from David. He is able to dream up these wonderful scenarios that tell these big stories without having text.” Robert Michael Oliver of the Maryland Theatre Guide wrote, “The movement is simply dazzling; moving, apposite, and imaginative.”

WHY WE SUPPORT VCUarts and the VCU ICA

“We are delighted to be involved with this exciting endeavor which offers such promise to enrich cultural life of the Richmond community.”

— John Snow, former CEO of CSX Corporation and U.S. Secretary of the Treasury and his wife Carolyn, VCU ICA campaign committee and community advocate

“The VCU Art & Design programs are an integral part of the vibrancy and economic engine of Richmond. While I am a neophyte to the art community, my interest and involvement with VCU is inherent in my desire to see Richmond continue to be a leader in the arts and the visually creative industries. The ICA is a natural extension of the progressive evolution of the cultural leadership of VCU, Richmond and the Commonwealth.”

— Jimmy Wheat, a longtime friend to VCU, supporting the School of Business, Athletics and VCUarts

INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART ON TOP 100 BUILDINGS IN VIRGINIA LIST

ica.vcu.edu

Construction for the VCU Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA) hasn’t begun yet but the building designed by Steven Holl Architects is already earning accolades. Architects across the state nominated the ICA for Virginia’s Favorite Architecture, a contest and exhibition organized by the Virginia Society of the American Institute of Architects and curated by Interior Design Assistant Professor Roberto Ventura. After voting by the public, the ICA was ranked number 49 out of 100 structures. An impressive feat considering the ICA is the only unbuilt building on a list that includes Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello and Virginia’s state capitol, as well as other widely regarded structures. The exhibition runs through October 19, 2014 at the Virginia Center for Architecture in Richmond. A $35 million capital campaign is underway for VCU’s 43,000-square-foot ICA, which will sit at the corner of Broad and Belvidere streets and is anticipated to open in 2016. Visit ica.vcu.edu to learn more.
The Carpenter Foundation’s 2014–15 grant to our Department of Dance and Choreography this semester marked more than two decades of support for our students. Providing the department’s largest scholarship grant and enabling guest artists continues to make a tangible impact on VCU’s ability to contribute to the emergence of talented artists in the field of dance on a national scale.

Ryan Smith ’13, is a recent recipient of the Carpenter Foundation Scholarship and was selected by visiting artist Kate Weare (also funded by the Carpenter Foundation grant) to perform in a repertory work that she created. Upon graduation, Ryan was offered an apprenticeship with Kate Weare Company and was then invited to become a company dancer. Carpenter support was crucial in Ryan’s journey to becoming a professional dancer. (See more about Ryan on page 3.)

The E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation was formed in 1975 and supports a wide variety of worthy causes in the region. It holds the arts among its top priorities. Support for 2014–15 will enable VCU Dance to again encourage the best work by talented students and will broaden the range of artists that we are able to share with this community.

Thanks to the support of the Carpenter Foundation.
“...I will be able to continue to push on in this beautiful art form that I love so deeply.”

DANCE FACULTY RECEIVES GRANT TO TEACH IN CHINA

In November, Associate Professor Scott Putman returned from teaching in China as a cultural exchange choreographer in partnership with Ziru Dance and Dancers’ Group. The trip was funded by a grant from the U.S. State Department and the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Beijing. He was the first American to have taught contemporary modern dance in Daqing. Putman says, “It was a very special experience sharing information with them and introducing them to more contemporary practices.” In addition to teaching and mentoring VCU Dance students, Putman is the founder of Amaranth Contemporary Dance.

ALUMNAPOSES IMPORTANT SOCIAL QUESTIONS

A film about a tradition of girls growing up as boys; felting with women in the Republic of Georgia in the name of activism; and paper making in the context of socially engaged art — Melissa Potter loves to raise questions about gender and society. Potter, a ’92 BFA Painting and Printmaking alumna, created the fascinating film Like Other Girls Do about the last surviving member of a Montenegrin tradition in which a girl is brought up as a boy in a household with no male heirs. It poses questions about women and choice in today’s society, and how we shape our identities.

A recent exhibition, Social Paper, that Potter co-curates with Jessica Cochran at Columbia College Chicago, charts the evolution of the art of hand papermaking in relation to recent discourse around socially engaged art. Social Paper happened to feature People’s Library, an initiative by VCU alumni that was featured in the last edition of Studio.

Potter exhibits widely and is a two-time Fulbright recipient. She has received numerous other awards including ArtsLink, the Soros Fund for Arts and Culture and the Trust for Mutual Understanding.

Potter is associate professor and director of the Book & Paper Program in the Interdisciplinary Arts Department of Columbia College Chicago.
FELTING AND COLLABORATING ABROAD

Art Foundation Assistant Professor Hope Ginsburg oversaw a project in the fall that was part of the 9th Mercosul Biennial in Porto Alegre, Brazil and took Painting and Printmaking undergraduate students Lindsay Clements and Gavin Foster with her. In Brazil, they collaborated with artists to produce an installation comprised of four Brazilian species of freshwater and marine sponges rendered in wool, hand-dyed with plant and insect pigments. They installed in two specially-designed recessed brick “tanks” in a former hydroelectric plant on the Guaiba lagoon.

Clements said of the experience, “I had never seen an event of such size come together. You go to shows and you tend to forget about the work that goes on behind the scenes. On top of the long hours we spent working in the studio, we also had meetings with the architects, designers and producers. It was such a valuable experience. The whole trip was so inspiring and rewarding.”

WHY WE SUPPORT VCUarts

“We think of our experience at RPI as a positive and formative time which has remained with us throughout our careers. We were both in the Arts, and know first-hand the benefit attending these VCU departments will bring to today’s students. We would not want any deserving student hindered in achieving their goal and have made our gift so that this is possible.”

—George R. Wolts, ’59 BFA, and Nancy W. Wolts, ’61 BFA, established an endowed scholarship for a Graphic Design or Fine Arts junior. George was co-founder and creative director for the ad agency, Martin & Wolts Inc. and was instrumental in the Virginia is For Lovers campaign. Nancy was active in the Nimrod Hall program for artists in its early days.

MoMA ACQUIRES PROFESSOR’S WORK & OTHER NEWS FROM KINETIC IMAGING

We are thrilled to announce that Stephen Vitiello has had two installations unanimously approved for acquisition by the Committee on Media and Performance Art at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The pieces are My Blue Sky, a multi-channel sound installation and Fear of High Places and Natural Things, a sculptural piece (shown above). Vitiello is a sound artist and associate professor in the Department of Kinetic Imaging. Closer to home, Associate Professor Bob Kaputof had a solo show, There Are Things That I Have Always Known, at Richmond’s Black Iris in the fall. He created an ethereal and beautiful space where new and re-imagined work examined life’s intimate and mundane details.

In other Kinetic Imaging news, 2006 alumna Jordan Bruner was honored this year by being named one of Art Directors Club’s Young Guns. The ADC honors “creative professionals who let loose their imaginations, shattering conventions and breaking boundaries with a dash of brilliance and personal flair.” Jordan’s animation, And Then We Were Jumping, was chosen as a Vimeo staff pick. The film is based on a poem written by Eve Ensler for One Billion Rising For Justice, a collective envisions justice for all survivors of gender violence. Congratulations on your good work, Jordan.
FACULTY’S WORK IN VATICAN CITY

Nine VCUarts faculty are represented with new art installations at the US Embassy in Vatican City. These loans, coordinated by the Art in Embassies Program (AIE), US Department of State, were installed in the US Ambassador’s official residence in January and will remain on view for two years. Work of Jack Wax, Ruth Bolduan, Susan Iverson, Ronald Johnson, Matt King, Richard Roth, Javier Tapia, Hilary Wilder, and Reni Gower (featured at left) are included.

AIE is a public-private partnership engaging over 20,000 participants globally, including artists, museums, galleries, universities, and private collectors, and encompasses over 200 venues in 189 countries. Professional curators and registrars create and ship about 60 exhibitions per year, and since 2003, over 58 permanent collections have been installed in the Department’s diplomatic facilities throughout the world.

Art featured above: Reni Gower, Glimmer (left), Susan Iverson, Winter Walk (right)

VCUarts AND COLUMBIA STUDENTS JOIN FORCES

VCUarts Departments of Painting + Printmaking and Sculpture + Extended Media hosted fine artist and mentor Mark Dion and his group of fourteen mentees from the Columbia University MFA Program, February 25th. Traveling south from New York City as part of their weeklong intensive with Dion, the Columbia students met with a full itinerary here in Richmond. The group began with a tour of Hollywood Cemetery given by an expert guide from the Valentine Richmond History Center and were joined by a group of honors students from the Art Foundation Program. Each MFA candidate from among the three programs gave a short presentation about his or her work in a rapid-fire “five images in three minutes” format. VCUarts grads opened their extra bedrooms and hospitable floor spaces to their colleagues from Columbia and a good time was had by all.

SCULPTOR HAS A MEDICAL CALLING

When VCU surgeons set out to separate a set of conjoined twins, they called on Morgan Yacoe (shown above, right), at the time a junior sculpture student. Her task: to cast a medical mold of the twins to duplicate their skin and shape. Nothing like this had been done before.

In collaboration with Dr. Jennifer Rhodes M.D., a reconstructive plastic surgeon and director of Center of Craniofacial Care at the Children’s Hospital of Richmond at VCU, Yacoe provided the model, complete with a skin-like outer surface. It was a crucial part of the operation’s success: so much so that surgeons tapped Yacoe again a year later. This time she was asked to cast the model for an even more complex surgery involving another set of conjoined twins. Both sets of twins were successfully separated.

Yacoe is also completing a number of sculpture commissions and continues to work with plastic surgery residents and attending physicians to develop models to simulate surgery outside the operating room. She designed and teaches a series of figure sculpting workshops to VCU plastic surgery residents to help them improve their understanding of the body by having them observe and replicate the human form in three dimensions. An exhibition with documentation of Yacoe’s groundbreaking work is scheduled for fall 2014 at our new Depot building. Yacoe and Rhodes spoke about their collaboration at the recent TEDxRVA.

Congratulations to Painting • Printmaking Professor Reni Gower for being named the 2014 recipient of the College Art Association’s Distinguished Teacher of Art Award, one of the greatest honors an arts educator can receive.
PERFORMANCE ARTIST MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ VISITS VCUQATAR

VCUQatar, in association with Qatar Museums Authority, welcomed acclaimed New York based performance artist Marina Abramović to campus for a lecture in November. Abramović spoke to a full house about her career and work as a performance artist and introduced the Marina Abramović Institute for the Preservation of Performance Art, which is scheduled to open in Hudson, New York in 2016.

Since the beginning of her career in Belgrade during the early 1970s, Abramović has pioneered performance as a visual art form. The body has always been both her subject and medium. Exploring her physical and mental limits in works that ritualize the simple actions of everyday life, she has withstood pain, exhaustion and danger in her quest for emotional and spiritual transformation. She has presented her work at major institutions in the US and Europe. In 2010, Abramović had her first major U.S. retrospective and simultaneously performed for over 700 hours in The Artist is Present at Museum of Modern Art, New York.

ALUMNI DESIGN QATAR’S ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGN

VCUQatar’s Center for Research, Design and Entrepreneurship (CRD+E) spearheaded the development of Qatar’s newly established national road safety campaign, titled One Second. The innovative campaign, supported by Maersk Oil Qatar as part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) undertaking, seeks to bring about lasting changes to driver habits in Qatar. The campaign is being rolled out in several phases, each targeting very specific areas of driver and vehicle safety.

The CRD+E team included VCUQatar alumni, graphic designers Hadeer S. Omar, Haneen Al Sharif and LuLu AbuDheays, and interior designer Rana Murad Ibrahim.

The road accident and fatality rate in Qatar is well above the world average. Qatar’s roads and cars are technologically advanced, yet common understanding and awareness of road safety is in its infancy. The One Second campaign was designed to act as a platform for all road safety initiatives launched in Qatar, thus creating an identifiable and sustainable identity to support the long-term vision for a national road safety campaign.

Qatar’s Ministry of Interior embraced One Second as the new umbrella brand that will bring under it all traffic and road safety awareness programs in Qatar.
VCUQatar Student Wins Damien Hirst Challenge

VCUQatar Painting and Printmaking junior Hana Al Saadi’s installation Snail Print Factory won the Damien Hirst Art Challenge, a competition set up in conjunction with Relics, Hirst’s first solo exhibition in the Middle East. The prize: an all expenses paid trip to London to tour one of Hirst’s studios, meet the artist and help create one of his famous spin paintings.

Al Saadi’s winning work is an installation that explores stages of the natural lifecycle: eating, mating and reproduction. Within the micro-ecosystem, the snails go about their business and leave slime trails on paper telling stories of the individual journeys, encounters and new beginnings inside the tank.

Hirst commented: “I love art like Hana’s that asks questions and makes you think and is difficult to define, and I love art that involves a living element, it makes the art feel more real. It looks simple too and is universal and communicates across international boundaries, which all great art should.”

Since the late 1980’s, Hirst has shocked and delighted the art world with works that explore the complex relationship between art, life and death. Relics, which presented the largest collection of Hirst’s work ever assembled, ran in Qatar from October 2013 through January 2014 and was curated by internationally renowned writer and curator Francesco Bonami.

Students’ Designs Now Represent Qatari Culture

qatar.vcu.edu

The Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy has selected designs by six VCUQatar sophomore graphic design students to be rolled into its brand guidelines. The students designed iconic pictograms of Qatari landmarks and culture, and Arabic calligraphy monograms representing precincts in Doha, Qatar.
VCU Quest Grants Go To Arts Faculty Projects

arts.vcu.edu/research

Once again, the new VCUarts research team is positively impacting the number and quality of grants received for faculty and students. We’re pleased to announce that four VCUarts teams have garnered VCU Quest grants this season, totaling $85,000.

Middle of Broad – (pictured above) Support for the Middle of Broad community engaged design studio on Broad Street to present project outcomes at national conferences, develop a good practice “toolkit” for dissemination nationally, and bring in internationally known designers to work with faculty and students.

Co-Project Directors: Kristin Caskey, Fashion Design; John Malinoski, Graphic Design; Camden Whitehead, Interior Design; also pictured above, Troy Schaum, architect and visiting designer.

Arts-Medicine Fellows – Support for an Arts-Medicine Fellowship program, which will make awards to VCU faculty and graduate students to undertake interdisciplinary research projects that explore the intersections between arts and healthcare.

Project Director: Aaron Anderson, Theatre Co-Project Directors: Alan Dow, Internal Medicine; Sarah B. Cunningham and David Holland, Arts

Bioenergetics: Arts Meets Gentle Science in Sickness and in Health – Support for an interdisciplinary team from the sciences, engineering and arts to develop new teaching modules for explaining bioenergetics to young children and their families. The project will culminate in a series of art works, educational digital apps, and an interactive installation at the Science Museum of Virginia.

Project Director: Shilpa Iyer, Chemical and Life Science Engineering

Co-Project Directors: Sarah Faris, Communication Arts; Raj Rao, Chemical and Life Science Engineering

Ecological and Environmental Science Perception 2.0 – Support for a curricular collaboration between Communication Arts and the VCU Center for Environmental Science in which science students are given access to courses in art theory.

Project Director: Daniel McGarvey, VCU Center for Environmental Science Co-Project Director: Robert Meganck, Communication Arts

Miami: Hotbed for VCUarts

A recent visit to Miami with Dean Joe Seipel made it clear that VCUarts is thick in the mix of what makes Miami and Miami Beach roar.

Miami area VCUarts alumni came out in force in December and toured the private art collection of Carolee and Nathan Reiber. Joined by VCU President Michael Rao and Dean Seipel, our alumni rocked the party. Gallery owners, night club designer, professional singer, business owners, fashion designer, sports car photographer, visual artist, museum director... VCUarts alumni do it all in Miami. The night was too short for everyone and there is a promise to return soon with a repeat performance.

In traversing the city from Art Basel to the Design District, the group was able to sneak an elevated view from a roving exhibition entitled Hotel Rehearsal (cover story). This pop-up inflatable hotel room roving the streets of Miami in December was in part fabricated and conceived by current VCUarts student, Meredith Argenzio ’16. Perhaps not the fanciest room, but the coolest.
ALUMNUS PETER HARHOLDT ISN’T SLOWING DOWN

peterharholdt.com

He builds race cars, photographs and races cars, and he’s hard to keep up with. He’s Peter Harholdt, and as a kid he built and raced go-karts but could not have foreseen where that interest would take him. When he was a VCU Sculpture MFA student in the early 1970’s, he built an actual race car as part of his thesis project. Shortly after graduation, Harholdt was offered the position as second-in-command in the Hirshhorn photo department. Although he tried to step away from photography, he never succeeded. In the nineties, MoMA, the Corcoran, LA County Museum, the Louvre and others began tapping him for photography. And is it any surprise he taught at racing and counter-terrorist driving schools?

In 2006, he had is first car book published — he now has fifteen stunning car photography books published by several specialist publishing companies including a new venture of his own. We would like to think that his VCU sculpture training had something to do with most recent endeavor: a 30-foot trailer that has everything a photo studio would have. He developed this incredible mobile studio with an engineer and it allows him to travel and still ensure the highest quality as he photographs some of the most amazing cars you’ve ever seen. His life now is far cry from teaching intro photography at VCU in the early 70’s (yes, he did that too). When asked about his time at VCU, Harholdt said, “I had this overwhelming sense I was in the right place at the right time. I knew it at the moment too — it was the place to be. It was like discovering my tribe.”

WHY I SUPPORT VCUarts

VCUarts does something special. It inspires and nurtures creativity, the manifestation of which is not limited to the production of remarkable images and crafted objects. It provides an environment in which intellectual and theoretical ideas can be formulated and tested. For more than three decades I had the privilege of participating in the collaborative creativity that constitutes the VCU teacher/student relationship that is fundamental to the art historical discourse. Providing research funds for current and future students enables me to continue the relationship and to do so with pride.

— Fredrika Jacobs, Professor Emeritus, Art History

LYON’S PHOTOS

GRAB GQ’S EYE

cargocollective.com/laurenlyon

The GQ Eye is GQ Magazine’s style blog — and they know what’s hot. They loved Photography and Film alumna Lauren Lyon’s photos in Need Supply Co.’s beautiful biannual print publication, Human Being Journal, issue 3. Lyon graduated in 2013 and has been helping Need promote their products, which sounds like a great job, as GQ Eye calls Need “one of the coolest online stores on the entire Internet.”
ART HISTORY IS ON THE MOVE

Robert Hobbs, Rhoda Thalhimer Endowed Chair in American Art, took students in his Spring Break class Robert Smithson/Earth Artist to New York and New Jersey to visit museums, private collections and sites important to the artist’s work (pictured at left). They met with curators and collectors at Dia Beacon, in Beacon, New York, the Princeton University Art Museum and the Montclair Art Museum in Montclair, New Jersey, which is currently featuring the exhibition Robert Smithson’s New Jersey. They also visited Great Notch Quarry, an outdoor site that is represented in a 3-dimensional artwork (what the artist called a “non-site”) in the exhibition. Hobbs was a co-curator of the Bahamian Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale.

In other Art History news, Assistant Professor Janna Israel is spending the year in Italy, engaged in NEH-funded research. And Colin Lang is back from the Freie Universität, Berlin, where he was awarded a fellowship in the Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies. In December, Assistant Professor Kathleen Chapman, took her Fall 2013 graduate class, What Was the Now? to see The Armory Show at 100: Modern Art and Revolution, an exhibition at the New York Historical Society.

VCUQatar and VCU Richmond students meet together for two classes this semester: Assistant Professor Radha Dalal is teaching Islamic Art Survey and Dina Bangdel, associate professor and director of Art History at VCUQatar, is teaching Contemporary Asian Art. They are both physically in Doha, and students in Richmond attend class via Vidyo technology in the art history classroom.

Photograph by Tom Burkett
Dance’s own **Courtney Harris** is the recipient of a 2014 Artist Fellowship in Choreography from the Virginia Commission for the Arts!

**Congratulations to Leslie Rogers, 2013 Sculpture MFA**, on being named a Postdoctoral Scholar in the Michigan Society of Fellows. This incredible fellowship will allow Leslie to split her time between New York and Ann Arbor where she will have a 3-year appointment as an assistant professor in the University of Michigan Art Department.

**Robert Ferguson Hester**, professor emeritus died August 17, 2013 in Richmond. From 1953 to 1970, he was chair of the Department of Interior Design at Richmond Professional Institute, which became VCU in 1968, and, from 1970 until his retirement in 1990, he was associate dean of the School of the Arts.

The Department of Communication Arts welcomes new full-time faculty **TyRuben Ellingson**, veteran Hollywood concept designer. Ellingson has worked on such films as *Men in Black*, *Hellboy*, *Avatar*, *Pacific Rim* and the sci-film *Elysium*. He teaches students the techniques and skills of his profession, but also provides them with wisdom gained from more than 20 years in the field. He got his start in 1989 as visual effects arts director for George Lucas’s Industrial Light and Magic, where he eventually worked on *Jurassic Park*.

John DeMao has retired and we miss him. John was interim chair for Graphic Design, 2009–2012; interim director for the VCU da Vinci Center for Product Innovation and Development in 2009; VCUQatar associate dean, 2003 – 2008; and chair of the Communication Arts and Design Department, 1987 – 2003. The MFA Graphic Design program was ranked the number one public and number four among all public and private institutions in the nation, by *US News & World Report* during his tenure. He was involved in the development of the design curriculum for VCUQatar since its inception in 1997 until 2012.

It is with pleasure that we share the selected recipients of the 2013–2014 VCUarts Faculty Awards in the categories of Distinguished Achievement in Service and Distinguished Achievement in Teaching. In Service, the award goes to **Dr. Melanie Buffington** (Art Education). **Christian Von Howard** (Dance & Choreography) has received the Teaching award.

**Dave Brockie**, lead singer and bassist for the Richmond-based Grammy nominated band GWAR, passed away at the age of 50 on March 23rd. Brockie and other VCU art students formed an art collective in the 1980’s, and GWAR was born. Brockie (aka Oderus Urungus) and bandmates were known for their comically grotesque costumes and stage theatrics for three decades. His influence lives on.

Interior Design has a new interim chair. **Christiana Lafazani** received her MFA in Interior Environments from VCU, her BS in Interior Design from James Madison University and a BAD in Business Administration from the School of Business, Thessaloniki, Greece. Christiana has served at VCUarts as associate professor and director of Interior Design graduate studies since 2003.

**Peggy Lindauer** is the new chair of the Department of Art History. She was formerly associate professor, interim department chair & museum studies coordinator. Lindauer holds an interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Curriculum Studies and an M.A. in Art History from Arizona State University, where she also was the curator of exhibitions at the Museum of Anthropology.
2013 POLLAK PRIZES

We're pleased to see several of our VCUarts family being recognized by Richmond Magazine for their Excellence in the Arts. Congratulations to the following recipients of 2013 Theresa Pollak Prizes:

VISUAL ART – Andras Bality, BA alumnus from the Department of Art History
WORDS – Cheryl Pallant, former Contact Improvisation adjunct professor in the Department of Dance & Choreography
APPLIED ARTS – Tom Chenoweth, MFA alumnus from the Department of Sculpture + Extended Media
PHOTOGRAPHY – Regula Franz, MFA alumnus from the Department of Photography & Film
DANCE – Arnott Mader, former adjunct professor in the Department of Dance & Choreography
THEATER – Debra Clinton, MFA alumnus from the Department of Art Education

Image: Regula Franz, Golden Rock, Myanmar