Annually, VCUarts supports student scholarship by funding Undergraduate Research Grants. Here’s a small sample of this year’s projects:

• The Drag Lab (pictured above and on the cover), a collaborative project with an initial focus on androgyny, fashion, identity, and cooperative art-making, seeks to communicate developments in gender performance through the lens of visual art. AWARD: $2,679

• Coding Literacy in the Arts is a project to form a community around programming in the arts through an interdisciplinary arts workshop that brings algorithmic drawing into the physical world. AWARD: $2,138

• In Human vs. Nature Microscopic Exploration, a team of scientific illustration students will use a digital dissecting microscope with a camera to examine relationships between specimens, both natural and artificial, gathered from the VCU Monroe Park campus. AWARD: $2,550

• With Adorning the Censored Body, a team will create adornments for various women’s nipples and organize a performance exhibition of the work, inspired by the wearable art of Lauren Kalman. AWARD: $1,700

Visit bit.ly/24FC9Hg for the full list of grant receipts, past and present.

Fear, righteous indignation, and a sense that we were participating in a pivotal moment in history were all emotions present when I was an art student at the University of Wisconsin. The Vietnam War and the Civil Rights movement provided the backdrop for my undergraduate experience. 1968 was a landmark year in American history; it was the year Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. were assassinated. The year of the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, which marked the beginning of the end of the U.S.’s involvement in that war, and the year Apollo 8 orbited the moon. It was also the year that America saw its first interracial kiss on TV.

It was in this rapidly shifting political and ideological landscape that contemporary art was expanding—with new endeavors like process, video and installation art gaining momentum—and that the Anderson Gallery was making a name for itself. As we reflect upon the 45 years of inquiry, experimentation and contributions to Richmond’s art community, it is important to note that the closing of the Anderson Gallery marks the ending of a significant chapter in VCUArts’ history.

It is also at this moment that we must look to the future.

That future must continue to welcome creative exploration and the panoply of thought, experience, and perspective that strengthens our artistic community. I am excited to see how active and engaged our students are: Cinema students creating free promotional videos for girls, non-confirming and trans youth; communication arts and graphic design students starting their own company to help at risk children; and mOb students partnering with Massey Cancer Center to bring comfort to cancer patients. Our students are out in the world, making a difference and working together to effect change.

Our students are working for change within VCUArts, too. This semester, in response to our students’ desire for a stronger voice, I initiated the Dean’s Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion. This student advisory group will help to inform my leadership team on these important issues. Our students today are redefining activism on campus and we are enriched by these conversations.

Together, we learn from each other and we contribute to the larger conversation that is happening nationally. The work we do today lays the groundwork for the school of tomorrow. We want VCUArts to move into the future with agility and strength, while remaining dedicated to academic and creative excellence. And to continue to be an open, supportive and rigorous environment.

Seipel blowing glass in 1969 while a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin.
If the university and the Anderson Gallery were a married couple, there’d be an exchange of sapphires, but we think paper suits just fine. To celebrate the Anderson Gallery’s 45-year-run of introducing innovative contemporary art to Richmond audiences and its vital role in the evolution of the School of the Arts, VCUarts is publishing a commemorative 232-page book, “Anderson Gallery: 45 Years of Art on the Edge.” Overseen by project director and editor Ashley Kistler, with input from former gallery staff Traci Garland and Michael Lease, this publication also illuminates significant developments in the larger cultural community of Richmond—a history that has helped pave the way for the launch of the university’s Institute for Contemporary Art in 2017.

This richly illustrated book includes a foreword by Dean Joseph H. Seipel; essays by former directors Steven High, Marilyn Zeitlin, and Kistler; an historical overview by Garland; a remembrance of former director Ted Potter by Bernard Martin; and interviews, commentary, and personal reflections by other individuals who have had a close connection with the gallery. Also featured are six artist-designed folios by Lease, Caryl Burtner, Jasmine Calvert, Hope Ginsburg, John Malinoski, and Matt Spahr. The book is designed by VCUarts alumni Charley Foley (M.F.A. ’04) and Angeline Robertson (B.F.A. ’00) of Scout Design.

Generous support has been provided by Altria, the Pollak Society, and the VCUarts Dean’s Office. The book will be available in late April for $35.00. The book will be available for purchase through Barnes & Noble at VCU.
VCUarts Artists Earn $94,000 from VMFA Fellowship Program

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Fellowship Program is a vital source of funding for the arts in Virginia. This year, of the 28 artists honored for this program, more than half are VCUarts faculty, staff, alumni and students. Winners include:

Natalie Abernethy (B.F.A. ’17)
John DiJulio (B.F.A. ’17)
Moaz Elemam (B.F.A. ’15)
Monica Escamilla (B.F.A. ’18)
Kyle Falzone (B.F.A. ’18)
Madeleine Hardy (B.F.A. ’17)
Cynthia Henebry (M.F.A. ’14)
James Heyes (B.F.A. ’17)
Isabel Lee (B.F.A. ’17)
Kathryn Mayes (B.F.A. ’16)
Rachel McGovern (B.F.A. ’16)
Valerie Molnar (M.F.A. ’08), AFO instructor
Paul Ryan (M.F.A. ’86)
Matt Spahr (M.F.A. ’07), AFO instructor
Stephen Vitiello Kinetic Imaging professor
Jack Wax Craft/Material Studies professor

YMA Scholarship Winners

Seven students from VCU Fashion have received coveted YMA Scholarships. Amanda Data (B.F.A. ’18), Jessica Fatherly (B.F.A. ’18), Caroline Gottlieb (B.F.A. ’16), Robert Rey Layson (B.F.A. ’18), Katherine Manson (B.F.A. ’16), Madison Moran (B.F.A. ’17) and Corinne Napper (B.F.A. ’18) traveled to New York City with department Chair Patricia Brown and Professor Karen Videtic to celebrate at YMA’s awards ceremony in January.

Virginia Commission for the Arts Awards $9,000

Michael Jones McKean, an associate professor of Sculpture + Extended Media, and graduate students Steven Randall (M.F.A. ’16) and Levester Williams (M.F.A. ’10) have each received a $3,000 fellowship award from the Virginia Commission for the Arts.

Abstract Expressionist Judith Godwin

Painting alumna Judith Godwin (B.F.A. ’52) will be featured in the landmark exhibition “Women of Abstract Expressionism” at the Denver Art Museum, opening June 12.

After graduating from VCU (when it was Richmond Professional Institute), Godwin moved to New York City, studied at the Arts Students League, and became a major figure in the abstract expressionist movement. In 2012, she returned to Richmond for the opening of her concurrent exhibitions, “Judith Godwin: Early Abstractions” at the VCUarts Anderson Gallery and “Gesture: Judith Godwin and Abstract Expressionism” at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. She was also interviewed by Dean Joseph H. Seipel at the Grace Street Theatre, which may be viewed at: bit.ly/1VVdDvD

VCUQatar Rams Slam Dunk the Competition

The Hamad bin Khalifa University basketball league pits the eight universities of Education City, Doha against each other in good ol’ fashioned school spirit-driven rivalry. This year, the VCUQatar women’s basketball team, pictured above with Dean Akel Kahera, beat out Northwestern to take the title of tournament champions, 15–14.
Joseph H. Seipel, sculptor, professor, educational leader, arts advocate, philanthropist, and all-around great human being, has announced his retirement effective June 30, 2016. “Joe’s leadership has made VCU a creative campus,” said VCU President Michael Rao. “… [He] has been instrumental in positioning the School of the Arts as a global, forward-thinking institution.”

Seipel’s 42 years of service in arts higher education include 17 years as chair of the Department of Sculpture + Extended Media and eight years as VCUarts’ senior associate dean and director of graduate studies. He was appointed dean of the School of the Arts in the spring of 2011, following a national search. Under his tenure as dean, VCUarts’ graduate fine arts programs were ranked number two in the country by U.S. News & World Report’s peer assessment survey, just behind Yale University (March 2016). The school maintained its ranking as the country’s number one public fine arts program.

Seipel furthered the school’s global commitment to cutting-edge arts and design by establishing exchange agreements with arts and design schools in Finland, India, Israel, and Korea, with discussions currently underway in China and Cuba. He has spearheaded opportunities for interdisciplinary research between the arts and healthcare, and created new programs and partnerships to connect students with the creative and business marketplace. He has advocated for arts research by supporting the creation of the Arts Research Institute, to launch in the fall of 2016, and hiring the first executive director of research for VCUarts. Seipel also played a pivotal role in raising funds—over $34M—for VCU’s new Institute for Contemporary Art.

“To have been able to play a part in transforming the lives of hundreds of students who have come through this institution has been a gift of immeasurable scale,” says Seipel. “… I fully intend to continue my passionate advocacy for VCU and VCUarts as I move into this next chapter of my life. I especially look forward to having more time to spend with my incredible wife and daughter … and for the sculpture studio that is lonely and looks forward to my return.”
As this past academic year came to a close, the VCU community was engaged in conversations surrounding the university’s core values of diversity, equity and inclusion. Echoing the national conversation, these discussions are at the forefront of our cultural consciousness.

In the VCUarts Department of Dance and Choreography, Chair E. Gaynell Sherrod, Ed.D., and Associate Chair Lea Marshall had already embraced the diversity of the department’s students and the need for equity and inclusion.

The department, which is celebrating its 35th year, has seen considerable growth from the 25 students that were enrolled in 1981. With about 100 students now enrolled in the department, Sherrod notes that the demographic makeup of those students has evolved along with the quantity: Today, more than 50 percent of dance students identify as a person of color.

“With that said, there are several implications we need to address,” Sherrod said. “How do we reflect, in a cultural sense, what those voices are and help them get the information they need in order to make their own career happen? How do we also make sure that we have the faculty at the table that will bring that information to the forefront in terms of curriculum?

“Our curriculum needs to shift a little bit, not only to address the students of color, but all students, because we want to make 21st century artists. And 21st century artists are really global artists.” One way to do this is creating more study abroad opportunities. “If we’re talking about global then we need to get them out in the world,” Sherrod said. Faculty are already cultivating relationships in different parts of the world and, as a result, about a dozen students are studying in Paris this semester.

Sherrod and Marshall also hope to match the department’s growth with much-needed additional space. If the curriculum is to evolve, space is needed for students to have more time to work in the studio and more time with guest artists such as Akram Khan.

Khan, an internationally renowned British choreographer, only designates one month for performances in all of North America each year. This year, he chose VCU. With a Bangladesh heritage, Khan is trained in the classical Indian kathak, a percussive, classical dance.

“We have put together events where the artists can interact with students so we have them coming into classes and departments,” Marshall said. “It’s one thing to go to the performance but it’s another thing to have our students actually interact and connect with those artists in the classroom.”

Khan’s February performance was complemented by FLASH: a Conversation in Hip Hop and Butoh, a collaboration between Rennie Harris, a famous hip hop dance artist out of Philadelphia, and Michael Sacamoto, a Japanese butoh artist from California. The piece is conceived as a conversation between the two forms.

While the styles differ vastly, the catalysts for each dance have striking similarities: both are responses to violence against people.

“They both resonate in a very similar way and explore how the body responds to that,” Marshall said. “As Michael Sakamoto describes it, ‘hip-hop and butoh were born from marginalized, postwar urban subcultures, and each embodies a philosophical approach to the creation of cultural identity through dance.””

“With these men from different parts of the world ... having this common language through their movement ... they tease out not only the commonalities but those things that are different and uniquely interesting. They feed off each other,” Sherrod said. “[Dance] is a good vehicle for people to really see more clearly how differences help move us forward.” By Leila Ugincius, adapted from VCU News.
DANCE AND CHOREOGRAPHY

Photography by Sarah Ferguson (B.F.A. ’05).

CELEBRATING
35 YEARS OF DANCE

VCUarts STUDIO | 7
WADING IN THE BAY OF FUNDY

Jessica Carey (B.F.A. ’16) had never envisioned herself in Canada’s Bay of Fundy, nor did she know about its legendary 50-foot tide rises—but last fall that’s exactly where she found herself, dressed in waterproof overalls, assisting a video shoot for VCUarts Associate Professor Hope Ginsburg.

“We worked two 11-hour days and laughed the whole time,” says Carey, a senior in the photography and film department, “but I’ve learned a lot about professionalism and how to communicate from Hope. She’s been a great mentor.”

Ginsburg recruited Carey to be second cameraperson on the video shoot for “Land Dive Team: Bay of Fundy,” the latest iteration of “Breathing on Land,” Ginsburg’s ongoing project depicting scuba divers meditating on land in various settings. In the Bay of Fundy, Ginsburg was interested in capturing video of the Bay’s tide rising above the heads of her “Land Dive” meditators, which made for interesting shooting for Carey, lead cameraman Matt Flowers (B.F.A. ’03) and sound producer Joshua Quarles (B.S. ’94).

They arrived before sunrise and had one chance to make the shot. “The tide came in so fast we were scrambling to get in our gear before it was all the way up the beach,” remembers Ginsburg.

Carey and Ginsburg had worked together before. The two met when Carey took Ginsburg’s Time Studio Art Foundation class her freshman year, which, she says, was instrumental in helping her choose film as a major. Over the years, Ginsburg recruited Carey to contribute to her projects in various ways.

“Working with students is one of the best things about teaching, and being part of the VCUarts community,” says Ginsburg. “It’s also how I learned. I had mentors who pulled me in on projects and I think it’s an incredibly valuable experience to work on real world projects. And I think the keenest students figure that out.”

“Land Dive Team: Bay of Fundy” will be part of an exhibition at the Tyler School of Art’s Temple Contemporary gallery in Philadelphia, opening May 4, and at MASS MoCA in North Adams, Mass., opening May 28.

BLACK ARTS STUDENT EMPOWERMENT AT VCU

Black Arts Student Empowerment at VCU held its inaugural exhibition at the VCUarts Depot Gallery in November. Thirty-four artists came together for the exhibition, which was prefaced by a round of critiques by faculty members including Stephen Alcorn and Sonya Clark.

Paintings, short films and performances spoke to the theme “Justice Or Else!,” the 20th anniversary theme of the Million Man March. Performances from the evening included the Black National Anthem by the Black Awakening Choir, spoken word by Good Clear Sound and a rap performance by Tolliver “Lucky” Turner.

Inspired from his experiences and conversations with the organization’s members, Alcorn began working on a series, creating one-of-a-kind portraits of each B.A.S.E. member, pictured at left.

Top row, left to right: Angelique Scott (B.F.A. ’13), B.A.S.E President; Raymond Barry (B.F.A. ’16), B.A.S.E. member; Abu Yillah, B.A.S.E. member. Bottom row, left to right: Christina Hairston (B.F.A. ’15), B.A.S.E. Vice President; Nia Campbell (B.F.A. ’19), B.A.S.E. member; Jelani Taylor (B.F.A. ’18), B.A.S.E. member.
No field was immune to the upheavals. Even the arts faced violence as Andy Warhol nearly died after being shot. “Students hear about something called the ’60s, and this lives in their psyche,” Meganck said. “But they did not experience any of this stuff... This to them is ancient history. ... There’s a lot of that ’68 stuff that’s kind of happening again. Students don’t understand the context of Black Lives Matter, but this, to me, is like this is 1968 again.”

Jorge Benitez, assistant professor of communication arts and the instructor for the course, suggested the class tie in all these events to the zeitgeist of the times. Because the historic context for the class is not limited to a single field, no one person has all the expertise.

Each lecture in the class was given by a professor from a different school and/or department within the university and the School of the Arts. The topics included civil rights, fashion, film, media, the performing arts, philosophy and theory, politics, popular culture, religion, and the visual arts.

Universitywide, faculty responded with interest to the opportunity, contributing their time and expertise. Not one professor or department head that Meganck approached turned him down. Instead, they all eagerly asked if the class would continue in subsequent semesters. If so, Meganck will have to decide if it will continue with 1968 or with a different year.

By Leila Ugincius, adapted from VCU News.

Robert Meganck, chair of the Department of Communication Arts, remembers the past well, and thinks the way it’s taught could be improved.

The idea came to him during a conversation with Margaret Lindauer, chair of the Department of Art History, that turned to the different art history classes taught at VCUArts.

There are classes specifically for the histories of communication arts, graphic design, dance, music, etc.

“This is kind of crazy that we all have these history classes as if these things happen in isolation, which they don’t,” Meganck said at the time. “What is happening in painting at the same time is happening in dance, at the same time that it’s happening in sculpture. Wouldn’t it be great if we could create a class that essentially talked about how all these different disciplines related to one another?

“What if we just took one year, and talked about what everyone was doing that one year? And how everybody is relating to the same material.”

That conversation led to a new arts class, offered in the spring 2016 semester, open to the entire university: 1968: Love, War, and Revolution. Meganck chose 1968 because so much happened that year that still affects us today. In some ways, the world today mirrors that of 1968.

Major events in 1968 included the Tet Offensive, the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. and the Democratic National Convention protests. The Equal Rights Amendment was proposed and VCU was formed. In pop culture, it was the year “2001: A Space Odyssey,” “Yellow Submarine” and “The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test” were released.

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”
-George Santayana
AMONG THE SPRING 2016 VISITORS:

The Fretful Porcupine, Roots Chamber Duo
Sam Doney, classical guitarist
Josh Kline, artist and curator
Ruba Katrib, curator
The Atlantic String Chamber
Gordon Hall, site-responsive sculptor
Paul Basler, French horn
The Quiet Club (Danny McCarthy and Mick O’Shea), sound artists
Nash Dunnigan, art director
Mike Cloud, contemporary painter
Mary Virginia Swanson, photography educator and author
Thomas Allen Harris, documentarian
Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center
Akram Khan, Israel Galván, Rennie Harris, and Michael Sakamoto.
ToroBaka/FLASH: The Cultural Intimacy Project collaborators
Benjamin Fraley, percussionist and composer
Matt Barton, video and sound artist
Abigail DeVille, site-specific installation artist
American Trombone Quartet
Horzowski Trio, strings
Connor Stevens, percussionist
Dona Nelson, painter
Candida Alvarez, painter
Doric String Quartet with Jonathan Biss, pianist
Howie Chen, curator
Samara Golden, installation artist
Ronald K. Brown, choreographer
Kim Harty, glass artist
Letha Wilson, mixed-media contemporary artist
Jim Cohen, Afghan-born filmmaker
Liz Lerman, choreographer, performer, writer and educator
Margo Norton, assistant curator at the New Museum of Contemporary Art
Josh Singer, Rachelle Riley and Daniel McCafferty, graphic designers and urbanists
Lisa Sokolone, visual artist
Sean Berg, graphic designer
Chris Fritton, “the Itinerant Printer”
They’ve included recent graduates and legends in the arts, and their messages and their presentations are as individual as the artists themselves. The VCUarts visiting artists program is one example of how our students may engage in rich conversations and encounter a broad range of viewpoints, with learning going well beyond the conventional professor-student exchange.

Dance and Choreography Chair E. Gaynell Sherrod, Ed.D, says, “The program allows students the opportunity to work with professionals in the field: those who are current and cutting edge, and those who are legendary. It’s a way of expanding upon and enhancing the curriculum, and providing the students with different perspectives.”

What does each department consider while curating their list of visitors? For Graphic Design Chair David Shields, it’s about going beyond the expected. “We bring in scholars and practitioners from the fringe to really help us push the boundaries. We look for artists who are curious, passionate and iconoclastic.”

Throughout VCUarts, visiting artists aren’t just a special event; they’re a huge part of the learning experience. They include everything from small classroom discussions to lecture hall presentation to workshops—and even semester-long residencies.

The list of visitors is substantial. In the spring 2016 semester, VCUarts students were taught, mentored and inspired by 22 visiting artists. VCU Dance alone hosts about 8 to 14 guests per semester.

The students and staff from the Cinema program have partnered with some amazing Richmond nonprofits to produce and edit promotional videos. Richmond Ballet, YWCA and Girls Rock! RVA, an organization that runs a musical empowerment camp for girls, gender non-conforming and trans youth, are just three of the nonprofits Cinema will be working with this year.

Visit bit.ly/1OxSkdK for a look at the Girls Rock! RVA trailer.

**Cinema Helps Richmond Nonprofits**

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**DoDream: ART BRINGS HOPE TO AT RISK CHILDREN**

VCUarts students **Woojin Ahn** (B.F.A. ’15), **Song Han** (B.F.A. ’16), and **Jane Lee** (B.F.A. ’16) are self-initiators. A demanding figure drawing class cemented their friendship. When they began, they had a simple goal: to design and create artwork with a purpose. In 2014, Ahn, Han and Lee started DoDream by developing specialty products to raise money and awareness for at-risk youth; they illustrated a line of greeting cards, calendars, framed art and clocks that are currently sold on the DoDream website at dodream4.org.

Ahn, a communication arts major, explains that DoDream means ‘gentle knocking’ in Korean and represents the idea of hope in English. She says, “What started out as a simple idea grew into our passion. We realized we could create what we wanted and help children in need.”

VCUarts has given Ahn many opportunities to exhibit her work. In May 2015, these products were shown at Anne’s Visual Art Studio and again in August 2015 at the Hippodrome Theatre. She says, “I have put myself out there and like the idea of using my art to give back to the community.”

Han, a graphic design major, says, “My personal goal as a designer was to use my time to design and create artwork to help others. I’ve always wanted to participate, achieve and strive to do more than just school projects and works. I’ve always wanted to use the opportunity for greater, extraordinary purposes.”

Last July, the group decided to sponsor Adolof, a ten-year old boy who lives in Indonesia, through the program Compassion International. These students have been supporting Adolof with money raised by DoDream. They write to each other regularly and send birthday gifts. Adolof fondly refers to the girls as his ‘sponsor DoDream sisters,’ and sends wishes for good health and success. This positive relationship fuels their creativity.

This year, the students are creating storybooks for children in schools, hospitals and shelters. Han says, “My goal as a graphic designer is to help others in need, especially children in physical and spiritual poverty. What we do for the DoDream project, especially the children’s distribution project, is exactly what I wish to do as a designer and artist.”

“We found a purpose behind our art,” says Ahn.

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**Artist Finds his Purpose in Community Engagement Work**

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Ryan Mulligan (B.F.A. ’03, M.F.A. ’05) does not mince words. “I was a selfish bastard who made self-entitled art.” But that all changed when Mulligan’s son, Hobbs, was diagnosed with autism. Spending time in his studio making abstract paintings started to feel selfish. Mulligan was no longer interested in landing museum and gallery shows—places he felt his son would not fit in, given Hobbs’ erratic behavior—and instead began focusing on community-based projects. His goal became fostering a supportive community for Hobbs.

Now, Mulligan works for Cradle Cincinnati, providing innovative solutions to lower the city’s high infant mortality rates. “I look at problems differently, artists look at people first,” he says.

For more on Mulligan, visit bit.ly/1MzS5jV

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IN SERVICE
Above: Migrant worker housing prototype built by VCUQatar in 2012. Below: With a linear plan people are not facing each other and semi-private space is extended across the cabin to the storage along the opposite wall. The idea is that every structure will be personalized according to the persons needs. Bottom: First test of bed prototype in the studio.

MAKING HOME

IMPROVING LIVING CONDITIONS FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

Migrant labor is a fact of life in the rapid modernization that is transforming Doha, Qatar. As the country prepares to host the World Cup in 2022, the Qatar Foundation has implemented new national standards for migrants’ living quarters.

Recently, five interior design students lead by assistant professor Maja Kinnemark worked with Johan Terblans, manager of CORE construction, and the Research Centre at VCUQatar on a project called “System for Living.” This project is part of a larger design endeavor to improve the living conditions for low-income migrant workers in Qatar.

The junior students Teekshani Perera, Mark Bermejo, and senior students Dhika Khaira, Farah Zamri and Arwa Safri helped research and design sleeping quarters for the migrants’ camps, with the aim of establishing a sense of privacy and personal space in what is otherwise a shared environment.

Says Perera of the experience, “This project has been a great opportunity for us to learn about people from a different background. I know now that I would like to work with social design in the future.”
“Rethink the experience of a cancer patient.”

That’s not what most people would expect as an assignment for an art student. But that has been one of the challenges at VCUarts’ Middle Of Broad for more than five years, since this hands-on design lab first started working with Massey Cancer Center. Now, a group of mOb students has developed a new product that can bring chemotherapy patients a bit of relief when they ride in a car.

“We were faced with the question, ‘how do we improve the daily life of someone in the hospital?’” stated Manon Loustaunau (B.F.A. ’15), a mOb student who serves as the project’s leader. “We ended up focusing on a special seat-belt cover, because so many people travel a long distance for treatment at Massey. When you have cancer, something this small can really affect a large part of your day.”

The padded cushion is designed to cover a standard seat belt to ease the discomfort of riding with a chemo port. These ports are usually implanted under the skin of the chest, and they typically stay in place for as long as the patient undergoes chemotherapy.

According to mOb professor Kristin Caskey, “mOb has been working with the patient care group at Massey for more than five years. A lot of ideas have come up for how one can make a patient experience better, from wayfinding to waiting room design.”

Part of the unique treatment practice at Massey Cancer is the idea of holistic treatment—not just a medical diagnosis, but addressing the patient’s physical, emotional, and mental concerns by providing comfort, both physically and psychologically. Says Loustaunau, “The seat-belt cover figures into all of this by showing that Massey Cancer cares about the big things, but also the small details. Something that can relieve the pain of a seat belt allows a cancer patient to still have the freedom and autonomy they are used to having with transportation.”

The seat-belt cover team included Loustaunau, fashion design (B.F.A. ’15); Kerrie Harlow, graphic design (B.F.A. ’16); Jackson Cantor, graphic design (B.F.A. ’16); and Kasha Killingsworth, interior design (B.F.A. ’16).

The original design was a soft, fleece-covered cushion shaped like a hand, which the patient could wear either as a thumbs up or a thumbs down, reflecting one’s feelings at the time. Each hand featured a patch with a sunburst-shaped like a hand, which the patient could wear either as a thumbs up or a thumbs down, reflecting one’s feelings at the time. Each hand featured a patch with a sunburst-like design, symbolizing a cancer cell being destroyed by chemotherapy. The product is currently being redesigned to be more budget-friendly. The new tube-shaped cushion will feature a carrier and a custom printed fabric.

“This project contains a number of elements we look for in a mOb project,” stated Professor Caskey. “It identifies a community need—in this case, the need for comfort. And we also look for things where there is room to be playful.”
DESIGN EASES PAIN

STUDENTS DEVELOP A SEAT-BELT COVER FOR CANCER PATIENTS

Loustauau, Harlow, and Killingsworth show their original seat belt cover design for Massey Cancer Center. Photography by Diego Valdez (B.F.A. '15).
LOS ESTUDIANTES DE M.F.A. VIAJAN A MÉXICO

Academic and artist development doesn’t just happen in the classroom, which is evident by a recent trip to Mexico City led by Painting + Printmaking Chair Arnold J. Kemp. This weeklong trip for graduate students involved studio and gallery visits, curator and gallerist meetings, and arts and cultural tours of sites such as Plaza de las Tres Culturas, Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo and Museo Nacional de Antropología.

Kemp says: “The Professional Practices course aims to examine and expand aspirations while preparing young artists for the practicalities they will face upon graduation—taking an extended look at the various scenes, galleries, residencies, teaching opportunities, and nonprofit institutions in a selection of global cities. I designed the trip to Mexico City so that our students could make authentic connections with amazing people, and feel the excitement of cultural immersion in a historic and contemporary art scene.”

Mexico City became a VCU classroom for a week with guest artists Martin Soto Climent, Daniela Libertad and Yoshua Okón, and curators Daniel Garza-Usabiaga and Cuauhtémoc Medina, among others. Kemp hopes to make this travel opportunity to Mexico City an ongoing experience for his students.

Music Chair Named ICFAD Fellow

Darryl Harper, chair of the music department, has been named as an International Council of Fine Arts Deans Fellow. The Fellows Program fosters talented arts administrators through leadership and career development.

London’s Saatchi Gallery Features VCUarts Alumna

Sculpture alumna Mia Feuer (M.F.A ’09) is one of 14 artists featured in Saatchi Gallery’s “Champagne Life,” its first all-female art exhibition. Her sculpture “Jerusalem Donkey” was on display in the exhibition, which ran in early 2016. In addition, Feuer’s “Dog Sled,” has been purchased by the Saatchi Collection. The piece, pictured above, is made from petroleum trash found on the shores of arctic fiords, made on the deck of a tall ship while she was living and sailing in the Arctic Sea.
Richmond summers can be hot and humid, but not even that prepared Nastassja Swift (B.F.A. ’15) for the August heat when she landed in Qatar. Swift, who studied painting and printmaking on the Richmond campus, is VCUQatar’s 2015–2016 Artist in Residence. The residency program was established in 2011, making Swift its fifth participant.

In addition to her artistic development and culminating show, Swift is a teacher’s assistant for a painting course and an assistant with the digital lab and printmaking studios. She is also the advisor for Contemporary Fiber Crew, a student organization she started, where students learn various fiber processes and how to use specific materials.

For Swift, moving to Doha hasn’t been a seamless transition, but it’s been an eye-opening and humbling one.

“My ride to school or visit to the grocery store has become a part of my daily routine and I often forget that I’m in another country. But even those things are often interrupted by the norms of Doha—like the roads changing ever so quickly or the grocery store being closed for prayer,” said Swift. “Doha is changing almost everyday, it continues to feel like a new place.”

Cultural nuances aside, being an artist in a new country also comes with its own life lessons.

“Living in Richmond for the past four years, I knew where everything was, in terms of materials. Then I came to Doha, where there aren’t very many choices of where to find materials, so I had to quickly adapt. Whether it was building a frame loom on my studio wall, or being conscious of future material needs when ordering, I’ve learned to adjust and to also appreciate the access I had to certain materials I had back home.”

Swift graduated in spring 2015 and she hasn’t slowed down yet. She spent the summer at a residency program at Vermont Studio Center, which left her with a mere nine days to prepare for her international, multi-month stay in Doha.

“I struggled with jumping back into the studio. I needed time to really think about what I was making and ask myself questions about my work,” she said. “Luckily, the faculty here eased my worries of needing to immediately, and I was able to just be in the studio and sketch and read and sketch some more without committing. Taking that time in the beginning has played a major role in the development of my studio practice.”

Swift’s solo exhibition “I Keep Repeating it Over and Over in my Head” showed at the VCUQatar Gallery from March 27—April 3. Her pieces show off both her painting and craft talents, including felting, weaving and dying. As for plans after Doha? Graduate school may be on the horizon, but Swift’s not rushing it.

“For now,” she says, “I want to continue learning about myself as an artist and person before stepping back into the realm of being a student.”
PAINTER STANLEY RAYFIELD: PURITY IN ART

Stanley Rayfield (B.F.A. ’09) creates powerful portraits, capturing the inner core of his subjects. He paints from the heart and wants his artwork to bring others joy. His Christian faith is a driving force in his work and current success as an artist. Rayfield says, “I want to be honest and pure in what I do.”

From private commissions to a teaching workshop, it has been a busy year for Rayfield. His paintings were exhibited at the Morris Gallery in Augusta, Ga., where he was the youngest artist featured. The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts added Rayfield’s painting “Black Jesus” to its permanent collection, he had an opening at the Glave Kocen Gallery, and he was a guest on Virginia This Morning.

Rayfield, pictured inset at left, has worked hard as a portrait artist. His education at VCUarts in communication arts laid the foundation for his professional achievements. He was influenced by faculty members Alex Bostic and Albert Epshteyn who challenged him to be more introspective and take risks in his drawing. Epshteyn recalls, “Stanley was exceptional. He had a yearning for knowledge. I always knew he wanted to achieve. That passion is what helped him become an artist.”

Golden Installations Brighten Up D.C.

Foon Sham (M.F.A. ’81) installed four public artworks in the District of Col, as part of a commission for Rain Gardens by Golden Triangle Business Improvement District. Many of Sham’s works are large wooden sculptures comprising several smaller blocks of wood.

Sham, inspired by the natural qualities of wood, continues to find new ways to work with the medium. “Wood is a unique material and no two pieces are alike, just like human beings,” he says.

In dense urban neighborhoods like Jessica Langley’s (M.F.A. ’08), neighbors reveal a lot about themselves on their clotheslines. In Ridgewood, Queens, you’re likely to know boxer or brief before you even know a name or face. So when Langley’s neighbor wanted to hang a clothesline behind their apartments, an idea sparked and the Stephen and George Laundry Line gallery was born. “I like the idea of sharing something on my laundry line that I’m interested in,” says Langley. “Not my personal belongings, but an idea.” Langley’s inspiration for the project came from her days at VCU, specifically Locker 50b, the gallery VCUarts student Virginia Samuels created in her locker with exhibitions of miniature work. And fellow VCUarts alumni play prominently in Langley’s monthly programming; for the inaugural exhibition last May, she tapped Rachel Hayes (M.F.A. ’06). For more on Langley, visit: bit.ly/1MzTEhO

Gallery on a (Shoe) String


Work by Rachel Hayes displayed during Stephen and George Laundry Line’s inaugural exhibition. Inset: Langley installing a piece on the line.

“Toby.” Oil on canvas, 22 x 30. Courtesy of the artist.
vcuarts thanks members of the pollak Society for providing generous support for student and faculty scholarships, travel opportunities and research. We also thank Page Bond gallery for being a partner in the arts and providing pollak Society event sponsorship. For information about ways to support VCUarts, please contact julia carr, executive director of development 804.827.4676, carrj@vcu.edu.

OUT OF BOUNDS: Connecting VCU Basketball Players to the Community

What are VCU basketball players Mo Alie-Cox and Melvin Johnson up to after the final buzzer sounds for the Rams?

These two criminal justice majors with the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs can be found interning at the General Assembly, while getting a firsthand look at Virginia’s legislative process.

In an upcoming Brown Bag lecture, the Commonwealth Society will hear from Alie-Cox, Johnson and other team members about their internships and contributions to the community. Lectures, along with short courses, travel opportunities, and seminars are part of a robust series of offerings that members have access to.

For more information about the Commonwealth Society or to join, contact director Angela M.D. Allen: amdallen@vcu.edu or (804) 827-7301.

THE FULL CIRCLE OF GIVING

Local arts supporter and philanthropist Josée Covington has generously provided an annual scholarship for undergraduate and graduate students in the School of the Arts since 2005. Beatrice Modisett (M.F.A. ’16), a painting and printmaking graduate student, was awarded this scholarship in April 2015.

“It’s a great thing to know that I am helping students,” says Covington, who was able to meet Modisett in her studio recently. Covington was immediately struck by the painting “Dendritics,” pictured, and decided to purchase it.

The Covington Travel Scholarship gave Modisett the freedom she needed to take greater risks in her artwork. “The scholarship set me on an upward trajectory,” says Modisett.

For more on this story, visit: bit.ly/1S3zgXb

SAVE THE DATE

The largest fundraising campaign in Virginia Commonwealth University’s history is launching this September.

Sept. 22-24, 2016

Thank You

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Mo Alie-Cox goes in for a slam dunk during VCU’s tournament match-up against Oklahoma on March 20, 2016. Photograph by Brooke Marsh (B.F.A. ’16).