University of Washington
School of Art + Art History + Design
MFA/MDes Thesis Exhibition
It is with great pleasure that I introduce you to the thesis work of our 2015 graduate students in art and design. The annual School of Art + Art History + Design MFA and MDes Thesis Exhibition is the culmination and most public demonstration of our graduate students’ research. Exhibited at the Henry Art Gallery, the leading contemporary museum in the Northwest, the MFA/MDes opening was a boisterous and well-deserved celebration of their work. The Henry has long been an essential component of the educational mission of the SoA+AH+D, and we are grateful to the Director, Sylvia Wolf; Lead Preparator, Jes Gettler; and the rest of the Henry staff for their exceptional support of the exhibition.

A mere 21 months ago, these MFA/MDes candidates arrived in Seattle from disparate regions in the U.S., China, and Iran to commence the unknown rigors, challenges, and joys awaiting their discovery in graduate school. They leapt enthusiastically into their coursework and immersed themselves in their studios. Presentations and critiques were interspersed with periods of solitary thought and reflection, all while being challenged and encouraged by faculty, staff, visitors and, perhaps most importantly, each other. Their studio practice has been filled with fits and starts, doubts and revelations, questions, questions, and more questions.

The visualization of their thesis is truly a unique demonstration of each student’s interests and concerns particular to their time and place. We champion the independence of their work while recognizing that they will long remember their experiences at the University of Washington. As these sixteen artists and designers embark on the next step of their journey, they carry with them a sense of accomplishment and confidence that will serve them well in their future endeavors.

On behalf of the School of Art + Art History + Design, congratulations to the class of 2015!

Jamie Walker
DIRECTOR, UW SCHOOL OF ART + ART HISTORY + DESIGN
CLASS OF 2015

MASTER OF FINE ARTS (MFA)
Maria Rose Adams
Matthew Schau Allen
Tim Coleman
Katherine Groesbeck
Morgan Mangiaruga
Coley Mixan
Sarah Norworth
Krista Schoening
Amanda C. Sweet
Zheng Wu
Lanxia (Summer) Xie

MASTER OF DESIGN (MDES)
Shaghayegh Ghassemian
Scott Ichikawa
Ryan Moec
Abigail R. Steinem
Kun Xu

MASTER OF ARTS (ART HISTORY)
Kelsey Eldridge, Autumn 2014

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (ART HISTORY)
Lucienne Dorrance Auz, Autumn 2014
Alexis Ruth Culotta, Autumn 2014
Kimberly Herreford, Spring 2015

DIVISION OF ART HISTORY
Susan Casteras
Meredith Clausen
Ivan Drpić
Sonal Khuller
Estelle Lingo
Stuart Lingo
Haicheng Wang
Marek Wieczorek
Robin Wright

DIVISION OF DESIGN
Sang-gyeun Ahn
Karen Cheng
Annabelle Gould
Tad Hirsch
Kristine Matthews
Dominic Muren
Christopher Ozubko
Axel Roesler
The Henry Art Gallery was founded as Washington State’s first art museum in 1927 by Seattle entrepreneur Horace C. Henry, on the principle that art stimulates inquiry, fosters knowledge, and builds healthy communities. Today, the Henry is internationally recognized as a pioneer in the research and presentation of contemporary art. We engage artists to consider the museum as a studio or laboratory for creativity, and our exhibitions and programs invite audiences to push the boundaries of traditional thinking. In all that we do, we live our mission: to advance contemporary art, artists, and ideas.

For decades, the Henry has partnered with the University of Washington’s School of Art + Art History + Design in hosting its Master of Fine Arts (MFA) + Master of Design (MDes) Thesis Exhibition. Our presentation of the MFA + MDes Thesis Exhibition is a hallmark of our commitment to supporting artistic innovation and a culture of creativity campus-wide. We serve as a cultural resource and training ground—opening our doors and resources without charge—for over 65,000 students, faculty, and staff.

The museum actively participates in the academic life of university students by offering jointly-developed courses, student internships, practicums, and work study opportunities, and we collaborate with over 20 academic departments and 10 other units across campus. The Henry encourages access to, and research of, the 25,000 objects in our permanent collection through our Eleanor Henry Reed Collection Study Center, the only facility of its kind in the region, where visitors can study from original works of art.

It is a pleasure and a privilege to celebrate the achievements of this year’s graduates in art and design. For many students, this has been their first experience working with a professional museum staff and crew. Special recognition goes to Jes Gettler, Henry Exhibition Designer and Lead Preparator, who has worked with students throughout the year to develop their installations and realize their visions. Thanks also go to our colleagues at the School of Art + Art History + Design, in particular Jamie Walker, Director, and members of the faculty for partnering in this initiative.

But above all, we thank this year’s graduates for making the art and design that is the subject of this exhibition and for sharing with us this important juncture in their lives. We applaud them for their educational achievements and wish them the very best as they launch their careers.

Congratulations to the 2015 recipients of the School of Art + Art History + Design’s Master of Fine Arts and Master of Design degrees!

Sylvia Wolf
JOHN S. BEHNKE DIRECTOR, HENRY ART GALLERY
Coley Mixan (MFA PHOTOMEDIA) is the hardest working student I have ever known. Her appetite for information, movies, music and popular culture is voracious. She frenetically re-creates her own images pulling humorously from this material into an intentionally overwhelming experience that begins to question everything, especially the construction of identities.

— Ellen Garvens

Thesis Committee: Ellen Garvens, Rebecca Cummins, Wynne Greenwood


Most explicit sacred duties, as well as the symbolic objects, garments, and materials utilized, are performed to support a presupposed conviction. Although Katherine Groesbeck’s ’15 MFA studio rituals echo liturgical ceremony, their resolution is perhaps the inverse operation. She constructs seemingly familiar, humble objects and scenarios that, through rigorous “self mandated tasks”, or ablutions, are imbued and transformed by her intimate, spacious sense of faith. —Doug Jeck

Thesis Committee: Doug Jeck, Rachael Lincoln, Amie McNeil, Jamie Walker

INHERITANCE Wax, fabric, chair, charcoal, 8 x 10’ (2015)
Morgan Mangiaruga (MFA 3D4M) explores our fascination with the phenomena and aesthetics of Horror genres and the Grotesque, by contrasting her idiosyncrasies with broader cultural appetites. The figures that emerge through her investigations assert an anxious humor that confronts our own psyche and stance amidst the dreadful, the boisterous, and the banal.

—Doug Jeck

Thesis Committee: Lauren Grossman, Doug Jeck, Amie McNeal, Nicole Saxler

SURROGATE 1 Clay, string/yarn, fake hair, found objects, paint, concrete, hydrocal, and flashlight, 11 ×20×78” (2015)
SURROGATE 2 Clay, string/yarn, fake hair, found objects, paint, concrete, hydrocal, and flashlight, 14 ×14×75” (2015)
SURROGATE 4 Clay, string/yarn, fake hair, fake fur, found objects, paint, concrete, hydrocal, and flashlight, 15 ×12×79” (2015)
Krista Schoening’s [MFA PAINTING + DRAWING] paintings of large undulating flowers have a confrontational specificity that reflect her research of botanical structures and systems, as well as the lush forms and symbolism of traditional still life imagery. She has studied and dissected the objects she represents and has brought the same scrutiny to the form of painting. By making great distortions in the expected scale of an image, or pulling a painting from its presumed presentation on the wall, she has brought attention to the physical and symbolic presence of painting. Her peculiar attentiveness has produced extraordinary work that exposes an uncomfortable relationship of content and concept. —Ann Gale

STILL LIFE (BANQUET PIECE) Oil on linen on table, 20×25” (2015)
Matthew Schau Allen (MFA PHOTO MEDIA) brings together diverse facts and trivia from all ends of the cultural spectrum, i.e., movies, architecture, design, advertising, etc., with an awareness of how these forgotten (or newly discovered) details are politically charged and relevant to today’s cultural tensions and power struggles. —Ellen Garvens

THE SUN NEVER KNEW HOW GOOD IT WAS UNTIL IT EVAPORATED WATER OFF CONCRETE Bisected core sample from sidewalk, water, petrichor, vanity, 4 x 2 x 2” (2015)

SURVEY Static electricity, string, styrofoam, pine, 20 x 30” (2015)

TARZANA, CA Photograph, 20 x 40” (2014)


HOUSING AUTHORITY Concrete, landscaper’s grass dye, 3 x 2 x 2” (2015)
Maria Rose Adams’s MFA PAINTING + DRAWING paintings celebrate the beauty that surrounds us in our everyday lives through an exploration of pattern, vibrant color, and jarring juxtapositions of form and space. Her process of ritual repetition is meditative and incremental. Structured on myriad variations of a grid, her paintings present a visual personal narrative that is joyful and mesmerizing, sometimes humorous, meticulously crafted, and intricately complex.

—Philip Govedare

Thesis Committee: David Brody, Ann Gale, Philip Govedare, Denzil Hurley, Zhi Lin, Helen O’Toole

***THREE GOOD THINGS (YESTERDAY) I***
Acrylic on linen, 32 × 62" (2015)

***THREE GOOD THINGS (YESTERDAY) II***
Acrylic on linen, 31¾ × 61¾" (2014–15)

***THREE GOOD THINGS (YESTERDAY) III***
Acrylic on linen, 31¾ × 61¾" (2014–15)

***THREE GOOD THINGS (YESTERDAY) IV***
Acrylic on linen, 32 × 62" (2015)

***THREE GOOD THINGS (YESTERDAY) V***
Acrylic on linen, 31¾ × 61¾" (2015)
It could be declared, and supported historically, that an artist’s utterly personal content may paradoxically resonate as universal. Tim Coleman (MFA 3D4M) adopts the tactics of mythology to “explore the exaggerated internal experience” that he aims to create in his videos. He boldly offers the pluralistic subject of himself (as did Anchurus), as both the root cause and the remedy for the chasm(s) he/we confront. —Doug Jeck

Thesis Committee: Doug Jeck, Scott Lawrimore, Nicole Seisler, Robert Yoder, Mark Zirpel
Sarah Norsworthy’s (MFA PAINTING + DRAWING) work is in many ways a rumination on her experiences living in Texas, Vermont, Arkansas, and now Seattle. She calls on direct observation, memory and a reimagining of the past. The work spans painting, drawing, sculpture, installation and employs traditional materials, found objects and the vast array of ephemera she’s collected in her travels. —David Brody

Thesis Committee: David Brody, Ann Gale, Philip Govedare, Denzil Hurley, Zhi Lin, Helen O’Toole

PALACE PELAGIC
Oil on panel, found wood, bricks, found materials, plaster, cloth, dimensions variable (2015)
GLEANER Oil on canvas, 95 x 72” (2015)
The body of work produced by Amanda Sweet (MFA PAINTING + DRAWING) during her two-year study is the result of her ongoing efforts to explore, redirect, and redefine her vision that reflects her particularly personal experience and her understanding of art making practice in contemporary art. One of the unique aspects of her studio practice is that she made endless experiments with materials and processes, and then used them in her work, and they are the subject of her work. In addition, Amanda’s work is observation based, however she extracts and reorganizes the perceptual information in a poetic manner, here she represents her specific vision, which shows her understanding of the ideas of diversity, openness, and inclusiveness.

—Zhi Lin

ECHO
Archival inkjet print, 42×36", 52×46" framed (2015)

REVERBERATION
Archival inkjet print, 42×36", 52×46" framed (2015)

A HISTORY OF LAND
Oil and red clay soil (origin: Blackstock, SC) on canvas, 72×96" (2014–15)
NURSE LOG (CHANCE CURRENTS byproduct) (2015)

CHANCE CURRENTS Graphite on paper, collage and beeswax on 14 panels, 10×180×1" overall (2015)
Scott Ichikawa (MDES) is one of those students who makes it a real pleasure to be their thesis chair. Smart, articulate, interesting ideas, excellent execution... plus humility and a good sense of humor! —Kristine Matthews

Thesis Committee: Kristine Matthews, Tad Hirsch, Tom Hobbs

THE CURRENT PROJECT Mixed media (2015)
Before entering the MDes program, Ryan Moeck had a lot of experience in the field of Design. Because of those experiences, his design solutions are very solid and well-developed. I have been consistently impressed by his visualization skills. Ryan was also a wonderful TA who created a strong bridge between the students and the instructor. — Sang-gyeun Ahn

Thesis Committee: Sang-gyeun Ahn, Karen Cheng, Kristine Matthews
Abigail Steinem (MDES) approaches her work with the methodical organization of a seasoned graphic designer and book maker, but with just enough barely contained curious energy to make unexpected discoveries. Her thesis work developing a framework for makerspace type community centers geared toward graphic designers is a groundbreaking application of this precision, energy, and curiosity. —Dominic Muren

Thesis Committee: Annabelle Gould, Kristine Matthews, Dominic Muren

Zheng Wu (MFA PHOTO MEDIA) makes any material he touches elegant and transformative. The materials he works with range from simple and humble to highly technical. His real subject is light and how it can transform the mundane into the sublime. —Ellen Garvens

Thesis Committee: Rebecca Cummins, Ellen Garvens, Tivon Rice

A PEEP THROUGH A TUBE AT A LEOPARD MDF, LED, mylar, aluminum foil, vinyl tube, thread, cotton, paper, color ink, 2×2×10’ (2015)
Morgan Mangiaruga explores our fascination with the phenomena and aesthetics of Horror genres and the Grotesque, by contrasting her idiosyncrasies with broader cultural appetites. The figures that emerge through her investigations assert an anxious humor that confronts our own psyche and stance amidst the dreadful, the boisterous, and the banal. —Doug Jeck

As our first graduate student from Iran, Shaghayegh Ghassemian (MDES) brings a unique perspective to the Design program. She is bright, articulate, and fearless. Her thesis work is surprising and engaging, and pushes the bounds of graduate work in design. —Tad Hirsch

 Thesis Committee: Karen Cheng, Tad Hirach, Dominic Muren

I WISH FOR AN ANIMAL
Mixed media, modular installation (2015)
Lanxia (Summer) Xie’s (MFA PAINTING + DRAWING) seminal thesis work Breathe, is theatrically presented with a video projection that is flanked by two paintings on either side. The central image morphs continually, suggesting, but never resolving, embryos, celestial bodies, and toxic landscapes. Vibrant and artificial colors evoke seductive celestial landscapes, body parts, vitriolic substances, creating sensations that are disorienting formally and conceptually. Xie’s work is arresting in its attention to moments of detailed drawing, obscured by swathes of color and light that distort and continually seemed to change in both the video projection and the paintings. — Helen O’Toole

Thesis Committee: Helen O’Toole, Zhi Lin, Denzil Hurley, Ann Gale, Philip Govedare, David Brody

BREATHE NO. 1
Acrylic on canvas (2015)

BREATHE Single channel video (color, sound), 10 minutes, 14 seconds (2015) details on page 43

BREATHE NO. 2
Acrylic on canvas (2015)
Kun Xu’s (MDES) graduate thesis work on designing a better flight experience focused on improving the health conditions of passengers. She has devoted a tremendous amount of time to this research and I am proud to say she produced a very interesting and pragmatic solution. Kun is a hard worker and great Teaching Assistant. Her contribution to the ID program has been tremendous.

— Sang-gyeun Ahn

Thesis Committee: Sang-gyeun Ahn, Karen Cheng, Christopher Ozubko
Deep contemplation combined with eccentric elements become apparent. The viewer is invited to enter, observe and evaluate the narrative through the characters, or become lost alongside them.

Katherine Grosebeck (katherinegrosebeck.com)

Catherine Bailey is a central theme. Their work, their inherent intimacy and privacy conceal and signifies the absence of love and presence of the Palate Palace. The location represents a point where the tribes’ names and the streets of Canyon Boulevard. Locate a paramecium-shaped cluster of streets named for Native American tribes: Zuni, Cherokee, Apache, Mohawk, and hangs the resulting assemblage on the wall, and since I wanted to take a banquet painting off the wall, I thought of textiles and the humble activity of embroidering a tablecloth. While working on this piece, I thought of textiles and clothing. Women of my family poured much love and the fabric and the decorative arts, including ornamental wall paint, ceramic decoration, and textile design. This piece is to create new media consumptions, but unfolding uniquely in the present. My interest in architecture and human presence represents is one very familiar to me—the Puget Palace. The landscape that it disturbs the consumerist and patriarchal mumblings of Hypercapitalism through her splatting, abrupt, vacuantly unp various (while blissfully radiative) guitar riffs and rock shows.

Sarah Norworth

My work is deeply rooted in my birthplace of South Carolina. I rely on memory and the soil from this particular earth as my central repository of experiences and passions. I delved into personal narratives to express meaning over the course of ‘the making.’ I love honey, molasses, flour, oranges, and onions because of their color, texture, and ability to signify the beauty and vitality of the earth. As the piece grows, I begin to incorporate the paintings and other materials from the site into a curved structure related to the curvature of one’s field of vision. The structure is now sprawling inward like a shell into an interior space and solidifies objects and space, as well as a place of large, humus-encrusted rock that I would sit next to when the tide was out. The piece has been on view for over many months. I began to understand the paintings and other materials from the site into a curved structure related to the curvature of one’s field of vision. The structure is now sprawling inward like a shell into an interior space and solidifies objects and place through a kind of poetic classification. This work is a reflection on how we perceive and interact with both public and private, interior and exterior.

Kris Schoening (krischoening.com)

Since the emergence of still life as a genre, there has been an inextricable connection between the act of seeing the object and the decorative arts, including ornamental wall paint, ceramic decoration, and textile design. This piece is to create new media consumptions, but unfolding uniquely in the present. My interest in architecture and human presence represents is one very familiar to me—the Puget Palace. The landscape that it

Lana (Summer) Xi (vanessawong.com)

inspired by light, intertwining the cutting techniques of the Guatemalan and the One World trade. It is targeted at individuals and signifies both the absence of love and presence of the Palate Palace. The location represents a point where the tribes’ names and the streets of Canyon Boulevard. Locate a paramecium-shaped cluster of streets named for Native American tribes: Zuni, Cherokee, Apache, Mohawk, and hangs the resulting assemblage on the wall, and since I wanted to take a banquet painting off the wall, I thought of textiles and the humble activity of embroidering a tablecloth. While working on this piece, I thought of textiles and clothing. Women of my family poured much love and the fabric and the decorative arts, including ornamental wall paint, ceramic decoration, and textile design. This piece is to create new media consumptions, but unfolding uniquely in the present. My interest in architecture and human presence represents is one very familiar to me—the Puget Palace. The landscape that it

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