

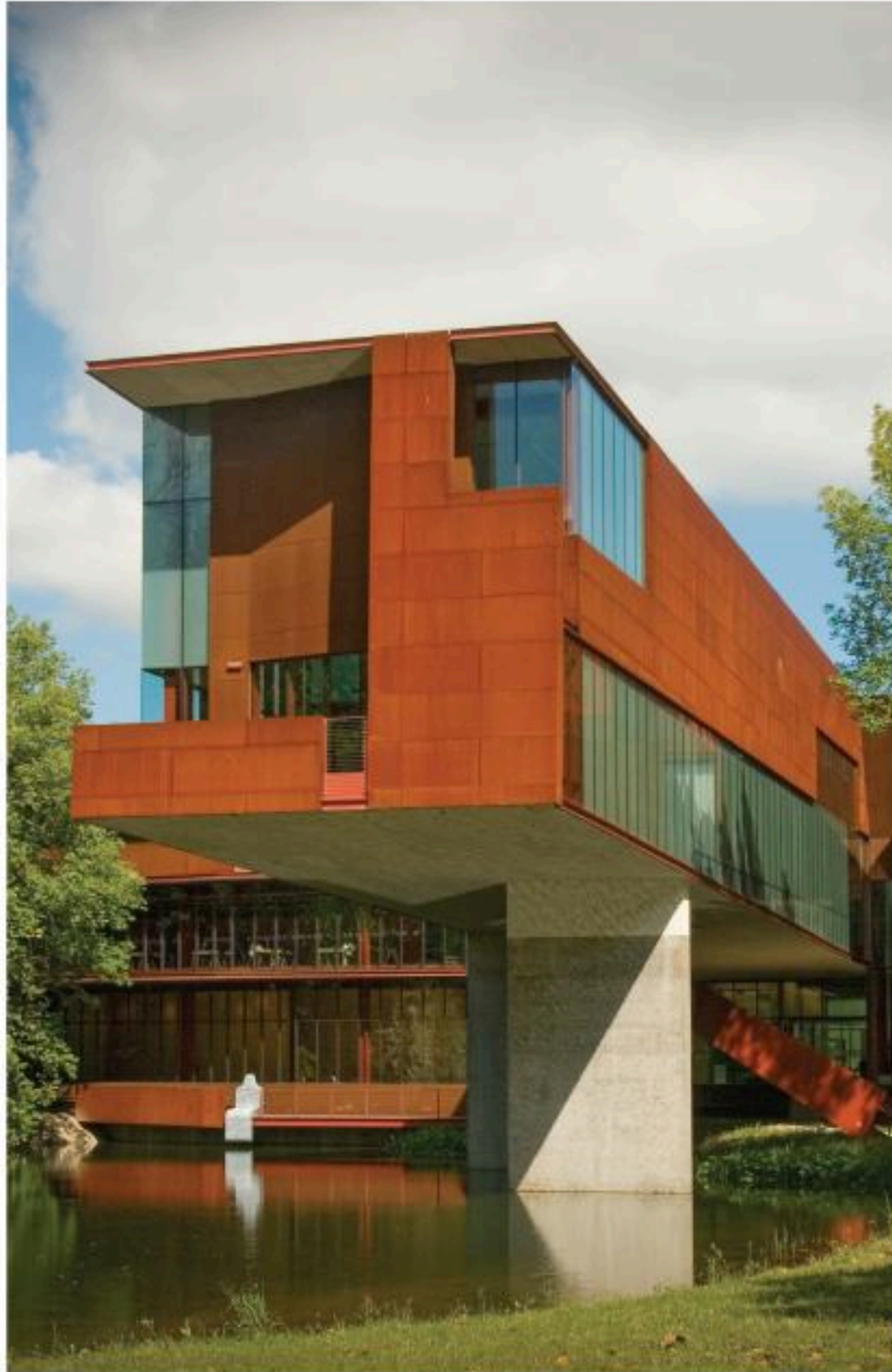


# Process

School of Art and Art  
History Graduate Journal

2025-2026





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# Aaron Lurth

## Foreword

### MFA Candidate in Photography

First and foremost a “welcome” is in order. It brings us great pleasure to present Process, the first edition of a new graduate journal from the University of Iowa’s School of Art and Art History.

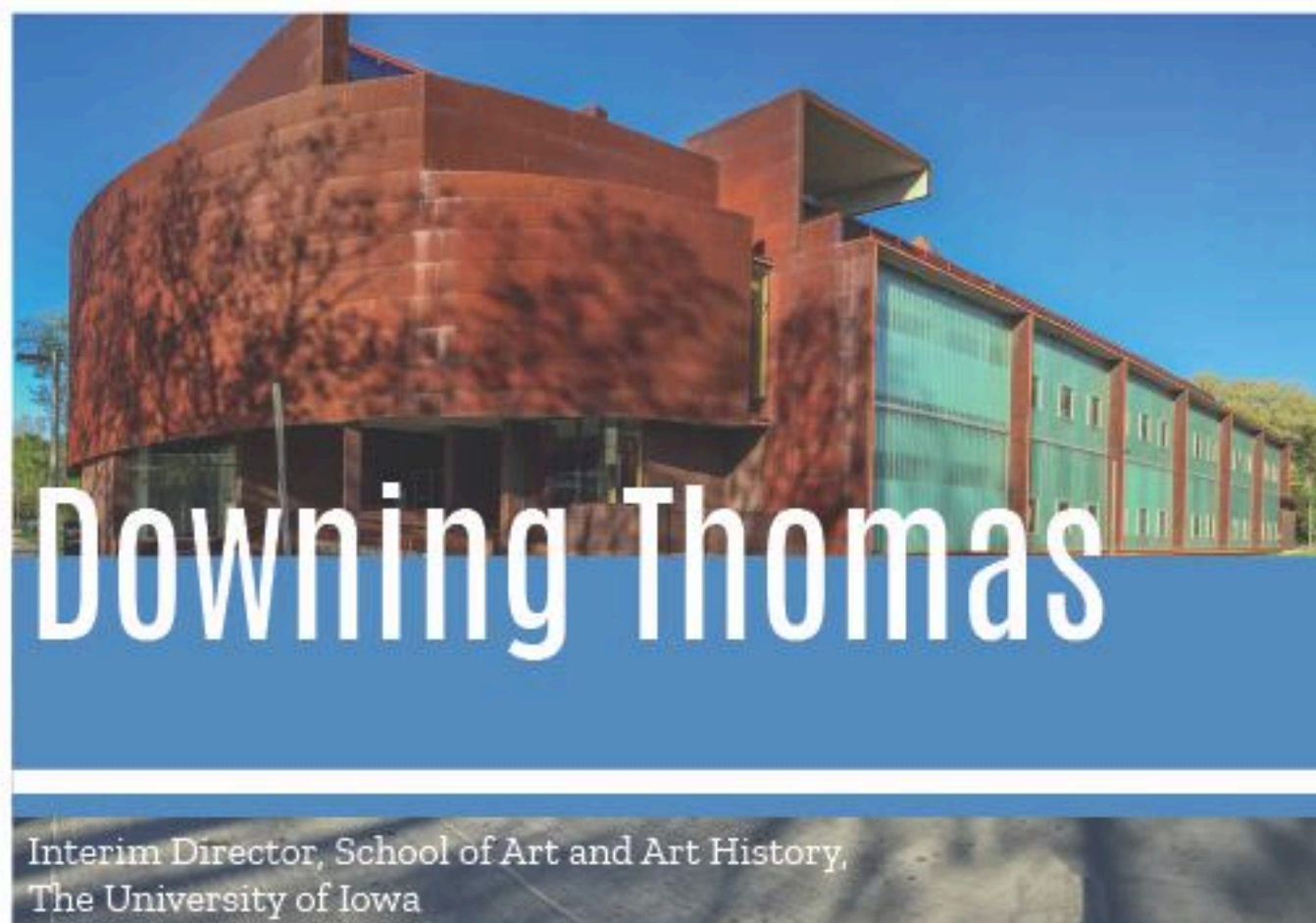
The idea behind the journal is simple: to present current and incoming graduate students with a holistic picture of what this years graduating class has been creating during their graduate career. It’s easy for many of us to get so consumed by our own work that before you know it three years have gone by and you have little idea of what your peers are working on. We aim to fix that. This is where process meets product, a venue in which you as an artist are able to reflect on your time in graduate school while simultaneously showcasing all you have accomplished. Process is a place where those of us who are graduating have a chance to remember those we went to school with. It’s also a place however, where those who are interested in coming to SAAH can come and get an idea for the type of people who attend Iowa, and the work that is coming out of the program.

It’s important to note that this journal is produced by us, for us. That is, it is the product of the work and dedication of a group of graduate students for the rest of our graduate class. In the end we hope that you enjoy getting to know the class of 2012 as much as we have over the course of creating this publication, and we hope that the fruits of our labor will yield many future issues.

It’s been a pleasure getting to know you all over the years, and we hope the future for all is bright.







# Downing Thomas

Interim Director, School of Art and Art History,  
The University of Iowa

The innovative “Iowa Idea” of bringing artists and scholars together in an academic context was first formulated in the 1920s by University of Iowa President Walter Jessup and Graduate Dean Carl Seashore. The goal was to bring major practicing artists to the faculty and combine Art History and Studio Art into one school. In 1938, Lester Longman, the first chair of the Department of Art, brought art history and studio art into one department. The “Iowa Idea,” which subsequently became the model for many arts programs around the nation, was to train artists within a liberal arts environment that would combine studio courses in the practice of art with the history and theory of art. The historians, in turn, would benefit not only from the experience of studio courses but also from their proximity to the creative processes of art production. This was the historic mission of Iowa’s School of Art & Art History.

The School of Art & Art History has remained true to its historic mission even as the national trend favored separation. This tradition has endured to the present, with consistently top-ranked programs. In addition, the UI famously pioneered the embrace of artistic achievement as grounds for advanced degrees. In 1922, the university established that works of music, visual arts, or literature could fulfill the thesis requirements for a master’s degree—a revolutionary move. Soon, the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree became the standard for graduate study in the arts. Exactly who invented the MFA—the UI or Yale—is open to debate, but Iowa holds an indisputable place in the history of arts education.



# The ‘Iowa Idea’

This inaugural issue of the graduate student journal Process memorializes, through text and image, the artistic and scholarly achievements of M.F.A. and Ph.D. students graduating in the 2023-2024 academic year. The completion of a challenging degree curriculum is in each case crowned with a thesis that exhibits the accomplishments of years of practice and study. Tenacity, creativity, and just plain hard work undergird this achievement.

In combining both visual and text-based work, wProcess also exemplifies the “Iowa Idea” that first took shape in the 1920s when the University of Iowa pioneered acceptance of creative work for advanced degrees and, then, in the 1930s when the establishment of the School of Art & Art History brought together in symbiotic relationship both the production and the historical study of art.

These graduates are therefore to be congratulated for having reached this milestone and also recognized for the place they now take in this grand tradition.

# Art

# History

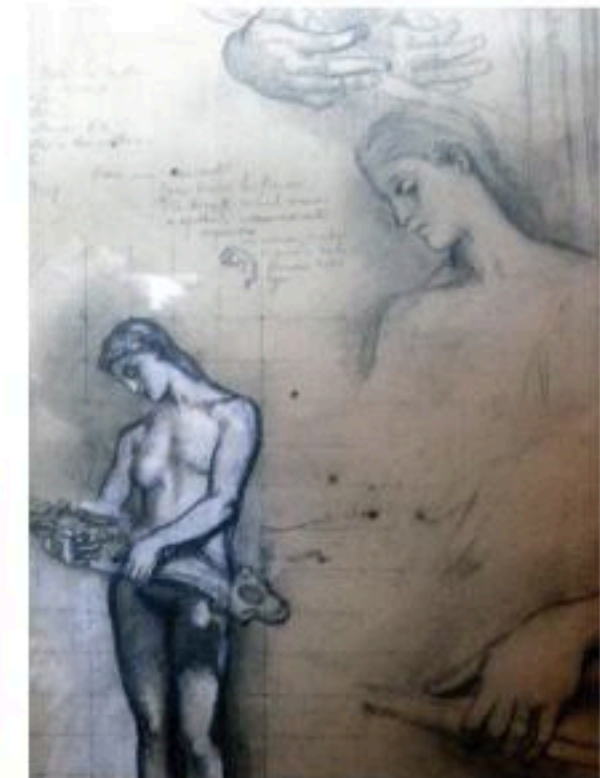


# Alice Phillips

## PhD Art History

Romanticism's reaction to the Enlightenment's logical, scientific nature involved a regression to past fascinations with the bizarre and the supernatural. The Romantics found that the Commedia dell'Arte theater embodied such qualities, and artists and writers aligned themselves with figures such as Harlequin and Pierrot to emphasize buffoonery, the grotesque, and comic despair. Initially, this paper investigates how Commedia dell'Arte-inspired characters such as E. T. A. Hoffmann's composer Johannes Kriesler and Victor Hugo's poet Pierre Gringoire may be signifiers for their authors. Through characterization and mirroring devices, these writers infused their own personality into their stories, mixing art, performance, and life—a synthesis that resurfaces in the visual arts.

Several paintings of Commedia dell'Arte figures emphasize how the Romantics and their followers aligned themselves with theatrical personalities. Artists painted self-portraits as Harlequin, including Cézanne and Picasso—who often created grim portraits of himself and others as performers. These characters' continued popularity as different aspects of the creative personality signifies artists' sacrificial isolation from society while weathering the shifting tide of popular favor, and perhaps also their contempt for those who cannot comprehend their imagination and eccentricity. Offering examples of the continuation of Commedia dell'Arte iconography in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century art, my research examines how Romantic philosophical, social, and esoteric motifs come full circle from Enlightenment-era exile to modern disillusionment.





## Q&A

### How would you describe your research or area of study?

*My research focuses on late 19th through early 20th-century French art, particularly Romanticism, Symbolism, and Surrealism. My dissertation studies the influence of early psychology and occult beliefs on these movements.*

### How would you describe your research or area of study?

*My research focuses on late 19th through early 20th-century French art, particularly Romanticism, Symbolism, and Surrealism. My dissertation studies the influence of early psychology and occult beliefs on these movements.*

### Who/what have been your primary influences?

*Museum professionals and professors, especially my advisor, Dorothy Johnson. Initially, I was inspired by the artists and writers themselves. Victor Hugo's novels and Gustave Moreau's paintings drew my interest to 19th-century France.*

### How has your research or approach changed during your time at the University?

*My research has expanded to become much more interdisciplinary. I've been looking into not only art history, but also topics such as the history of psychology, French literature and history, and 19th-century occultism.*

### Of the research or work you have completed at the University, what are you most proud of?

*Definitely finishing my dissertation. I'm also proud that I planned and taught a 19th-century art class, and earned grants to conduct research in Paris. While I was there I lived my dream of working at a French museum, as an intern at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs.*

### How do you see your research evolving in the future?

*I'd like to expand my current project further into the 20th century to include Abstract Expressionism. I also have ideas for new research involving Gustave Moreau, the major artist I study.*

### Can you briefly describe your research process or technique?

*I usually begin with an image that intrigues me. I determine what questions I have about the image, the artist who created it, his influences, and the time period. Then I search for books and articles, which always leads to more books and articles, and museum visits if possible.*

### How did being in Iowa City influence your work?

*Iowa City was a good environment for both my academic and creative work. I did my best to take advantage of campus events and library resources as well as local opportunities such as art exhibitions, music venues, a club where I could practice speaking French, and an Irish session where I could play my fiddle.*

### What brought you to the University of Iowa?

*My Masters thesis advisor, Evan Firestone at the University of Georgia, recommended the art history program here since he knew it had a strong concentration in 19th-century and modern art.*

### What are your plans after graduation?

*I'll search for a museum job or postdoctoral fellowship while revising my dissertation and looking into academic publishers.*

### What was your most memorable experience at the University?

*I'll probably never forget helping wrap and pack the UIMA's art collection to rescue it from the rising floodwaters in 2008.*

### What is the biggest thing you will take away from graduate school?

*My History of Modern Art textbook. It must weigh about 50 lbs. Really, though, the biggest thing I will take away is more confidence. Breaking into the museum world is difficult, but now I feel prepared.*

### What, if anything, would you have done differently during your time in graduate school?

*I wish I had studied more non-western art and more French. I also wish I could have taken more studio art classes. I think it's important for art historians to understand the techniques they're writing about.*

### What advice would you give to incoming/prospective students Art History graduate students?

*Study hard, but keep a hobby.*



# 3D Design



# Won Jae Lee

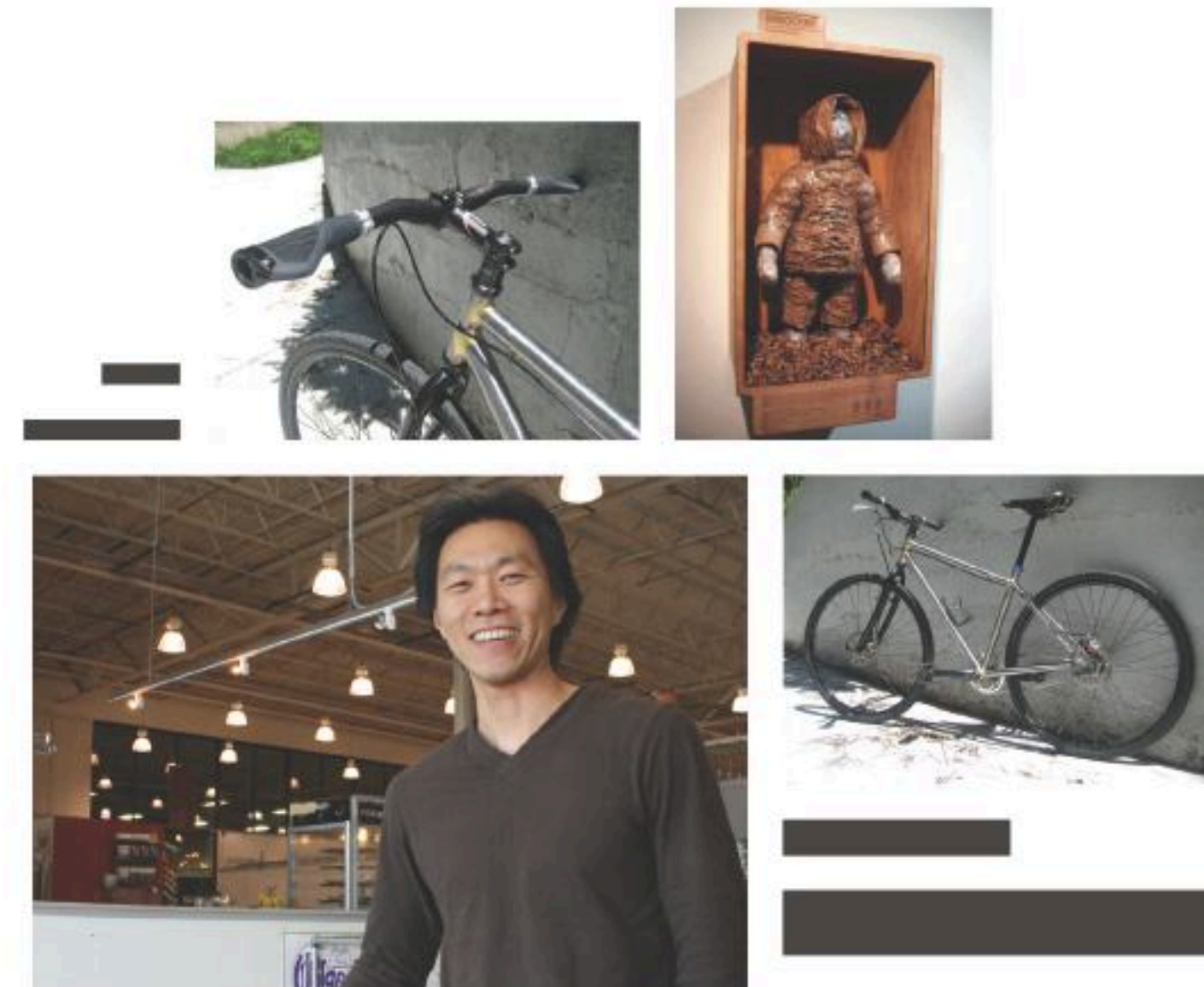
## MFA 3D Design

My path to visual arts has been far from direct, but I can confidently say it all started with the South Korean model of a practical pursuit of something that will lead to a secure life, and was followed by me progressively moving away from that cultural ideal to my own personal ideal.

I came to the United States as an undergraduate to complete a degree in some field of engineering. For my first three years of college, the engineering curriculum constantly left me amazed with how the use of mathematics and logic allow us to master the behavior of the landscape that surrounds us, and furthermore allows us to reliably change that landscape. However, while I was thrilled to learn these different skills that engineering entailed, I found that it was, for good reason, incredibly constrained by rules and regulations. These restrictions impeded my ability to be as open as I desired, and left a particular creative void in the various projects I pursued while in the problem.

This creative void is what initiated my first move away from engineering towards what I thought was a compromise between creativity and engineering. As a result, I completed a Masters degree in 3D-Design and learned a set of skills that I still use to this day, including using Adobe Suite, Auto CAD, and 3ds Max. While enjoying learning the 3D-Design skills, I wanted to expand my ability to express myself. It was at this point I knew I would have to make a leap if I truly wanted to be making what I knew I was motivated to create. So, I finally settled into the world of sculpture, never with the intent to lose my interests in engineering and digital technologies, but to instead use them in the more imaginative way I had wanted ever since stepping onto American soil.

Sure, I was not designing buildings, or bridges, or electrical grids, but what I was doing is using those abilities to speak to particular issues that concern me and echo throughout my work. My latest pieces, "Older Posts", is "direct voice" of the



social networking system and blogging "Habit", which are thought to be one of the most advanced behaviors of human in the 21st century. I am not necessarily judging an historical, social phenomena or behavior. Rather, I enjoy observing even participating and creating social behavior; believing humans are where we should be. Physical and tangible prints seemed to become our burden when the digital camera was introduced.

The digital camera removed worrying about image focus, how long it would take to get the film developed and, yes, how disappointing it is to see bad prints, especially love ones. Now, the simple click does not provide what used to be a great amount of human emotion.

I believe that it is my duty and privilege to engrave historical and social phenomena. What I wrote in "Older Posts" does not necessarily relate to the objects framed within the piece. People often "post" without deep attention to association, which becomes a "habit".

I will continue to engrave the 21st century historical and social phenomena into my works and encourage people to interact with their own body and mind.



## Q&A

### How would you describe your research or area of study?

*My work is a representation of my study of the female form in nature. My forms have become an extension of nature and nature has become an extension of the forms. My work represents the beauty and adaptability of the female. Nature has become a decorative camouflage and in turn the form has become a representation of the beauty of Mother Nature*

### Who/what have been your primary influences?

*Professors Chunghi Choo, Kee-ho Yuen, Monica Corriea, have had a large impact on my work. As well as the sculpture artist Ana Mendieta.*

### How has your research or approach changed during your time at the University?

*The University of Iowa has exposed me to a tremendous amount of new technology. My current work is a representation of my work evolving from the use of new technology and new materials. My goal became to combine the use of new technology with traditional hand skills.*

### What pieces are you most proud of?

*The pieces I am most proud of are my geoflower lights, my bike, and my sculpture "Emerge".*

### Can you briefly describe your working process?

*I used programs such as Rhinoceros and AutoCAD to draw my forms. I use CNC machines for milling my form and rapid prototyping printers. I combine the use of technology with traditional mold making techniques. As well as traditional metalsmithing techniques such as raising, soldering, welding, forming, sawing and casting.*

### How do you see your research evolving in the future?

*I intend to study forms, design, and sculpture. I hope to create a series of lights, make bikes and would like to continue exploring new materials.*

### What was your most memorable experience at the University of Iowa?

*Being able to ride my first hand built bike.*

### How did being in Iowa City influence your work?

*Iowa City gave me the opportunity to focus on my work. Being from Virginia I did not know much about the area. I have discovered that it is full of bike trails and nature trails. I have enjoyed kayaking and biking in this area. My work is based on forms in nature and this area has provided me with lots of inspiration.*

### What brought you to the University of Iowa?

*Kee-ho Yuen came to my undergraduate school and persuaded me to continue my studies at the University of Iowa.*

### What are your plans after graduation?

*I hope to get a teaching job at a University where I can continue to be influenced by other artist and be able to work on my art.*

### What is the biggest thing you will take away from graduate school?

*I have made many friends and will miss them very much. I will also miss the amazing instructors.*

### What, if anything, would you have done differently during your time in graduate school?

*I would have taken more design and sculpture courses.*

### What advice would you give to incoming/prospective students Art History graduate students?

*Stay true to your own passions in art and learn new techniques to improve them.*



# Suzanne Bradley

## MFA 3D Design

### Q&A

**How would you describe your research or area of study?**

*I really love nature, but also modernism. So, I guess I feel like a mix of both.*

**Who/what have been your primary influences?**

*I study nature and lots of design websites and magazines.*

**How has your research or approach changed during your time at the University?**

*I used to design according to what I felt like I could construct. Now I design first and then figure out how to pull it together.*

**What pieces are you most proud of?**

*I am most proud of my little lamps made of felt.*

**Can you briefly describe your research process or technique?**

*Oh my God am I supposed to have a process? I work in chaos.*

**How do you see your research evolving in the future?**

*I am pretty optimistic about the future. It feels like my work evolves with each project so that it will have to be a surprise.*

**How did being in Iowa City influence your work?**

*Being around so many artists and people pursuing their interests is inspiring.*

**What brought you to the University of Iowa?**

*I was an undergraduate here in Anthropology. We left for a while, but came back to raise our kids and family.*









# Jared Williams

## MFA 3D Design

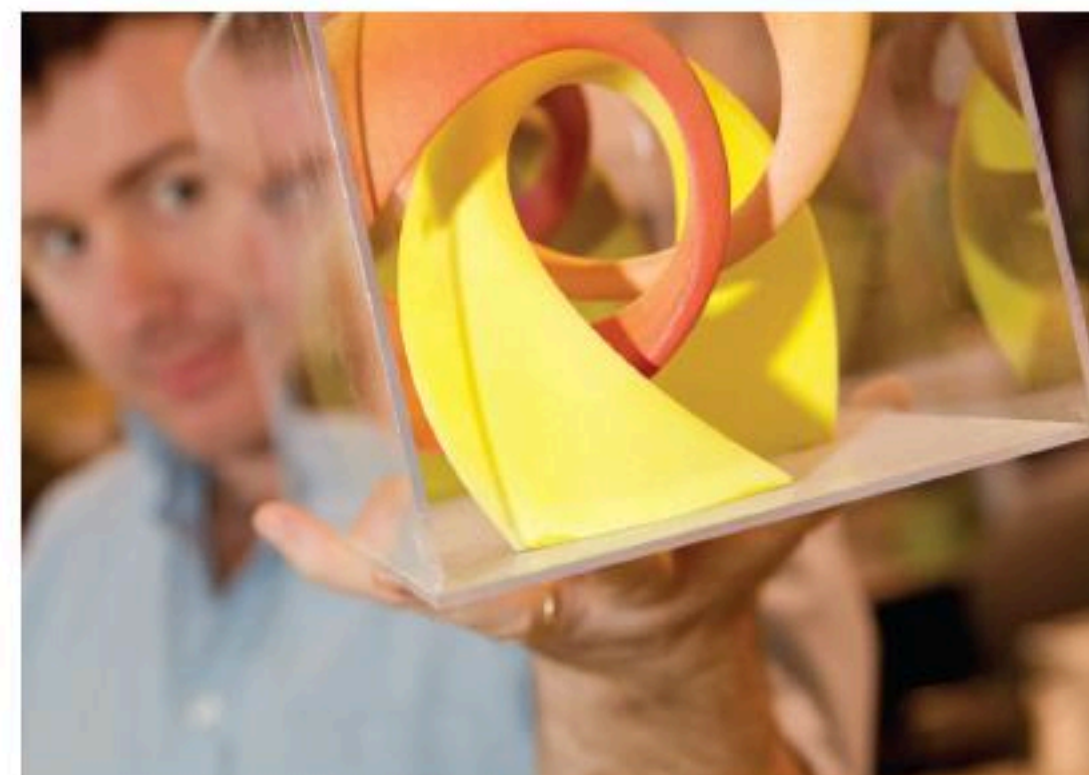
Human beings have two perfectly aligned eyeballs that work together to send three-dimensional images to the brain and provide accurate depth perception. I was born without stereoscopic vision.

I was five years old when I had my second eye surgery. I remember lying blind and terrified for two days in the children's wing of Reid Memorial Hospital in Richmond, Indiana. Later, I learned that my eyes didn't align properly and for the rest of my life my right eye would "wander". Because of my condition, I was given a list of jobs that I could never perform, jobs where human lives are entrusted to skilled professionals wielding scalpels or landing jets. I could never be one of those people.

Or so I was told.

It's become clear that my lazy eye has taught me to "see" better than the average artist. Having spent the last five years of my life studying 3D Design and exploring the most advanced creative technology on the planet, I've composed a series of computer-generated environments, objects and characters. This is my attempt to prove to the world that I can see just fine. I could've been a doctor or a pilot after all.

These works have been manifested from my slightly skewed interpretation of the world. Rocky is the embodiment of my imagination brought to life in perfect three-dimensional clarity for the world to see. He's a symbolic representation of my childhood love for cartoons and science fiction. He is strong yet gentle, modest, intelligent and noble. And, he is fiercely protective of that scared and blind five year old boy.





## Q&A

### How would you describe your work?

*I am a multimedia design artist specializing in 3D computer modeling, animation, graphic design, photography, video production and sustainable product development. I use Technology to create. All of my work was conceived or constructed using some form of computer technology, CNC fabrication or 3D rapid prototyping.*

### Who/what have been your primary influences?

*A lot of my work references my love for cartoons and science fiction movies. Leonardo da Vinci's scientific approach to artistic creativity inspires me. Learning how the natural world around us operates is a valuable trait that all artists should possess, in my opinion. Leo is my favorite classical artist, but my favorite contemporary artists are mainly architectural designers like Santiago Calatrava and Zaha Hadid. Their use of lines and curves are amazingly unique and beautiful.*

### How has your work changed during your time at the University?

*I was very symmetrical and predictable in my early designs. I've learned that abstraction and asymmetry can be just as balanced and beautiful.*

### Which piece/research/work are you most proud of?

*I am most proud of my digital artwork. The precision modeling and animation design software has allowed me to create some of the most dramatic environments I can imagine.*

### Can you briefly describe your working process?

*I watch a lot of television and spend a lot of time surfing the web. Mainly scientific oriented education programming and documentary productions. I study the most visually appealing components and then try to re-create these elements in a different context.*

### How do you see your work evolving in the future?

*I see my work becoming more animated, and possibly less photo-realistic.*

### How did being in Iowa City influence your work?

*Iowa City is my home and where I live with my wife and kids. It's where I have experienced most of my happiest moments.*

### What are your plans after graduation?

*I have accepted a position with HON, a large furniture manufacturing company in Iowa. I will be a multimedia designer in their marketing and communications department. But, I'll certainly continue to create abstract digital work and my own animated creations.*

### What was your most memorable experience at the University?

*It's a tie. I have two most memorable moments. My first most memorable moment would be teaching the first ever Digital Forming class with Monica Correia. Our students did such good work that I was asked to go to Las Vegas and present some research at the 2012 Consumer Electronics Show. My second most memorable moment was when President Sally Mason came to my MA show. I got to spend some quality time discussing my work and some exciting new frontiers in the arts with President of the UI.*

### What is the biggest thing you will take away from Graduate School?

*Teaching. I will never underestimate the creativity of young people. When I was teaching, I actually learned more than when I was studying.*

### What, if anything, would you have done differently during your time in graduate school?

*I would definitely try to create more personal abstractions and conceptual work.*

### What advice would you give to incoming/prospective students?

*Follow your passions no matter where they lead. Happiness will follow.*



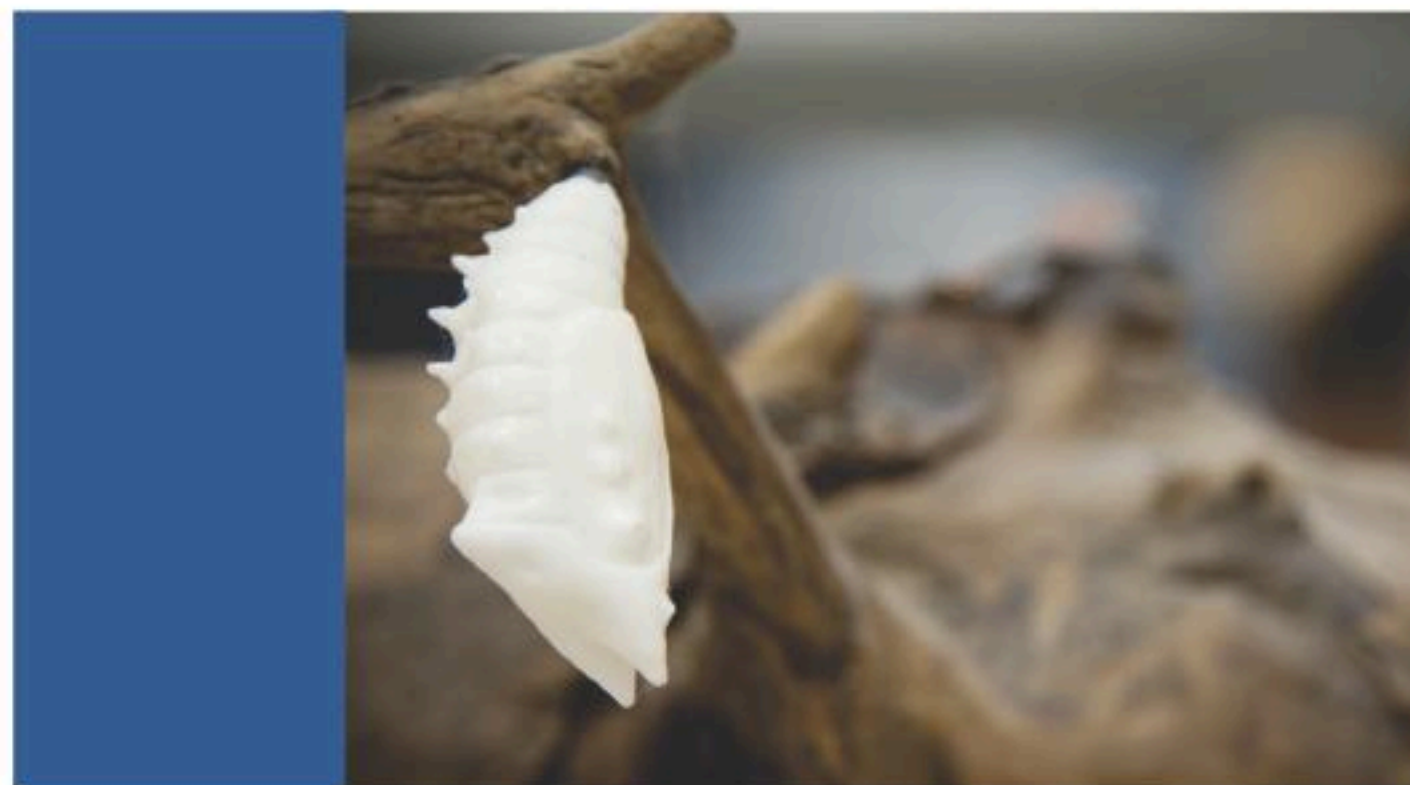
# Cera mics



# Kevin Chamberlin

## MFA Ceramics

Kevin Franz Chamberlain received his BFA in Ceramics at the University of North Dakota in 2009 and his MA in Ceramics at the University of Iowa in 2011 as a Bodine Fellow. He is currently a third year MFA Candidate and pursuing a Museum Studies Certificate. Kevin is the Assistant Preparator for the UI Museum of Art and has held an internship with the UI Museum of Natural History to advance the photo digitization of the Museum's 100-year-old insect collection. Working with scientists and researchers during the internship has influenced Kevin's body of art work. He plans to engage the public with a collaborative exhibit for the UIMNH containing the photo-documentation along with his artwork created during this project. The proposed exhibit will be a way of displaying some of what the University has to offer within science, technology, and art.





# Graphic

# Design



# Rodd Whetstone

## MFA Design

### Q&A

#### How would you describe your work?

*I would best describe my work as the story of my weight loss journey and my contempt towards the fast food industry. Before attending the University of Iowa I lost 125 pounds. I was very heavy and very unhealthy. I am utilizing this opportunity while I am a student to make work that depicts my journey, how I felt, what I gave up and I gained, and the like. My goal is to inspire others to make healthy changes to better daily lives.*

#### Who/what have been your primary influences?

*I was influenced by my need to change my unhealthy lifestyle.*

#### How has your work changed during your time at the University?

*I have been able to better hone my drawing skills to make a short graphic novel. I also have been able to bridge my gap between drawing and graphic design.*

#### Which piece/research/work are you most proud of?

*I am most proud of an image I created. It is a self-portrait of who I was and eventually where I will be physically. It is an image of a fit person emerging out of a fat body.*

#### Can you briefly describe your working process?

*For graphic design and drawing I begin the same. I start with a series of little, ugly thumbnail sketches, dozens of them. I say ugly because they are quick. I only sketch long enough to get the ideas out. Next I review the thumbnails and discard the really ugly ones. Of the ones I keep, I sketch them better and take my time. I like to build them up, reinforcing the original though before I either take it to the computer or redraw it on good paper.*

#### How do you see your work evolving in the future?

*I would like to evolve my drawings into paintings and my design into 3D design. I also want to make more graphic design graphic novels.*

#### How did being in Iowa City influence your work?

*Iowa City is a very fit city. There is no lack of gyms, and it is bicycle friendly here. I was able to sketch people at the gym as they exercised.*

#### What brought you to the University of Iowa?

*The opportunity to attend graduate school is what brought me to the University of Iowa.*

#### What are your plans after graduation?

*First and foremost I will rest and regain my pleasant demeanor. Then I will apply for jobs, look for freelance work, and keep being creative. I started a comic/graphic novel drawing group that meets on Saturday mornings. It started out of a drawing class I teach on Saturday mornings. I would also like to travel abroad and learn. I am also considering pursuing a doctorate degree.*

#### What is the biggest thing you will take away from Graduate School?

*The biggest things I will take away from Graduate School are the relationships. The people make it worthwhile.*

#### What, if anything, would you have done differently during your time in graduate school?

*I would have taken a 3D class or two and gone to the Center for the Book sooner.*

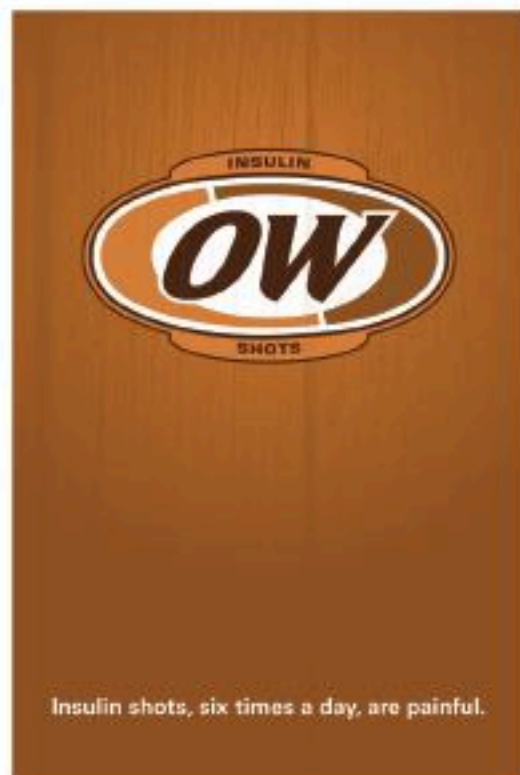
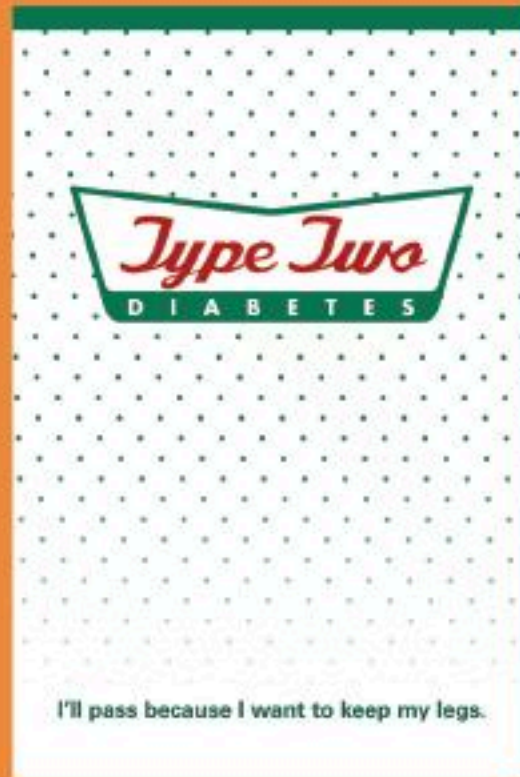
#### What was your most memorable experience at the University of Iowa?

*I took a study abroad class over the 2011-2012 winter break to India. It was one of the greatest experiences of my life thus far. It was hot, the people were friendly, the food was amazing, and I was with the most excellent group.*

#### What advice would you give to incoming/prospective students?

*Plan your schedule so you can have an afternoon or a morning every so often to just walk around the downtown and do nothing but be. Work hard and play harder.*







# Cristiane Cunha

## MFA Design

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As a designer, I want to create not just objects and graphics, but also scenarios that will help people understand the consequences of consumer choices. Since moving to the United States, I have been intrigued by the over consumption and excessive production of short-lived or disposable items. What began as a personal fascination with everyday objects, transformed into self-awareness of over-consumption and waste. Finally I developed a deep desire to use design for social good, translated into images that resonate with the audience about the ephemeral trajectory of these objects.

This work presents a selection of ordinary items and everyday commodities, dipped into white paint representing the blindness and lack of unawareness of my generation's relationship to consumerism. In order to enhance their resonance, these objects are photographed isolated on a white background, exploring the aesthetic and cultural aspects underscoring their identity and inherent meanings.

This is a message about unconscious behaviors in our everyday lives and leaves to the viewer to draw conclusions about the consequences of our habits.







A B C D E  
F G H I J K  
L M N O P  
Q R S T U  
V W X Y Z

What advice would you give to  
incoming/prospective students Art  
History graduate students?

*Do what you love, and do it  
often.*





## Q&A

### How would you describe your research or area of study?

*My work explores different aspects of visual identity, branding and consumerism and also our relationship with them.*

### Who/what have been your primary influences?

*My influences are diverse as Andy Warhol, Heidi Cody, Haim Steinback, Conrad Bakker, Chris Jordan, Rob Walker and Tony Cragg. New insights are synthesized from them all, based on pop culture, consumerism and objectification.*

### How has your research or approach changed during your time at the University?

*I entered Graduate School with a pure commercial perspective of Graphic Design, once my professional background was marketing and advertising. Along these 3 years of grad school I have acquired knowledge in fine arts, expanding my research widely and consequently my work has become more interdisciplinary and eclectic.*

### What are you most proud of the research or work you have completed at the University?

*Definitely finishing my MFA thesis work, which is the result of 12 months of research and showcases my work as a conceptual designer.*

### Can you briefly describe your process or technique?

*Every project, regardless of its size or type, begins with research. This foundation laying is essential to develop a meaningful design that works for its audience. This leads me to a brainstorming, which inspires me and determines the concept that is worth pursuing.*

### How do you see your research evolving in the future?

*I'd like to keep researching about consumer behaviors, but also expand my project further into mindful consumption and creative reuse.*

### How did being in Iowa City influence your work?

*Iowa City it's a rich cultural and educational environment..*

### What brought you to the University of Iowa?

*I have had always the desire to go study abroad, and once I moved to Iowa City with my husband, I decided to apply for graduate school at the University of Iowa. Besides the University of Iowa is highly ranked, the Design Program offers a very practical course, which was very appealing to me.*

### What are your plans after graduation?

*I'm looking for a creative marketing position. This is what I love to do.*

### What was your most memorable experience at the University?

*For sure my experience teaching solo - in a foreign language.*

### What is the biggest thing you will take away from graduate school?

*I believe that by acquiring knowledge in design, I reinforced my skills in the marketing/advertisement fields, making me a more complete professional.*

### What, if anything, would you have done differently during your time in graduate school?

*I wish I had taken more interdisciplinary art classes/courses that would allow me to get acquainted with different research areas and different methodologies.*

### What advice would you give to incoming/prospective students Art History graduate students?

*Do what you love, and do it often.*





# Jewelry/Metals



# Bess Siritanapivat

## MFA Jewelry & Metals Q&A

### How would you describe your work?

*Hmmm...I guess I'm going for whimsical with just a hint of thought provoking.*

### Who/what have been your primary influences?

*So far it seems to be anything; from nature, to tradition and even soda.*

### How has your work changed during your time at the University?

*It's bigger, louder, and brighter.*

### Which piece/research/work are you most proud of?

*Sunship Blooms. I didn't get to sleep making that one.*

### Can you briefly describe your working process?

*Do it until it's right.*

### How do you see your work evolving in the future?

*I'm not sure yet. I'll let you know when I get there.*

### How did being in Iowa City influence your work?

*It made me listen better.*

### What brought you to the University of Iowa?

*A good friend.*

### What are your plans after graduation?

*Possibly live in a cardboard box mansion and continue making art.*

### What was your most memorable experience at the University?

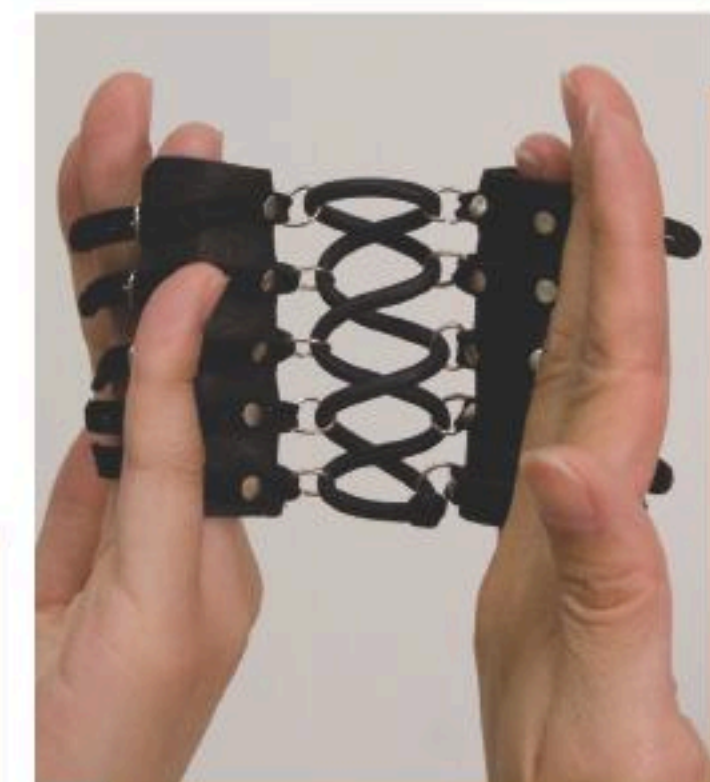
*I had a chance to work with wonderful people.*

### What is the biggest thing you will take away from Graduate School?

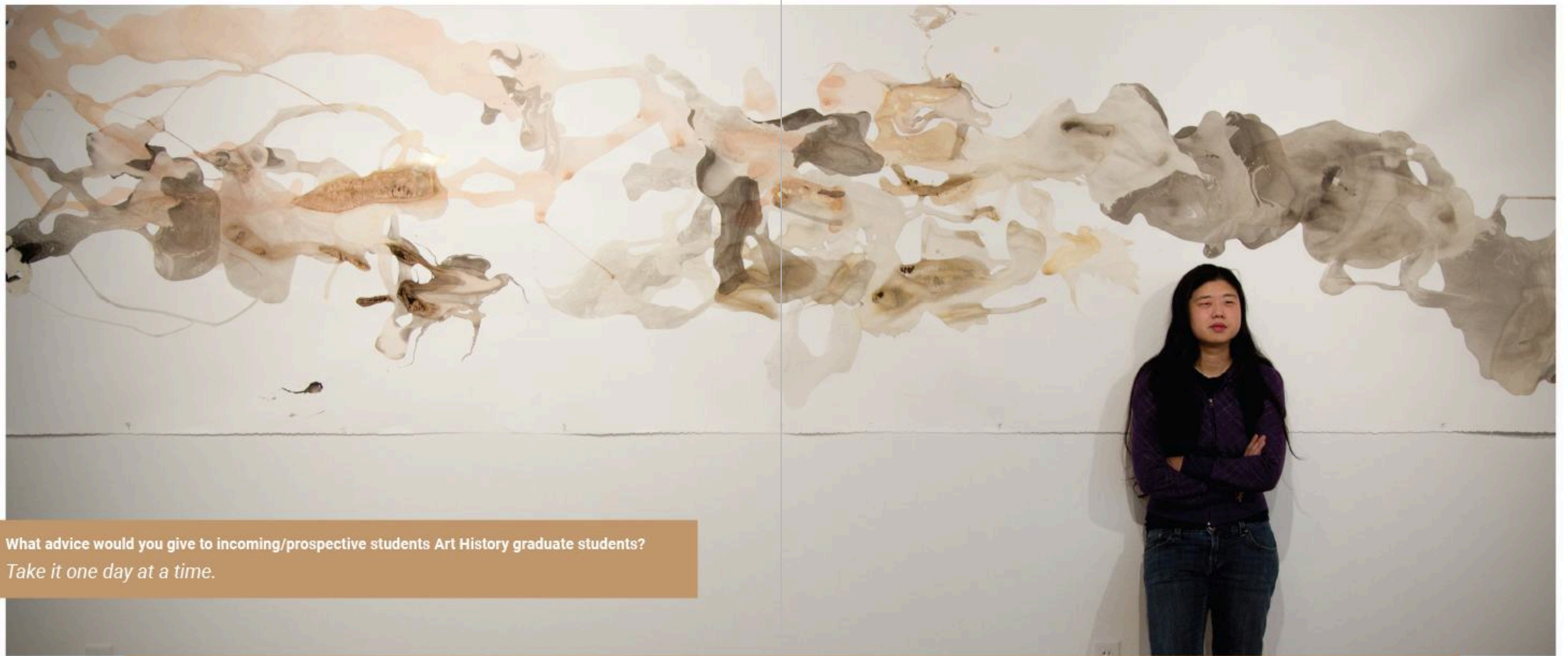
*The CNC Laser... Shhhh.*

### What, if anything, would you have done differently during your time in graduate school?

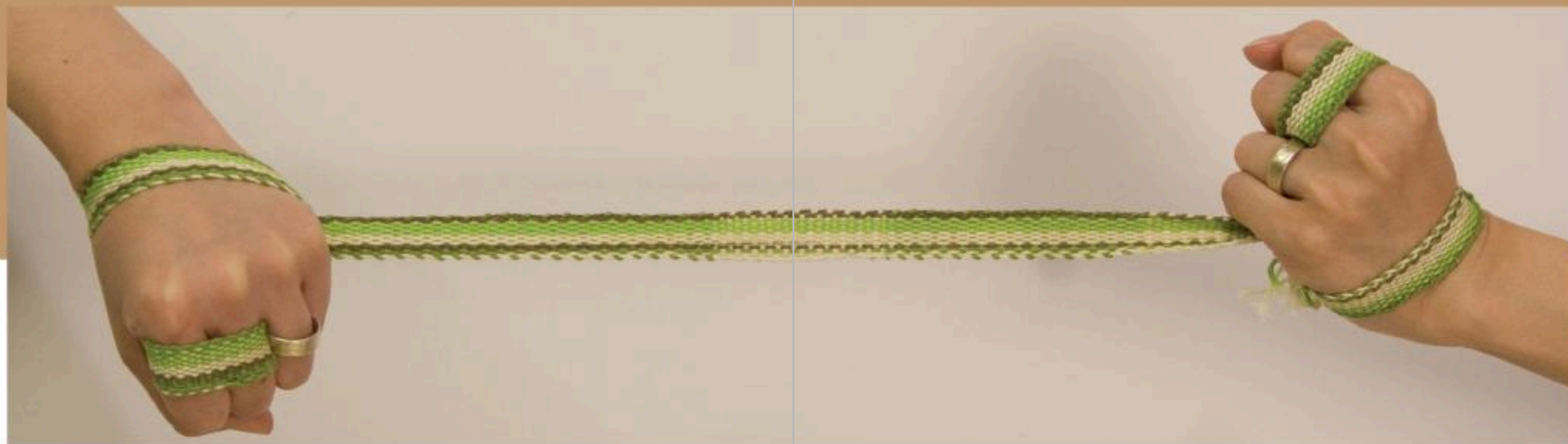
*Emailed the programmers of Microsoft Word to inform them that metalsmithing IS a real word. It's on my undergraduate diploma for goodness sakes.*







What advice would you give to incoming/prospective students Art History graduate students?  
*Take it one day at a time.*





# Carrie Methany

## MFA Jewelry & Metals Q&A

### How would you describe your research or area of study?

*My work is a representation of my study of the female form in nature. My forms have become an extension of nature and nature has become an extension of the forms. My work represents the beauty and adaptability of the female. Nature has become a decorative camouflage and in turn the form has become a representation of the beauty of Mother Nature.*

### Who/what have been your primary influences?

*Professors Chunghi Choo, Kee-ho Yuen, Monica Corriea, have had a large impact on my work. As well as the sculpture artist Ana Mendieta.*

### How has your research or approach changed during your time at the University?

*The University of Iowa has exposed me to a tremendous amount of new technology. My current work is a representation of my work evolving from the use of new technology and new materials. My goal became to combine the use of new technology with traditional hand skills.*

### What pieces are you most proud of?

*The pieces I am most proud of are my geoflower lights, my bike, and my sculpture "Emerge".*

### Can you briefly describe your working process?

*I used programs such as Rhinoceros and AutoCAD to draw my forms. I use CNC machines for milling my form and rapid prototyping printers. I combine the use of technology with traditional mold making techniques. As well as traditional metalsmithing techniques such as raising, soldering, welding, forming, sawing and casting.*

### How do you see your research evolving in the future?

*I intend to study forms, design, and sculpture. I hope to create a series of lights, make bikes and would like to continue exploring new materials.*

### How did being in Iowa City influence your work?

*Iowa City gave me the opportunity to focus on my work. Being from Virginia I did not know much about the area. I have discovered that it is full of bike trails and nature trails. I have enjoyed kayaking and biking in this area. My work is based on forms in nature and this area has provided me with lots of inspiration.*

### What brought you to the University of Iowa?

*Kee-ho Yuen came to my undergraduate school and persuaded me to continue my studies at the University of Iowa.*

### What are your plans after graduation?

*I hope to get a teaching job at a University where I can continue to be influenced by other artist and be able to work on my art.*

### What was your most memorable experience at the University of Iowa?

*Being able to ride my first hand built bike.*

### What is the biggest thing you will take away from graduate school?

*I have made many friends and will miss them very much. I will also miss the amazing instructors.*

### What, if anything, would you have done differently during your time in graduate school?

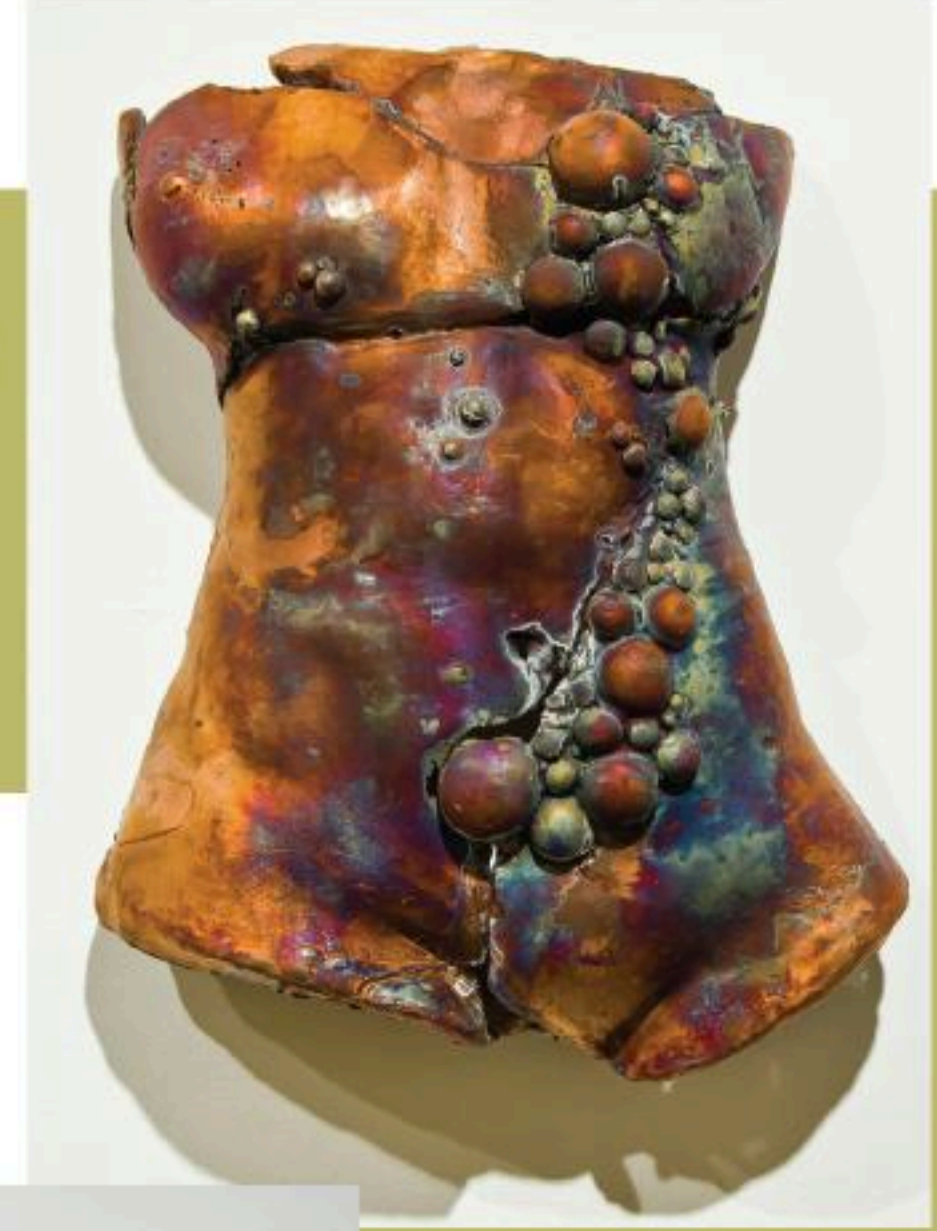
*I would have taken more design and sculpture courses.*







What advice would you give to incoming/prospective students Art History graduate students?  
*Stay true to your own passions in art and learn new techniques to improve them.*





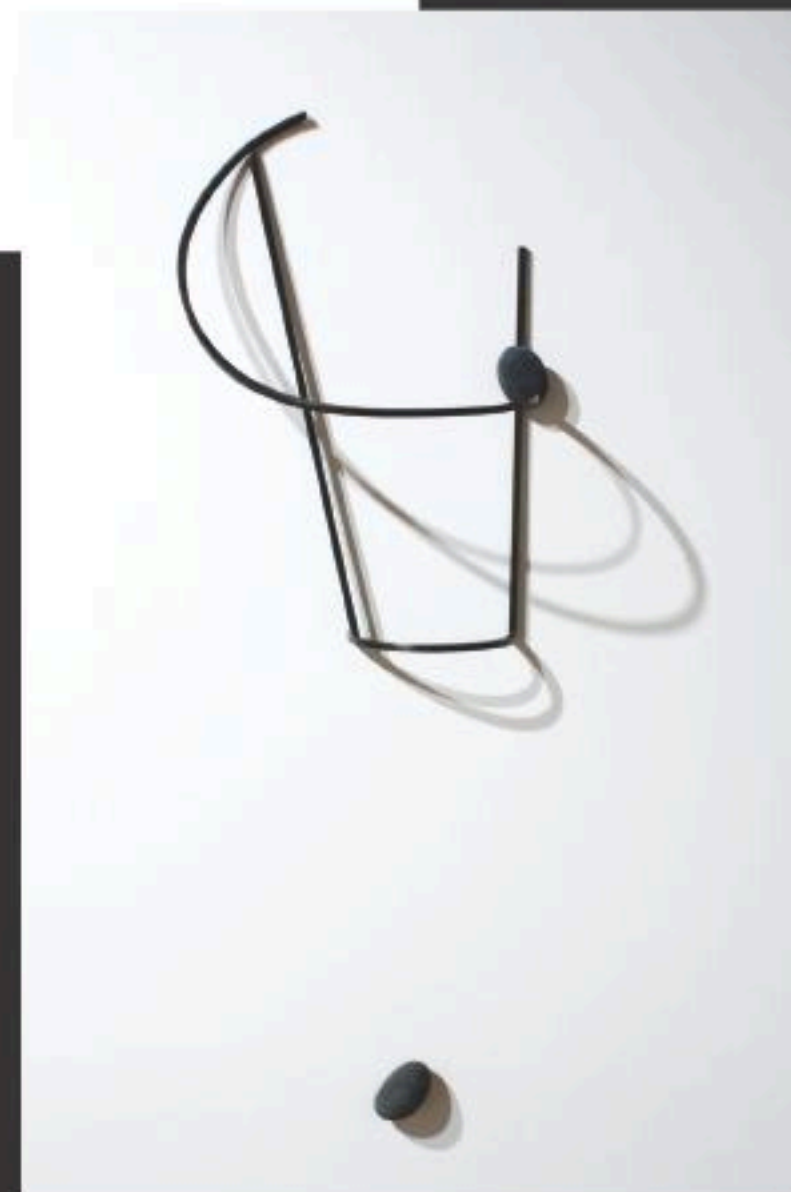
# Margaret Kim

## MFA Jewelry & Metals

After trying various materials in the past, I have learned that metal is the most effective material to deliver the kind of message that I wanted to deliver. Metal looks solid and cold externally, but it can be converted to something that is quite flexible and malleable. I enjoy creating new forms utilizing this dualistic character of metal in my works.

Externally, most of my works are minimalistic, but characteristically they also contain story-telling elements. I often create works that look industrial and modern, but in the process I place an emphasis on Oriental beauty of space, leaving sufficient room for viewers' imagination. I also employ curves that come from organic forms in nature to deliver a sense of life force contained in it.

My recent works have a tendency to fabricate certain elements of nature or natural objects as they are in order to graft them to a metal form that looks hard. In the process, I create fresh and new sensation by contrasting cold and hard characteristics of metal and flexible and malleable characteristics of metal, one against the other, in a piece of work. This kind of work can signify at the same time a deviation from routine or a cure for monotonous modern life. Through such experimental works using metal material, I intend to create art works that can serve as a cure not only for myself but for others as well who are coping with difficulties in everyday life.





## Q&A

### How would you describe your work?

*My works present an artistic possibility by highlighting diverse characteristics of metal through craft techniques. These works emphasize eco-friendly and human-friendly expression and deliver a sense of comfort and rest that we feel from nature.*

### Who/what have been your primary influences?

*I often get inspiration from nature, but this inspiration does not just come from external look of nature but represents certain life force that is inherent in nature. In fact, life force is the very force that forms the nature itself. Hence, more often than not, I try to make this life force felt in my works.*

### How has your work changed during your time at the University?

*In the past, I paid more attention to visual effect when I created my works. But after taking more courses at Iowa, I think I became somewhat bold and began to experiment various things. I matched diverse materials, combined*

*heterogeneous forms, and experienced something new was created in the process which is more accessible to the public.*

### Which piece/research/work are you most proud of?

*I would select works that are entitled 'Coexistence'. These works are created with metal in geometric forms and contrasted against natural materials such as stone, water, and tree leaves. Externally, these works look rather simple but they enabled me to experiment a number of bold attempts, providing an occasion for me to come up with new challenges.*

### Can you briefly describe your working process?

*I am interested in simple geometric forms that are derived from nature. I enjoy developing them into new forms either by dividing them or contrasting against other natural objects. In the process, I often introduce new materials or techniques which add new meaning to my works.*

### How do you see your work evolving in the future?

*I have this feeling that my works are getting simpler and minimalistic, but more imbued with meaning and room for imagination.*

### How did being in Iowa City influence your work?

*I had quite interesting life-changing experience while living in Iowa City. Lots of greens in Iowa City helped balancing my life, and I feel it affected my works.*

### What brought you to the University of Iowa?

*My former professor Rob Glover from Texas Tech University recommended Jewelry and Metalsmithing program here at the University of Iowa.*

### What are your plans after graduation?

*I am planning to move to South Korea and look for a teaching position.*

### What was your most memorable experience at the University?

*I got a commission from one of the donors in our program, and working with her was a very pleasant experience for me.*





# Painting & Drawing



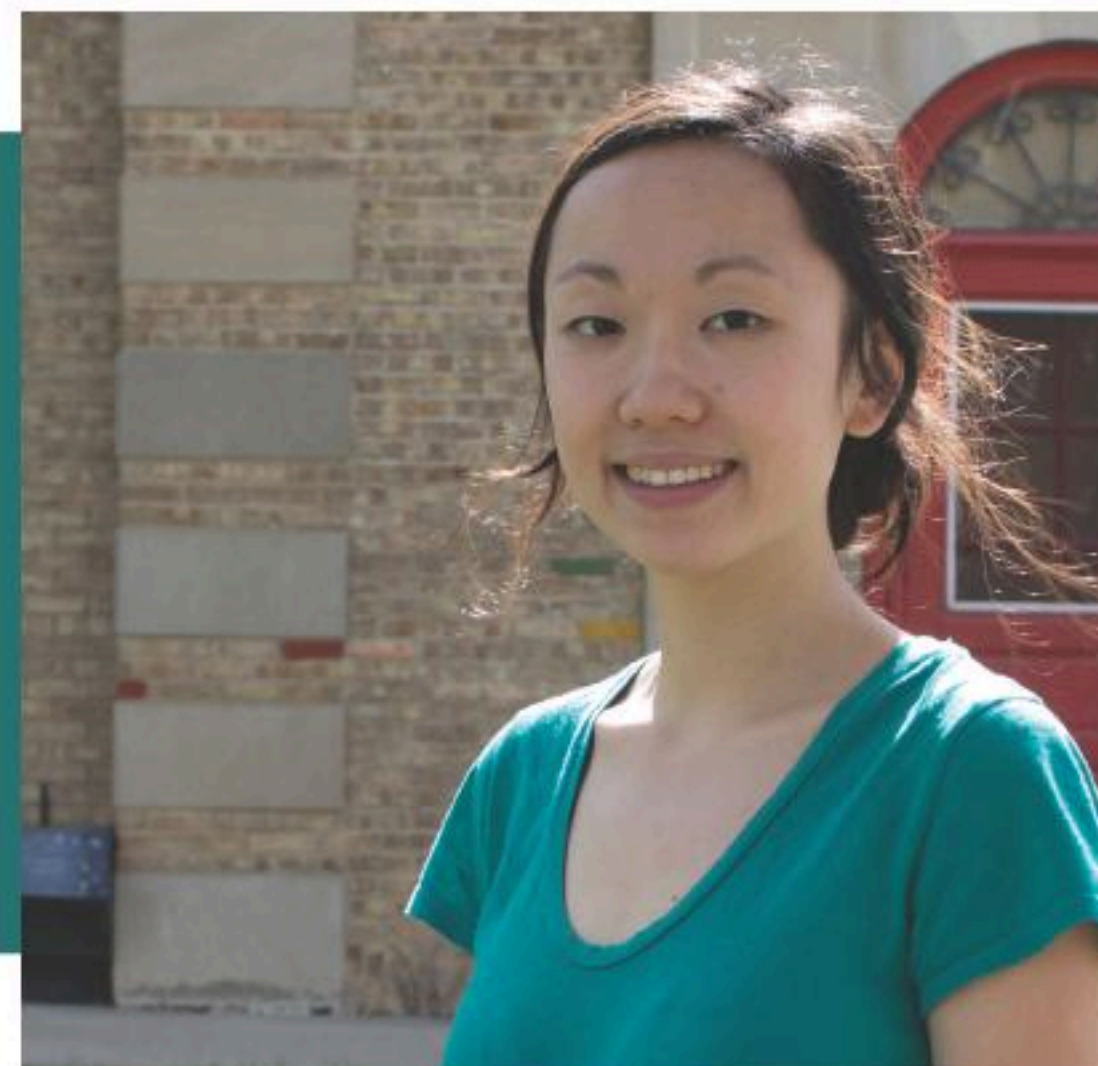
# Mary Laube

## MFA Painting & Drawing

I consider the home to be a container that not only shelters our physical bodies but also harbors our memories and daydreams. My work simultaneously embodies warmth and sterility to question the notion of absence and how a void emerges only to reveal the presence of something else. My work is an investigation of loss, where the exchange between searching and hiding is continually at play. I am attentive to my own sense of urgency to preserve memory while simultaneously being aware of the impossibility of such an endeavor. Although my work suggests vacancy (visually and metaphorically), art making provides me the opportunity to reimagine the void through an uncanny and sometimes painful confrontation with my own memories.

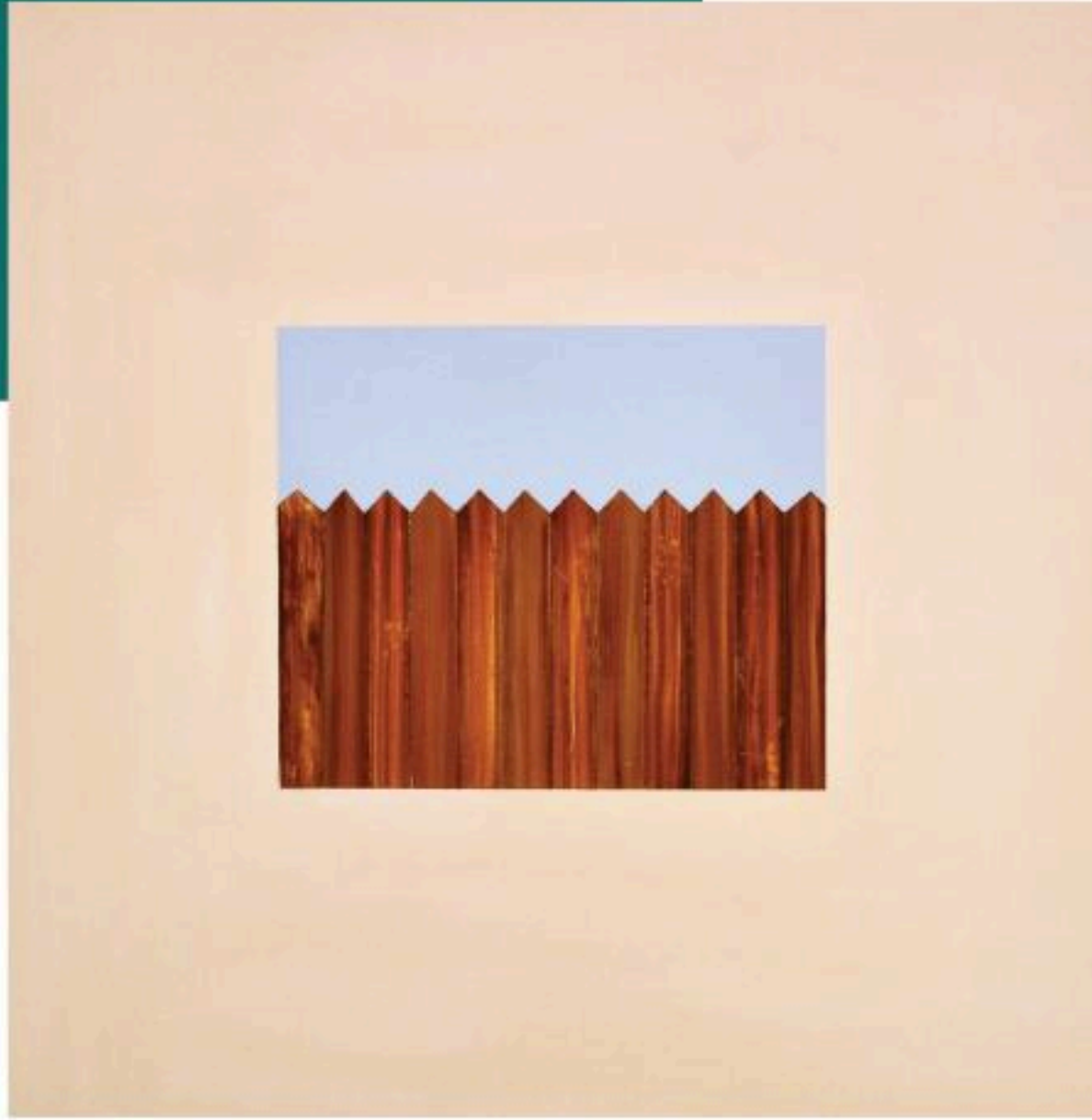
The home is a place that recalls the past; the curve of a railing, the smell of carpet, or the color of light shining through a window perform as bookmarks in our memory. It is a location often cherished and loved by its inhabitants. It embodies the potency of nesting, birth, and safety. When the home experiences any form of adverse change, it has the potential to harbor tragedy. In such moments of augmentation, emotional contradictions occur, where the uncanny emerges through the conflation of both ease and discomfort. Once a place of refuge, the domestic habitat can transform into a complex world layered with haunted memories, projected contrivances, and mundane iteration.

Echoing has become an important aspect of my work, where characters, patterns, and gestures appear in several different iterations. I am interested in challenging the notion of the autonomous art object and am attempting to form relationships that exist within and beyond the borders of each work. One of my objectives is to question the exclusion of painting from the contemporary



conversation of relational and interactive work that dismisses it as a non-transitive art form. The provocation of the frame's edge is a way to investigate the painting as an object that speaks to and from its exterior. Another objective is to challenge the boundaries that differentiate between the realms of "painting" and "reality." Gestures within the paintings are repeated in and on the architecture of the space itself. The frame of each work is no longer clearly identified as the termination of the narrative; rather, each painting functions as a possible character that exists within the same world as the viewer.







## Q&A

### How would you describe your work?

*My work employs the marriage of flattened abstraction and illusionistic space in order to represent the uncanny through the telling of my own personal narrative. The emptiness of each room, the congested architecture, the harshness of each edge, and the sparsely populated brush strokes render these spaces emotionally distant and sometimes cold. The color, altered perspectives, and various levels of abstraction implicate a sense of lightness, pleasure, and play.*

### Who/what have been your primary influences?

*My work is in part influenced by early Italian and Florentine painters such as Giotto, Fra Angelico, Giovanni de Paulo...etc. I also like to give quite a bit of credit to the work of Joseph Albers, specifically regarding the Interaction of Color.*

### How has your work changed during your time at the University?

*In baby steps, my work has consistently changed throughout my time here. More specifically, I think I have sharpened my technical craft as a painter.*

### Which piece/research/work are you most proud of?

*The installation of my M.F.A. show Practical Joy.*

### Can you briefly describe your working process?

*My studio practice involves a simultaneous approach where drawing, painting, reading, and photographing are all executed throughout the entire process.*

### How do you see your work evolving in the future?

*I would like to continue working on installation based work and fusing those projects with my paintings.*

### How did being in Iowa City influence your work?

*The most influential part of Iowa City is the community and my direct peers.*

### What are your plans after graduation?

*I am currently applying to artist residencies and will probably stay in Iowa City for another year. I have a few shows lined up so my plan is to get in as much studio time as possible.*

### What was your most memorable experience at the University of Iowa?

*My most memorable experience is simultaneously joyful and sad. I entered the program with a woman named Megan Dirks whose passing occurred shortly after our first year here. She was a huge part of my life during that first year. We began working collaboratively on several different projects. Unfortunately most of them were not completed and I hope to someday return to those ideas.*

### What advice would you give to incoming/prospective students?

*I like to consider graduate school as a long-term artist residency. So my advice would be to use the time well and get some serious work done. Time flies!*



# Andrea Ferrigno

## MFA Painting & Drawing

Born and raised in Des Moines, Iowa, Andrea Ferrigno received her BFA in 1997 from the Kansas City Art Institute. Andrea will receive her MFA this May of 2012 in Painting and Drawing. Her work reflects her interest in the intersections of art, science and philosophy. She is currently an instructor of Basic Drawing at the University of Iowa. Andrea hopes to study synthetic biology in the near future exploring the changing definition of nature as well as expanding an understanding of material possibilities.

I like to think of gardening as a metaphor for the way I develop various bodies of work. I have different "plants" that I am cultivating and at this point I am excited to see areas of cross-pollinations and also new growth. There is a balance of an intuitive and analytic approach to my image making. Conceptually, I am interested in our rapidly changing relationship to nature and well as unprecedented power to manipulate her, down to her very building blocks. I see my work as a by-product of my inquiry into the changing structure of nature and technology, bringing with it both hopes and fears as to where this will take mankind into the future. Making images in this fashion I see as an effort to reconcile my experience in the world, with a more clinical understanding of the world. The final images always are never pre-planned rather discovered through this semi-systematic approach.

There is symbiotic relationship of the intuitive and analytic in my approach to image making. Working with systems extracted from science and nature, allows me a potential objective point of entry. Distilling drawing to elementary parts and having a systematic working method allows for continual discovery and new challenges, for each piece is a different variation of this approach. I assert my free will, moving materials in space in time, leaving behind a material trace of my intention, and the final image as evidence of discovery. My work is both esoteric and exoteric reflecting on my individual experience as a living being, paired with a scientific conceptual understanding of the genesis of our existence. I think about the juxtaposition of the following assumed dichotomies:



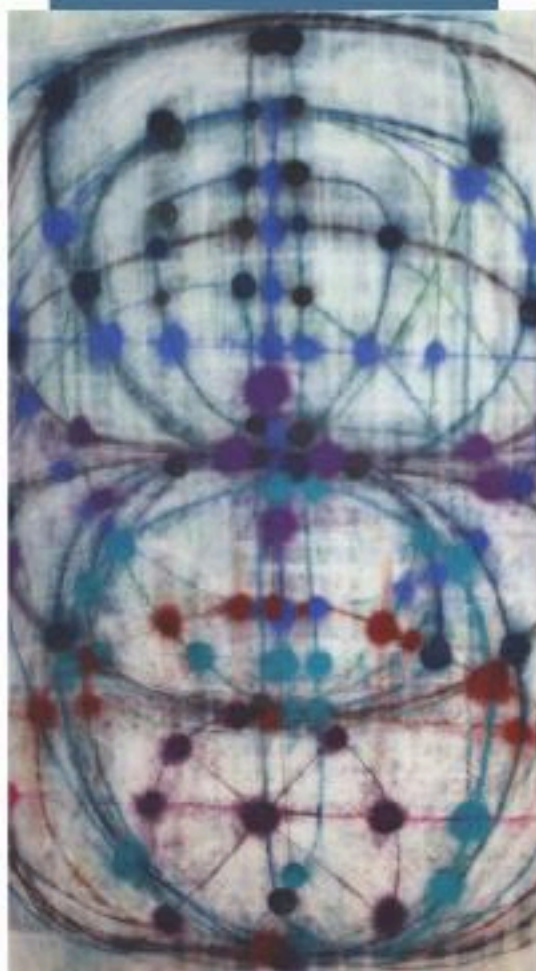
stillness and motion, matter and energy, experience and information and their synergy in space and time. I think about how form comes into being in time, through observation and through historical and contemporary literature.

The personal biographic and search for a true identity has driven my interest in science. I was given up for adoption as an infant and then reunited with my biological family as a young adult. Artistic impulses seemed to have been imbedded in my genetic code, as both sides of my maternal and paternal heritage and full of artists. This left me questioning if my desires to be an artist were really mine at all? Uncanny similarities in personality, political and spiritual view became apparent that were in many senses affirming and in another sense left me questioning; what felt like me asserting my free will and making my own life decisions which seems rebellious to my adoptive family, was really just part of my predetermined being? My process is meditative and systematic in approach. Working within a system allows me for an objective entry for subjective experience and desires a synthesis of these realms. I was raised Catholic while my biological families, on both estranged sides have highly embraced Native American spirituality. I have been strongly influenced by both of these experiences and continue to question my identity through these experiences as one of a nurtured nature.





My interest in science and philosophy reaches beyond myself and I hope for my work to as well. As we search for a collective identity and heritage within a global awareness and revelations of our ancestors, we look to cave paintings of 100,000 years and find someone not unlike ourselves.



## Q&A

### How would you describe your work?

*An analytical and intuitive approach to synthesizing dialectic phenomenon.*

### Who/what have been your primary influences?

*Science, Philosophy, Nature, Artists: Paul Klee, Sol LeWitt, Brice Marden, Agnes Martin, to name a few.*

### Which piece are you most proud of?

*Mostly, I am proud of the breadth of my exploration, not any particular piece over others, maybe the one I am getting ready to work on next.*

### Can you briefly describe your working process?

*Akin to gardening, I have an oscillating path that I walk in my garden, watering what needs watered and pruning what needs pruned.*

### How do you see your work evolving in the future?

*I see my garden expanding, cross-pollinating and creating new hybrids, sustaining the heirlooms, maybe put in a fountain?*

### How did being in Iowa City influence your work?

*I am really grateful for the amazing community here.*

### What are your plans after graduation?

*I hope to continue teaching.*

### What is the biggest thing you will take away from Graduate School?

*Life-long friends and colleagues.*

### What advice would you give to incoming/prospective students?

*Take risks.*



# Ellen Siebers

## MFA Painting & Drawing

My recent body of work is one that revolves around the awkward, disconnected, violent and loving relationships that exist between the natural world and myself. As a child I often displayed the inability to recognize the order and requirements of nature. This disconnect is still evident in my life as I often mirror similar gestures of my adolescence. I long to feel at home in nature yet, ultimately, my attempts fail or slip beneath my feet. The gestures that I am closest to are the act of carving and the act of framing. Carving in that it is an attempt to physically imprint something human onto a natural object. Framing in that it is an attempt to selectively identify an illusion or image, while signifying its importance. Yet a framing device ultimately removes the viewer from the identified image. I also relate the frame to a history of photography. This is important in my work because the weight of the pre-meditated image, as well as experience itself, both have an impact on how I internalize environments first-hand.

The figures in my paintings are often references to historical, natural pursuits, which I adapt from my reading of biographical accounts of how natural and human worlds collide. I am interested in stories of expeditions in which assumed knowledge of conditions ultimately failed the members involved.

The figures and figurative references ultimately serve as vessels for self-exploration. I extrapolate stories from the lives of these references and interject my own experience of disconnect to create the myths of my life. The inherit narratives are meant to circulate around a visceral moment experienced, not a sequential event. The drawing line leads the way through the paintings, working to dissect and restrict the figurative from the natural elements. I aim to create physical space in the paintings through glazing techniques. Flattened space and quick gesture is also important, as it relates to the space or environment of memory or internal experience.



I should add that book making is an imperative part of my process. I make one-of-a-kind books, usually drum-leaf or folio bindings, to aid my process of discovering different kinds of space in conjunction with object. The construction of books and paintings occur simultaneously, as the two processes support and inform each other.



## Q&A

### Who/what have been your primary influences?

*My main influences have been TL Solien (painter and professor at the University of Wisconsin, Madison) and my fellow MFA painters at the University of Iowa.*

### How has your work changed during your time at the University?

*Through my time at the University, my work has become more emotionally considered and has more fully explored its own relationship to the history of painting. It also has turned to explore smaller, everyday moments (as opposed to earlier works, that were about a larger mythic narrative).*

### Which piece/research/work are you most proud of?

*I am usually most excited about whatever piece I just finished. In this case I would also say that "Totem" and "Untitled" are what I consider to be my most important finished pieces.*

### Can you briefly describe your working process?

*My studio practice involves two distinct yet inseparable methods or working. The photographic image and idea of the catalogue has remained a consistent interest of mine throughout my practice, but for the past two years has shifted from existing in the form of a catalogue to the artist or single-edition book. The presence of the mediated image and the gesture of construction and arranging these images eventually settle into the form of a painting or a book, as the processes hinge and inform each other.*

### How do you see your work evolving in the future?

*I really can't be too sure, that is the fun of it. Five years ago, I never would have guessed what I would be making now. I hope that ten years from now I feel the same way.*

### How did being in Iowa City influence your work?

*Living and working with my fellow classmates at 109 River Street influenced my experience. The building is always filled with work and conversation. Also through the amount of time spent in the space, the direct architecture and landscape of the space found its way into my paintings and books.*

### What brought you to the University of Iowa?

*The reputation of being a place that has a true respect and love for painting brought me to the University of Iowa. Furthermore, the opportunity to teach a drawing class brought me here.*

### What are your plans after graduation?

*I want to pursue being an educator, and hopefully just become a better painter and artist. Whatever plan helps me become those things is what I will do.*

### What was your most memorable experience at the University?

*My most memorable experiences at the University of Iowa have been a few great nights at 109 River Street with my painting family. Times grilling out, having picnics or generally spending time together talking about being young artists. That and the time I hit a deer right in front of the studio building.*

### What is the biggest thing you will take away from Graduate School?

*I will take away with me a community of great friends and artists.*

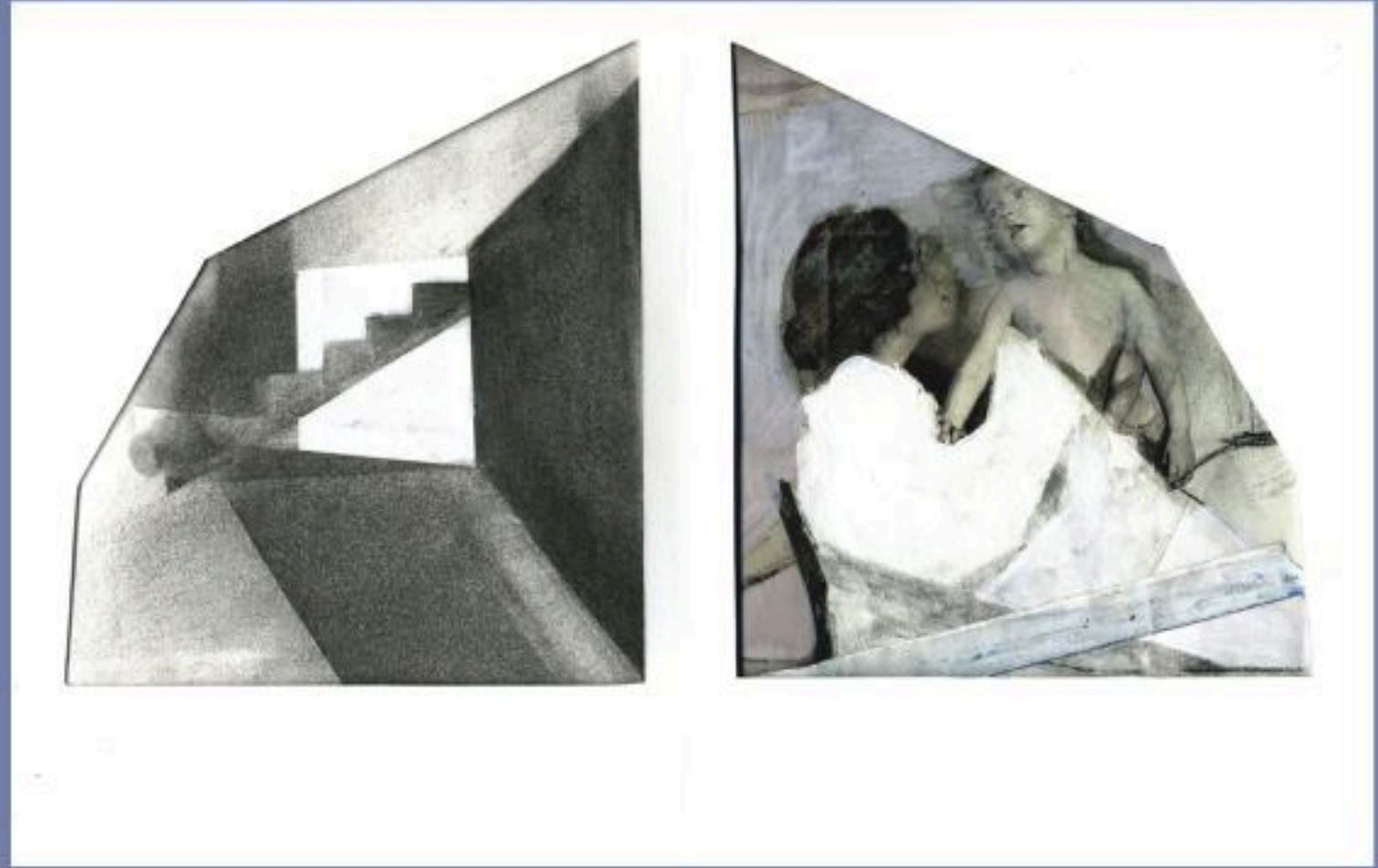
### What, if anything, would you have done differently during your time in graduate school?

*No regrets!*

### What advice would you give to incoming/prospective students?

*Enjoy getting to know your faculty and fellow students. Go to every lecture, opening and take every studio visit that you can. Also, the "Dundee" burger at Short's cures most ailments.*







The background features several overlapping rectangles in two shades of blue and red. A large blue rectangle is on the left, with a red one overlapping its bottom right. Another blue rectangle is in the center, overlapping the red one to its left and another red one to its right. A large red rectangle is on the right side. The word 'Photography' is centered across these shapes in a white serif font.

# Photography



# Cheryl Childress

## MFA Photography

In this work, I revisit my interest in conflicting human emotions, which, on one hand, manifests itself as violence confused for love, and on the other hand, aspires to transcend everyday vision. Overall, my work is a quest for understanding my surroundings, may that be personal feelings, the emotions of those close to me, or information relayed through news media. Internally, we all have dual responses to any given situation and a reflex to place judgment on situations beyond one's immediate experience. Thematically, I continue to fixate on the Charles Manson trial due to its pop culture status and extremity in example. Love, an extreme misinterpretation of Beatles lyrics, and, ultimately, cognitive dissonance, prompted the murders of Steven Earl Parent, Abigail Folger, Voytek Frykowski, Jay Sebring, and Sharon Tate. Over all, the Manson Family felt that through killing these individuals they were helping humanity and acting out of love. The outside world viewed their behavior as insane, evil, and ultimately an act of hate. Although the Manson Trial has been somewhat isolated in its extremity, the issue at hand, confusing love and hate, is fairly common. In many ways, my work is a search for personal understanding through happenstance and metaphor in daily life.



In revisiting these themes, I am interested in the concurrent meditative and intuitive presence within nature and human experience. Additionally, I am interested in nature as a space experienced as a place of wonder and nefariousness. This body of work is a physical manifestation of my understanding of my surroundings, exploring a wide range of cognitive human experience from moments of darkness to spiritual transcendence, and the simultaneous occurrence of both ends of this spectrum. The overarching presence of this body of work is united through visual ambiguity and implication of standard moments being a link to something more profound. A balance of stability and instability permeates from the body of work through the use of life and death both visually and conceptually. Additionally I am interested in challenging personal understanding of reality through the use of Ben Day dots commonly used in printed media. These dots serve as a visual barrier, meant to signal to the viewer, "This is not real."

Moments of conflicting emotions are key concepts in my photography, as well as questioning empathy and judgment in day-to-day life. A note passed from Charles Manson to Linda Kasabian in the courtroom read, "This trial of Man's Son will only show the world that each man judges himself." In many ways, my work uses crime text and moments from my own life to create a visual landscape for self-examination. Skewed perception is always at the heart of my work, but essentially, all personal perception is skewed in one way or another.







## Q&A

### How would you describe your work?

*My work is an attempt to understand life by examining what happens in my surroundings through news articles and my day-to-day life. Additionally, I am interested in themes related to my experience living in the St. Louis area for the majority of my life. The resulting work is a form of visual story telling exploring the human condition.*

### Who/what have been your primary influences?

*The films of Terrence Malick, especially *Bad Lands* and *Tree of Life*, Gerhard Richter's *October 18, 1977*, *Demian* by Hermann Hesse, the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, and found photos*

### How has your work changed during your time at the University?

*I have started to explore the use of various cameras, books, papermaking, printmaking, video and other media to further my ideas. Allowing myself new options has helped motivate me when I feel like I am in a rut.*

### Which piece/research/work are you most proud of?

*I really like an untitled pinhole image I made of clip-on Christmas ornament birds in a field of Queen Anne's Lace. The exposure time was only 1 second, but the wind was blowing so hard that one of the birds appears to be dissipating into space. The over all mood of this image is something I had wanted to convey for a long time, but had not been able to accomplish. It is one of my favorite images to date.*

### Can you briefly describe your working process?

*Very Fluid.*

### How do you see your work evolving in the future?

*I feel like I will always be interested in working with themes relating to the human condition, but I see myself using other media in addition to photography.*

### How did being in Iowa City influence your work?

*The natural landscape around Iowa City has heavily influenced my aesthetic choices and thought process while living here. Specifically, Kent Park has been a meditative and inspirational place for me. A number of images from the series *From an American Dream* were shot there because the grass in areas of the park seem untouched as well as timeless. The stillness of this space has also made me reexamine the relationship we, as humans, have with our environment; that the landscape offers both a sense of peace and uncertainty.*

### What brought you to the University of Iowa?

*The environment seemed so peaceful; that it would be easy to focus on making work without many distractions.*

### What are your plans after graduation?

*To continue making artwork and find fulfilling work within the arts.*

### What was your most memorable experience at the University?

*Spending quiet fall afternoons in Kent Park.*

### What is the biggest thing you will take away from Graduate School?

*An encouraging art community is very important, especially in times of doubt.*

### What, if anything, would you have done differently during your time in graduate school?

*Nothing really.*

### What advice would you give to incoming/prospective students?

*If you have never lived through a real winter...you will before you leave. Buy a wool coat.*



# Allison Welch

## MFA Photography

My view of the 19th century is a union of fact and fiction. When I conjure images of the pioneer's life, it tends to be romantic. I see a forest, or an endless prairie, and a small cabin abounding with good food, family, and time. This tempered world, constructed in large part by the Little House on the Prairie and American Girl series, rarely invites the circumstances of politics, poverty, disease, and destruction of land and people. Based on the stories and clothing of the American Girl doll Kirsten, the self-portraits in Meet Allison, an American Girl tell of my attempts to make a storybook place real.

These photographs are longing nods to the past, both historical and personal. Handmade costumes and situations that were appropriate in the American Girl books surrender themselves as ineffective in the world, and I cannot help but have the critical capacity to discern that Kirsten's fictional life was much different from a real pioneer's. Emotions appear as riddles on my face as I earnestly try to believe in my surroundings' verisimilitude – I hold doubt and delight, memory and loss. In one way, my sentiment is linked to a childhood friend's palpable absence. Meeting in middle school, Meggy and I quickly discovered a shared love of the American Girl dolls. Two years ago, I lost her to cancer. In these photographs, I search for the overlap of fact and fiction, tying together the memories of my life and those of America.

I am a curator and preservationist of memory. Umberto Eco writes of our need to preserve history as a "philosophy of immortality as duplication," (1) and so I photograph these habits of collecting and remembering through objects. In the accompanying bodies of work, I explore specific collections that act as material reminders of the past. These reminders, ranging from historical reenactments to trinkets set on bedside tables, have great sentimental importance and carry elaborate stories that are both personal and public. In contrast to the privacy of the bedside table, the Civil War reenactment is an explicit portal into communication – the language of costume, behavior, and setting is rich with significance. Hovering between these works are self-portraits that detail my transition from childhood to womanhood.





## Q&A

### How would you describe your work?

*Colorful; I photograph people (including myself) to intertwine the relative concepts of history, memory, storytelling, costume, nostalgia, and tradition.*

### Who/what have been your primary influences?

*I can sound off a number of photographers who incorporate history and costume in their work, but I'd be dishonest if I didn't start my list with Edward Hopper and Rainer Maria Rilke. Both painter and poet tell of worlds known exclusively to the subject, and for us to discover. Their work is comforting and mysterious, and I always return to it for guidance.*

### How has your work changed during your time at the University?

*I've come full circle here. As an undergrad, I primarily photographed my grandparents at their rural farm in Wisconsin, and am back to portraiture (Civil War reenactments and American Girl). But at the start of graduate school, I took a stylistic 180° turn, photographing and archiving the bedside tables of friends and strangers alike.*

### Can you briefly describe your working process?

*It's hard to pinpoint the beginning and end to my practice; everything is in flux. Some form of dress is in the works, negatives are waiting to be scanned, books stay scattered around my house, a mocha waits at Java House, a friend is near to collaborate with.*



### How do you see your work evolving in the future?

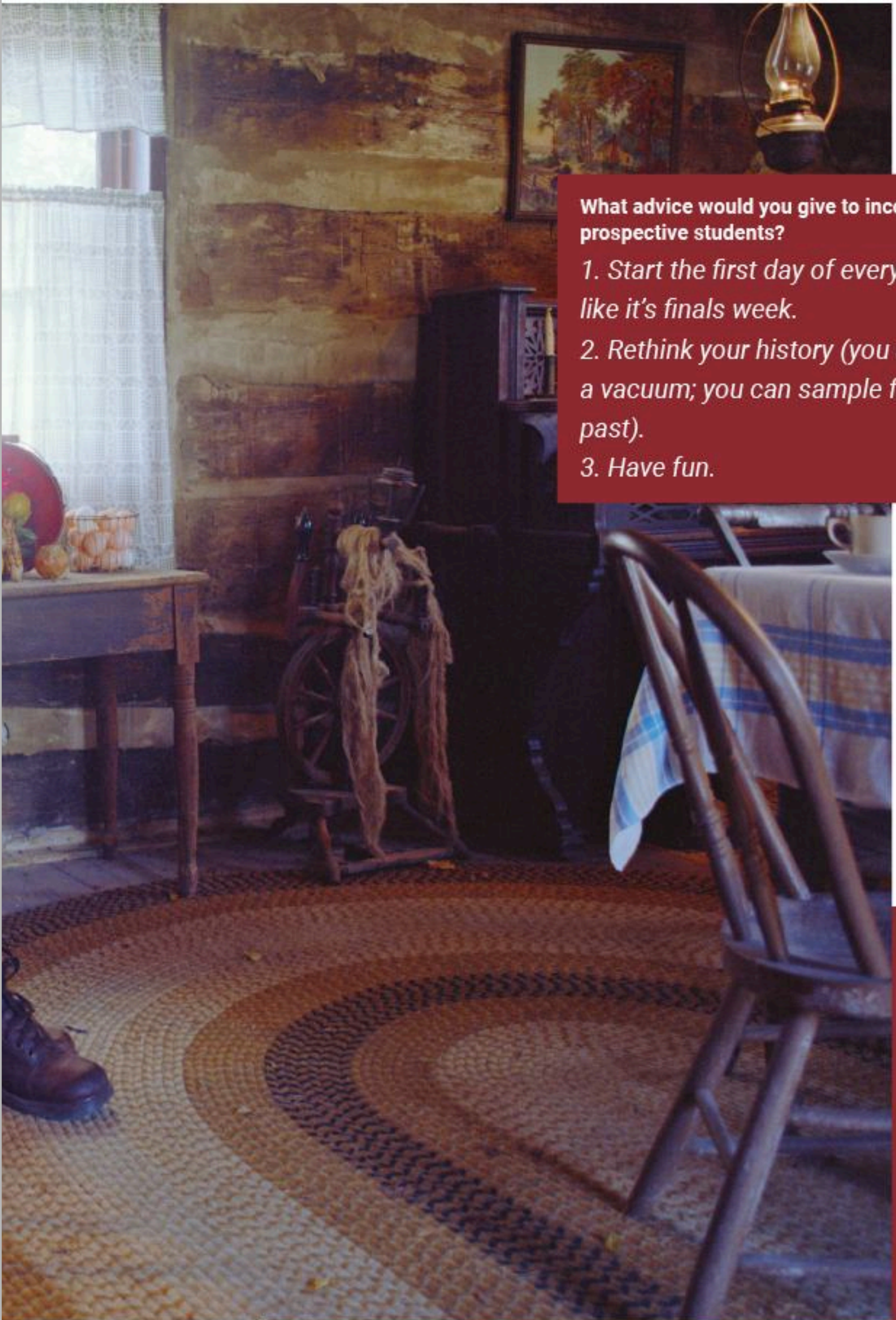
*I see long-term convergences with textiles and photography, self-portraits, and narratives of American culture. I see myself working (and playing) all the time!*





What advice would you give to incoming/  
prospective students?

1. *Start the first day of every semester like it's finals week.*
2. *Rethink your history (you are not in a vacuum; you can sample from your past).*
3. *Have fun.*





# Aaron Lurth

## MFA Photography

### Q&A

#### How would you describe your work?

*I consider myself a documentary photographer, though my subject matter may not be representative of what a typical documentary photographer would shoot. My interest lies in how people interact with the spaces we build. More specifically, I'm interested in how spaces change when we are not around.*

#### Who/what have been your primary influences?

*That's a tough question. My interests really are extremely broad. Though I consider myself an artist, my art thus far exists solely as photographs. So really I sometimes find it easier to just call myself a photographer. As such, I look at and am influenced by mostly photographers. There are four primary photographers I have come to say helped define my interests and shooting style: Hiroshi Sugimoto for his technical mastery and elegantly simple style, Gregory Crewdson for this cinematic use of light, Edward Burtynsky particularly for his work in China, and Andreas Gursky because, well, he's the man.*

#### How has your work changed during your time at the University?

*I entered graduate school here with a portfolio of work I did on refugee camps in Malta. My background was in journalism and public relations photography and I thought I would continue to travel to far-away lands and work on telling stories about people. What I really wound up doing was staying close to home and telling stories about places void of people. In a way I suppose you could say my work did a bit of a 180.*

#### Which piece/research/work are you most proud of?

*My MFA thesis work is the result of two full years of hard—but enjoyable—labor. It's really the showcase collection of work I will come away with from my time here in graduate school here. I think I'm most proud of that so far.*

#### Can you briefly describe your working process?

*I suppose my working process is not all that exciting. After I come up with some sort of idea I start location scouting. It just so happens that all my work thus far as been at night. So the location scouting happens during the day, and then I have to come back late at night to see what the place looks like when the sun's not out. At that point I shoot for a few hours, and then spend a ridiculous amount of time sitting in front of the computer editing, and printing. I usually burn through quite a few episodes of *This American Life* and *RadioLab* to stay sane.*

#### How do you see your work evolving in the future?

*I find as an artist, your work is typically highly influenced by the current situation you find yourself in. I'm not exactly sure where I will find myself after graduation, so I'm not completely sure where my art will take me. Ideally, I have a few documentary project ideas in China, but like all things in life it will take some money to pull off. So we'll see.*

#### How did being in Iowa City influence your work?

*I have this professor in the photography program that likens Iowa City to New York City. You just laughed, I know, but here me out. New York City is the artistic and cultural hub of a state that is really nothing like that city at all. Iowa City is very much like that. The art scene in Iowa City is extremely strong, you are centrally located 3-5 hours away from every major city in the Midwest, and the people here are awesome. It's been a great place to go to school.*

#### What brought you to the University of Iowa?

*Three things really. First, this is a highly ranked, extremely reputable art school with a great history, having the opportunity to attend a top tier graduate school was pretty great. Secondly, my goal is to teach at the collegiate level after I get done with grad school and Iowa is known for producing great teachers. Thirdly, the money, ha! I know that's not a real great answer but I was blessed with a few fellowships and scholarships to come here and that makes a big difference when making a decision on where to attend school.*

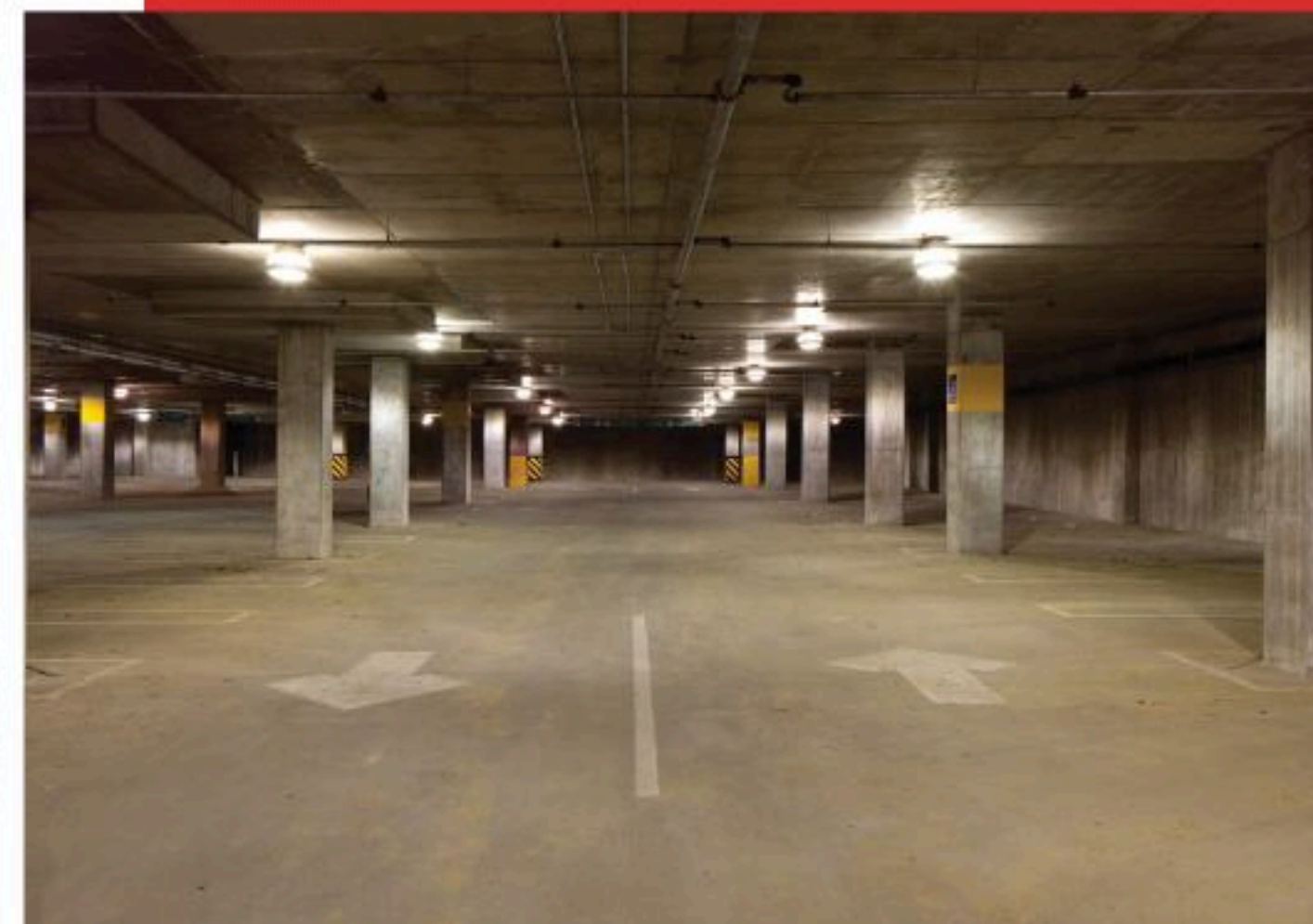
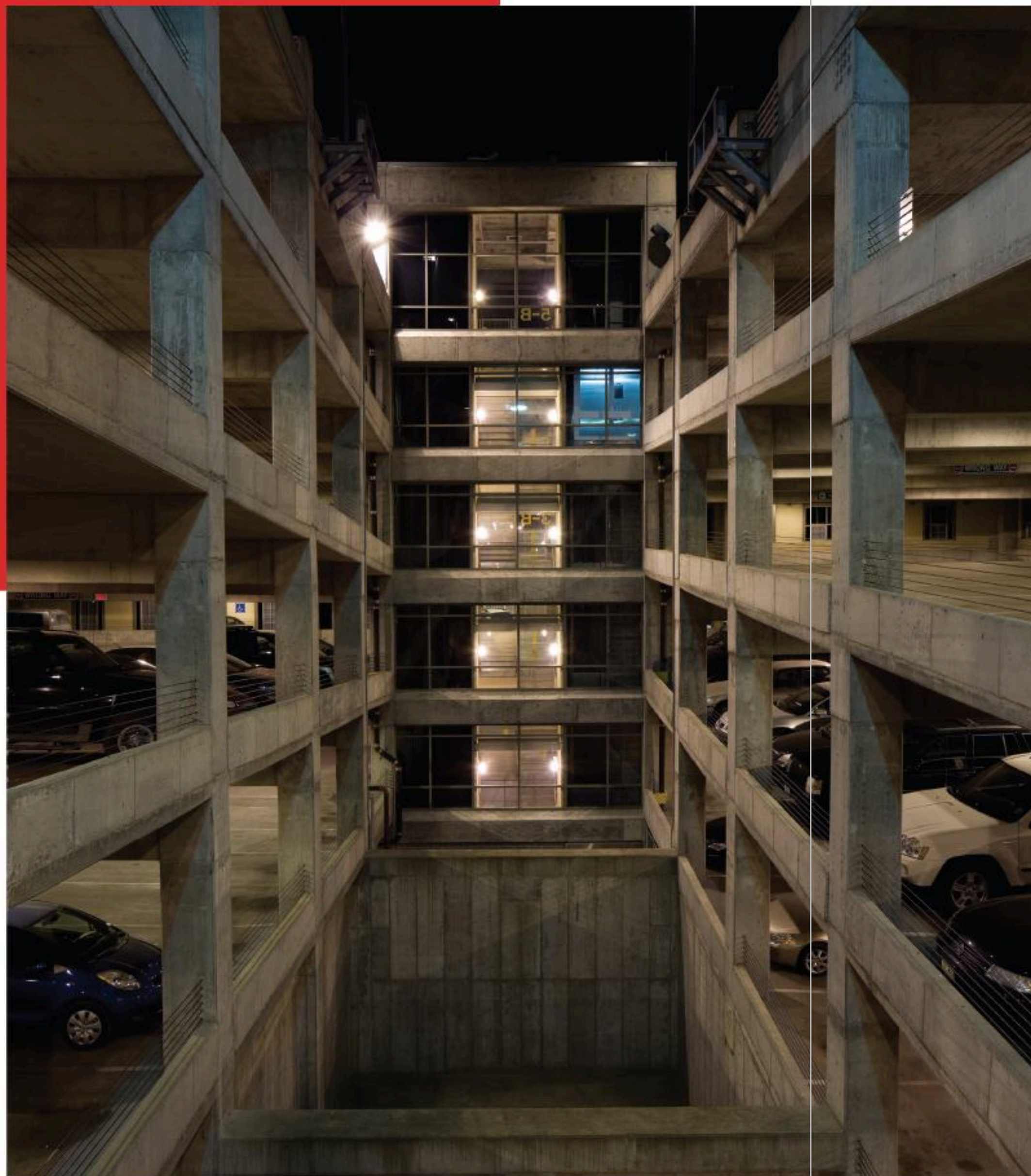
#### What are your plans after graduation?

*I hope to find a professorship somewhere. But in all honesty, in this economy, I just hope I have a job that I love.*

#### What was your most memorable experience at the University?

*My first day of teaching was pretty darn memorable. There's nothing I like directing your own class completely solo.*





**What, if anything, would you have done differently during your time in graduate school?**

*If I can give one piece of advice to anyone it's this: start showing your work in the public sphere as soon as possible. You may not start graduate school producing home runs. Everyone needs some time to get their feet wet and figure out what the heck they are doing. But the thing is, when it comes to getting hired for professorships your exhibition record and teaching experience is key. If you go to Iowa you will most likely have a leg up on the competition on the teaching side of things but the exhibition side is up to you. Plus, the more you show you work the more feedback you get on what you are doing. Win, win.*



# Print making



# Chuck Forsythe

## MFA Printmaking

Residing in a space between historical print traditions, the book trades and contemporary graphic design, I embrace craftsmanship and artistic formalism while pursuing the development of a unique visual style and new methods of working.

Perception has been a long standing theme running throughout my body of work: how we perceive images paired with text, how we interpret masses of information, and how we observe our surroundings are all subjects of investigation. In practice, these inquiries are given form through the print medium and use of overlapping layers of text, found imagery, gestural drawing and bold color combinations. The goal is to create a conversation between a historical, craft-based medium and contemporary fine art informed by science and technology.

With an abiding interest in the book arts and printmaking, Christopher (Chuck) Forsythe has immersed himself in the black arts since earning a BA in Studio Art from Colorado College in 2003. He has served as coordinator and printer at The Press at Colorado College, a fine book press founded by book artist Jim Trissel; as a letterpress operator at the Minneapolis-based design and print workspace, Studio on Fire; and as a bookbinder at Bookmobile, a digital print on demand bindery. In addition Chuck has been a member of the High Point Center for Printmaking cooperative; The Minnesota Center for the Book; and the Minneapolis based bibliographic society, The Ampersand Club. This spring Chuck will earn an MFA in printmaking from the University of Iowa with an additional certificate in book arts from the Center for the Book. After graduation he will join the U of I Printmaking area faculty and staff as their new Instructional Services Specialist.





## Q&A

### How would you describe your work?

*Most recently I've been working with screenprints that deal with the topic of perception and the minutia that surround us. Visually, that takes form in collaged elements of found prints where I am looking at them in a magnified state; excerpting parts of them and blowing them up into a large scale, then collaging those into reinterpretations of the original pieces.*

### How do you see your work evolving in the future?

*Right now I'm pretty happy where I am; it's taken me three years to get to the point where I'm actually happy with the prints I'm producing. I plan to stay with this note for another year or so, until I feel I've really fulfilled this current idea, and then I'll move on from there.*

### Who/what have been your primary influences?

*I'm informed by process—a lot of processes. I was a letterpress printer for a number of years, which has informed my work in a huge way. Before I came to grad school I was working typographically, as I had been working with letterforms on a daily basis and paying a lot of attention to those structures and how they are used. Design is another big influence, which also has to do with coming from a letterpress background, and the need to be aware of the use of typography and layout. Color and the use of color also plays a influential role, especially the colors of the major painters of the 1950's and 60's.*

### How has your work changed during your time at the University?

*My work made a huge shift when I came to grade school, as I had been working primarily with typographic forms; overlapping typographic forms, thinking about the formality of the printed word and preserving that*

*formality or breaking it as a being—not necessarily an act of defiance—but as exploring ways in which to break the power of the written word. So when I came to the University I embarked on a new body of work, where I am exploring the details that surround us that we're not necessarily aware of. As an example, most of my current prints feature bacteria, something that coats everything that we deal with in life—it floats through the air, it's in the water—and yet we can't see them. So bacteria becomes a symbol of the idea I examine in the work in my most recent show, *Seeing the Unseen*.*

### Which piece/research/work are you most proud of?

*My favorite piece in my current show is a piece entitled *In The Woods*. What I enjoy most about that piece is the subtlety of the color and the composition. The piece is a collage of a ripped up wood engraving that has been enlarged, and hiding behind those pieces are ominous looking bacteria, creeping out from around the edges. I enjoy how it works, because from a distance, the color of the bacteria is pretty similar to the color used in the collage pieces, so they blend in. As you approach the print, though, you become aware of what is actually seeping out around the edges.*

### Can you briefly describe your working process?

*I do a lot of looking. I look at photographs, I read the newspaper, I read articles on scientific and print topics. The content of these articles and their accompanying images become embedded in my mind, saved up for a "rainy day." When I approach a print, I reflect on all of these different bits of content and images, and start printing out black and white images representative of them, tearing them up, collaging them, rearranging, and juxtaposing them. Once that's done, I will scan those into a computer, working with the composition some more and begin to work with color. If there are drawn aspects to the images, I'll incorporate those as well. With the images I've been working with lately, I'll draw a dozen or so different forms and scan them into the computer, where I can multiply them and so on. Then, I'll print the film that I use to make screens for screenprinting, and print onto paper. Handmade paper has been another big part of what I've been doing. Handmade paper adds an aspect to the work that is not achievable through print alone. Once I have an image, I think about how paper can enhance that image, and then I bring the two together during the printing process.*



### How did being in Iowa City influence your work?

*The city itself has had no influence on me, but the people have been a big part of my experience here, and certainly the conversations that I've had with them have influenced how I evaluate my work, and see its success and failures. That has been a big impact.*

### What brought you to the University of Iowa?

*I applied to a number of schools, but the University of Iowa was the only school that had a major book arts program and a highly respected printmaking program. When I was accepted here I made up my mind to come to Iowa pretty easily.*

### What are your plans after graduation?

*I'll be working for the University of Iowa in the Printmaking area as a lab tech.*

### What was your most memorable experience at the University?

*The most memorable experiences are also the experiences best kept out print.*

### What is the biggest thing you will take away from Graduate School?

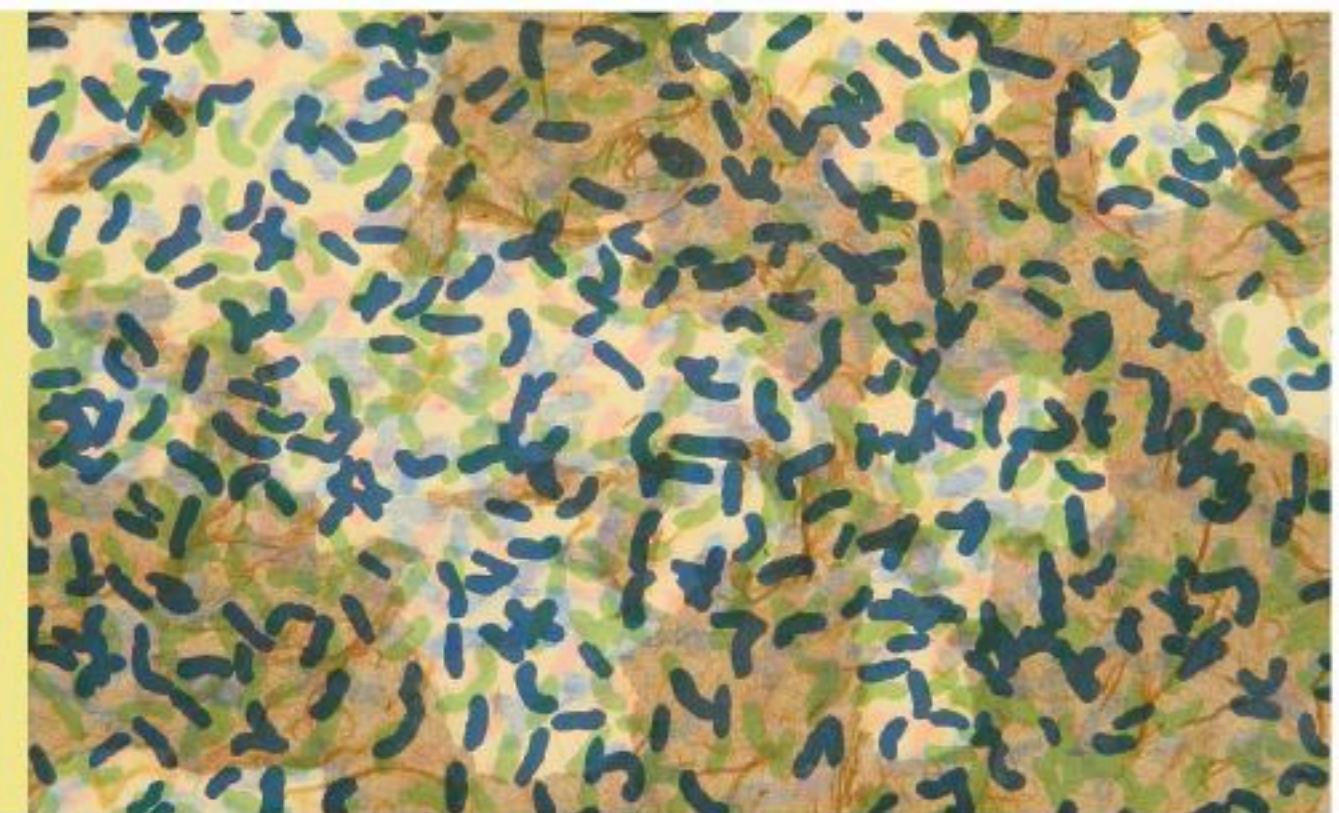
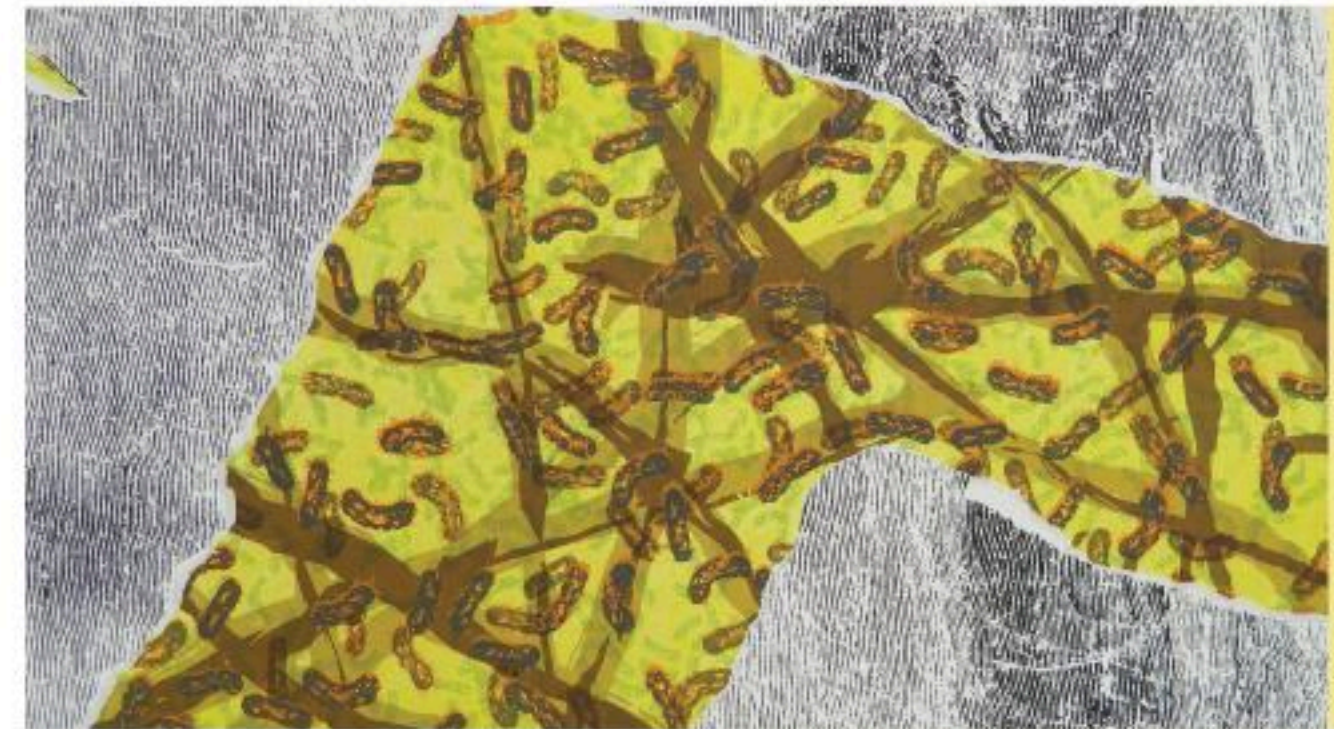
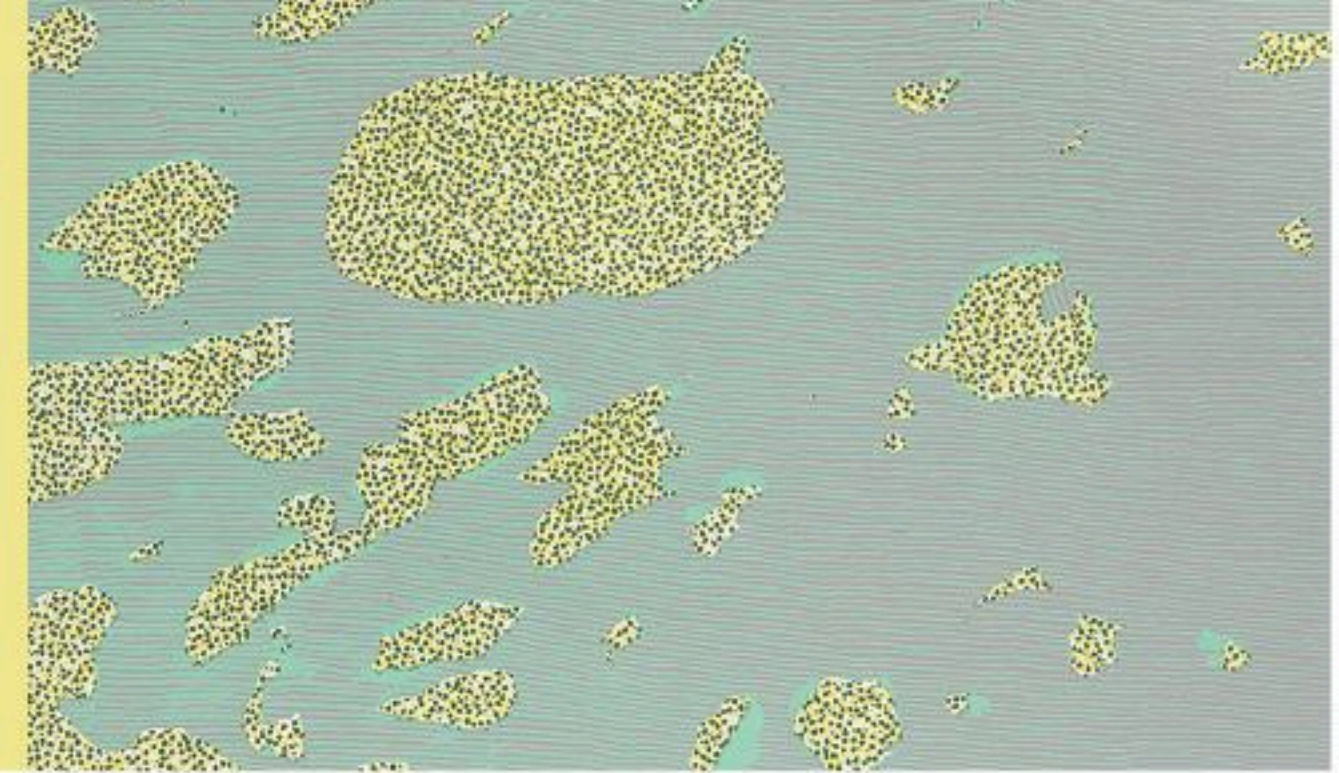
*The experiences I've had with the people that I've worked with here. Hopefully the friendships and the good working relationships will continue on into the future.*

### What, if anything, would you have done differently during your time in graduate school?

*I can't really see doing things much differently than I did.*

### What advice would you give to incoming/prospective students?

*In general, I think potential graduate students should spend a lot of time researching the institutions they're going to enroll in; spending time getting to know the grad students in the program, getting to know what the culture at the institution is like, and if there are instructors or students whose work is similar to theirs, or if there is someone there that could act as a mentor. In my experience, facilities are important, but the people that inhabit those facilities are more important.*







# Sculpture



# Lisa Johnson

## MFA Sculpture

Several years ago, I joined a group of performers, directors, and artists at The Center for Peace in Kolymari, Crete. We came from many countries and very few of us spoke one another's languages. Communication was a struggle and a free-for-all. But our goal in gathering was this very thing: how can we hear each other, what language can we make? We sought to create an international arts language. The Center had a long history of barrier breaking: housing, for example, a theatre built by Palestinian and Israeli teenagers. In my favorite memory, I stand under a white canopy talking with Sead. The wind blows thick air across him and we laugh as we talk. This isn't small – Sead speaks only Bosnian and I don't speak a word. But we listen hard. We speak with our whole bodies. The story gets told. When I look at who I am as an artist I go back to Kolymari again and again. It created me.

I was tremendously influenced by this experience. We developed ways to listen and speak that crossed the typical boundaries of language. I began to examine how impasses in communication could be surmounted, and what this might mean on a larger scale. Today, my work asks: What is the space between us? My work explores voice and silence. I work with personal narratives of multiple communities, layering story and sculptural space. Since March 2010, I have been working with a group of women inmates at the Iowa Correctional Institute for Women. We create new works that fuse literary mythology and personal story. We work from the idea that personal truth must be spoken out loud, that there is power and resonance in the sheer act of speaking. Because I have seen how the act of speaking affects this often-silenced community, I have developed additional research to examine how different communities tell their stories, and how artists work among alternative communities where art is often not made.



My long-range goals connect sculpture, theatrical space, community story, and oral tradition. I am researching the development of storytelling and artistic expression within "silenced" communities, detailing the measurable ways that vocalization affects a group whose voices have been previously unheard. This work will combine physical works of art alongside academic research, using the strengths of each medium to tell the larger, often-complicated story.

I am an artist-activist-sculptor-storyteller-teacher-community builder. I am looking for ways to listen and speak that allow low-decibel stories to be heard.



## Q&A

### How would you describe your work?

*I think my work is an exploration of the way we relate to the landscape and to one another. I almost always explore some type of narrative in my work, because I've found that the storytelling element is particularly important for me in making connections between the piece and the audience. That also makes it hard for me to talk about the work "in general," because narratives are so specific to a person or a project. I like to think that I search out the narrative, over a longer period of investigation or research, and then create a work that responds to that narrative, or works with it. For example, for two years now I've worked closely with a group of incarcerated women on a project called The Eva Luna Project, in which we vocalize parts of the women's history that have been previously untold. We link the women's stories to literary mythology and tell stories that land somewhere between fact and fiction. The stories are performed both inside and outside of the prison, and the "performances" make use of theatrical conventions,*

*but also installation, painting, slam poetry, and community events to tell the stories in a way that links the incarcerated community to the "outside" community. I've recently begun a project called Place-Map-Place, in which I am cataloguing the relationships that people have with the Iowa landscape. I've conducted interviews with local historians, scientists, people who've lived here all their lives, and people who are relatively new to the area, and layered those stories together into a map that is also a quilt, that is also an audio essay, to try to tell some of the complexities of the stories that people have about places they call their own.*

### Who/what have been your primary influences?

*I was tremendously influenced by John Grade, and his manner of working with the landscape but at the same time allowing his pieces to be slowly consumed by it as they "lived" in a natural space; I was inspired by the Appalshop, Red76, and the Los Angeles Poverty Department for their reporting of challenging stories in poetic and meaningful ways; and I*

*was tremendously influenced by time that I spent at The Center for Peace in Kolymari, where I worked with a group of artists in which most of us did not speak one another's languages. I learned so much about what it does (and doesn't) take to communicate fully and effectively, what it means to really listen, that that experience is always present in my work.*

### Which piece/research/work are you most proud of?

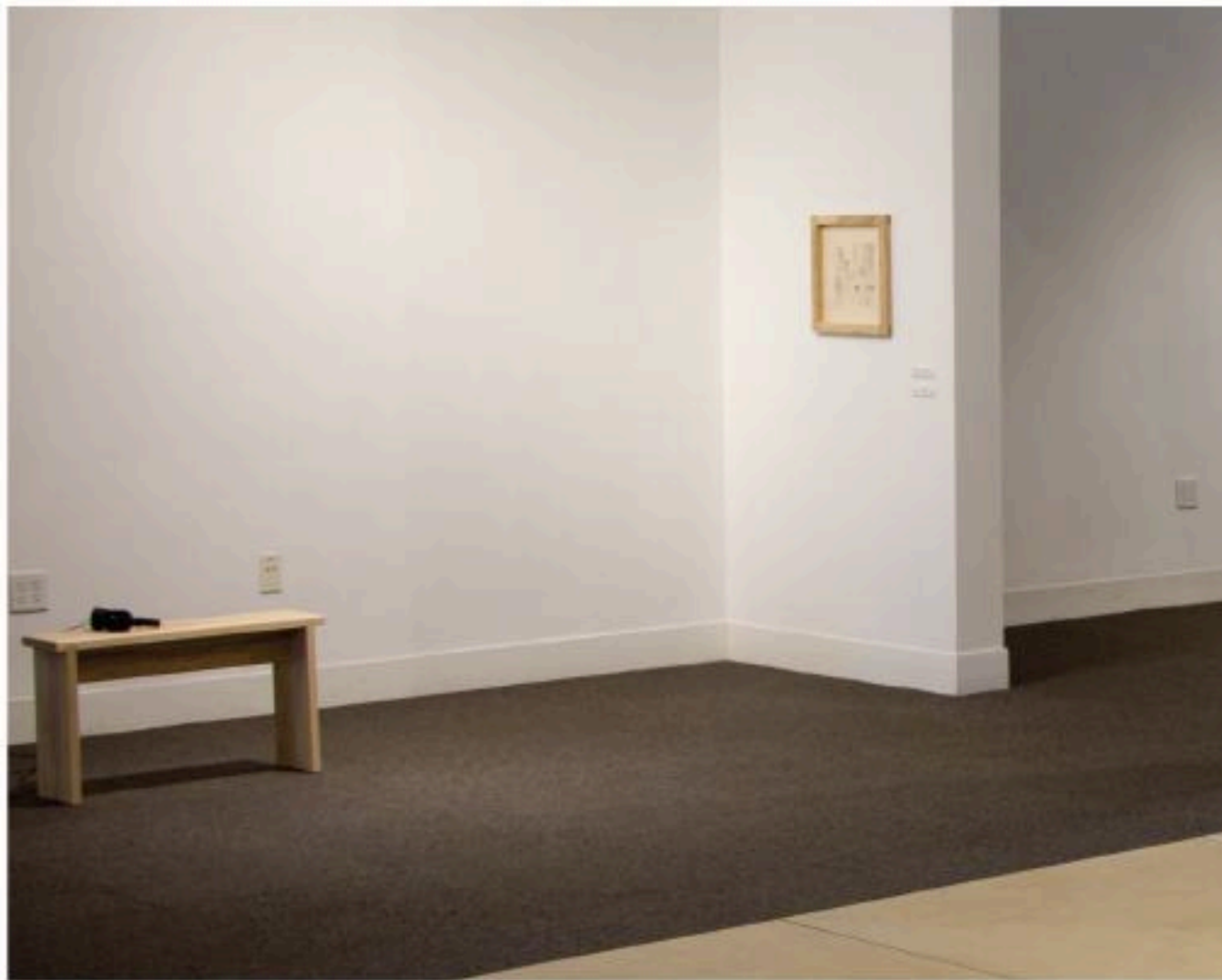
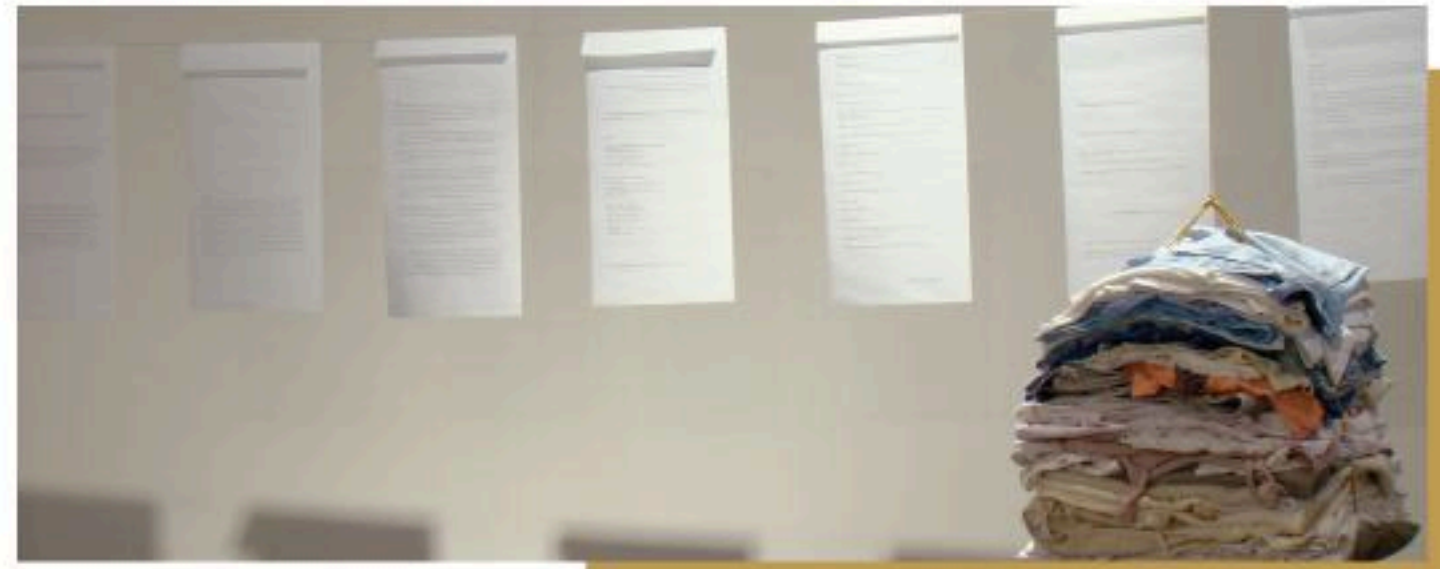
*I'm pretty proud of "12:30." I rented a moving van and locked the audience in the back while it was being driven around, and two of us gave a performance inside of it that included dropping raw eggs on the floor. It was about space, confinement, and the fragility of our relationship with time – I was doing this just as I started collaborating with women at the Iowa Correctional Institution – and this piece grew out of that. People got sick; it turned time and space around in one small, disoriented space. It's still one of my favorite pieces I've put together. It goes without saying that I'm proud of The Eva Luna Project – not just the final works but the ongoing collaboration that we have between incarcerated and non-incarcerated community members. Eva Luna links different communities that would otherwise not connect with one another, and vocalizes stories*

*we're often told should stay silent, and I feel strongly that vocalization is extremely valuable.*

### What advice would you give to incoming/prospective students?

*There's a place for wandering, just as there's a place for focused, developed work, and you should make room for both of those things. I've found some of my best work, and my most meaningful projects, when I was doing something that I thought had "nothing to do with" my own work or interests. It was a surprise, or a happy accident, and it's nice if there's to be room in your practice for those accidents to happen.*







# Dana Haugaard

## MFA Sculpture

How am I certain that I exist, that I am here, in this room and in this world. What proof do I have that I am here, present among others, and not a figment of my own or someone else's imagination. The proof that I have, and that I have to believe in, is the physical response my body has to my environment. Being confronted with physical stimulation, it is almost impossible to not have a heightened sense of self-awareness. Moments of jarring or unexpected stimulation have become crucial moments, as they remind me that I am aware and that I do exist. I have been trying to use my art practice to craft these moments, to engineer experiences that will hopefully instigate some sort of heightened self awareness, brief reminders of body, place, and existence. By creating situations using vibrations, both gentle and ones that push the boundary between pleasure and discomfort, triggered in response to an interaction with an object or a defined space I hope to facilitate a sense of body and self. There is a primacy to the body. It is the tactile, tangible part of me that informs how I feel, how I make decisions, how I go about in the world. Every time I have an opportunity to recognize and remember that, I am reassured in the validity of my existence. We exist and affect our environment. We know we exist because our environment affects us. We are here, We are real.





## Q&A

### How would you describe your work?

*Moments of stimulation, sensation, that hopefully provoke some greater sense of body and of self. We are all real, and we are all here. My work is a small attempt to re-focus people on themselves and their physical existence. Most of us are rooted in the physical aspects of life. It informs us and affects how we go about our lives.*

### Who/what have been your primary influences?

*I am influenced by the things that I encounter as I move about and experience my environment. The moments that resonate and give me pause are the ones I try to harness and reconnoiter into my art practice.*

### How has your work changed during your time at the University?

*My first pieces in Iowa were casts of myself, mostly of my belly. My goal then was to give people an object that they could identify with or measure themselves against. As I prepare to leave, most of my work is less object based and is rooted in my facilitation of experiences that stimulate through vibrations, sound, and distorted visual reflections. I now feel like, instead of presenting my body, I'm presenting the viewers body back to them selves and allowing them to identify with what they feel or see or to measure what they know of themselves to how my work makes them feel.*

### How do you see your work evolving in the future?

*I just hope to keep going, working as I see fit. Making the next thing that strikes my fancy.*

### Which piece/research/work are you most proud of?

*I'm most proud of my vibrating mirrors, both in This Is You, Here and This Isn't Much Unless You're Here. I find them to be very affective. Also, it was a very long and involved process to work on the mirrors until they were at a point where the technology and technic were effaced and gave way to the reflection of ones self, vibrating.*

### Can you briefly describe your working process?

*I, as I assume most people are, attracted to stimulation. When I encounter a situation during my daily life that has some unexpected or affecting stimulation or sensation I file it away in my brain. Eventually, it will surface again, sometimes with some sort of physical manifestation that I can tweak and harness in order to pass along the experience to others.*

### How did being in Iowa City influence your work?

*I quite like Iowa City. It is a place where I've grown comfortable. It has given me the place where I can let my guard down and be open to the experiences that inform my projects.*

### What brought you to the University of Iowa?

*In an attempt to escape the city, I ended up surrounded by corn fields.*

### What are your plans after graduation?

*Make art, continue living.*

### What was your most memorable experience at the University?

*Honestly, the late long conversations at George's and The Fox Head with the other artists over cheap beer. Those are the conversations that helped, affected, and informed my art and my life the most.*

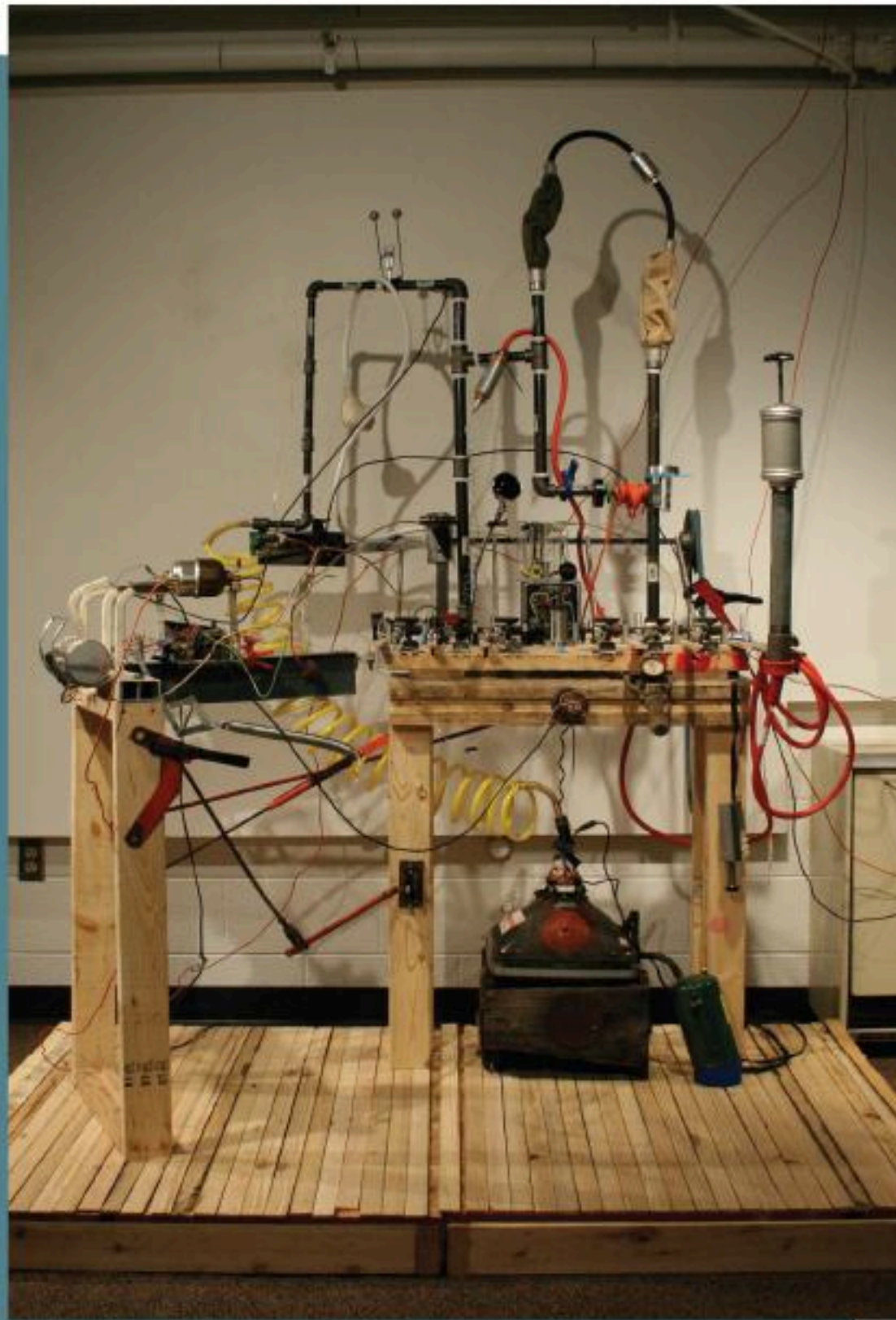
### What is the biggest thing you will take away from Graduate School?

*The knowledge that I can do about anything provided I've got the time and the will to learn it.*

### What, if anything, would you have done differently during your time in graduate school?

*Drank better beer while my loans were covering my bar tab.*





What advice would you give to incoming/prospective students?

*Graduate school is a silly place and you have to make it what you want it to be. That said, this school is full of people that will help you figure it out and help you get to where you want to be.*





# Ryan Rasmussen

## MFA Sculpture

### Q&A

#### How would you describe your work?

*Multi-media in nature, I am focused primarily on an installation-based practice but also work in print, books, objects, interactive sculpture and video.*

#### Who/what have been your primary influences?

*My primary influences have been fiction writers Philip K. Dick and Kurt Vonnegut, but artists include Tim Hawkinson, Chris Larson, and Tom Sachs. The spectacle of American consumer culture has perhaps had the most direct influence upon my work.*

#### How has your work changed during your time at the University?

*My work has matured while here in Iowa. It has also reached out to other disciplines and processes.*

#### Which piece/research/work are you most proud of?

*I think that my show Fits and Starts is what I am most proud of but only because it seems to embody fragments of all the other works I did while here in Iowa. It is sort of an accumulation of all the preliminary works and so to me feels most resolved.*

#### Can you briefly describe your working process?

*Hit the ground running is the way I like to approach the studio. I have impressions about subjects I am attempting to tackle and so take those and put them into motion through my interactions with related materials. I find myself getting started from these impressions but having to work through them in order to understand what they are describing or are about. Work sort of unpacks the dense layers of each idea. Only through work does thought turn into thing.*

#### How do you see your work evolving in the future?

*Expanding and refining.*

#### How did being in Iowa City influence your work?

*My peer group has been exceptional for helping me develop as an artist. The people around me have shaped me, and for the most part I am grateful for their influence.*

#### What brought you to the University of Iowa?

*Suggestions by an old professor of mine, that and an offer to teach which is something I love doing.*

#### What are your plans after graduation?

*Roll the dice on some residencies or other such opportunities. I would like to travel and see where my work can lead me.*

#### What was your most memorable experience at the University?

*I can't recall.*

#### What is the biggest thing you will take away from Graduate School?

*A shipping crate of collected materials measuring approximately 40" x 96" x 72".*

#### What, if anything, would you have done differently during your time in graduate school?

*Said 'No' more often.*

#### What advice would you give to incoming/prospective students?

*Don't let academia mislead your creative spirit.*





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prospective students?

*Don't let academia mislead your  
creative spirit.*

