2011-2012 NEWSLETTER

ART & ART HISTORY

ROCHESTER.EDU/COLLEGE/AAH

department chair update // 1
sage art center // 3
undergraduate art history // 5
awards // 6
undergraduate studio artists // 7
interview: cary peppermint // 10
hartnett gallery // 13
faculty updates // 15

VISUAL & CULTURAL STUDIES

ROCHESTER.EDU/COLLEGE/AAH/VCS

director’s update // 17
interview: alexander brier marr and berin golonu // 18
faculty updates // 21
the “on-film” series // 24
student updates // 24

Artist: Nan Zhu

Front Cover: *Lactuca sativa*
0.7mm mechanical pencil / paper
18”x24” 2012

Back Cover: *Agaricus bisporus*
0.7mm mechanical pencil / paper

Organization:
Sara Dankert and Christopher Patrillo

Copy Editing:
Janet Berlo

Design Layout:
DSS Print Division
Milestones define change and change prompts and sometimes necessitates reflection.

As I write this, just outside my window at Sage Art Center things are changing. The construction of a new building there has occupied, not only way too much of my attention the last several months, but also what used to be my parking spot for the last 18 years. The start of the project required the moving of a sculpture by Arch Miller that was planted outside of Sage in the early 1960s. It was lifted to another location. In researching the sculpture, the University’s historian relayed a history of our Department whose highlights I had not before known.

Professor Elizabeth Denio was the University of Rochester’s first female professor; she taught between 1902 and 1917 and firmly established art in the undergraduate curriculum. The teaching of the history of art began earlier when the University’s first President Martin B. Anderson delivered a series of art lectures on Saturday mornings. (I first imagined this equating to Saturday morning cartoons and then realized that classes were regularly scheduled on Saturdays at that time.) “Drawing” appears to have been introduced into the cur-
riculum in 1926. About a decade later - 75 years ago - the department was founded. A few years into its existence it was reorganized under Chair Carl Hersey with the addition of two assistant chairs, one to coordinate the studio art program (Archibald Miller) and another in art history (Howard S. Merritt). Hersey held his post as Chair for 33 years. My colleagues will be pleased to know that I neither comprehend nor seek to emulate such behavior.

The first M.A. degrees in Art and Art History were earned in 1948 and graduate level studies continued to be offered by the Department until 1974. The Department of Fine Arts was renamed the Art and Art History Department in 1988. (I guess that they realized what we now know - that there is nothing necessarily “fine” about what we study!) In 1990 a new graduate program in comparative arts was created. This program was housed in the Department of Art and Art History. Today it is called the Graduate Program in Visual and Cultural Studies.

The year, in such close proximity, is difficult to weigh in consequence. Truly significant milestones are not always recognizable as they form – they are typically lifted from a broader curve in history as a way to sharpen change.

Wishing you all the best in the coming year’s changes,

Allen T opolski
art & art history department chair
home of the studio arts program

by stephanie ashenfelder
program coordinator, studio arts

Every day at Sage new artwork reveals itself, sometimes motivated by curiosity (I wonder what will happen if . . .) or necessity (I need an image projected on the floor for people to step on. . . .). Works are installed everywhere from the gallery to the loading dock, online, and well beyond the boundaries of campus. Dwellings designed for the resident ground-hog and silhouettes on post-it notes detailing the day’s misconnections from Craigslist adorn the hallways and grounds. On occasion just the residue of a work is left behind: an abandoned tea service for four or chairs gathered around a television tuned to static.

Sage Art Center is an environment that is always shifting and this year we’ve enjoyed some really meaningful changes. Among them are the new faculty and staff we welcomed to the department. New faculty member Cary Peppermint explores environmental issues and convergent media and technologies from an interdisciplinary perspective. His hybrid practice embraces art, theory, engineering, digital media & ecology. Studio manager Michael Leonard joined Sage. He has all our preferred qualifications for the studio manager position and many attributes that allow us to expand his role in the department. Sara Dankert also joined our staff as departmental assistant and gallery preparator. A newly renovated digital lab and the completion of the renovations to our wood and metal shops

One of Sage Art Center’s “companion species” in the remnants of an environment built for her last year in an Introductory 3D class, the work was by Chelsea Yalen
ranked big among the changes to our facilities. Subtle improvements at Sage took the form of upgraded technologies, refurbished equipment and a newly repainted gallery.

Today as you enter the building the speakers above the entrance treat you to the sound of a flock of seagulls. A dozen performance art pieces greet you in the gallery and as you round the corner you notice tiny plastic cockroaches crafted into a chandelier. It’s been a great year for change and a great day for it too.
senior art history

Alison Canavan is graduating with High Distinction in Art History and a minor in Music. Inspired by her internship at the Palestine Exploration Fund while studying abroad in London, Alison hopes to pursue a career combining art and non-profit organizations. She will be taking a year off, after which she will enroll in a Masters in Public Administration program with a focus in Non-Profit Management.

Carlie Fishgold is graduating with High Distinction in Art History with a minor in Anthropology. She interned at the Fenimore Art Museum during the Summer of 2011, and co-curated a show using prints from Edward Curtis’ *The North American Indian* at the Rare Books and Special Collections during the Spring of 2011. She plans to pursue whatever makes her happiest.

Sarah Gerin’s undergraduate career has been a mix of neuroscience, linguistics, studio art, and art history. Her last two years at UR she was co-Art Director for ArtAwake, Student Supervisor for Hartnett Gallery, and a TA for Intro Painting. She spent this past year as a Take Five Scholar, studying cultural representations of German identity, from a socio-historical lens as well as a visual one. In 2012, she also took courses on marketing, grantwriting, and has recently started an independent research project at the Memorial Art Gallery.

Carolyn Marthens graduates with a Spanish minor in addition to her Art History major. She studied in Italy in the Fall of 2010, taking a deeper look at art of the Renaissance as well as ancient Roman works. Beginning in the Summer of 2012, she will be pursuing a Master of Studies in Elementary Education at the Warner School, and will also be a member of the Urban Teaching and Leadership program there.

Roslyn Yi graduates with a dual degree in Art History and Microbiology. Starting in June 2012, she will be working for the Funds for the Public Interest campaigning for human rights and environmental groups in Philadelphia.
2012 Awards in the Department of Art and Art History and the Program in Visual and Cultural Studies

Celeste Heughes Bishop Award
Amanda Graham
Berin Golonu
Alicia Guzman

Roger Mertin Prize for Excellence in Studio Art
Joey Hartmann-Dow

Elizabeth M. Anderson Prize
Carlie Fishgold

Art and Art History Purchase Prize
Nan Zhu

AAH Department/Hartnett Gallery Purchase Prize
Samuel Sadtler

The Performance Art and Social Intervention Class
Megan Brown. I work quickly and intuitively, and express my emotions rationally in my art. Therefore, my work is always very personal; I do not intentionally address profound notions. To begin I channel my emotion with the right soundtrack and a mechanical pencil. From there I produce work with swift confident lines that have no intelligible direction. I often do not find pieces to my liking and erase or add color here or there in hopes of being satisfied with the outcome. On the whole, I prefer art that makes you feel. I’d rather come away disgusted than only thinking, ‘I wonder what it means’. I believe I should know what art represents the second it evokes emotion. Because of this, I use simple materials with minimal color. I wish to stimulate, even if it is only a teaspoon of emotion.

Joey Hartmann-Dow. My work comments on the unhealthy relationships between humans, animals, food, industry, and landscapes, while focusing on the concepts of “human-ness” and connections. The use of newspaper and mixed-media is relevant to the meanings behind text, information, media, human communication, and disposable objects. The relation of color—especially my own skin tones— to animals and objects is a commentary on what connects us to the things we use and consume.

My art is a conversation. It’s talking about relationships in biology, anthropology, destruction, and sustainability. It’s talking about sense and hope, without guilt or failure—intending to draw questions from the viewer about our own roles in these relationships. It’s an extension of the capacity to endure. My purpose is to plant a seed.

Josh Kessler. The recently discovered pre-human species Homo Apollexus has forced us to re-examine current conceptions of human history. Discovered in Zimbabwe, H. Apollexus differs significantly from other known hominids, but lived alongside H. Erectus between One Million and 400,000 years ago. The complexity of their physical engineering, as well as artistic adornment of tools suggests that these people had intelligence comparable to that of H. Sapiens. Anthropologist Renee Eckertson, who led the discovery, says “their lack of an opposable thumb was likely the reason for their extinction.” The Vadoma people who currently live in the same valley have high rates of a birth defect characterized by missing digits. DNA comparisons between H. Apollexus and the Vadoma reveal a similar mutation on chromosome seven, a part of the genetic code responsible for digit formation. By contrasting Apollexus with our own species, we are able to understand more fully the adaptive benefits of opposable thumbs.

Sam Sadtler. I explore the affects of digital technology and aging technologies on the human condition. We are constantly inundated with new technologies that are the latest and greatest, only to be surpassed by something “better” a few months later. I am left asking: When does this end? What happens to this technology? When it is
just discarded? Rarely do we as a society truly inquire about the rituals, materials, and items that we use. Our culture is about consuming the new, yet what questions do we ask when buying a new product? How fast is it? What can it do? We rarely ask ourselves about the role of technology in our society, the sacrifices we are making by adopting the newest gadget. What technology is already here that can do the same thing? As a Mechanical Engineer, I often find it difficult to step back from the material at hand. Whether I am redesigning or inventing new items, there always seems to be a drive to create and improve upon technology. By using old and outdated technologies, I call attention to that fact that they were once highly sought after items, which hold little significance in the consumers eye today.

Janelle Sandefur. There is no one way to define what a mark is. Some are visible and physical, ranging from blemishes that are a part of our bodies to lines drawn on a sheet of paper. Other marks are more internal. They cannot always be seen, but they exist within us as a result of our relationships and interactions with others. They are the traces of ourselves that we leave behind, products of loss and love. A random mark on someone’s body becomes more than an insignificant spot. In the series of splotches, I studied freckles and moles that were a part of loved ones, as well as stains that could be found on their clothing. These marks were documented first via photograph and then free-sewn onto small sheets of vellum. Through the re-creation of these marks and splotches, I attempt to preserve my connection to the people that they represent. If the splotches I first created are the act of preserving, the scribbles are the emotion paired with it. These feelings of frustration and anxiety also surface in a collection of crumpled vellum--a three dimensional extensions of the scribbles. These works are an attempt to deal with the anxiety and fear that arises at the threat of loss and change. The small pouches are intimate spaces—containers, holders, and pockets—to keep them safe. They are the people and the places that I long to hold on to.
**Alyssa Smudzin.** *It Doesn’t Last Forever* is a photographic documentation of physical and psychological spaces from childhood. Childhood experiences are reenacted to explore how relationships with these spaces have changed. Revisiting places from childhood is like flipping through old photo albums, and capturing these experiences in some form seems like the only way they can be preserved. The memory of swimming in a grandparent’s pool evokes bittersweet nostalgia, as the pool no longer exists. Yet a childhood tire swing still hangs on the big maple tree in the front yard exactly the same. During the progression from childhood to adulthood, the relationship with family also changes as independence and maturity develop. Memories are crucial to self-identity; without them there would be no record of a person beyond the material evidence of their existence. If memories can be recorded, the identity that they create will not be lost. In a way, the preservation of these memories, emotions, and relationships is a preservation of self.

**Nan Zhu.** In kindergarten, I quickly picked up the habits of carefully coloring inside the lines and putting the crayons back into the box in perfect rainbow order after every use. I’d be lying if I said that I’ve completely outgrown these behaviors, but looking back, they completely and accurately foreshadowed the artistic process I use today. I’ve retained the borderline-obsessive tendency to organize everything, and to meticulously plan and execute every artistic endeavor. No detail is ever left unattended; this has been the most consistent feature of my work. Because my choice of media is constantly changing, my artwork is process-based rather than aesthetically coherent. In creating my senior thesis, I reverted to traditional pencil drawings on sketchbook paper, showcasing my signature detail-oriented style in its simplest and clearest form.

**Shirley Zimmer-Kidd.** *I remember being terrified as my Grandfather’s goose nipped at my heels while I frantically tried to run up the steep flight of stairs.* I returned 30 years later to discover those stairs were only three steps. I’ve always been fascinated by the memories people have, especially childhood memories. My work explores and transforms personal memory and the past. I collect memories and catalogue them. Through memories, histories, and photographic archives, I try to re-interpret and re-create that past. Memories often reveal themselves in layers. I overlap fabric, images, and paint to reflect this layering. Sometimes paint and stains are blurred like the edges of memory. We seldom remember with sharp and exact detail, in the same way the edges of my work are not always sharp and exact. I hope some detail in my art allows the viewers to remember some aspect of their childhoods. I use objects and figures to trigger memories of times, situations and emotions of the past that may be universal.

Allen Topolski’s Introductory Drawing class sketch the construction site outside of Sage Art Center
Cary Peppermint’s work explores the convergence of ecological, cultural, and digital networks, through a post-disciplinary practice with strong ties to internet and performance art. His works are in the permanent collections of the Walker Art Center, Rhizome.org at the New Museum for Contemporary Art, Computer Fine Arts, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Since co-founding ecoarttech with Leila Nadir in 2005, Cary’s art has turned toward the imagination of the environment as a convergent network of biological, cultural, and digital spaces. Peppermint is an Assistant Professor at the University of Rochester and has held previous appointments at Cornell University, Colgate University, and the Pratt Institute.

Chris Patrello: How did you come to work primarily in multimedia/new media formats?

Cary Peppermint: I have been interested in hacking—taking machines apart to see how they work and putting them back together again in unexpected configurations—for as long as I can remember. As a child I taught myself how to program using a Commodore Vic 20. This was one of the first consumer model home computers on the market, and realizing at such a young age that I could influence machine behaviors through changing and writing code was life changing. Because we are immersed in a culture of machines with networked connectivity, hacking has become for me an artistic strategy that can allocate unexpected spaces for creativity and play in everyday life.

As an undergrad, I became interested in art as a social interruption staged through media or form. At first I experimented with traditional art disciplines—drawing, painting, photography, and performance. As my interest in conceptual art deepened, I began to see that computers could become part of the creative process in ways that I felt were much more open-ended, collaborative, and participatory. The ephemerality of digital works function well with my conceptually leanings to disrupting authorship, myths of genius, and the fetishization of objects.

INTERVIEW


CP: How do you see the relationship between how your work (both collaborative and solo) is displayed in gallery contexts and its life on the internet? I’m thinking specifically of your #TrainingYRHuman project and its life on Twitter.

Cary: I co-founded a collaborative called ecoarttech in 2005. We make art in what we consider the biological, cultural, digital wilderness. Working collaboratively with
digitally networked environments makes a lot sense: under an ethos of open-source and free software; the network can allow the immediate and unfettered exchange of digital tools, objects, and information. My collaborative partner and I create works that exist in overlapping and intertwined hybrid environments—between virtual and physical spaces. These are the ecological spaces, biological and augmented reality, in which we make our lives at this point in history.

**CP:** Much of the #TrainingYRHuman project focuses on the complex relationship between humans and our pets. How would you describe the training process, and who is really being trained? I noticed that this project came about through your work with Akitas.

**Cary:** #TrainingYrHuman is not only about pets but rather more generally about animals who live with human-animal and the agency they exhibit in negotiating a human-dominated world. A more accurate term for this is “companion species” rather than “pets,” and this category can include every sort of animal that interacts with humans regularly, from farm animals to backyard wildlife. As you note, this Twitter-based project was inspired by our experiences adopting and rehabilitating Akitas from a local rescue group. Akitas are unique dogs, very dominant and intelligent, but because they are a more “primitive” breed, a lot of humans have trouble integrating them successfully into their homes. In short, many humans’ preconceived ideas of how dogs should act gets a lot of Akitas and their human companions in a lot of trouble. I learned a lot from training myself to be a good Akita leader about the limits of humans’ imagination of animals, and I thought, if a dog can so interrupt my ideas of “dogness,” there must be so much I don’t know about animals in general. #TrainingYrHuman also tries to interact with some of the scientific research going in the area of animal behavior. This research has illuminated animals’ ethics, modes of cognition, and psychological awareness, but our everyday experiences, or narrative ethnology, can also tell us a lot about our companion species if we listen carefully—about their diverse personalities and creative problem-solving and the ways they invent to express themselves and meet their needs and desires in a human-dominated world. Twitter can be a sort of database of this subliminal knowledge and unprofessional information.

**CP:** I’m very interested in your Indeterminate Hikes project. With the advent of interactive maps as part of our everyday lives, we’re becoming increasingly accustomed to using maps as a way to move as quickly as possible between point A to point B, but Indeterminate Hikes explores the idea of moving through environments that are not fixed or predetermined.
and point B without exploring the map beyond the route chosen for us. Would you care to talk about how the project plays off how we typically use smartphone apps and technologies of mapping?

Cary: Indeterminate Hikes + (IH+) is a mobile phone app that transforms everyday landscapes into sites of bio-cultural diversity and wild happenings. Generally devices of rapid communication and consumerism, smartphones are re-appropriated by IH+ as tools of environmental imagination and meditative wonder, renewing awareness of intertwining biological, cultural, and media ecologies and slowing us down at the same time. The app works by importing the rhetoric of wilderness into virtually any place—indeed, entirely random places—accessible by Google Maps and encouraging users to treat these locales as spaces worthy of the attention accorded to sublime landscapes, such as canyons and gorges. The result is the possibility of ecological wonder at usually disregarded spaces, such as city sidewalks, alleyways, and apartment buildings. By misusing, or hacking, maps and smartphones with our app, participants are breaking down the preconceptions that define their senses of place. We wanted to see what would happen if a walk down a sidewalk were treated as a wilderness excursion. What if we consider the water dripping off an air-conditioner with the same attention that we give a spectacular waterfall in the wilderness?

What motivates us most about working with new technologies is how they can be misused for unexpected purposes. IH+ transforms ubiquitous computing into an opportunity to notice the happenings occurring all around us in our local environments, to see sublimity in our backyards, alleyways, and local neighborhoods.

CP: Lastly, I was wondering if you would speak a little bit about how your own work informs your approach to teaching digital art.

Cary: My creative research naturally informs my teaching. I can’t help but bring my enthusiasm for whatever is going on in my studio into the classroom. This works well for students: they have a direct exchange of ideas with someone who is immersed in and defining the field. This works well for me because my work benefits from students’ ideas and perspectives: as technologies continually transform our society, the classroom is a place for me to see how new generations relate to emerging media technologies. Sage’s Digital Arts Lab is an environment where my students and I, through art-making, learn to think and imagine in new ways. Students in my Advanced Digital class, Nature 2.0, tell me they feel they are participating in a Think Tank for conceptualizing the misuse of technologies. This is exciting to me—I am encouraged by the intellectual curiosity that U of R students bring to the classroom.
hartnett gallery
by genevieve waller

The Hartnett Gallery is a student-supported, professional art gallery located in Wilson Commons. For the 2011-2012 exhibition season, the gallery mounted six exhibitions. Naomi Kasumi, an Associate Professor of Fine Arts at Seattle University, visited Rochester in September 2011 to install three works from her series MEM: memory · memorial: a group of panels made of used tea bags, calligraphy, leaves, butterfly wings, Xerox transfers, and beeswax; a mandala of Buddha hands screen-printed on handmade paper; and a site-specific installation of strings that meandered throughout the gallery space. Much of her work reflects upon her experiences dealing with a terminated pregnancy. MEM: memory · memorial commemorates the progress and development of Kasumi’s absent child, inviting reflection on the ways in which memory is constructed.

Rosalyn Engelman, a New York City-based artist who is an alumna of the University of Rochester, displayed paintings from her Echo Sonata series in October and November 2011. These works reference Eastern art traditions and calligraphy, with each painting accompanied by a historical Japanese poem. Ms. Engelman’s exhibition coincided with the University’s Meliora Weekend celebration of alumni.

The group exhibition mousePressed() mouseReleased() took place in December 2011 and featured the work of undergraduate students in University of Rochester Professor Cary Peppermint’s Introductory Digital Art and Advanced Video classes. Digital illustrations, two-dimensional animation, photo-imaging projects, and videos based on first person video game play were some of the main media represented.

In January 2012, Cazenovia College Professor of Art Kim Waale’s exhibition I Need A Lullaby opened at Hartnett. For this show, Waale hung webs made of spun plastic wrap and glass beads throughout the gallery space, creating an immersive environment of what she refers to as “three-dimensional drawings.”
West Virginia Wesleyan Assistant Professor of Art, Andy Bloxham, came to Rochester in March 2012 to present his photographic series *Fictions* in the gallery. The images depict Bloxham in a comic and surreal situations, and were taken during an 18-day, 4,000-mile road trip across the U.S. and Canada.

The annual Undergraduate Juried Art Exhibition concluded the academic year at Hartnett. Undergraduate students of all majors submitted work for consideration and a non-U of R art professional selected pieces for show, which opened in late April 2012.

A student spends some time with a work in the Hartnett exhibition called `mousePressed() mouseReleased()`.

The exhibition featured works by undergraduate students in the fall semester’s offerings of Introductory Digital Art and Advanced Video.
This year Rachael Hetzel’s artist book “I Understand” was selected for the exhibition *Monumental Ideas in Miniature Books II*, which is scheduled for over thirty exhibition venues in the United States and fifteen international venues. Hetzel was also a panelist at the Ladies of Letterpress conference in Asheville, NC and a featured speaker at Tradeshow Bootcamp, which is a series of workshops designed for small businesses in the stationery industry. Hetzel’s commercial letterpress shop, Pistachio Press, continues to produce fine prints for both private and institutional commissions.

Heather Layton was a keynote speaker at the “Social Intervention 2012” conference at the University of Karachi in Karachi, Pakistan. While there she also gave an artist talk at the Indus Valley School of Art & Architecture and had 150 students participate in an ongoing, interactive installation called *Letters to a Future Generation*. She and collaborator Brian Bailey co-organized the second phase of an artistic exchange between Rochester and Nagaland (India), by hosting five first-generation Naga filmmakers in the United States. Layton was selected as one of eleven international artists to participate in the D. Fleiss East West Artists Residency Program in Mallnitz, Austria. As part of a solo exhibition at Elon University in North Carolina, she installed a 360-degree wall painting called *Ally/Enemy*.

Cary Peppermint spent much of his studio time this past year developing *Indeterminate Hikes+ (IH+)*, a mobile media app that transforms everyday landscapes into sites of bio-cultural diversity and wild happenings, with Leila Nadir and their art/theory collaborative, ecoarttech. The Android version of *IH+* debuted at “L.A. Re.Play” at UCLA’s Design Media Arts Gallery in February 2012, and the iPhone app will be released, with the assistance of a New York State Council on the Arts Media Distribution grant, in Spring 2012. Selected *IH+* performances/exhibitions this year include the gallery 319 Scholes in NYC and the Centro de Arte Contem-
poráneo de Málaga in June 2012. While in Spain, Cary will also be an off-the-grid artist-resident at JOYA: Art + Ecology Residency at Cortijada Los Gazquez, in an eastern Andalusian national park. Ecoarttech’s 2009 work “Untitled Landscape #5,” a commission for the Whitney Museum of American Art, was selected last fall by Rhizome at the New Museum for inclusion in its Artbase—an archive that ensures that future generations will be able to access digital art even as technologies evolve. Other highlights from the past year include exhibitions at Emily Carr University and University of Massachusetts, Boston, as well as two in-depth interviews with Furtherfield, a leading European platform for technological arts, and New York Foundation for the Arts. In addition, ecoarttech has two articles forthcoming in Leonardo: Arts, Science, and Technology and Antennae: Journal of Nature in Visual Culture.

When Allen Topolski isn’t enjoying long walks on the beach, he is wishing he is in his studio. One of his works has just returned from the exhibition titled Modern Icon: The Machine as Subject in American Art at the Memorial Art Gallery’s Lockhart Gallery. Earlier in the year Topolski digressed from his typical pursuits to pair with Missy Pfohl-Smith’s dance company to design a set and incorporate an installation for a performance at the Cracker Factory in Geneva, NY as part of the Finger Lakes Dance! program. By mixing recycled popular dances of the 1940’s and reworked objects of domesticity with a contemporary perspective, this work looks back at a time in our history when the culture of America and the roles of men and women were changed by war.
Greetings! It’s been a great year in VCS.

This Spring I attended University of Rochester receptions at the annual conferences of both the College Art Association in Los Angeles and the Society for Cinema Studies in Boston and can proudly say that VCS students and graduates continue to thrive. I’m not going to list every accomplishment—please check the student entry section for that—but the honors include prestigious fellowships at the National Gallery of Art, The Terra Foundation, the SSRC, Winterthur, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art as well as an assortment of teaching and travel fellowships both nationally and internationally.

The job market is picking back up and VCS students are getting placed in positions from New Hampshire to Washington State. We’ve also had students doing research across the globe—from Lithuania to Beijing, and from New Mexico to Australia; they’ve published work in leading journals and curated shows across the world. It is truly an honor to work with such impressive students and faculty and I look forward to the fruitful exchange of ideas in the months to come.

Best wishes for a restful and productive summer!

Joan
“Looking at AIDS 30 Years on” – an interview with alexander brier marr and berin golonu

From January 26th to May 21st, 2012, an Exhibition of Rush Rhees Library’s vast collection of HIV/AIDS related educational posters was mounted in the Rare Books Library. First-year graduate student Chris Patrello spoke with its curators, both third-year graduate students.

Chris Patrello: How did the University acquire the Atwater Collection? What compelled Dr. Atwater to catalog AIDS posters?

Alexander Brier Marr: Dr. Edward Atwater donated the AEP (AIDS Education Posters) to the Department of Rare Books, Special Collections & Preservation in 2007. The AEP includes about 6200 posters from at least 100 countries. At the heart of the AEP lie the posters, though it also includes balloons, t-shirts, postcards, condom wrappers, and magazines. With incredible foresight, Dr. Atwater began collecting these ephemeral objects in 1991, in the first years of public health campaigns directed at HIV in the United States. He was riding Boston public transit when he noticed a poster encouraging condom use to fight AIDS. A historian of medicine as well as a practicing physician and teacher, Atwater immediately comprehended the significance of AIDS posters in medical history. Through the twentieth century contraception served as a medical lightning rod for ideological debate, and Atwater understood the straight-forward promotion of condom use in a public setting to mark a watershed moment. As his collection
INTERVIEW

expanded beyond the United States, he began to understand the social value of his collection. It is a repository of diverse cultural beliefs about ethics, the body, and the danger of others. These are some key concerns in visual studies, and the AEP offers a distinct and often surprising perspective on global visual culture of the last 30 years.

CP: Given the breadth of the collection, how did you decide which posters should be included in the exhibition?

Berin Golonu: We wanted to give an indication of the collection’s global reach, so it was important to include posters from various countries, not to mention posters that spoke to differing minority cultures within diverse populations. The posters that spoke most directly to me as an American, however, were ones produced and displayed the United States. There are many materials in the collection produced by American AIDS activist groups in the 1980s and early 1990s. The exercise of looking through these materials was an amazing history lesson, providing an overview of the social struggles led by a generation that had preceded ours. It not only put AIDS awareness in the context of Reaganism and all the conservative backlash that came with it, but it also shed light on Culture Wars, the growth of the gay rights movement, the rise of third wave feminism, changes in the health care industry and the demands for health care reform. We thought it was important to try to communicate this history to viewers here in the US. We divided the posters into several thematic subsections that could balance this need to display the collection’s global reach and the need to familiarize viewers with how AIDS Configures into recent American history. The process of comparison was also very interesting. Comparing the more racy content of posters produced by major AIDS awareness campaigns in England, Switzerland or Austria to the decidedly conservative manner in which this topic was communicated to mainstream audiences in the US suggests a more puritan ethic in operation here.

ABM: The themes were central to the exhibit, but we also included two non-thematic sections to point to the overwhelming breadth of the collection. If there is one thing that unifies Dr. Atwater’s collections, it’s the astounding diversity and comcomitant resistance to simple description. We filled the floor cases in the Rare Books hallway with ephemera such as postcards, mugs, socks, and, yes, condoms. Before entering the Plutzik Library, which including explicit and overtly political materials, we presented a “free skate” in the last two hallway cases, an assortment of posters that we found visually striking. In the entrance of the RBL, the first two wall cases featured two thematic sections each. Some of the themes we had in mind before culling our selection from the collection, and some we developed after leafing through thousands of objects. “Spreading the Facts” featured posters with information about how AIDS gets transmitted. “Familiarizing AIDS” included posters with celebrities including Cher and Ronaldo, a soccer star who, with this poster, helped introduce condom use to reluctant male populations. “Belief and
Behavior” concerned the intersection of medical knowledge and global notions of bodily ethics. Finally, “Visualizing AIDS” presented representations of the virus, sometimes using microscopic photography and sometimes depicting HIV as a monster.

CP: Did the myriad ways in which the posters addressed issues of safe sex, AIDS awareness, and sexual orientation present problems in terms of how you organized the exhibition?

BG: We thought it was important to show how the uncomfortably intimate topic of sexual behavior was being addressed from differing cultural perspectives. For example, the game of soccer kept appearing as a visual motif in AIDS posters from countries in Latin America, the Middle East and Europe, where the game is popular. The posters would have slogans such as “don’t let AIDS score another goal,” or they would present protective equipment such as knee guards as a metaphor for condoms. We realized that speaking about soccer was a way of talking around AIDS and safe sex in order to appeal to men who lived in societies where extra-marital sex was not talked about openly and homosexuality was still a taboo subject.

CP: Some of the posters are more provocative than others. Were there any concerns regarding the content of some of the posters? How were those concerns negotiated?

BG: We hoped to stay true to the range of content in the collection, as well as presenting an accurate view of the diversity of AIDS awareness materials produced in varying cultural spheres. A good percent-

Janet Berlo, co-curator of a retrospective exhibit of the Cuban-American artist José Bedia, stands near a private collection of Kifwebe masks at a party following the Bedia opening at the Fowler Museum at UCLA

*Now!,* a book on Native American art since 1992, to be published by The Eiteljorg Museum in Indianapolis in 2013. During the 2012–13 academic year Janet will be on leave, with the support of grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Fund for Craft, Creativity and Research, writing a book entitled *Not Native American Art: Fakes, Replicas, and Other Vexed Identities.*

**Douglas Crimp**’s new book, “*Our Kind of Movie*: The Films of Andy Warhol,” was published by MIT Press this spring; he gave readings from it at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, D.C., The Kitchen in New York City, the Tang Museum at Skidmore College, the Museum Sztuki in Lodz, Poland, the Hebbel Theater in Berlin, and the University of Chicago; and he organized a screening series of Warhol’s films for this year’s PHotoEspaña in Madrid. Professor Crimp wrote essays this year for catalogues of exhibitions of the work of Yvonne Rainer at the Kunsthaus, Bregenz; Elad Lassry at White Cube in London; and Donald Moffett at the Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, and for the Centre Pompidou’s major exhibition *Danser sa vie: Art et danse de 1900 à nos jours* in Paris. The Centre Pompidou also celebrated Professor Crimp’s career in their series L’histoire de l’art par ses artistes, même. Professor Crimp delivered the Kracauer Lecture in
Film and Media Theory at the University of Frankfurt, the Stonewall Lecture at Dartmouth College, and the keynote address for the conference Sex, Empire, and Literature in the Anglo-American World, 1700-2020, at Wesleyan University.

In 2012 Paul Duro published ‘A Disturbance of Memory: Travel, Recollection, and the Experience of Place,’ in the anthology *Rhetoric, Remembrance, and Visual Form: Sighting Memory* (Routledge, 2012). He was an invited speaker at the annual meeting of the Art History Association at SUNY Geneseo for 2011. In Fall 2011 he was granted leave to continue work on theories of the sublime in eighteenth-century art and literature. He is currently engaged in a study of Edmund Burke’s *A Philosophical Enquiry into the origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* from the point of view of word and image. Recently he has been invited to join the Critical Topographies Research Group at Trent University, Peterborough, Canada, the inaugural meeting of which took place in February 2012 in Toronto.

Robert Foster spent the academic year on leave working on his cultural biography of the P.G.T. Black Collection of Pacific Islands objects. His co-curated exhibit *Journeys Into Papua* ran at the Buffalo Museum of Science from September 2011 to January 2012 and concluded with public lectures and a symposium of invited curators and scholars. He gave talks on this project at the University of Cambridge, the Manchester Museum, Wesleyan University, USC, and the meetings of the American Anthropological Association in Montreal. In December of 2011, he presented a paper on brand valuation at a workshop in Cairns and participated in a conference on the Australian documentary filmmaker Maslyn Williams in Canberra. He was invited to visit the University of Papua New Guinea for three weeks in April/May to offer talks and classes, to meet with faculty, and to mentor undergraduate honors students.
During the Summer of 2011, Rachel Haidu gave a talk at Wiels, Brussels, on Martha Rosler and Yvonne Rainer. She then went to Dublin to interview the artist James Coleman; the essay she wrote on his early work will appear in the catalogue accompanying his major retrospective at the Reina Sofia in Madrid. She wrote two texts: “I inhabit a cube,” for the catalogue accompanying the Sol LeWitt exhibit that the Public Art Fund put on in downtown Manhattan, and a piece in Artforum on Sven Augustijnen’s film, “Spectres.” In the fall Rachel gave a talk at Dia: Beacon at a conference on the work of Franz Erhard Walther and a lecture at Cornell’s School of Art and Architecture. In Spring 2012 she gave a talk at “Abstract Painting and Beyond,” a conference at University of Pennsylvania, and is writing an essay for a collection forthcoming from the University of Chicago, about language in art since the 1960s. This summer she will spend six weeks at the Clark Institute of Art, on a fellowship, beginning her new book project entitled Transmission.


Joan Saab hopes to complete her born-digital project Searching for Siqueiros by the end of spring semester 2012. This past year she presented work at the annual conferences of the American Studies Association, the College Art Association, and the Society for Cinema and Media Studies and ran workshops on scholarly publishing in the digital age at both SCMS and CAA. She was the keynote speaker at the Getty Research Institute’s conference on Rethinking Progressivism last November. Her paper for that event forms part of her new project on the material culture of American modernism. Joan has articles forthcoming in Social Text, the Radical History Review and the Journal of Urban History. She is one of the co-organizers of “Now! Visual Culture!,” the first annual meeting of the International Visual Culture Association convening in New York in May 2012 and is working to start a born-digital journal for the organization, to launch early in 2013.

Community on Film – Ryan Conrath

After a brief hiatus, the VCS graduate film group known as OnFilm is back and more ambitious with their selections than ever. Centering their efforts in 2012 around the theme of “community,” the group has chosen 8 films to screen that all, in some sense, speak to issues of belonging, collectivity, inclusion/exclusion, and range from works that explicitly portray communities (Silent Light, Together) to films that approach the topic more obliquely (Bedwin Hacker, 12 Angry Lebanese).

“Originally, we had hoped to use this thematic premise as a way of reflecting on 2011 as a year of global uprisings and the appearance of so many tacit, alternative communities or gatherings of bodies,” the group notes. “As usual with us, though, this ended up just being one implication of this larger theme we’re exploring. After all, none of these movies are actually about any of these uprisings (OWS, Tahrir, etc.) in a direct sense.”

OnFilm is currently made up of 4 programmers: Shota Ogawa (5th year PhD candidate in VCS); Zainab Saleh & Ryan Conrath (3rd year PhD students in VCS); and Zach Rottman (2nd year PhD student in VCS).
Visual and Cultural Studies Student Updates

In August, online journal *LatinArt* published Tiffany E. Barber’s interview with Los Angeles-based artist Eamon Ore-Giron. Tiffany also published an exhibition review and an artist profile in *Art Focus Oklahoma*. In April 2012, she presented a paper titled “Signification and Iconicity: William Pope. L Distributes MLK, Jr.” at *Crossing the Boundaries XX: Icons*, the Art History Graduate Student Union at Binghamton University’s annual conference. Her essay “Black Male Sports Bodies in Advertising and Performance: Artist William Pope. L’s Budapest Crawl” is currently under peer review to be included in the forthcoming volume *Racism and Sports*. Her exhibition review “Talking Back: Now Dig This! and 30 Americans” is forthcoming in *caa.reviews*. Tiffany is a newly appointed Book Reviews editor for *InVisible Culture*.

This spring, Ryan Conrath will be working with Shota Ogawa, Zainab Saleh, and Zach Rottman on the most recent OnFilm installment, “Community on Film.” He will also be delivering a paper at Society for Cinema and Media Studies entitled “Everything but the Body: Montage Affects.” He will be teaching Intro/Advanced Video and Sound at the University of Rochester this summer.


Abby Glogower has two publications forthcoming in 2012, one in Studies in Contemporary Jewry (Co-authored with Dr. Margaret Olin of Yale University) and another in the Salem Press anthology, Literature, Technology and Humanity. This year she has enjoyed working with other graduate student representatives from the English and History departments to form and steer the new University of Rochester Graduate Humanities Caucus, a forum for interdisciplinary scholarship and professional development.

Berin Golonu was selected as a recipient of the SBAI Teaching Fellowship for the fall 2012 semester. She will teach an introductory women’s studies course on the art and literature of women of the Muslim world in diaspora. Golonu also received a dissertation fellowship from the Darat al Funun Foundation to travel to Amman, Jordan, to conduct research on modern Arab art and photography. Berin presented a paper titled “Osman Hamdi Bey’s Orientalist Ethnographies and Ottoman Nationality” at the Graduate Symposium of the Association for Historians of Nineteenth Century Art, held at the CUNY Graduate Center in March 2012. As a result of this conference, she has been invited to submit her paper for possible publication in the “Journal of Art Historiography,” published by the Barber Institute of Fine Arts at the University of Birmingham, UK. Berin also published articles on Turkish and Middle Eastern contemporary art in *Art in America* (online), *Art Papers*, and *Sculpture* magazines.
Amanda Graham taught “Ephemeral Movements: Contemporary Dance on Film” through the University of Rochester Writing Program. This spring her article “Assisted Breathing: Developing Embodied Exposure in Oscar Muñoz’s Aliento” appeared in Latin American Perspectives’ issue on Arts, Culture and Politics and her essay “Participatory Art, Engaged Scholarship: The Embedded Critic in Nadia Myre’s Scar Project” was published in the Syracuse University Graduate School Press collection Collaborative Futures: Critical Reflections on Publicly Active Graduate Education. In June, Amanda will deliver her paper “Out of Site: Trisha Brown’s Roof Piece” at the Society of Dance History Scholars Conference: Dance and the Social City.

Dinah Holtzman successfully defended her dissertation “Portrait of the Postmodern Artist as Hysteric”. She is currently teaching art history and media/cultural studies courses at Eastman School of Music and R.I.T. She will present “Becoming Other: Racial and Gender Performativity in the Art of Cindy Sherman and Nikki S. Lee” at Northeast Modern Language Association this semester.

From June to October of 2011 Jessica Horton conducted dissertation research in France and Italy with the help of a Terra Foundation for American Art Residency in Giverny, a SSRC International Dissertation Research Fellowship, and a CASVA Wyeth Fellowship from the National Gallery of Art. She had reviews published in e-misférica and AHAA online reviews. Her essay, “A Shore Without a Horizon: Locating as Looking Anew” was published by Yale University Press in Shapeshifting: Transformations in Native American Art. She spoke at the Native Studies Research Network at the University of Kent and at the Native American Art Studies Association conference in Ottawa, and was an invited lecturer in the Department of Art and Art History at University of Oklahoma, where she presented “Playing in Paris: Native Artists and the Hand-Painted Poster.” She is currently writing her dissertation in Santa Fe and working on an article with Janet Berlo for Third Text.
This year, Gloria Kim was an Andrew W. Mellon / American Council of Learned Societies Dissertation Completion Fellow. This fellowship was given in support of her dissertation “Transmissions: Public Health Information and Ambient Media in the Era of Global Health Under U.S. Health Security,” which she is currently completing. During her fellowship year, Gloria conducted research in the archives at the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland. In March of 2012, she delivered a paper titled “The Medium is the Medicine: Communicable Mobility and Mobile Communications in Global Public Health” at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference in Boston. Gloria has accepted a 2-year Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship in Media for Social Change at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. This fellowship is awarded to help develop research and teaching in the areas of media, humanities, ethics, justice, and social change.

In January, Alex Marr was appointed Secretary of the Native American Art Studies Association. CASVA awarded him a Predoctoral Fellowship for Historians of American Art to travel abroad. He will research late nineteenth-century Aboriginal drawings in Australian archives during the summer of 2012. An SBAI grant allows him to attend the Sydney Biennale while traveling in Australia. Alex’s introductory essay accompanies the AIDS Educational Posters (AEP) online database, launched last autumn by the Rare Books Library at UR. With Berin Golonu, he curated “Picturing AIDS and Its Publics,” an exhibit of posters from the AEP at Rare Books.

Jessica S. McDonald completed the manuscript for Nathan Lyons: Selected Essays, Lectures, and Interviews, to be published in the summer of 2012 by the University of Texas Press. She organized the exhibition Photography in Mexico at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, where she is Assistant Curator of Photography. She is Reviews Editor for the journal Photography & Culture.

Jenevive Nykolak presented a paper on David Wojnarowicz’s early photography at the College Art Association annual conference in Los Angeles in February 2012.

Shota Ogawa organized a panel entitled “Citation and Appropriation: Film Remembers (through) Film” at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference in March 2012. He is also working on multiple fronts to make Rochester an exciting place for people interested in cinema. He has a Japanese-language blog about Dryden Theater which he runs with Daisuke Kawahara. He is also a member of the OnFilm series. For summer 2013, he is planning a separate series on experimental and independent films from Japan in the 1960s.
This past summer, **Cesare Wright** developed the Deconstructing Literacy program with graduate researchers from The Warner School of Education and produced a short documentary. The program is based on a socio-cultural context for learning, and allows students to engage New Media and multimedia literacy practices as a means of developing comprehension, while building traditional reading/writing skills. This fall, Cesare began production (as director and producer) with the Gracie family, founders of Brazilian Jiu-jitsu, on a feature documentary film about the Bullyproof program, which helps kids to deal with the physical and psychological aspects of bullying. Currently, Cesare is an Adjunct Lecturer at Rice University in Houston, where he created and taught two new courses: Advanced Sound and Cinematography; and Auteur Film - Case Studies of Werner Herzog, Dario Argento, and Rob Zombie.

Heather Layton introduces a new project to her Advanced Painting class while attending the D. Fleiss East West Artists Residency Program in Mallnitz, Austria

The first Rosalyn Engleman Studio Workshop featured artist Igal Nassima who offered two days of instruction on Physical Computing using Arduino microprocessors