The UC San Diego Department of Visual Arts is one of the country’s leading centers for research in contemporary art practice, history, and theory. Widely recognized for its unique concentration of faculty concerned with the production, criticism, and analysis of contemporary art, our department is also recognized as a nexus for innovative research that bridges artistic practice with forms of intellectual inquiry and creative production across the humanities and sciences. We bring together discipline-specific study and interdisciplinary investigation into new synthesis of practice. We work on issues of art and public space, exhibitions, environmental interventions, and urban pedagogy, exploring new frameworks for cultural practice in the spaces, social networks, and media pathways through which people communicate, collaborate, and build communities. With artists, curators, critics, and historians brought into close proximity and dialogue, diverse domains of practice are synergized in novel forms of research and production, analysis and display.

Situated within a large metropolitan region stretching from Los Angeles across the border to Tijuana, the visual arts program is deeply tied to the history of artistic innovation in Southern California and the border culture of the U.S. and Mexico. The department has had a long-standing interest in urban, ecological, and territorial transformations and their critical relationship to arts and culture—not only in terms of its engagements with Latin America along a trans-continental axis to the south, but also with East Asia along a trans-Pacific axis to the west. Interventions into community, regional, and environmental sites have long been an important dimension of faculty and student work, from small-scale situational performances to sustained, in-field practices to larger regional exhibitions. Frameworks for artistic practices are advanced through a focus on the key procedural and framing decisions that these practices involve, the forms of collaborative agency and public address that they solicit, and the forms of knowledge production and aesthetic consideration that they develop.

As we prepare students for careers as artists, critics, teachers, curators, and scholars, we also prepare them for a whole range of affiliated professions from work in independent and public media, to libraries and archives, to entrepreneurial activity and institutional directorship, to design-related professions in media, materials, and software. Students are taught disciplinary knowledges and skills in specific artistic and scholarly pursuits within visual arts, in addition to transferable knowledges and skills that prepare them to be intellectually and creatively agile in whatever discipline they may pursue. Our courses prepare students for the hybrid forms of cultural practice that are emerging in an increasingly networked world—a world where new creative forms emerge in a changing ecology of contemporary art production, scientific research, communication technology, and social and institutional space. Courses also prepare students for engagement with diverse publics—art audiences as well as broader demographics through techniques that might be incorporated from fields such as journalism and ethnography, in sites that may involve the street or the marketplace as much as the museum. Just as our students may well go on to become significant figures in contemporary art and criticism, they will go on to invent entirely new forms of cultural practice and analysis—forms that are barely visible to us today.

We are proud to present this survey of achievements from our 2013-14 academic year. It is intended to showcase the exemplary scholarly and artistic works produced by our diverse community of artists, theorists, historians, and cultural practitioners, as well as to provide an experimental field for new models of pedagogy, interdisciplinary collaboration, and cultural production. It aims to further our work in promoting cultural exchange with new communities and advancing unique perspectives on the diverse influences, problematics, and possibilities of art in the contemporary world. By exploring new forms of engagement, organization, and presentation across institutional, environmental, and urban contexts, the Department of Visual Arts is, in this way, helping to shape new historical and critical contexts for art practice.
A space designed for critical dialogue, theoretical inquiry, curating, and experimentation, the Discursive and Curatorial Productions (DCP) Initiative has been an active site for reflection and production. This year the DCP curated three exhibitions for the Visual Arts Gallery, produced two new issues of the research notebook series Unweave, and hosted several events.

The DCP’s first exhibition for the Visual Arts Gallery, SUBTERRANEA, featured the work of Sam Durant, Haris Epaminonda, Christopher Kardambikis, Gordon Matta-Clark, and Dominic Paul Miller, and was curated by graduate students Elizabeth Miller and Melinda Guillen. Subterranean structures, associated with both literal and figurative conceptions of the underground, comprised the premise of the exhibition. Notions of the subterranean are often inflected with the properties of the unknown, evoking the arcane and the afterlife. The exhibition coincided with Void/Gravity: Dominic Paul Miller, Works On Paper and closed with the release of the third issue of Unweave.

MFA candidate Tomas Moreno worked with the DCP to present his research on the psychedelic underpinnings of Walt Disney’s Dumbo, highlighting the political imaginary of America’s twentieth century through the media landscape that underwrites it. DumbSun by Moreno closed the winter quarter with a live scoring by RAS_G & The Afrikan Space Program.

The next major exhibition the initiative produced was Spheres of Glass: Re-imagining Aesthetics of Nature and the Social. This group exhibition and series of programs featured works by Juan William Chávez, Detroit Tree of Heaven Woodshop, Judith Hopf, Leslie Thornton and Ron Vawter, and Erika Vogt, and was curated by art practice graduate students, Katrin Pesch and Tim Ridlen. Spheres of Glass aimed to present workable solutions to contemporary problems. The exhibition also featured a film screening series and special lecture by film scholar Vivian Sobchack titled Stop + Motion: On Animation, Inertia, and Innervation. The exhibition Spheres of Glass coincided with the fourth issue of Unweave.

Additional events that the DCP hosted include a discussion with Hugh Davies, Kathryn Kanjo, and Jill Dawsey, curators from the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego and a panel and reflection on Michelle H. Hyun’s tenure as the University Art Gallery Curatorial Fellow.

The DCP is led by Assistant Professor Mariana Wardwell. The advisory board is comprised of faculty members Norman Bryson, Brian Cross, Ricardo Dominguez, Grant Kester, Elizabeth Newsome, Kuiyi Shen, Lesley Stern, and John C. Welchman. The exhibition, curatorial, and publication committee is comprised of graduate students Edward Kihn, Elizabeth Miller, Melinda Guillen, Tim Ridlen, Cara Baldwin, Drew Snyder, Catherine Czacki, Katrin Pesch, Tomas Moreno, Dominic Paul Miller, and curatorial fellow Michelle H. Hyun.

Spheres of Glass aimed to present workable solutions to contemporary problems. The exhibition also featured a film screening series and special lecture by film scholar Vivian Sobchack titled Stop + Motion: On Animation, Inertia, and Innervation.
ACTIVE STRUCTURES + MATERIALS

Active Structures + Materials is home to two groups: the Active Structures Research Group and the Material Culture Working Group.

The Active Structures Research Group, organized by Professor Jordan Crandall, who leads the exhibition at the gallery@calit2 called AUTONOMOUS and a coinciding forum, Autonomous Perspectives, both presented an exhibition at the gallery@calit2 called AUTONOMOUS and a coinciding forum, Autonomous Perspectives, both organized by Professor Jordan Crandall, who leads the research group. The project considered how aspects of our world that were formerly considered inert are becoming endowed with communicative ability and intelligence, and questioned the autonomy of objects, systems, and ideas in the digital age.

A dozen artists and researchers presented their works in the exhibition, including an installation of self-assembling structures by Skylar Tibbits at MIT and Arthur Olson of The Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla; a film by Harun Farocki that explores the role of computation and computer vision in modern weaponry, underscoring how computer vision has overtaken human sight, especially as a witness to history, turning the traditional man-machine distinction into an eye-machine divide; and a project by Defense Distributed that involves new fabrication methods. The exhibition also included a series of works by Donald Judd from the 1970s that offer insights into the relationship between his sculptures and their fabrication processes.

Autonomous Perspectives: A Forum on Art, Engineering, and Critical Theory featured a talk by visual arts Associate Professor Benjamin Bratton in addition to presentations from Peter Ballardine, a curator and restorer; Ryan Bishop, professor of Global Art and Politics at the Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton; and Robert Skelton, professor emeritus in the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Department of the UCSD Jacobs School of Engineering. Topics included The Cultural Politics of Remote Sensing in the Long Cold War; Autonomy as Abstraction: Notes on Robotics and Material Composition; Transferences Between the Process of Fabrication and the Specificity of Material Form; and Deployable Tensegrity Structures.

The Material Culture Working Group was established to afford opportunities for new dialogues, exchanges, and collaborations across the variety of disciplines participating in material culture research. Research from this group is focused on the centrality of human relationships with the material world and how individuals experience complex and dynamic relationships with the objects and environments around us.

This year the Material Culture Working Group was sponsored by the UCSD Center for the Humanities. The group is expanding its reach and includes participation from the following departments: visual arts, communication, ethnic studies, anthropology/archaeology, music, science studies, cognitive science, and engineering.

This initiative was founded by art history faculty members Norman Bryson and Elizabeth Newcombe and next year the group will be joined by visual arts Professor Lisa Cartwright, Assistant Professor Roshanak Kheshti from ethnic studies, and Assistant Professor Fernando Rubio Díaz from communication. Several speakers are scheduled for the upcoming academic year. In October, renowned British anthropologist and pioneer of materiality research, Tim Ingold, and later in the academic year UC Berkeley anthropologist, feminist theorist, and 2010 Guggenheim winner Rosemary Joyce. Additionally scholars on campus that have committed to next year’s lineup include Jay Lemke of the Laboratory for Comparative Human Cognition, art historian William Tronzo, and Professor John C. Welchman.

DESIGN THEORY & RESEARCH PLATFORM

UCSD Design Theory and Research Platform serves as an incubator for interdisciplinary work and experimental design, linking projects and programs from across campus and across the world. The Platform brings a global design conversation to UCSD that will serve multiple research interests. It provides a hub for design research across disciplinary encounters, from experimental art to nanotechnology, from interface design to robotics, from global urbanism to biotechnology. The Platform serves as a site of encounter and support for unique projects that might otherwise not fit within our institutional frameworks; it facilitates collaboration at both graduate student and faculty levels, and organizes regular peer-critique of project development. The Platform studio in the Structural and Materials Engineering building will also serve as an intellectual hub for the department’s new speculative design major, due to begin in 2015.

CENTER FOR DESIGN & GEOPOLITICS

The Center for Design and Geopolitics (D:GP) is a think-tank that uses speculative art and design to investigate how planetary-scale computation transforms political, technological, and ecological systems. This initiative is led by Associate Professor Benjamin H. Bratton.
EXPERIMENTAL SCULPTURE & PAINTING STUDIO

Guided by Professors Anya Gallaccio and Rubén Ortiz Torres, the Experimental Sculpture and Painting Studio (ESPS) operates as a democratic collaboration among students developing new ideas.

“Instead of emphasizing a particular practice or individual vision it has been a very fluid opportunity for the students to create and understand a context for what they do,” Ortiz Torres said. “It’s a platform to present and try themselves as artists interacting with the University community at large and new audiences in California and abroad.”

As a workspace the initiative is oriented towards small to large-scale experimental sculpture, unconventional structures and fabrication methods, explorations into new materials and applications, painting and active surfaces — all with a fundamental consideration towards making.

This year’s programming has seen a focus on exhibition strategies and, in particular, international exhibition and exchange. Through departmental support members of the working group participated in two exhibitions hosted by international institutions: PARAC in Monterrey, Mexico; and Universidad del PaMs Vasco (UPV) in Bilbao, Spain. Member artists of ESPS visited the sites to respond and configure work to their respective settings. Additionally, ESPS hosted an exhibition of Mexican artists from the PARAC working group, curated by its founder, Marco Granados. The exhibition, RESOLANA, discursively configured musical production through the 1990’s up until the millennium in Monterrey, as a particular action towards social critique and reflection. Generating artworks with specific songs as their referent, the artists both document and interpret historic change in the region. In December 2014, ESPS will host an exhibit of work by artists from UPV Bilbao, Space 4 Art, curated by Usoa Fulloando at Space 4 Art in downtown San Diego.

Apart from these events, graduate students have curated and exhibited numerous projects in the ESPS space. Student lead, Dominic Paul Miller, curated Spaces that Surround Us, featuring UC Irvine graduate students, Rochele Gomez and Amanda McGough; as well as former faculty member Adriene Jenik, currently director for the Katherine Herberger School of Art at Arizona State University. The exhibition investigated modes of situated critique within an unconventional genre of sculpture.

CENTRAL FOR URBAN ECLOGIES

Directed by Professors Teddy Cruz and Kyong Park, the Center for Urban Ecologies (CUE) sees urban conflict as a productive zone of controversy that leads to new forms of cross-sector collaboration and inter-disciplinary debate and dialogue for urban research and intervention.

During 2013-14, CUE continued to bring together research and works from the fields of architecture, urbanism and design, environmental and social practice, political theory, visual arts and public policy, summoning practitioners across diverse sectors, and developing research, symposia, and exhibition that focused on local and global border urban dynamics, primarily targeting Latin American and Asian cities and regions.

Cruz, in partnership with the UCSD Center on Global Justice (CGJ) and its co-director, Professor Fonni Forman, received substantial funding from the UC Berkeley BLUM Center on Developing Economies to initiate the BLUM Cross-Border Initiative. This new research and pedagogical platform engages regional poverty research and practice in the San Diego-Tijuana region, promoting interaction and collaboration between demographically diverse neighborhoods and the classroom, while deepening UC San Diego’s partnerships with community-based organizations and the municipalities on both sides of the border. The goal is to develop new forms of civic participation and public culture, community-engaged research and pedagogy.

During the last year the BLUM Cross-Border Initiative at CUE produced a variety of projects and programs, including the UCSD Community Stations, a knowledge-exchange corridor that links the specialized knowledge of UCSD with community-based knowledge; the Public Scholars Award which enables community activists to co-produce research and teaching with UCSD professors and students and the Blum Summer Field Internship and Stipend, which provides support to undergraduate students from the main practica across campus, including the global health minor, Global TIES, the human rights minor, and the Sixth College Practicum, to engage the marginalized communities of San Ysidro, Los Laureles among others, on both sides of the border, to work collaboratively with partnering NGOs, examining issues of health, illness, and wellbeing; environmental and urban challenges; engineering and technical problem solving; human rights and social justice; and the role of arts and culture in underserved communities.

CUE’s activities with the CGJ also included a variety of research projects, symposia, lectures, and workshops, including a special FORD Foundation funded research project in collaboration with legendary former Mayor of Bogota, Colombia, Antanas Mockus, to develop the Bi-national Citizenship Culture Survey, an instrument that will measure and help visualize San Diego and Tijuana’s shared values and norms, the common civic interests around which a new bi-national conception of citizenship can be formed; the Urban Ecologies of Global Justice Series, which included international speakers such as Eyal Weizman, Richard Sennett, and Andrew Ross; a week-long UCSD-BLUM Workshop: Waste and the Urbanization of Retrofit with faculty and students from the Bauhaus University in Weimar Germany; and the formation of the Civic Innovation Lab at UC San Diego, in collaboration with the City of San Diego, to work with local governments and community organizations to re-think public space as a place of knowledge, where environmental literacy, arts education and cultural activity can stimulate political agency at the scale of neighborhoods.
EXPERIMENTAL MEDIA LAB

The Experimental Media Lab has become a dynamic site for exploration of new approaches to media and media production. The initiative is led by faculty members Brian Cross, Amy Alexander, and Michael Trigilio. In the fall, MFA candidate Emily Grenader and her collaborators in the Department of Computer Science concluded an ongoing research project that involved an interactive Kinect system of video portraits performed in public spaces. During the 2014 Open Studios, the Lab presented an exhibition of media works by graduate students in visual arts. Curated by MFA candidate Bill Basquin, Rarities and B-Sides featured video installations and projections by Lyndsay Bloom, Aitor Lajarin, Andreas Leonardsen, Elmina Mohelval, Hermione Spriggs, and Angela Washko.

Workshops over the past year included a master class with cinematographer Jonas Steadman, whose credits include Oblivion, Eyes Wide Shut, The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, and Sex and the City. Steadman shared his industry knowledge with special emphasis on techniques used in contemporary feature cinematic practice. This past spring the Lab also hosted a workshop and presentation with MFA alumna and Assistant Professor of Computer Art at Syracuse University, Anina Rüst. She examined the relationship between surveillance, personal computing, and engaged participants in an interactive session to create hardware against webcam spying.

EXPERIMENTAL DRAWING STUDIO

An active environment of research, exhibitions, and discourse marked the second year of programming at the Experimental Drawing Studio. The Studio is led by Professor Amy Adler with graduate students, Nichole Speciale (managing director), Emily Grenader, Kara Joslyn, Lucas Coffin, and alumnus Josh Tonies.

The past year focused on the theme of drawing as an inclusive and expanded form. Highlights from programming include interactions that explore the relationship of drawing with various research practices. Anna Joyce Springer, associate professor and director of the MFA program in writing in the Department of Literature, presented Writing Pictures. She discussed the relationship between drawn words and written images in nonfiction comics with a focus on contemporary women’s graphic memoirs and their unique uses of narrator.

Drawing Sound was a two-week series that investigated the relationship between drawing and musical sound production. Programs included Graphic Score: Drawing in Musical Practice, an exhibition curated by MFA candidate Nichole Speciale and music graduate student Rachel Beitz featuring visual and aural works by four graduate students in musical performance. The series continued with Drawing in the Air: Sound and its Representation, a discussion between Liz Kotz, professor of art history at UC Riverside and Charles Curtis, professor of musical performance at UC San Diego. Drawing Sound concluded with an artist talk and installation by MFA alumna Nina Waisman titled Body Envelope where visitors created their own shifting composition of sounds that change in pitch, speed, and volume in relation to their movements within the installation.

Neither Here Nor There: Illustration (or not) in Drawing Practice, also engaged alumni in an exhibition and panel discussion with undergraduate visual art majors who identify with an art world that exists outside the mainstream. The exhibition was curated by Adler and included drawings by undergraduate visual arts alumni David Chen, Aaron Guerrero, Vanessa Martinez, Ragan Russell, and Christina Tsui. The panel discussion, moderated by Adler, discussed the difference between drawing as a fine art practice and drawing as illustration practice. Participants included Dylan Jones (Subtext Gallery, San Diego), Walter Sutin (MFA candidate), Enrique Covarrubias (Dream Design Builders, San Diego) and Tom Knechtel (artist and professor at Art Center College of Design).

Drawing Sound concluded with an artist talk and installation by MFA alumna Nina Waisman titled Body Envelope where visitors created their own shifting composition of sounds that change in pitch, speed, and volume in relation to their movements within the installation.

The screening series, explored insights on drawing in cinema, and featured Rebel Cruser, Used Futures, Drafting Galactic by Associate Teaching Professor, Michael Trigilio followed by a screening of George Lucas’s Star Wars (1977). Additional programs included a discussion by LA-based video and installation artist Laura Vitale and a presentation by Professor Louis Hock who screened a number of his short films including his 1972 film Silent Reversal along with his cinematic work, Southern California.

The Studio also hosted Incendiary Traces, conceived by artist Hillary Mushkin. Participants were guided on a six mile driving tour led by a United States Border Patrol agent along the US-Mexico border. During the event there were informal onsite presentations and drawing followed by discussions led by Mushkin and historian Celeste Menchacha.
ARThUR C. CLARKE CENTER FOR HUMAN IMAGINATION

Understanding and enacting human imagination is the Arthur C. Clarke Center’s mission. The Center works across science, technology, arts, and humanities. Founded in 2012, directed by Professor Sheldon Brown, it is named for the prominent science fiction author known for 2001: A Space Odyssey. Clarke’s legacy combines scientific innovation with visionary cultural creation.

In November 2013, San Diego-based satellite innovator ViaSat announced a $1 million gift to the Center, which also received a $600,000 gift from the Taubman Foundation and more than $500,000 in National Science Foundation grants. In addition, the VirBELA project is supported by a $1.7 million grant from the Graduate Foundation. In November 2013, San Diego-based satellite innovator ViaSat announced a $1 million gift to the Center, which also received a $600,000 gift from the Taubman Foundation and more than $500,000 in National Science Foundation grants. In addition, the VirBELA project is supported by a $1.7 million grant from the Graduate Foundation.

Events in 2013-2014 included “The Future is Here,” a three-day conference at the Smithsonian in Washington DC. Co-organized by the Clarke Center with the Lemelson Center for Industry and Innovation and Smithsonian Magazine, the event looked at science fiction as a framing mechanism for social, technological, and cultural developments. Participants included Star Trek actors George Takei and Patrick Stewart, scientists Sara Seager and Brian Greene, astronaut Mae Jamison, and science-fiction authors Kim Stanley Robinson and David Brin.

The Center also hosted a range of public programs at UC San Diego. NASA chief engineer Jon Jenkins and UC Santa Barbara physicist Philip Lubin presented a forum on the discovery of thousands of planets by NASA’s Kepler mission. “Math and the Body and the Mind” featured UC San Diego cognitive scientist Rafael Núñez and Museum of Mathematics founders Cindy Lawrence and Glen Whitney. Clarke Center artist-in-residence Jon Lomberg presented projects that explore ways in which artists can respond to the fact that “our generation is emerging into the Milky Way, and becoming a planetary species.”

“Galileo and the Music of the Spheres” celebrated the scientist and philosopher’s 450th birthday. Panelists included UC San Diego music Professor Shlomo Dubnov and literature Professor Stephanie Jed. Musicians in Ordinary performed music composed by Galileo’s father, set to ultra high-def videos depicting Jupiter, made by Clarke Center Director Sheldon Brown using data from NASA. The Sci Fi Flick film series screened the movies Contact, 2001: A Space Odyssey, and Gattaca, with special guests ranging from 2001 actor Keir Dullea and the film’s science advisor Fred Ordway to Sanford Consortium Director Larry Goldstein and neuroscientist Shanti Ganesh.

The six-week Clarion Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers Workshop gave aspiring writers a chance to interact with authors such as Gregory Frost, Geoff Ryman, Catherynne Valente, N.K. Jemisin, Ann VanderMeer, and Jeff VanderMeer.

NEW INITIATIVES

Catalyst Lab - This workspace will support collaborative projects, interdisciplinary dialogue, and creative research at the intersections of art, science, technology, feminism, and media. The Lab is home to Catalyst: Feminism, Theory and Technoscience, a peer-reviewed, open-source online journal launching in spring 2015, and a center for activities linked to the FemTechNet, an international network of feminist scholars, artists, and teachers of technology, science, and digital media engaged in projects including the development of feminist media archives and distributed online collaborative courses. Catalyst Lab will be directed by Professor Lisa Cartwright. Affiliated graduate students include Lyndsay Bloom, Artemisa Clark, and Ava Porter (visual arts); Fiori Dall, Louise Hickman, Stephen Mandiberg, and Cristina Vesperas (managing journal editor for Catalyst) (communication); Cat Crowder and Nicholas Hirsch (sociology); and Kate Furby (Scripps Institute of Oceanography).

Field - This initiative is based on the argument that conventional modes of art criticism and theory are not able to adequately grasp new forms of collaborative, participatory, or socially-engaged art practice. Field aims to open up a dialogue across the boundaries between art history and theory and other disciplines like sociology, anthropology, ethnography, and political theory. The initiative will also produce FIELD: A Journal of Socially-Engaged Art Criticism. Supported by the University of California Institute for Research in the Arts (UCIRA), the Division of Arts and Humanities, and the Department of Visual Arts, this new online, peer-reviewed journal will be devoted to socially engaged art practice. Professor Grant Kester is the faculty lead and publication contributors will include visual arts Professor’s Teddy Cruz, Kyong Park, and Professor Emeritus Lesley Stern in addition to participation from visual arts graduate students Nori Brynijolson, Alex Kershaw, Julia Fernandez, Paloma Checa-Gismero, Melinda Guillen, and Stephanie Sherman. Collaborators outside of the department include independent curator Lucia Sanromán and Elana Zilberg, associate professor of communication.
Subterranean structures, associated with both literal and figurative conceptions of the underground, were the premise of SUBTERRANEA, the Discursive and Curatorial Productions initiative’s first exhibition for the Visual Arts Gallery. Fantastic cosmological atlases, schematic drawings of holes, salt maps, and critical perspectives of underground pop culture afterlives comprised the works of Christopher Kardambikis, Haris Epaminonda, Dominic Paul Miller, and Sam Durant respectively. In fall 2014, the exhibition also offered a series of film screenings and paired with the publication release of Unweave #3, titled “Topologies of the Underground: Metaphors, Extensions, and Speculations.”

Curators and graduate students, Elizabeth Miller and Melinda Guillen, outlined the broad perspectives of the subterranean. “Architectural and natural environments’ root systems, foundations, and material infrastructures lay buried or concealed underground, largely unperceived... The term also draws upon allegorical or psychological space: the subterranean is the site of Dostoevsky’s Notes from Underground and Dante’s Inferno; as a plural term, ‘subterranea,’ or ‘undergrounds,’ signifies political (the French Resistance), social (the Underground Railroad), and economic (the 17th century English ‘Diggers’) counter-cultural movements.”

Spheres of Glass: Re-imagining Aesthetics of Nature and the Social, art practice Ph.D. curators Katrin Pesch and Tim RIDLEN developed a show that explored the grey spaces between nature and culture. The exhibition was produced by the Discursive and Curatorial Production initiative. Consisting of video, sculpture, photography, and works on paper, projects in the exhibition “take on problems of being in the world created by the ‘abstract’ theoretical scientific conceptualizations and the ‘actual’ social interaction with material culture.” Works spanned from the pragmatic investigations by Juan William Chávez to the poetic sculptures of Erika Vogt. The exhibition also incorporated a comprehensive guest speaker and film series, including the work THOSE THAT THROUGH THE EAR BECOME AN ATLAS, by MFA candidate Hermione SPRIGGS and her collaborator Curtis TAMM, and THE INVISIBLE COLLEGE by visual arts Assistant Professor Mariana WARDWELL.

FILMATIC FESTIVAL
Exploring the future of film and new media, the second annual Filmatic Festival featured works of many visual arts graduates, undergraduates, and faculty. In light of declining movie theater attendance but increased public consumption of media, the impetus behind the festival was to reimagine the potential of the cinematic experience. The Artpower! sponsored event featured an array of interactive workshops, panels, and performances.

Many visual arts faculty and alumni underscored Filmatic by presenting new forms of sound mixing and video projection through installation and interactive projects. Visual arts MFA candidate Ave PORTER and Department of Music Ph.D. student Yvette Jackson’s installation Soldier featured a room paneled with projections and layered recordings. Assistant Professor Brian Cross (aka B+) opened Filmatic with a live Vmix by Beat Junkies founder J.Rocc. The interactive crowd assembling project VideoMob, by MFA candidate Emily Grenader was also featured. Other visual arts associates pushed the boundaries of filmmaking. In the Film Shorts Series, visual arts alumna and current theater and dance Assistant Professor Tara KNIGHT presented her documentary work Mikumentaries. Using 4K cinema technology visual arts Professor Sheldon BROWN, Associate Teaching Professor Michael Trigilio, and undergraduates Tanner Cooke and Ren Ebel presented their 5 minute short works.
ELECTIVE AFFINITIES: 
MFA GRADUATE EXHIBITION 2014

In spring 2014, the University Art Gallery hosted Elective Affinities: MFA Graduate Exhibition 2014, which included artwork by sixteen students graduating from the department’s MFA program. From J Noland’s rattlesnake heart moonshine to Hermione Sprigg’s live moths, a diverse array of theoretical approaches were on display.

The exhibition was curated by Noni Brynjolson and Paloma Checa-Gismero, who are first-year Ph.D. students in Art History, Theory, and Criticism. After visiting the MFA students’ studios, they decided to focus on the relationships that developed between the artists and their work during their time in the program. The title for the exhibition came from German author Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s 1809 novel Elective Affinities, in which an analogy was set up between chemical elements and personal relations.

Brynjolson and Checa-Gismero explain that “like the characters in the novel, the artists in the MFA exhibition were subject to manifold relations linking their bodies and practices. The meeting of their works in the same space—for some, the first time—set up an inquiry into the conditions of their coexistence in a shared microcosm.” Brynjolson and Checa-Gismero also drew inspiration from the curiosity cabinets of the pre-modern era, in which unlike objects were collected and displayed together, resulting in new and unexpected combinations of materials.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Pairing four distinct video installations in conversation with permanent videos, photographs, and texts in the University Art Gallery, Timing is Everything questioned notions of time, history, and memory. This exhibition was produced by curatorial fellow Michelle H. Hyun. The Exhibition of a Necessary Incompleteness by Joseph Redwood-Martinez was featured in the gallery while Charles G. Miller, Hong-An Truong and Dwayne Dixon, Cauleen Smith, and Uriel Orlow respectively rotated video installations in the space.

The Exhibition of a Necessary Incompleteness revealed the broader implications of intentionally postponed construction, a cyclical process of eternally becoming. Against this backdrop, the gallery screened films that referenced architecture and temporality.

Hyun points to the videos as “poetic interlocutors,” since time is just a perception in this medium. In Hidden in Plain Sight: La Jolla/UTC Annex, An-Edge City alumna Charles G. Miller presented a video essay that documents the area surrounding the campus and gallery while challenging the placid exterior of the region. Truong and Dixon screened a dual-channel video installation titled The City and The City, where the past and present are interweaved as imagery of Saigon and Tokyo is visually assembled and disassembled.

Brynjolson and Checa-Gismero also drew inspiration from the curiosity cabinets of the pre-modern era, in which unlike objects were collected and displayed together, resulting in new and unexpected combinations of materials.

ALUMNI IN LOS ANGELES

Over 100 visitors gathered in Pieter Performance Space, the lights dimmed, and alumna Elle Mehrmand captivated the crowd with the sounds and lights of her performance, [saffron_.text]. The piece was part of an exhibition titled, At Sixes and Sevens. The exhibition was up for one night only and presented works from 13 alumni artists living and working in Los Angeles.

Professor Amy Adler ignited this effort to showcase the work of MFA alumni working in Los Angeles. “This exhibition was not only an opportunity to show their work but also a chance to provide more opportunities for present, past, and future UCSD graduate students to connect with one another.” Alumnus Louis Schmidt was brought on by Adler to curate the exhibition.

GRADUATE STUDENT OPEN STUDIOS AND SYMPOSIUM

As a self-organized event, Open Studios is the one day each year where all graduate student artists in the department open their doors and engage the community into their research and practice.

This year’s graduate student showcase coincided with International Women’s Day and was fittingly themed around feminist cultural production. The expansive lineup of events included a symposium, several exhibitions, performances, a film screening, 41 open artist studios, and an offsite post event at MCASD.

Ph.D. students Melinda Guillen and Marguerite Hodge organized the symposium, AFTER THE FACT: Feminist Cultural Production and Temporal Dissonance, and brought on UC Davis English Professor, Elizabeth Freeman as the keynote speaker.

ON THE BEACH

Art history Ph.D. student Noni Brynjolson was in the department’s pilot Curatorial Studies seminar, taught in partnership with MCASD, when the opportunity arose to organize an exhibition at the Museum. “Our final project was to propose an exhibition using work from the museum’s collection. As I started to do research I was struck by the numerous works that focused on landscape, and I knew that I wanted my project to focus on the geography of San Diego in some way. The beach seemed like an obvious thematic choice given its idealized depictions in pop culture, its relationship to the city’s identity, and its unique qualities as a public space.”

Brynjolson’s concept, On the Beach: Art and Public Space on the California Coast, was selected to exhibit in the Meyer gallery at MCASD and was on view from January to April 2014.

“The main highlight for me was seeing an idea come to fruition. When the physical work was taken out of the vault and arranged on the wall, it seemed to open up new ideas and conversations that hadn’t been there before.”
SENSES OF CARE

Senses of Care: Mediated Ability and Interdependence exhibited artists and design initiatives that raise provocative questions about the way we view caretaking at the gallery@calit2. The exhibition features artists whose work addresses topics ranging from disability fashion to do-it-yourself (DIY) prosthetics to creative modes of reframing sensory experience.

Art History, Theory, and Criticism Ph.D. student Amanda Cachia participated in a curatorial collective, under the leadership of Brian Goldfarb, associate professor of communication, to create the exhibition. Cachia suggested and liaised with four of the artists, who included Sara Hendren, Park McArthur, Christine Sun Kim, and Chun-Shan (Sandie) Yi. She also initiated and co-organized a program entitled “Visualizing Care: Design, Politics and Interdependence,” a round-table discussion with eminent disability studies and gender studies scholar Rosemarie Garland-Thomson; artist, designer, and writer Sara Hendren; and artist Chun-Shan Sandie Yi.

As Goldfarb states “More than universal design, the orientation of the work turns prevailing frames of accommodation on their side and on their head. They enact possibilities for bridging radically distinct experiences of embodiment, sensory perception, and cognition.”

BYRON KIM VISIT

The department and MCASD continued the annual tradition of hosting an internationally recognized artist with a large lecture at the Museum and intimate studio visits with graduate students at the department. La Jolla native Byron Kim was selected as the 2014 Russell Lecturer.

Associate Professor Benjamin Bratton and MFA candidate Angela Washko organized the visit with MCASD Assistant Curator Elizabeth Rooklidge. Kim engaged with a group of graduate students to discuss their works-in-progress in an open critique. MFA students who participated included Bill Basquin, Heidi Kayser, Joshua Miller, Julian Rogers, Walter Sutin, and Angela Washko.

AND HOW ARE WE FEELING TODAY?

And how are we feeling today? was the question and title of the winter 2014 exhibition curated by Michelle H. Hyun, University Arts Gallery Curatorial Fellow. Hyun set the tone of the exhibition, claiming the question carries with it a complicated chain of social, biological, economic, and political reverberations. “The question of ‘feeling,’ therefore insists upon a politics that must operate on the level of affect.”

Artists Nina Canell, the Feminist Economics Department (the FED), Melanie Gilligan, Vishal Jugdeo, Reena Katz aka Radiodress, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Anna Sew Hoy, and Wages for Facebook approached the question from a wide set of materials and perspectives. The opening night of the exhibition offered a dynamic range of activity—visitors encountered documents, performance, sound, sculpture, and video installations. Exhibition goers moved through a room of tubular grieving bells, read documentation of a student’s staggering education debts, and viewed a fragile sculpture of human hair delivered from Dublin. These are just a glimpse of the many projects that exposed the underpinnings of a seemingly banal question, yielding a complex exhibition, that required many return visits. “If a show is easy to grasp in one viewing,” Hyun stated, “it would just be entertainment.”
Intersciplinary Computing in the Arts (ICAM) is a hybrid undergraduate major offered in both the Department of Visual Arts and Music. It marries paradigms from computer science, art, and cultural theory. At the end of spring quarter, graduating seniors in the ICAM major come together to present a showcase of their final projects. This year’s event included ICAM install, ICAM Timecode, and ICAM bestof, an exhibition and series of performances and presentations respectively that showcased final projects.

ICAM visual arts major Douglas Rosman was honored with an award for Best Project for his amin (a box) installation. He created an immersive viewing experience using four 22 inch LCD screens arranged in a square that surrounds the participant’s head. Playing with fiction and reality, Rosman notes that “the prospect of inhabiting virtual worlds is undoubtedly exciting, but at the cost of potentially increasing our isolation from one another.”

Other recognitions in the ICAM visual arts major include Kacey Coughlin and Adrian Phillips who both received a Meritorious Achievement Award. The ICAM awards were sponsored by ComHear, a digital audio wearables products, software, and services company.

There was great range in this year’s projects and as Associate Teaching Professor Brett Stalbaum notes, “When students combine 21st century skills in object making with an understanding of the histories of the experimental avant-garde and current practices in art and design, that mix of potent hard skills with rich conceptual skills leads them to surprise, delight, and sometimes even frighten their professors with their inventive art making.”

**BEST OF ICAM**

**AUTONOMOUS**

Professor Jordan Crandall curated the exhibition AUTONOMOUS at gallery@calit2, bringing together works employing rapid prototyping processes, generative software, photography, video, installation, and sculpture from a variety of research perspectives. Instead of introducing the exhibition with a curatorial statement, Crandall opened AUTONOMOUS with a provocation: “Aspects of our world that are formerly considered inert are becoming endowed with communicative ability and intelligence. Capacities of sensing, processing, communication and actuation are woven within and across the boundaries of objects, spaces, and systems…often bypassing the sensory and cognitive capacities of humans. To what extent can we regard these forms as ‘autonomous’?”

The exhibition included projects by Defense Distributed, Rinke Dijkstra, Harun Farocki, Donald Judd, Casey Reas, John Schabel, Robert Skelton, Skylar Tibbits + Arthur Olson, and Nathan Wade. In creating the agitation machine Autonomous Mass-Assembly, Skylar Tibbits + Arthur Olson energized roughly 240 pieces modeled on the polio virus capsid that organized with other pieces into closed molecular-type structures, producing a wholly self-assembling structure. German artist Harun Farocki’s video piece Auge/Maschine II explored the transfer of human vision to tactical warning systems, surveillance apparatuses, and smart weaponry. Approaching autonomous production from the human hand, Donald Judd’s work included four drawings of his sculptures combined with four fabrication drawings dating from the 1970’s. By including technical sketches intended specifically for his fabricators, Judd’s drawings opened “new insights into the relationship between artwork and the production process,” said Crandall. “Judd considered his sculptures to be specific and autonomous, to a certain extent, and the relationship between the sculptures and their fabrication process is key to understanding this.”

**MY STRANGEST STRANGER**

On a warm late spring evening, gallery goers walked through the seemingly empty, until University Art Gallery with mirrors in their hands. To experience the ceiling photomural by New York based artist Mary Wailing Blackburn’s project for the exhibition My Strangest Stranger, visitors were invited to view it through reflected fragments. Images of satellites and ambiguous bodies emerged, all part of an ongoing body of Blackburn’s work that explores the multitude of interpretations of what could be considered ‘alien’ in both natural and national borders in Turkey, Southern France, and US/Mexico. Resonant rumbling tones emerged from subwoofer speakers, creating a subterranean feeling of unease. Further exploration in the gallery also revealed video works and a hidden library of the extraterrestrial, including Blackburn’s original publication “The Extra Earth Analog.”

As the final exhibition produced by curatorial fellow Michelle H. Hyun, the project included a dynamic array of public programming. Open dance sessions led by dancers/choreographers Anya Cloud and Eric Geiger explored the territory of the unknown and the stranger through contact improvisation. Office hours with editors, curators, and scholars whose research related to the exhibition offered one-on-one opportunities to discuss topics within radical history, speculative literature, performance theory, and border studies.
**MUX DEMUX**

Cast off treasures from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, forgotten Mexican folk dances, and video liaisons with sphinxes could all be found in the same room at the recent MFA exhibition, Mux Demux. Hosted by Amy Adler and Los Angeles curator Darin Klein (of Darin Klein and friends), the exhibition featured current UC San Diego MFA candidates who had worked with Adler in her Spring Working Critique course. Mux Demux took place at Commonwealth & Council, in Koreatown, Los Angeles and presented a repertoire of sculpture, video, painting, and performance as diverse as the practices of the program’s artists.

Participating artist Julian Rogers explains his naming of the exhibit: “Multiplexers are devices that send multiple input signals to a single line. They are called Mux for short. Demux is the opposite, a single channel into many.” Klein continues, “This technical term poetically and aptly describes Commonwealth & Council as channeling 18 artists from UCSD into Los Angeles and the potential to channel one exhibition out to many viewers.”

Since 2007, Darin Klein and Amy Adler developed public programming and exhibitions in Los Angeles venues including ForYourArt, Hammer Museum, Human Resources, LACE, Luis De Jesus Los Angeles, in addition to residency projects at Adler’s Echo Park studio.


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**UNWEAVE**

Unweave is a series of research notebooks dedicated to the thematic exploration of critical curatorial and artistic production. Edited by Ph.D. students and faculty of the Discursive and Curatorial Productions initiative, each issue features contributions by art historians, artists, and arts professionals and is themed around a series of programming and exhibitions. Over the past year two new issues of Unweave were produced.

*Unweave #3, Topologies of the Underground: Metaphors, Extensions and Speculation,* was edited by Ph.D. candidate Elizabeth Miller, Ph.D students Melinda Guillen and Tim Ridlen, in addition to Assistant Professor Mariana Wardwell. The issue extends the concepts of the underground explored in the exhibition *SUBTERRANEAL: It features a special insert reproduction of Robert Smithson’s Toward the Development of a Cinema Cavern (1971) and includes essays by Aurora Tang, Julia Bryan-Wilson, Dominic Paul Miller, Elizabeth Miller, John C. Welchman, Kristen Gallerneaux, and Tom McDonough, with artist documentation of various ephemera by Artemisa Clark and Jill Magid related to death, ritual, and transcendence.

*For Unweave #4, the editorial team was joined by art practice concentration Ph.D. candidate Katrin Pesch, to produce the journal alongside the exhibition, Spheres of Glass: Re-imagining Aesthetics of Nature and the Social. A special insert of Paul Thek’s Untitled (Earth Drawing 1) (ca. 1974) sets the stage for this issue. Texts here consider the threat of ruination in the atomic age, the construction of failure in modernist utopian architecture, and the social dimensions of contemporary climate-related disaster. Authors include Drew Snyder, Tim Ridlen, Sabine Horlitz, Edward Kihn, Katrin Pesch, Tom Sparrow, and Lesley Stern.*
Integrating custom electronics, light projection, and a death metal band, this performance captures the peaks and valleys of stellar evolution.

The stark contrast in economic disparities is a starting point for Professor Kyong Park’s recent projects. Blurring fiction and reality in A City for One-Percenters, Park presents an artificial island built off the coast of Myanmar to accommodate the economic elites of Asia. This segregated city has been mapped into three concentrated rings, with the outer zone for the millionaires, the middle zone for billionaires, and the center for the zillionaires, making it the world’s largest and wealthiest "gated city.”

In a similar mapping inquiry, Park brings attention to anti-migrant politics in MEXUSA. Starting from the occupation of the San Ysidro Port of Entry in Tijuana, this emergent settlement allows anyone from anywhere to live and work without a visa or passport. The border condition provided an exceptional source of labor between the two states and the settlement began to capitalize by creating a multinational state growing across the entire length of the border.

Park’s projects combine urban research with artistic practice. In How Korea was Unified, he presents a fictional account about the occupation of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea. The Occupy DMZ movement eventually erases the existence of the states and governments of North and South Korea.

As co-director of the Center for Urban Ecology, Park also organized a series of lectures that included talks with curator Michael Zinganel; architect Hector Perez; and curator Chus Martinez.

Several graduate student artists expanded their horizons through extracurricular exchange programs and summer residencies. For four weeks, Julian Rogers worked in Vermont Studio Center as an artist in residence. Aitor Lajarin presented his work at the Pinta Art Fair in London and at the Centro cultural de Espana in Montevideo Uruguay. Bringing eight works by eight young basque artists to eight different countries, the GAUR program is organized by the Basque Government to promote basque art and culture. Kate Clark presented her public project Parking Lot Park: Seven Stories of San Clemente Canyon with her collaborator at the Department of Music, Samuel Dunscombe at the conference Affective Habitus in Canberra, Australia which was organized by Australian National University’s The Center for the History of Human Emotions.

As participants in SOMA Summer in Mexico City, Artemisa Clarke, Hermione Spriggs, and Collective Magpie worked alongside fellows from Mexico and the United States in a studio based and academic program concerning social and collaborative practice. As a resident of the Helsinki International Artists Program, Angela Washko created a performance at Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art and worked on a solo collaborative exhibition with Alex Young at Akovi Galleria in Helsinki, Finland.

In an exchange between PARAC, an academic program in Monterrey, Mexico, the Experimental Sculpture and Painting Studio initiative hosted Marco Granados to curate a traveling exhibition with the work of MFA candidates, including, Dominic Paul Miller, Kara Joslyn, Joshua Jon Miller, Hermione Spriggs, Matt Savitsky, Julian Rogers, Shana Demassi, Tanya Brodsky, Heidi Kayser, Aitor Lanjarin, Aldo Guerra, and Bill Basquin. Dominic Paul Miller and Collective Magpie joined the Bauhaus Institute, Weimar for a two week urban design and architecture workshop. Exploring dismissed industrial zones in Venice, Italy, Collective Magpie worked with IUAV Urbanism and Architecture program for a summer session through the Atlantis Program.
Thirty years ago I was making images that had 200-300 pixels with eight colors, what you would see on your Apple II or Commodore 64 or TRS 80. This process began showing that there are inter-relationships between how images, sound, text, space, person and perception are configured in a new matrix of possibilities. What has happened is that the ways we create images, the ways we distribute them, the ways we interact with them are all mediated by digital technologies.

Did some of these emerging technologies exceed your expectations?

In the sixties and seventies, we thought that by 2001 you would have computers going insane and killing people on spaceships to Jupiter. Now we’ve created this whole new digital fabric that connects human experience and expression and communication. The Clarke Center has this mission: “To understand, enhance, and extend human imagination.” We work in areas of scientific and cultural development that provide new methods by which we begin to understand a phenomenon like human imagination.

As you and your fellow artists interact with neuroscientists, engineers, and other experts, how do these collaborations re-define your work as an artist?

One of the remarkable things about art is the engagement with a viewer, an audience member, a participant, which can produce a range of insights. Art works that survive the test of time, that continually go back to during the course of your life—those works seem to change as you change. They become personally relevant to you at various moments and in very different ways. In my own work, I am creating an interactive computer-mediated environment, and it’s very interesting for me to begin utilizing digital and scientific means to measure the responses of participants.

You’re doing some of this work in a digital lab at the Clarke Center, where you attach sensors to participants and track how they respond to digital art. Yes, and I find that when I am watching people having a relationship with the artwork I can often make very subtle suggestions to them, I can say, why don’t you move it this way, with an interactive video piece, and when they do that, they have those ah-hah moments, moments of insight. I want participants to have these initial ah-hah moments, and when they go home and start falling asleep I want them to have another ah-hah moment, and I want them to have another week later. Over time, I would like to develop a way to shift a person’s perspective on the world they live in.

In November 2013, ViaSat, a digital and satellite communications innovator, made a $1 million gift to the Clarke Center. How does that resource begin to change the Center’s work?

The ViaSat gift enables us to expand various projects in frequency, breadth, and participation. Much of that will start to unfold in a more prominent way in the coming year. The ViaSat contribution is a significant addition to our base funding from the National Science Foundation, which goes toward partnerships with computer scientists around the country and internships for UCSD students from various disciplines. ViaSat really likes the idea of the Clarke Center doing research on how to improve imagination and creativity, which relates very much to what their company does.

Science fiction was a big part of the Smithsonian conference, and it’s also central to the Center’s annual Clarion Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers workshop, which was held last summer. Tell us what happens there.

We had six writers in residence ranging from Jeffry Ramon to N.K. Jemisin. We are building relationships between various campus departments in the arts and sciences. Generational frameworks changed through the seventies, eighties, and nineties, and we are very interested in where science fiction is headed in the next decade or two. Today, there are all sorts of modes other than print by which science is in the world, whether it’s graphic novels or video games or cinema.

By adding arts to the more conventional STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) model, transforming it into STEAM, the Clarke Center is creating a new more-inclusive research paradigm.

Yes. And I think there is something about having arts engagement that opens new possibilities for all sorts of participants. New collaborations produce new ways of looking at phenomena, changing the aesthetic criteria. Aisha Saygin, director of the Saygin Lab for Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuropsychology at UCSD, is a critical part of our work, as is Shelley Streetly, gender studies faculty and director of the Clarion workshop. Stephanie Losh, director of academic affairs at Sixth College, is very interested in the notion of embodied cognition. Stephanie played an important part in organizing the “Galileo and the Music of the Spheres” event in early 2014. She and Elizabeth Losh, director of academic affairs at Sixth College, are putting together a new course sequence titled “Are We Alone: Space Science, Science Fiction, and the Question of Human Exceptionalism.” And we’re creating another new course that will be co-taught by UCSD poet Rae Armantrout and Brian Keating in physics.

What role at the Clarke Center involves not only artsmaking, research, and teaching, but a fair amount of fundraising.

You’re comfortable in this capacity?

When I set out to be an artist you’re an idealistic person. But you probably also have some notions of how you’re going to negotiate the economics and your pursuit. One model for artists is, you make things and figure out how to have a gallery represent you and that gallery will sell your stuff and those buyers will do different things with the art. That is an economic relationship to the world was never one that I had any interest in. I began to realize that my computer work could develop outside the gallery system. If I really wanted to make a rendering in 1987 that used more than whatever pixels I could afford, that meant that I was going to have to get access to a quarter million dollar supercomputer. How was I going to do that? One of the reasons I came to UCSD 22 years ago is the San Diego Supercomputer Center. It was a great opportunity to join the faculty in a top visual arts department and to gain access to advanced computational systems. That process of gaining access to equipment brought with it the awareness that if I wanted access to the next system, I would need get a grant or identify a patron.

You have mentor several generations of students. Where do they go from here?

Some go on to be professionals at other institutions where they can combine artsmaking with an academic career. Others go to work at technology and entertainment companies like Sony and Pixar. On the academic side, Tim Nehe is at University of Maryland, Krista Erickson is at SUNY Storybook, Igor Varnos is at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.”

In California many of us are thinking about essential challenges that need to be addressed sooner than later. On one hand there are futuristic ideas such as trips to Mars or space tourism. On the other, maybe we will run out of water and the human race as we know it will cease to exist. How might the work at the Clarke Center point toward ways addressing such real-world challenges.

When I wrote the proposal for the Clarke Center it came out of thinking about the role of vanguard cultural expression might be in the 21st century. The role of what we call “art” always shifts, but also causes shifts, in the overall social and cultural milieu of any time. We can take this kind of work that is at these possible futures and not give simple answers, but raise questions about the course of human activity and human endeavor that aren’t typically raised in other forms of discourse and investigation.

Interview by Dirk Sutro
ART HISTORY IN PRACTICE

Visual arts Ph.D. students and candidates have presented and published their research in an array of venues over the past year.

In fall 2013, UC San Diego’s Department of Visual Arts joined forces with the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego to offer a graduate seminar that considered the programmatic activities of a contemporary art museum. The result was On the Beach: Art and Public Space on the California Coast, an exhibition curated by Ph.D. student Noni Brynjolson.

Amanda Cachia was a contributing author of Growing Rhizomatically: Disability Studies, the Art Gallery and the Consortium in the Disability Studies Quarterly. The piece suggests that the “art gallery offers a generative space for the growth of disability studies, disability aesthetics, and new models of access.” Cachia also became the 2014 recipient of the Irving K. Zola Award for Emerging Scholars in Disability Studies. Cachia won the award for her paper entitled “Pointed Views: Cornering Queer Crip Aesthetics.”

Catherine Czacki presented “The Hoop and the Stick: Object Ontologies in the Writings of Walter Benjamin” at the Story Brook University Cultural Analysis and Theory Graduate Conference. At the University of California, Davis Native American Studies Graduate Student Symposium, Dreaming to Knowledge: Acorn Eaters in Transnational Waters, Czacki also presented “The Disappointing Object: a Challenge to Dominant Epistemologies through the art of Jimmie Durham.” Her work was also featured in the Bruce High Quality Foundation “Brucennial” in NYC.

Sascha Crasnow presented her research, “The Power of ‘The Word’: Calligraphy and Identity in Middle Eastern Contemporary Art,” at the Gender, Sexuality and Power Conference at California State University, Los Angeles. She presented “Embodied Calligraphy: Representations of Femininity in Middle Eastern Contemporary Art,” at Gender Beyond Boundaries: The Second Annual UCSB Graduate Conference for Gender Research. As part of an artist sponsored discussion at Shulamit Gallery in Venice California, Crasnow also participated in the panel “Centrifuge in Context: Contemporary Art from Israel.”

Melinda Guillen teamed up with MFA candidate Artemisa Clark to produce the second edition of their collaborative zine project Sensitive Boys. They released the publication at the 2014 LA Art Book Fair at the Geffen Contemporary, MOCA Los Angeles. Guillen has been involved with a Field initiative research project that will result in a co-authored essay in the catalogue for Citizen Culture at the Santa Monica Museum of Art.

Marguerite V. Hodge presented the paper, “The Transnational Adventures of the Kewpie Doll” at the Japanese Arts and Globalizations Conference and the First International Conference on Dolls and Puppets as Artistic and Cultural Phenomena in Poland. During her first year, Stephanie Sherman collaborated with MFA candidate Ava Porter to compose “Slaughter Story.” Sherman was also invited to be a founding board member of Common Field, a national coalition of alternative artist projects and spaces. Elsewhere, an organization that Sherman founded, was awarded a prestigious ArtPlace America grant, which Sherman helped to author. Sherman was also selected as a curator for Washington DC’s 5x5 Public Art Festival.

At the Leuphana Universität, Germany, Tara Zepel presented “Selficity: Visualization as Process, Not Product” at the Cultural Analytics, Information Aesthetics, and Distant Reading Workshop. She also presented “Visualization in Digital Art History” at the College Art Association THATCamp in Chicago.

As something that signifies “love, growth, possibly dependence, and natural nurturance,” there is also a darker interpretation of human milk as a reflection of “an abused and contaminated nature.”

Last September, Glauer, artistic assistant for public art and new artistic strategies at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, completed a residency at the department. Amy Adler, professor of visual arts and director of Experimental Drawing Studio (EDS), hosted Glauer’s residency at EDS.

Glauer interacted with faculty and students and created experimental and interactive drawings using breast milk. She created images that reflected maps from the San Diego and Tijuana border region, an area with one of the highest rates of milk contamination. Glauer used an iron to transform the milk from an invisible ink into a sepia-toned pattern.

“lt points to the fact that all the garbage and history that we produce and toss out, or try to sweep under the carpet seeps back directly into our bodies as a sort of collective and sometimes unconscious memory,” said Glauer.

LISA GLAUER, ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

Breast milk is a central medium of artist Lisa Glauer’s practice. As something that signifies “love, growth, possibly dependence, and natural nurturance,” there is also a darker interpretation of human milk as a reflection of “an abused and contaminated nature.”

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CHOCOLATE INSTALLATION

A room painted with layers of dark chocolate: a richly scented environment, paradoxically bound for decay. For her second installation at Jupiter Artland, visual arts Professor Anya Gallaccio developed the installation Stroke. Based upon a word that connotes gentle touch, the movement of a brush, and also an often fatal health condition, Gallaccio’s Stroke is equally subtle, dark, and cloying. In a recent interview with Jupiter Artland, Gallaccio stated her work “revisits modernism and minimalism, which is solidly littered with white male masters. A lot of the work that I’ve done has been about challenging that, and reclaiming territory. In terms of the materials I use, which can be seen as feminine, I’m trying to elevate them and have them re-appraised in the public realm.” Her equally ephemeral first work at Jupiter Artland, Red on Green, featured a sumptuous carpet of 10,000 English red roses that slowly deteriorated over the course of the summer.

COLLABORATIONS WITH BALBOA PARK

The longtime connection between the Department of Visual Arts and Balboa Park is thriving with two undergraduate internship programs underway. The San Diego Museum of Art Summer Internship is now in its fourth year and undergraduate student Ashley Marin has been selected as this year’s summer intern. This paid opportunity allows a student in the department to work closely with the Museum’s curatorial staff on upcoming projects and exhibitions.

This year also marks the launch of the Stuart Humanities Internship at Mingei International Museum. Undergraduate Art History, Theory, and Criticism student, Audrey Maier has been awarded the internship for the 2014-2015 academic year. From curatorial to registration, Maier will rotate across various divisions of the Mingei to understand diverse functions within the Museum.

ANGELA WASHKO AWARDED THE FRANKLIN FURNACE FUND

In fall of 2013, MFA candidate Angela Washko was awarded the Franklin Furnace Fund Grant to produce a performance work called World of Warcraft Explains Feminism. As the founder of The Council on Gender Sensitivity and Behavioral Awareness in World of Warcraft, Washko has been creating performances and facilitating discussions inside the online video game. Instead of killing enemies and continuing to get better equipment as the game guides its player-base, Washko goes into major towns and talks with other players about the coded and misogynistic language. Projected and narrated live for an audience in New York City, her new performance will allow three separate players including herself to perform the role of five facilitators. They will engage players in discussions about how women are treated in the World of Warcraft community; why so few women feel compelled to continue playing the game; and taking pictures of people who are not them. They’re not making it for their subjects—they’re making their documentary for another audience.… I am interested in making work about my subjects, for my subjects.”

PROFESSOR EMERITUS FRED LONIDIER AT THE WHITNEY BIENNIAL

The New York City Labor Chorus teamed with UC San Diego visual arts alumnus and Professor Emeritus Fred Lonidier to highlight his installation N.A.F.T.A... Not A Free Trade for All at the 2014 Whitney Biennial. The spirited chorus was one element of Lonidier’s photo/text installation stemming from his work documenting the unjust labor conditions of Tijuana factory workers. During a public lecture at the Whitney, Lonidier described his four decade long perspective as an activist and documentarian in the San Diego region: “When you think of documentary, you think of someone going somewhere and taking pictures of people who are not them. They’re not making it for their subjects—they’re making their documentary for another audience.… I am interested in making work about my subjects, for my subjects.”

TARA ZEPEL WINS TEACHING AWARD

The Committee on Senate Awards selected Art History, Theory, and Criticism Ph.D. candidate Tara Zepel as a recipient of the 2013-2014 Excellent Teaching Award for Graduate Students. Zepel is an integral force in the continued success of the Culture, Art, and Technology Program at Sixth College. In May 2014, she was one of 12 campus scholars recognized in a formal ceremony by Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla where he noted, “These stand-out scholars personify our commitment to teaching, research, and service. It is because of such scholarly and scientific achievers that UC San Diego has become world-renowned in only five decades.”
**KAML MEDIA AWARDS**

Now in its fourth year, the Adam Douglas Kamil Media Awards have become a tradition of undergraduate filmmaking and creativity at the department. Named after a visual arts student that passed away in 2009, the Kamil Media Awards were established by Drs. Ivan and Elaine Kamil as a tribute to their son Adam’s memory and his belief in the power of connecting people through film.

The Kamil family has made a lasting positive impact on the Department of Visual Arts. Last spring, the family supported a course to strengthen the skillset of media students. Associate Teaching Professor Michael Trigilio offered a Special Projects in Media course in collaboration with the Introduction to Motion Graphics course at UC San Diego Extension. Undergraduate students were able to apply their software and motion graphics knowledge into seminar style course with Trigilio.

This past year the Kamil family endowed the program with a $150,000 gift and in recognition of this generous contribution the Mandeville Annex Gallery has been renamed the Adam D. Kamil Gallery. The naming was unveiled at the annual Kamil Media Awards reception.

This awards reception was a landmark in more ways than one. With booming undergraduate participation, the exhibition of films featured works from over thirty UC San Diego filmmakers. Faculty members also noted the exceptional quality and ingenuity of this year’s films. “Drawing more students each year, the Kamil Awards drive creativity and build confidence among UC San Diego students,” said Professor and Chair Jordan Crandall.

This year’s top prize went to Yu Chen’s film Grandma. She was awarded $2000 for her piece inspired by Chinese ghost stories; a series of surreal scenes with masked characters portrayed an artful contrast between good and evil. “The Kamil Award inspires me to pursue my passions as a filmmaker artist and capture beauty from a different perspective,” said Chen, a senior majoring in visual arts.

A $1000 prize was also awarded to two finalists, Ren Ebel’s Rikey and Rhiann Suen’s What Do You See.

“I’m happy that the awards have captured the imagination of students — the films are always diverse,” said Elaine Kamil. “We hope that through the creative process students develop their talents and grow as sympathetic individuals.”

**FULBRIGHTS**

Garcia Robles Fulbright Recipient, Dominic Paul Miller will be conducting research in Tijuana during the 2014-2015 academic year. Miller was awarded the thesis research position with host institution SOMA in Mexico City. His project, Las mujeres de la red, combines sculpture and public practice in the area of Centenario, eastern Tijuana’s manufacturing and shipping center. Working with labor advocacy group Olín Calí, Miller will archive social data from individuals employed in the vicinity, meanwhile translating the records into abstracted drawings as part of a large-scale installation.

Oriana Cacchione is currently a Fulbright-Hays Fellow based at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, China. Her research critically examines the globalization of contemporary Chinese art during the Reform Era. Using the tropes of translation, migration, and exhibition, her research analyzes how Chinese artists began to participate in the international art world by analyzing how artworks and art discourses move between different localities. Her research in China included archival research at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, the China Art Academy in Hangzhou, and the Asia Art Archive in Hong Kong. She has also conducted interviews with Chinese artists, critics, curators, and translators.

**UCSD / BLUM CROSS BORDER INITIATIVE**

San Ysidro and Los Laureles Canyon are sister neighborhoods divided by a wall. Each community is within a short distance of the San Diego/Mexico border, with San Ysidro just to the North and Los Laureles just to South, along the Tijuana River. Together, they are the focus of the UCSD / BLUM Cross Border Initiative, directed by UC San Diego’s Teddy Cruz (visual arts professor and co-director of the Center for Urban Ecologies) and Fonna Forman (political science professor and co-director of the UCSD Center on Global Justice).

For the past year, the pair has built the initiative into a new kind of collabora- 
tion that brings together faculty, students, and leaders from the two communities. The initiative’s mission is to change the view of marginalized communities in sites of poverty as needy recipients rather than as partners with knowledge and resources to contribute, in the search for solutions to deep social and economic challenges.

To advance this idea of community-engaged research and education the UCSD / BLUM Cross-Border Initiative focuses on the development of field-based laboratories on both sides of the border, called Community Stations, where research and teaching are conducted collaboratively with com- 
unity partners, and in partnership with other UCSD educators such as Mike Cole (communication), Bud Mehan (CREATE), and Keith Pezzoli (urban studies and planning).

Cruz and Forman have led the development of a variety of programs in support of more meaningful relations with community partners, for example the BLUM Public Scholars Award, given annually to a community leader to support collaborative teaching and research. In this inaugural year the award was given to Andrea Skorepa, of the San Ysidro non-profit Casa Familiar, and Oscar Romo, of Alter Terra, based in the Los Laureles Canyon in Tijuana.

Additionally the UCSD / BLUM Cross-Border Initiative coordinates undergraduate field-based internships, where students are immersed in a real-world experience to supplement traditional classroom-based learning. This summer, the internship supported students across campus, representing a variety of academic disciplines, including human rights, global health, Jacobs School of Engineering / Global TIES, urban studies, and Sixth College, where the majority of arts majors are based.

UCSD’s Blum Cross-Border Initiative is part of the BLUM Center for Developing Economies at UC Berkeley, funded by UC Regents and San Francisco-based philanthropist Richard C. Blum. UC San Diego’s initiative was particularly appealing to Blum because it localizes the phenomenon of global poverty, by adding a regional California-Mexico dimension. UCSD students can be in the field, engaging some of the poorest settlements in our hemisphere, and back on campus that very afternoon.

Another example of the UCSD / BLUM approach is the Chollas Creek project, completed this summer in collaboration with the community-based organization Groundwork and the City of San Diego. This project re-thinks public space as a space of education, where the physical transformation of abandoned sites is paired with new cultural programming and co-produced between local residents and UC San Diego visual arts MFAs, and where art is a tool to stimulate civic participation.

CUE is among several Department of Visual Arts initiatives based in the Structural and Materials Engineering Building, which opened at UC San Diego in 2012. To encourage new collaborations, the building houses artists alongside engineers, scientists, and other experts who do not usually work with artists.

As the UCSD/BLUM Cross-Border Initiative evolves, Cruz and Forman recognize the potential this project has in promoting new interdisciplinary collaborations by intervening directly in the border region: “The Blum Initiative’s new approach to supporting marginalized areas across the border not only depends on more robust civic engagement, but will also require new modes of working across the arts, technology, sciences, medicine, architecture, planning, and other disciplines, as well as new strategies of intervention into the physical fabric of those peripheral neighborhoods, where community buildings, environmental systems, public spaces, and affordable housing become pedagogical tools.”
DIVISION OF ARTS & HUMANITIES RECOGNIZED AS A DIVERSITY LEADER

In February 2014, the University held a reception to honor recipients of the Equal Opportunity/ Affirmative Action and Diversity Awards Program. The Division of Arts and Humanities was recognized at this reception for building an arts partnership with students at The Preuss School, UCSD. The Department of Visual Arts was acknowledged for its efforts to create meaningful programming tailored to Preuss high school students.

ALUMNI PARTAKE IN FEAST

Visual arts alumni Ross Karre, Nina Waisman, and Joe Yorty created original works about the relationship between people and food for the New Children's Museum exhibition FEAST.

In collaboration with John Brady, Joe Yorty created Dinner T.V., a 12 foot tall dinner table that invited visitors to playfully explore the archetypal form of the dining room table. Climbing underneath a canopy created by the artists’ originally designed vegetable tablecloth, visitors discovered a secret screening room of collaged footage of children eating food.

In the work Orange We..., sound installation artist Nina Waisman created an interactive play structure inspired by the orange industry of California. Waisman designed spiraling steel ladder forms and rope structures that incorporated recordings of familiar sounds of orange juice being poured as well as oral histories of agricultural workers and industrial machinery.

Ross Karre created a musical kitchen environment, Sound Kitchen. Using common culinary tools such as pots and pans, tin cans, strainers, and tiles, Karre created a full suite of musical instruments including marimbas, drum kits, xylophones, microphones, and more. Re-imagining the musician and sound engineer as a sound chef, Karre provided a space for participants to create, record, and share original electronically modulated music.

PROFESSOR'S CONTROVERSIAL TED TALK GOES VIRAL

To visual arts Associate Professor Benjamin Bratton’s surprise, his critique delivered at the 2013 San Diego TEDx conference went viral in a matter of hours. In 12 minutes, Bratton deconstructed the populist form of the TED conference, describing it as a “black hole of affectation” and urged the audience to engage more deeply with the critical problems of our era. “I think the department is an excellent fit for a student who has already acquired strong disciplinary foundations and is curious to move to the next level—a level where the self-conscious approach to the arts. She cited “the strength of interdisciplinary programs, the excellence of facilities and the path-breaking work in specific areas such as computing and the arts. The Department of Visual Arts is often mentioned as a model for its integrative graduate experience—one of the few places that has merged its MFA and Ph.D. programs into a single community of scholars, artists, curators, and critics.”

UC San Diego’s geographic location adds to the changed creative atmosphere, she said.

“Whether TED takes ‘something with the weight of the past and the burden of conventions and methodologies of the individual disciplines opens up spaces of comparison, collaboration, transformation, and discovery."

Cristina Della Coletta came to UC San Diego as the new Dean of Arts and Humanities last August. She moved from the University of Virginia (UVA), a place of strong traditions founded with direction from Thomas Jefferson, to a university founded in 1960 and built around the innovative spirit of scientists, engineers, and artists.

“When I interviewed here my impression was that the UC San Diego community shares a future-oriented ethos,” said Della Coletta, who was a professor of Italian and associate dean at the UVA, and who will hold the Chancellor’s Associates Chair in Italian Literature here. “There is a sense of urgency to address new possibilities and to engage with persistent challenges—the courage to take risks. This ethos inspired me.”

“I shared the very European presupposition that Americans have the privilege of intellectual freedom—freedom, among other things, from the weight of the past and the burden of tradition. This is a cliché that is applied to the country as a whole and I didn’t connect this particular cliché to this particular Western state nor question the banality of the cliché very much. Having returned to Southern California after a twenty-year hiatus, I am pleased to find an increasing sense of respect for a past that is not monochromatic, but rich in cultural complexities and local diversities. I also see that individual talents, innovative voices, and disruptive energies have engaged this past with a kind of intellectual curiosity that I find both energizing and distinctive. There is a push to invent a future that is more imminent here than anywhere else I have been before.”

Cristina Della Coletta holds a Laurea in Lingue e Letterature straniere (French and North American) from the Università di Venezia, Italy, and a master’s degree in Italian from UVA. She earned her Ph.D. in Italian from UCLA in 1993. Her research and scholarship often focuses on the relationship between literature and film. As a scholar, professor, and administrator at UVA, she was well aware of UC San Diego’s visionary approach to the arts. She cited “the strength of interdisciplinary programs, the excellence of facilities and the path-breaking work in specific areas such as computing and the arts. The Department of Visual Arts is often mentioned as a model for its integrative graduate experience—one of the few places that has merged its MFA and Ph.D. programs into a single community of scholars, artists, curators, and critics.”

Della Coletta came to the United States as a third-year undergraduate at UCLA.
PHIL STEINMETZ (1944-2013)

Phil Steinmetz, who joined the Department of Visual Arts faculty in 1971, died on Oct. 30, 2013. He was 69. In his early years at UC San Diego, Steinmetz and fellow faculty member Fred Lonidier defined the photography program as one that combined art practice, criticism, and theory. He had studied with Ansel Adams and Bennett Meyers. Like Adams, Steinmetz initially shot idyllic landscapes with a large-format camera and became a master of the darkroom process. He began to explore San Diego’s backcountry and became fascinated with the steady march of development over previously empty terrain. The juxtaposition of man and nature became central to his work. Steinmetz helped shape Department of Visual Arts programs and policies related to media research, graduate admissions, and the photography curriculum. His involvement also extended to the larger campus. He was a member of the Academic Senate, the Campus Community Planning Committee, the Community on Educational Policy’s Subcommittee for Students with Disabilities, and advisory committees for the design of the Conrad Prebys Music Center and the Structural and Materials Engineering Building. He was recognized with a UC San Diego Academic Senate Research Grants, a Distinguished Teaching Award, a Murri College Fellowship, and a National Endowment for the Arts grant. Steinmetz’s photos were shown at the Museum of Modern Art, the downtown Whitney Museum in New York, the San Francisco Art Institute, and at galleries and museums around the world. At the time of his death, he had recently completed the manuscript for Narcissus’ Brother, a book of his color photography.

ERNST SILVA (1948-2014)

Painter and sculptor Ernest Silva, professor emeritus of visual arts who joined the faculty in 1979, died on February 24, 2014. He was 65. Silva had a vital role in the department’s evolution for more than 30 years. Among his most popular classes were studio painting and drawing, where his critiques of student work were incisive and encouraging. Silva had a special interest in basic folk elements, legends, and textures. “I tend to see myself as a visual poet,” he said in a 2001 interview with San Diego’s Arts magazine. “I don’t really work with linear narratives. But I work with places and people in such a way that what I hope is that it triggers, on the viewer’s part, contemplation.”

He received a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in Painting in 1989 and an Excellence in the Arts Award from the University of Rhode Island in 2001. Silva’s work appeared in Made in California: Art, Image, and Identity 1900-2000 at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Silva was a co-creator, along with San Diego gallery owner Mark Quint, of IN/SITE 92, an exhibition of site-specific art in San Diego and Tijuana as well as exhibits in galleries, bookstores, and museums. One of his final shows was Volcanos and Full Moons, a survey of his work in 2013 at the Oceanside Museum of Art. To San Diegans, Silva might be best known for The Rain House, his installation at the New Children’s Museum, a colorful creature-covered playhouse featuring the sounds of rain.

THE DEPARTMENT WELCOMES NEW FACULTY MEMBERS

Lisa Cartwright

Known for her writing about visual culture and the body in feminist science and technology studies, Professor Lisa Cartwright joins the Department of Visual Arts. Cartwright has additional appointments with the Department of Communication and the graduate Science Studies Program and is affiliated faculty of the Critical Gender Studies Program at UC San Diego.

A native New Yorker, Cartwright was trained in film and critical theory at the Whitney Program and at New York University. Tisch School of the Arts before receiving her Ph.D. in American Studies from Yale and joining the faculty at the University of Rochester, where she helped to launch the Ph.D. Program in Visual and Cultural Studies.

Cartwright is the author of books including Screening the Body: Tracing Medicine’s Visual Culture, Moral Spectatorship, and Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture (co-author Manta Sturken). Recent essays consider the landscape photography of Catherine Opie, the media archaeology of film technology, and the visual culture of viruses. She is currently collaborating with photographer Steven Rubin on a sensory ethnography of land use transformation and wind power in rural farming communities.

This year, Cartwright will launch and direct the Catalyt Lab, an initiative that supports collaborations across art, science, and technology with emphases in feminist and critical theory and in experimental documentary practice. The lab is home to the online journal Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience and supports collaboration with the FemTechNet, an international network of feminist scholars, artists, and teachers of technology, science, feminism, and digital media.

Alena Williams

A specialist in modern visual culture in Weimar Germany, Assistant Professor Alena Williams is a remarkable scholar with expertise and critical and curatorial engagements that span the full range of the twentieth century. Her research areas include modern and contemporary art, film and media history and theory, the interrelation of art and technology, and the epistemology of the image. She is currently preparing a book-length study, The Total Experiment: Cinema and the Modernist Work of Art, on the relationship between postwar multimedia installations and performances and the dynamic artworks and environments of early modernism.

Professor Williams has pursued research and pedagogical activity internationally in a diverse range of forms—exhibitions, residencies, screenings, workshops, and research seminars. She was the curator of Nancy Holt: Sightslines, an international traveling exhibition on American artist Nancy Holt’s land art, films, videos, and related works from 1966–80 for the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery at Columbia University (2010–13), and published a companion book with the University of California Press (2011).

Williams received her A.B. in Fine Arts at Harvard University in 1998, and received her Ph.D. in Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University in 2014. Teaching across the fields of art history and media on the work of both neglected and canonical artists, media practitioners, and filmmakers, Williams will be teaching courses in history of film and science, experimental cinema, film in a social context, land art and media, modern art history/ theory and criticism, and history of art and technology.
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