

Art thesis show to unveil fruits of students' labor

Story and photos by Amanda Dahill-Moore
STAFF WRITER

Each year a small handful of committed art students are approved for thesis work in their field of study. This year, seven students have spent their senior year delving into their own vision, wrestling through the

problems of self-expression. Guided by faculty and staff and supported by one another, the moment is drawing near when these students will bring their vision and expression — the product of countless hours — to the campus community in a final thesis show held in the Founder's Hall Gallery on Friday, April 22.

Alex Minkin

Minkin's photos evoke a particular place through the subjectivity of one lens. His black-and-white images are a mysterious, sometimes paradoxical exploration into the Coble barn. Built by German prisoners of war in 1945, the barn is situated just a few miles from Guilford.

"I had been working in caves when I realized it was no longer practical to shoot them for my thesis," said Minkin. "I was on a tour of the Coble barn when I realized that the vibe it gave off was a lot like a cave's."

Minkin's photography is both personal and wide-reaching. He cites the tension between seemingly oppositional human emotions as a focus of his work, but at the same time acknowledges that "subjectivity is essential to any understanding of the truth."



Molly Spadone

Molly Spadone

Spadone melds the intimacy of home with the refinement of fine art. This juxtaposition of the rough and the refined carries through each aspect of her pottery, creating an eclectic, yet polished aesthetic.

"Functional objects belong in a home, but there is a tension when they are displayed in a gallery," said Spadone. "I am trying to smooth over that tension."

Spadone is strongly influenced by her family home.

"It's a place where beauty and functionality are completely interwoven," said Spadone.

Spadone's father, who builds art-deco furniture, helped her create several of the displays for her pots.

"These are objects of beauty, so they need to be displayed, but they are also incredibly usable," Spadone said. "During my show, I want people to come up and touch everything. I want people to feel at home."

Cloud Gamble

Gamble takes photos of used pads and discarded condoms, but not for shock value.

"I've always been fascinated by what we discard," said Gamble.

Gamble is installing a small room, suggestive of a bathroom, lined on the outside with abstracted close-ups of human refuse.

"The close-ups function almost like abstractions," said Gamble. "They re-contextualize the images."

The images on the inside, however, leave nothing to the imagination.

"As a woman and a person, I resent expectations to look and be a certain way," said Gamble. "This is about exposing what is underneath those expectations, the hidden processes."

Unlike many art students, Gamble plans to stay on an extra year and earn a nursing degree.

"I didn't realize it at first, but I see now that this work and my interest in health are strongly connected," said Gamble.

For more photos see
Guilfordian.com

Laura McGrath

McGrath layers photography and painting in a complex process that de-contextualizes the figure, as well as the traditional approach to both artistic techniques.

"I have had a fascination with both photography and painting for as long as I can remember, but it was not until high school that I began to explore both seriously," said McGrath.

This work represents the solution McGrath found to combine her two passions into one multi-faceted, but ultimately cohesive process. Although her work culminates in seamless images, the layered effect also deconstructs expected notions of the divisions between art forms and the role of the figure.

"Painting from photographs creates a layered, 'meta' effect of a painting within a painting," said McGrath. "(The process) also creates a blurring of subject and environment, and in a way, de-contextualizes the figure."



Laura McGrath

Brittney May

May displays objects from the world around her to shed new light on aspects of life many of us would rather not look at. These objects include scavenged bottles, dead bees, and many fruits in various stages of decay.

"Everything dies," said May. "People die and ideas die. But decay is masked in our society."

May is a double major in anthropology and art. Her art is strongly influenced by the work she has done for her anthropology major.

"The two are inseparable for me," said May. "I am constantly aware of how people's identities are strained by the artificial roles we are forced to live in. This work is a way for me to show what I see in a visual way, without words."



Brittney May

Zoe Sasson

Sasson's voluptuous abstractions fairly burst off the wall.

"The human body has always been my main source of inspiration," said Sasson. "What I am working towards now is a more expressive and contemporary way of representing the body."

Sasson painted traditional portraits before studying abroad in France and learned about new ways to render the body in two-dimensions.

"I have always painted very voluptuous women, and I used to show them in an insecure light. Now I want to show these same voluptuous women liberated in their own skin," said Sasson. "During my four years here I have become more comfortable with my own identity and in my own skin. That is reflected in my body and the way I hold myself, and I think that is true for everyone."

Gracelee Lawrence

Lawrence constructs creatures from another world — forged in steel and clothed in woven plastic.

"It's less about what I am trying to say with these pieces, and more how the viewer responds to them," said Lawrence.

Lawrence began her thesis with sculptural dresses; since then her work has evolved into something much more geometric.

"I want the steel pieces to relate to people on a physical level," said Lawrence. "Here is an encounter with an object unlike anything else you would find in this world. How does your body respond to that?"

Because of their large size, the steel sculptures will be on display on the quad near Hege-Cox. Her smaller works, what Lawrence calls "artifacts washed back from this other world," will be indoors with the rest of the thesis show.



Gracelee Lawrence