

Alumna recognizes the importance of experiential learning at BC

By Patrick G. Veilleux
Staff Writer

Wendy Ligon Smith is a Brevard College alumna who is currently finishing her final year of her PhD in Art History and Visual Studies at the University of Manchester, England. Her dissertation research is focused on Mariano Fortuny y Madrazo, a Spanish fashion designer famous for his work throughout the first half of the 20th century.

“My research is on Fortuny’s work in photography, painting, dress design and theater lighting,” said Smith, “Because he worked across so many mediums, my project is inherently more interdisciplinary. This is an approach I learned to appreciate during my time at BC- where I was able to see broader themes emerge from the range of courses I took such as painting, photography, English literature, wilderness leadership, and political communications among other classes.”

Smith’s research has taken her from the University of Manchester to archives in London, England and Venice, Italy. Fortuny himself lived in Venice, despite traveling Europe as part of his work. Smith also did research at the Palazzo Fortuny, Fortuny’s home in Venice which has since been converted into an art museum.

A graduate of 2004, Smith credited BC with giving her formative experiences for her current academic career. “What I have come to value as the greatest asset from attending Brevard was that I had so many excellent professors who encouraged me to think independently and critically. I felt encouraged to pursue my interests and make connections between my different areas of study.”

“Dr. Chapin taught me to look at and interpret works of art in their historical contexts. The stories around the objects changed the way I looked at them,” she continued, “Jo Pumphrey set aside time to have philosophical discussions about artwork with painters during their senior year. Over breakfast we would discuss the various approaches to art criticism and philosophy of art, from Plato to Kant. In my research on Mariano Fortuny’s photography and darkroom practices, I draw upon my own time

in the darkrooms at BC. Bill Byers teachings have helped me utilize photography to document my work. One of my photographs has even recently been published in the book *Blue Mythologies*, by my PhD supervisor, Professor Carol Mavor.”

Smith has given lectures at the Courtauld Institute and Oxford University in England, as well as the Renaissance Society of America. In December she will deliver a lecture, and a showing of a film she produced on Fortuny and 19th century composer Richard Wagner at the Bayreuth Festival in Bayreuth, Germany.

Smith has also taught several undergraduate courses on the history of art interpretation, museum display and collecting, and Michael Proust and visual art. She has helped coordinate museum events in the Manchester Art Gallery and convened an international, interdisciplinary academic conference on the study of fashion, Roland Barthes, and Walter Benjamin at the University of Manchester.



Alumna Wendy Smith in Venice on a research trip funded by a Delmas Foundation Grant for Independent Research.

Homecoming Weekend Schedule

Friday, October 25

- 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Registration
Alumni House; Pick-up pre-ordered tickets.
- 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. BC Alumni Art Exhibition
Spiers Art Gallery
- 3 p.m. - Walking Tour of Campus, *Alumni House*
- 4 p.m. - 50th Reunion Reception
President's House
- 6 p.m. - Distinguished Alumni & Athletic Hall of Fame Awards Dinner (\$20)
Porter Center for Performing Arts
- 7 p.m. - Volleyball Game (\$5 payable at door)
Boshamer Gymnasium; BC vs. Mars Hill College
- 9 p.m. - Pep Rally and Campfire, *Village Quad*

Saturday, October 26

- 8:30 a.m. Baseball & Golf Team Alumni Golf Tournament
- 9 a.m. - Walking Tour of Campus, *Alumni House*
- 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Registration, *Alumni House*
- 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Class Gathering Rooms
McClarty-Goodson
- 10 a.m. - Women's Basketball Alumni Game
Auxiliary Gymnasium
- 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. BC Alumni Art Exhibition
Spiers Art Gallery
- 10 a.m. - Co-ed Alumni Soccer Game, *Soccer field*
- 11:30 a.m. - Golden Club Luncheon (\$12)
Porter Center for Performing Arts
- 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. - Rock of Ages Lunch with club fair (\$7 for lunch, pay at door)
Myers Dining Hall
- 12 p.m. - Volleyball Game (\$5, pay at door)
Boshamer Gymnasium; BC vs. Tusculum
- 2 p.m. - Walking Tour of Campus, *Alumni House*
- 3 p.m. - Homecoming Picnic (\$5 pre-registration, includes admission to football game)
Brevard High School Stadium
- 5 p.m. - Football Kick-off (admission included with picnic ticket)
Brevard High School Stadium; BC vs. Catawba College

Sunday, October 27

- 10 a.m. - Baseball Alumni Gathering & Men's Softball Game, *Gil Coan Field*