THE STATE OF ART

In its promulgation of transdisciplinarity, the Bachelor of Fine Arts program challenges undergraduate artists to investigate at least six different modes of practice that span traditional and new media and necessitate the creation of artworks in two, three, and four dimensional forms. BFA students obtain advanced understandings of art history and contemporary art that provide multifaceted, global contexts within which they can place their own visual art practices. Through the diversity of the program and thoughtful direction from artist-professors, BFA students are equipped with skills to activate ample points of intersection between their accomplishments, career goals, and the global art world.

The Master of Fine Arts program flexibly accommodates the emerging artist’s pursuance of a complex, professional art practice. Designed as a think-tank for media specialization and/or the adoption of interdisciplinary practice, the program offers students multiple perspectives that problematize the boundaries of creativity. Students construct new frameworks for their practices through processes that critically interrogate materiality, identity, social change, and the world at-large. By way of a dedicated engagement with theoretical, historical, and contemporary visual art studies, each student formulates a globally-minded approach to articulating verbal and written syntheses of his/her practice. Through compelling curricula and close mentoring by artist-professors, MFA artists become learned in creating what Homi Bhabha refers to as “third spaces,” or places where they collaborate with local, regional, national, and international manifestations of the contemporary art world.

Critical analysis and theory of art serve as the underpinning of art history courses in the lower and upper division courses. The student’s experience is also enriched through the visiting artists program, largely funded by the Lilian B. Steinman Foundation as well as the Art Department’s gallery, home of one of the largest and critically recognized retablo collections.

Within the realm of the land-grant mission of the university, the Department of Art serves a diverse population through dynamic and rigorous studio, design and art history and art conservation programs. Students are given the opportunity to develop and foster their artistic aesthetic and professional growth through the engagement of materials, techniques and processes.

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NMSU DEPARTMENT OF ART
INTERDISCIPLINARY & INTERCULTURAL

Michelle Lanteri, MA Art History Student
The three graduating MFA students this semester are Aubrey de Cheubell, Kristopher Wilson, and Lea WiseSurguy-Sophiliazo. While all three artists create works that are very different from one another, each artist is looking to discover, interpret, and comment on the world around us.

Aubrey de Cheubell’s work considers human emotion on a much deeper level than our society usually renders acceptable. The darker emotions one feels such as depression or loneliness are explored in de Cheubell’s work in order to allow the viewer an opportunity to deeply connect with these emotions so as to better interpret and value them.

Kristopher Wilson creates work that is inspired by his interest in Modernist painting, geometry and grid forms found in our world. Wilson observes that while our day-to-day lives certainly are structured—say, in grid-like forms such as city street plans—there are countless points from which one deviates from these structures. He explores color and shape in conjunction with his own being and his environment in order to look into the idea that any experience is predicated on external stimuli—any moment can change depending on one’s emotions, environment, memories, etc.

Lea WiseSurguy-Sophiliazo is an artist that explores the organisms around us as well as within us. Creating works that focus on microscopic organisms and their interactions within a controlled environment, she invites the viewer to see these tiny parts of our world of which most people rarely get a good look. The artist asserts that through witnessing the growth of human bacteria—a metaphor for human existence—we can come to understand the concept of our bodies being a “landscape of life.”
I create work that engenders an emotional response. I use my own memories and emotions as the initial seed, and through a careful process of editing, my goal is to create works that transcend the autobiographical to function as a catalyst for a much deeper, personal and emotional response from the viewer. In a culture that has a difficult time expressing and sharing emotion – especially emotions like depression, loneliness and grief which are often restricted by sociological structures – I create art that allows both for the outward expression of emotion as well as offering a place in which emotion can be confronted, considered and critiqued.
My work functions as a way to understand and come to terms with the world around me. Through various applications of paint and intuitive processes, I orchestrate color and shape in a way that reflects my interpretation of external stimuli. The interaction of color and shape echo the interaction of myself and my environment – socially, physically, and psychologically. I situate my work between Gestalt, color and design psychology, as well as color theory as a means to further explore my perception of reality. The driving logic behind my work and process is that present experiences are determined by the patterns that a stimulus forms and on the mental organization of past experiences. My response at any given time depends on my mental organization at that time. I utilize a visual vocabulary of rectilinear forms stemming from my interest in Modernist painting, geometry and the inherent grid-like forms found in various aspects of life.
In trying to find life after death, I came to explore how our bodies are a landscape of life, composed of complex multitudes of co-existent beings that are part of us, and yet distinct. By growing some of these microscopic beings in agar, the normally hidden blending between our “self” and our integral organisms can be made visible, raising questions about our identity, our relations to each other, and our relations to our environment. Under the domes and in the circles of modified petri dishes, human bacteria take on a life apart from humans, growing into forms that often resemble landscapes and starscapes, intermingling and interacting with the bacteria of other humans, and making life in a finite, enclosed environment that can stand as a metaphor for our own existence.
Jose Arenivar

My work is mainly about the beauty I see in nature. Through painting and sculpture I represent this beauty. Nature is full of amazing things, and recent generations are often unaware because of contemporary fast-paced society. I feel like something has to be done about this situation. The sublime is one of the ways I can explain what I experience when I interact and observe nature. My sculptures and paintings are a representation of the unnoticed beauty. They work together to bring to life what I have difficulties explaining with words. Through hyperrealism my paintings represent the characteristics of birds that I find fascinating. Also, abstraction is used in my paintings to portray what’s keeping society from appreciating nature’s vast beauty. The sculptural aspect of my artwork is more experiential. All components of my artwork are combined as an art installation.

Beauty
Oil on Canvas | 36”x24”
2014

Twisted Dreams
Ceramics | Approx. 6” tall
2014

Luis Chavez

This project focuses on the theory of human beings having a soul, something that is eternal and that will live on long after our bodies cease to exist. This is a very personal piece to me because I am expressing my personal soul and how it has grown throughout my lifetime. These pieces will reflect events like my Father’s death when I was 5 years old that have had a huge impact on my interest in the soul at such a young age. I don’t expect people to change their beliefs but because the soul is such an important part that composes a person I hope to show the viewers the importance of having awareness of one’s soul.

Dead Thoughts
Intaglio print on copper | 22”x16”
2013

URCAS
Mixed media collaborative piece with Amberly Sisneros & Abby Ortegon
2014
I am interested in structural forms and exploring the relationship between positive and negative space within a landscape. It is intriguing to me that simple forms put together can become complex. By breaking them down, I begin to decontextualize the forms and start a new dialogue within a constructed image. I choose to focus on monolithic rock formations instead of straightforward landscape. By altering the exposure and gradation, I compress the depth within the image. This compression creates a hierarchy of the individual components. The compression breaks down the rock and the sky into simple forms. The breakdown causes the rock and space around it to become decontextualized, isolating them. The gradation from white, grey, to black emphasizes the space and the density within the image. The large size of the prints pushes the space within the image to an almost life-size scale.

The years in college have provided me with many different forms of art and points of view that may not have been subjected to in everyday life. Things like loss, joy, illness, and injuries are just some of the few. The outcome is entirely up to the person to do something about it. Weather we suffer over it or free ourselves from it. The philosophy behind my work is simple, in that I work with emotions, and bring the good and bad together to achieve greatness. The process behind most of the work starts off free-hand or free-hand with a bamboo drawing board. Once the outline is drawn out, it gets transferred to the computer using Adobe Illustrator. Brighter colors seem to be utilized more often in my work along with transparencies. I enjoy giving the artwork an extra “pop” or kick in color with an abstract twist.
Monique Harrison
moniqueharrison.wordpress.com

My work focuses on organic structures. These structures are a combination of scientific concepts and abstract elements. After going through the research process the painting process begins. Layers upon layers are applied to a surface, creating a back and forth push and pull. I choose to work in an abstract way because I do not want to influence the viewer’s thoughts when viewing my work. The moment of engagement between the viewer and painting is what I strive for. A well-balanced composition is required to create a pleasing image, resulting in an engaging moment.

Lindsey McDonald

My work highlights the small, often unnoticed aspects of nature. Reconnecting with nature keeps the more aggravating aspects of life in check and makes my day to day have small important moments among all of the seemingly necessary mundanity of maintaining a life. When hiking, I don’t so much walk through nature as much as I interact and observe, then attempt a form of recreation. Recreating nature in metal is my way of revering it and showing it off in a hard substance that is less ephemeral. I enjoy highlighting the smaller aspects of nature easily missed and lost.
Frederick Reinhardt

I create new forms and images by the layering of different photographs over each other. The photographs use found imagery and organic objects in conjunction with my own photographic works to build these compositions. The works encompass lumen prints, scanned images and digital photography to build the final compositions. I take elements of the images I photograph and find, then compose and manipulate them to form abstract compositions. I further manipulate the created photograph pushing the forms and colors until the original elements are lost in the new work. I break down scenes into colors and light and then abstract them into new forms. This rearranging of images adds both depth and form to the two dimensional image.

For output, I print these images in large scale as archival pigment prints on inkjet printers.

Carolina Reyes

These series show how my work is inspired and influenced by the history of homestead architecture in the Las Cruces area, and the change time has on them.
Cara Rotan

I am a Fine Arts student with an emphasis in Photography and Graphic Design. I use photography as a means of self-expression on subjects I was always told to keep to myself growing up. My graphic design incorporates all my other interests of digital art from vector imaging to website design. I have recently begun to expand on my designs by incorporating my photographic imagery and post production knowledge into the final product. My art ranges in a variety of media. I use food, LED lights, ink, fabrics, paper, sticker vinyl, and so much more when expanding on any idea. My fascination for LED lighting has pushed me to take some of my artwork above and beyond the expected outcome. Food has become a popular subject that I have created into its own character or pushed further into an unrecognizable form within a pattern. Through the use of Adobe Creative Suite and the lens of my DSLR camera, I am able to bring my art to life.

Lucio Sanchez

I was born and raised in Mexico. Growing up in Mexico and living in an environment where the abnormal is considered normal, my world-view was automatically affected. Early on in my life I started making political statement, through animated drawings, without realizing the content that I was putting out. Now, as I live in the United States, I can only be on the outside looking in. I primarily work in charcoal and watercolor. My body of work consists of political narratives, visually shown through realism and abstract backgrounds using a constant cycle that contains chaotic repetition. I address the emotional, personal affects. I am out to capture the melancholy mood in people and the atmosphere that is brought by political corruption.
As a graphic designer, I have had experience in a wide range of areas, allowing my design style and knowledge to become well-rounded and flexible. I enjoy print design, as well as creating identities for businesses and working with personal branding. I am interested in combining hand-crafted work with digital platforms, while striving to connect to the audience and capture attention. My style is generally clean and streamlined, allowing my designs to present clarity. Through the hand-crafted approach of my work, I am able to produce one-of-a-kind designs that have the ability to stand out among the crowd. In addition, I try to bring this ‘one-of-a-kind’ idea to designs made digitally. I strive to create simplistic material with unique characteristics. Through beginning sketches, I explore a number of ideas on paper. Using my sketches, I am able to draw inspiration to finish a completed design on the computer.