

# The Loupe

FALL 2012

The newsletter of the Department of Art and Art History

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## Fall 2012: The Art History Issue

### WELCOME BACK EVERYONE

to the Department of Art and Art History! This issue focuses on our art history program. News about our art historians is sometimes scarce here. Without a revolving calendar of exhibitions and events, art history students don't always get the attention they deserve. Art historians spend a lot of time looking, thinking, researching, writing, and looking again – not something that attracts a lot of attention. Between annual conferences or lectures, to an outsider, art history can appear quiet and uneventful. However, this year there are several reasons to notice our art history area at UA.



### LARGEST CLASS IN A QUARTER CENTURY

We have the only master of arts degree program in art history in the state – a joint program we implemented with the University of Alabama at Birmingham in 1987. This fall, the UA half of our program has the largest incoming class of graduate students since the program was initiated by Dr. Virginia Rembert and Dr. John Schnorrenberg. Please welcome new ARH grad students JUSTIN GREENLEE, SARA BRIERS, SAM SANDERSON, MEGAN MOORE, EMILY KELLEY, and RACHEL ROBBINS. They might look to our grizzled veterans – ANGELA SCOTT, EMI ARNOLD, MARY BENEFIELD, STARR INGLE, MENG TONG, ASHLEY MILLWOOD, FRANCES NICHOLS, PAT CAUSEY, BRANDI MOORE, ELLYN SIBLEY, and CHISM LIEN – for support in their upcoming studies.



MASTHEAD PHOTO: Mogao Grottoes. TOP CENTER: *Thousand-Armed Guanyin, the bodhisattva of compassion*, stone sculpture at Mogao. Both photos courtesy of ARH grad student Meng Tong. BOTTOM: Art history faculty and grad students get acquainted at a first-of-the-year gathering.

### RESEARCH & AWARDS

Along with teaching ARH 252, grad student MARY BENEFIELD teaches a UA Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) course in art history: "Renaissance Through Rococo." This will be her second time volunteer teaching with OLLI.

SAM SANDERSON, graduate student in art history, has been awarded the Virginia Rembert Liles Scholarship and the Joseph and Carolyn Bolt Fund in Art History for 2013.

Undergraduate double major in art history and English, MARYFRANCES HICKS, has been awarded an internship at MoMA PS1 in New York City. Hicks will work there for the spring semester and return to UA to graduate this summer. Hicks has also worked as an AT&T Corporate Communications Intern and a Creative Campus Intern.

### SUMMER TRAVELOGUE

When students are able to experience up close the works that they have been studying from afar, almost without exception, their perspective changes and insights happen! Graduate teaching assistants MARY BENEFIELD and MENG TONG each took a research trip last summer to gather thesis data. Benefield went to Florence, Italy, to research a 14th-century fresco cycle in the Palazzo Davanzati. The frescoes are in the Sala

dei Pavoni (Hall of Peacocks) and are of a medieval romance, *The Chastelaine de Vergi*. Benefield tells us that no photos of the complete cycle exist in any book or online collection. After much negotiation with the authorities at the photo archives, she was allowed to purchase digital images of the fresco cycle. She said they have been "invaluable" in her research. Her research

CONTINUED ON PAGE TWO

trip was funded in part by travel grants from the Research and Travel Fund of the UA Graduate School and the Department of Art and Art History.

In June, Meng Tong traveled to Dunhuang, China, to study the Mogao Caves, a Buddhist pilgrimage site on the Silk Road that dates from about 500 to about 1300. The site is being preserved and studied by researchers and scholars from all over the world. Tong wrote: "Of the 735 rock-cut shrines, 492 are adorned with elaborate murals and sculptures. More spectacular, a total of five thousand historical manuscripts uncovered at one of the shrines in the early 20th century articulate the literary and intellectual dimensions of the Buddhist mecca." Seeing the cave paintings in their original setting made a huge difference for Tong. Taking in all the colors, she said, made her "breathless!" Her trip was funded in part by the Research and Travel Fund of the UA Graduate School, Capstone International. and the Department of Art and Art History.

## FEMINIST ART SCHOLAR TO KEYNOTE SYMPOSIUM IN FEBRUARY

The 18th Annual Graduate Student Symposium in Art History will be held Friday, March 8, 2013, in UA's Gorgas Library 205. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Andrew D. Hottle, associate professor of art history at Rowan University. Hottle's research focuses on the history of women in the visual arts, with particular emphasis on feminist art of the 1970s. He has recently published articles and essays on the work of Sylvia Sleigh, Shirley Gorelick, Martha Nilsson Edelheit, and Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun. He is currently completing a detailed scholarly study of the Sister Chapel, a major collaborative project undertaken by thirteen women artists in the 1970s and is preparing the catalogue raisonné of Sylvia Sleigh's paintings.

Hosting of the graduate symposium for the joint program in art history is shared alternately each year between UA and UAB campuses. The symposium was begun in 1995 by faculty on both campuses to bring students from each program together



to hear and be heard by eminent scholars working in the field of art history. Renowned scholars such as Paul Barolsky in the field of Italian Renaissance art, Allison Kettering in the field of Dutch Baroque art, and up-and-coming scholars such as Michael Yonan, Krista Thompson, and Graham Boettcher, the William Cary Hulsey Curator of American Art at the Birmingham Museum of Art, have been keynote speakers.

## FACULTY-STAFF NEWS

<http://art.ua.edu/site/resources/loupe/faculty-news/>

WELCOME to BRITTANY HERNDON AND GEMINI SIGLAR, our new office associates, who are doing a great job keeping everything and everybody in the department in order.



In November, we were sad to say goodbye to the retiring MARK STEVENSON, who has served valiantly as Arts Technician Senior, protecting students from dangerous machinery,

chemicals, and rabid professors. His assistant for the past couple of years, BFA alumnus PATRICK O'SULLIVAN, recently accepted Stevenson's old position. CATHY PAGANI said in her announcement, "While no one can replace Mark, Patrick has 'trained under the master' and therefore already knows all the ins and outs." Another skilled UA art alumnus, MICHAEL EDDINS, has been hired as Patrick's assistant. Welcome Patrick and Michael!



Welcome to the newest addition to our faculty, TANJA L. JONES, whose area is Medieval and Renaissance art. Jones has taught at Florida State University and the University of Alabama in Birmingham. Her research focuses on the fifteenth-century courts of northern Italy, particularly the Gonzaga court in Mantua, innovations in personal commemoration, and objects demonstrating intersections between the courts of Italy, France, and Byzantium. Her current book-length project addresses the

ABOVE LEFT: Sarah Briers and Rachel Robbins talk at a recent gathering for art history grad students. TOP RIGHT: Gemini Siglar works on department budgets. BELOW RIGHT: Brittany Herndon welcomes students. FACING PAGE, TOP: Jerry Lamme, *Carl (Room Series)*. BOTTOM: Pete Schulte, *Starling*, 2012, graphite, ink, pigment on paper, 7.75 x 8", part of *Pardon Up Here*.

## NEWS & EXHIBITIONS ~ STUDENT NEWS & EXHIBITIONS

emergence of the cast bronze portrait medal in the 1430s and the political, religious, and ideological value the small-scale sculpted form conveyed.

In September, CHRIS JORDAN, professor of photography and digital media, had a “simultaneous solo exhibition” with mixed media artist Hollis Hammonds at the Museum of Art at The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg and presented an artist talk. Jordan explained, “While the shows are separate, I’m very excited about how our work shares some visual and thematic aspects.”

In July, Professor Emeritus (and alumnus) ROBERT MELLOWN presented “Different Perspective: An Examination of the Original Appearance of Tuscaloosa’s Historic Houses,” for a standing-room-only crowd at the Tuscaloosa County Preservation Society’s Sundown Lecture Series in the Battle-Friedman House.

Work by PETE SCHULTE is being showcased in the exhibit *Pardon Up Here* at the Luise Ross Gallery in New York City through January 12, 2013. He was part of a group exhibition at the same gallery in July 2011. His recent solo exhibitions include *The Armory Gallery* at Virginia Tech University, *Material Art Space* in Memphis and *Beta Pictoris Gallery* in Birmingham. He has also been artist-in-residence at The Atlantic Center For The Arts, New Smyrna Beach, Florida, the Bemis Center For Contemporary Art, Omaha, and *Threewalls* in Chicago.

JAMEY GRIMES exhibited his corrugated plastic sculpture *Roil* at the Kendall College of Art and Design of Ferris State University, a 2012 ArtPrize venue. Grimes also was a visiting artist at Spring Hill College in Mobile, and participated in the *Wiregrass Biennial* in Dothan. He exhibited at the *Rymer Gallery* in Nashville and had a recent solo exhibition at the *Harrison Galleries* in Tuscaloosa. He also won Best of Show in the *Monster Makeover III* in Tuscaloosa (see back page this issue).

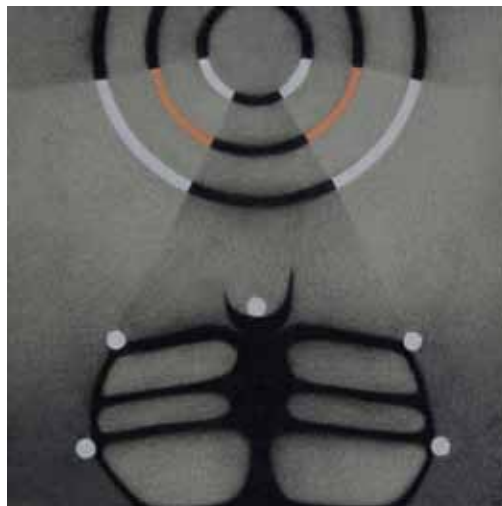
JERRY LAMME, Digital Media instructor, continues his global exhibition sweep. He had two works selected for the Opening Week Installation, Arles Photography Open Salon, Galerie Huit, *Photography Festival Les Rencontres d’Arles*, France, in July. His *App (Room Series)* was selected for the *3rd Annual Open International Contemporary Print Competition 2012*, a traveling exhibition from Royal Poly Arts Centre, Falmouth, UK, which ran August through December. This summer, his *Alice (Room Series)* was awarded the Cynthia Berg Prize at the *Ann Metzger Memorial National All Media Exhibition*, at the St. Louis Artists Guild Gallery, for which he had two works selected. The juror was Marla Prather, Curator, Department of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Lamme was awarded the solo show in the *10th Annual Surrealist, Visionary, and Art of the Spirit Exhibition* at the Caladan Gallery in Cambridge, MA. Fifteen of Lamme’s digital art works will be exhibited online in March, 2013 “for viewing worldwide.” He also had one work accepted in the 2013 Delta National Small Prints Exhibition, Bradbury Gallery, Arkansas State University. The show was curated by Anne Coffin, director of the International Print Center New York (IPCNY), and runs through February, 2013.



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### GROUP SHOWINGS

Several UA ART folks were juried into the 2012 *Wiregrass Biennial* at the Wiregrass Museum of Art in Dothan: grad student AYNLEE MOON; instructors/alumni JAMEY GRIMES, BARBARA LEE BLACK and BRIAN THOMPSON; instructor JERRY LAMME; and UA art alumni KAREN GRAFFEO and SARAH CUSIMANO MILES.



**MORE NEWS  
ON OUR WEBSITE**

<http://art.ua.edu/site/resources/loupe/faculty-news>

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

<http://art.ua.edu/site/resources/loupe/student-news/>

The yearly fall exhibition of the studio graduate students in the Sella-Granata Art Gallery, included new incoming grad student ASTRI SNODGRASS from St. Charles, Illinois, who also won an Honorable Mention in the 2012 West Alabama Juried Show.

In October, ANDY PRUETT, grad student in photography, demonstrated a technique he uses in his process of digital image-making at the 2012 Society for Photographic Education (SPE) South Central Regional Conference hosted by Mississippi State University in Starkville. The theme of the conference was “Nothing Ventured/Nothing Gained: The Creative Risk.” In the *Graduate Imagemaker Presentation*, Pruett explained a new digital transfer process he has been working with that consists of contemporary color digital images transferred onto silver gelatin prints. He writes, “The main idea of the work deals with the era of Walker Evans and other documentarian photographers and the economic hardships they suffered and how the same areas are suffering again in this economy.” Black and white images refer to the older era, while the color image refers to “the now. A third image is made by the layering of the other two.”

In September, Pruett had a work in *Slow Exposures 2012*, describing itself as “A Juried Exhibition Celebrating Photography of the Rural South,” a show which has gotten notice in *The New Yorker*, *Le Journal de la Photographie*, and *Burnaway*. He and James Davis, grad student in ceramics, held their joint MA exhibition, *Face Value*, in the Sella-Granata Art Gallery at the end of the semester.



Congratulations to SHIORI ITO, senior studio art major and new gallery assistant in the Ferguson Center Art Gallery! In August, she took over grad student ANNE HERBERT’s position, organizing and hanging exhibitions in the Ferguson Gallery.

In August, grad student ANNE HERBERT’s ART 305 class, *Aqueous* (water-based) Media, exhibited work from the summer in the Ferguson Center Art Gallery. This is the second year for the student-curated exhibition, *Aqueous*. Participating artists were BEN BAILEY, ERIN SCHOPKE, KRISTA ALES, KRISTIN KELLEY, MACY SYKES, MICHAEL MEADS, and SARAH LANIER.

AMY FEGER presented her MFA thesis exhibition, *Local Journeys*, in the Sarah Moody Gallery of Art in August. The work began as a response to the April 27, 2011, tornado. In several of the pieces, Feger explored the conceptual and narrative potential of the map as a means of describing place. She states that “each painting is the archaeological remnant of a re-constructed memory of my ritual road trips from home to home for the past three years. The paintings vary from oil paint to acrylic, from solid surfaces to roadmap ‘webs.’”

Grad student MARK BARRY was mentioned in an *Oxford American* review of the 2012 *Southern Open* juried exhibition (Lafayette, LA), in which he had three works. He was also one of only 16 artists from the US (ca. 240 total) accepted into the Santorini (Greece) Biennial of Art’s inaugural exhibition, *The Past: History, Time, Memory and Nostalgia*. Barry’s painting and the other artists’ works in the exhibition will be “configured throughout the island to build various platforms in which to open a dialogue with the public.” The exhibition ran through the months of August and September.

*The Loupe* is the newsletter of the NASAD-accredited Department of Art and Art History, in The University of Alabama’s College of Arts and Sciences, for students, alumni, faculty, staff and friends of the department. Please send correspondence to Rachel Dobson, Visual Resources Curator, [rdobson@bama.ua.edu](mailto:rdobson@bama.ua.edu).

(lōp), n. 1. a small magnifying glass used by jewelers or watchmakers, or for viewing photographic transparencies.

TOP CENTER: AYNLEE MOON paints herself into an MFA show in the Sella-Granata Gallery earlier this fall. ABOVE: A painting by JAMES DAVIS in his MA exhibition with Andrew Pruett, *Face Value*. FACING PAGE: TOP LEFT: Virginia Eckinger, *Eleanor’s Struggle*, ceramic. TOP RIGHT: Mark Barry, *Heavyweight*, acrylic. CENTER: A bamboo sculpture by Claire Lewis Evans in the Bamboost Park in Northport, adjacent to Kentuck Park. BOTTOM: Gallery installation of *You Can’t Hold Water*, the annual fall exhibition of work by graduate students in studio art. Photo courtesy of Mark Barry.



DARIUS HILL exhibited new works at the Coleman Center for the Arts through November 16 in York, AL. (<http://colem-anarts.org/2012/09/darius-hill/>) Hill also showed in the recent *You Can't Hold Water: Works*

by Graduate Studio Artists. Hill is a native of Birmingham, and is specialty chair of the Visual Arts Department of the Alabama School of Fine Arts. He writes that he is currently working with mixed media in exploring identity, drawing inspiration from art historical references, Americana and pop culture.

## UA STUDENTS & OUR COMMUNITY

This summer, CLAIRE LEWIS EVANS won a merit award in the 47th Annual Juried Exhibition, a.k.a. *The Summer Show*, held by the St. Tammany Art Association in Covington, LA. The juror was Miranda Lash, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the New Orleans Museum of Art. Earlier in the spring, Evans had work in the 35th Annual *Art on Paper Exhibition* at the Circle Gallery in Annapolis, MD; the Dogwood Arts Festival's *Regional Fine Arts Exhibition* in Knoxville, TN; and the *Southern Regional Juried Exhibition* at Northwest Florida State College in Ft. Walton Beach. She works as a digital publishing editor at The University of Alabama Press.



Recently Lewis Evans has been working with Black Belt Bamboost (BBB), a project of the Friends of Historic Northport, Inc., to build a "creative educational interactive bamboo park" adjacent to Kentuck

Park in Northport. She constructed her MA exhibition (one of the requirements to advance to the MFA program in studio art) of bamboo sculptures, titled *Signs of Life*, in BBB's new bamboo park in October. Lewis Evans held an open house on Kentuck weekend, and a reception in November.

SLOAN SAUNDERS' and CAROLYN KERR's joint BFA exhibition in December represented their combined artistic and educational experiences at UA. Kerr said that she learned that with sculpture, her "options are limitless and it is more than just making a 3D form. It's about problem solving. It's about coming up with a design and figuring out how to execute it properly, which for me often involves a great deal of experimenting. I feel if you can create something out of nothing than you can do anything you set your mind to. Sculpture has boosted the confidence I have in myself and has honestly changed my life in the best way possible."

IMAGES CONTINUED ON PAGE ELEVEN



# TRAILBLAZER FOR WOMEN LEADS UA ART INTO THE FUTURE

When her former colleagues talk about Virginia Pitts Rembert Liles, the word “gracious” appears frequently in their descriptions of her. “She was gracious and diplomatic,” says Robert Mellow, UA professor emeritus of art history. Liles’ former student Professor Marilyn R. Brown (BSC 1972) remembers her teaching as “a combination of awesome erudition and gracious elegance.”

UA professor of art history Mindy Nancarrow adds that “Virginia has an old school way about her.” Those qualities have served Virginia Liles well in a career often spent blazing new trails in academia.

Liles’ career spans more than 45 years, highlighted by her popularity as a teacher, her scholarly accomplishments and her administrative leadership in the arts. She was the first woman chair in three southern art departments: Birmingham-Southern College, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and The University of Alabama. In addition, as Donaghey Distinguished Professor of Art and Art History at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR), Liles established their art history program. She took UAB’s fledgling art program to the department level and later at UA helped to found the joint program for the Master of Arts degree in art history with UAB.

Before her trailblazing administrative career, Liles shone as a teacher. Her charm and generous spirit helped her in connecting with students and colleagues, in making friends, and in creating good community relations that supported her educational arts programs. The late Robert Kaufmann (a former BSC student who went on to work as a librarian at the Metropolitan Museum of Art) called her art history courses “electrifying” in BSC’s alumni magazine, *Southern*. BSC alumna Marilyn Brown wrote about her former teacher, “She made me realize that learning is not a chore or exercise, but a rich lifelong pursuit. Studying for her classes didn’t seem like work, it was something I looked forward to with joy.”



*“I think some of the studio men were a little leery of having an art historian be in charge. So there was some difficulty for the first two or three years – a little rough going until I got my sea legs.”*

Keyser Wilson (UA MFA 1978), who has taught art in higher education for two decades, had Liles for four years of undergraduate art history at BSC, where Wilson earned her BFA in art. Wilson describes Liles’ way of letting students be themselves and encouraging their creativity: “We were all wild and crazy

and she made us write a lot, gave serious lectures, a lot of tests and papers, and we smoked cigarettes in class! I loved her classes. She encouraged me to write what I think and feel and to hell with crap I was “taught” in high school, although she was more diplomatic in her statement. Dr. Rembert is really the ONLY woman who ever influenced me as an artist, and so I have a special place in my heart for her.”

Liles supported her colleagues as well as her students in their research

and career paths. Other people’s successes genuinely made her happy. Professor Mindy Nancarrow remembers that while she was working on her first book on the Spanish painter, Bartolomé Estéban Murillo, Liles encouraged her scholarship and helped

her connect with other scholars in her field. “She made me feel like I was special.” Liles has always had a strong network of colleagues around the country who were also friends. Artist Dorothy Gillespie, Pace Gallery founder Arne Glim-

cher, Met Museum librarian Robert Kaufmann and art historian Eleanor Tufts are a few examples.

ABOVE: In the spring of 1982, new art department chair Virginia Rembert poses on the porch of Woods Hall. Photo by Lee Ann Lutz, BFA 1980, and courtesy of the UA College of Arts and Sciences. ABOVE RIGHT: Virginia Rembert teaching a studio art class at BSC. Photo courtesy Birmingham-Southern College. BOTTOM RIGHT: At College of Arts and Sciences ceremonies in 1993 Virginia Rembert stands among fellow Society of Fine Arts award winners Adolph and Robert Weil, Clayton Cozatte, and Sanford and Jean Pinkerton, flanked by UA President Roger Sayers and A & S Dean James Yarbrough. Photo courtesy of the UA College of Arts and Sciences.

# ART DEPARTMENT HISTORY ~ ART DEPARTMENT HISTORY

SECAC was one of the annual events that allowed Liles to network and meet with friends and colleagues from all across the region. The Southeastern College Art Conference (SECAC), which she described recently as “like a little family,” is still the leading professional organization for art academics in the Southeast. Liles served as its president for a year and was on its Board of Directors for seventeen years. She organized and chaired two annual meetings, at UALR in 1978 and at UA in 1986. In 1989 she was honored by SECAC with their Distinguished Service Award and was paid tribute by one of her oldest friends, John Schnorrenberg, professor emeritus of art history at UAB. Another friend and colleague at Arkansas, Lloyd W. Benjamin III (now President Emeritus and Trustee Professor of Indiana State University), wrote, “Virginia has been a constant presence at SECAC and significant contributor to art history in the South.”



## A LEADER AMONG HER PEERS

Liles was a role model in teaching and administration through the 1970s and 1980s, a time when great changes were taking place for women in every part of society. Marilyn Brown wrote in *Southern*, “As a role model at a time when women didn’t have that many, she convinced me that women could be proud of being intelligent and professionally committed to teaching others about the infinite possibilities of the human spirit.”

A brief overview of female heads of departments generally, and of academic art and art history departments specifically, shows how groundbreaking Liles’ career has been. In North America, only a sprinkling of women had served as academic department chairs in areas other than art since at least the 1920s. Stand-alone departments of art history broke ground within their institutions by hiring women as heads in the mid-1970s. Anne Coffin Hanson, the first female full professor



at Yale, became chair of its Department of the History of Art in 1974, the first female department head at the university. In 1975 Madeline H. Caviness was named the first female department chair at Tufts University, also in art history. In academic departments of art (that often included art history), change

was slower, although, oddly, the South may have been an exception. As early as 1960, Professor Gulnar Bosch, who later was a friend of Liles’, was named head of the art department at Florida State University, a post she held until 1977.

If Liles’ administrative achievements seem striking for a time when women were just beginning to make headway in leadership roles, they are even more so for a woman who was tragically pushed into her career. She met her first

husband, John Lamar Rembert, while working on her master’s degree in Fine Arts and Fine Arts Education at Columbia University. They married, moved to Chapel Hill, NC, and then to Beloit College in Madison, WI, where he served as head of the art department. After her husband suffered a debilitating illness, the world she knew abruptly changed. She took over her husband’s

teaching and began to study art history more seriously. The next years she spent caring for her invalid husband (until his death in 1978), teaching at several schools until arriving at Birmingham-Southern in 1960, all the while continuing her education. Liles earned a second master’s degree in art history at the University of Wisconsin, and ultimately her Ph.D. in art history and archeology at Columbia in 1970.

In 1970 the ten-year department veteran was named chair of the art department at Birmingham-Southern. In 1973, Frederick W. Conner, the new dean of the School of Humanities at UAB hired Liles away from BSC to turn UAB’s new art program into a full-fledged art department where she stayed for two years before going to Arkansas in 1975.

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# ART DEPARTMENT HISTORY ~ ART DEPARTMENT HISTORY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE SEVEN

## COMING TO ALABAMA

Liles remembers, “They started looking for someone [to head the art department] at Alabama the year before they hired me. I heard about it, but I didn’t apply.” In the second year of the search, they asked her if she would be interested. “[Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences] Doug Jones was wonderful. I was hired for ten months and I could be off for two months in the summer.” With characteristic understatement she recalls some resistance: “I think some of the studio men were a little leery of having an art historian be in charge. So there was some difficulty for the first two or three years - a little rough going until I got my sea legs.” Liles kept the peace at Alabama, however, and even made some friends as she pushed the department to make the changes it needed to stay competitive with comparable schools, and to lay the groundwork for future improvements.

By 1986, she was getting her sea legs. “Things began to turn around when we invited SECAC [to conference in Tuscaloosa].” Liles knew what even football coaches know about “process:” that working together toward a common goal builds relationships and strengthens trust within a group. She enlisted Arts and Sciences Assistant Dean Joan Parsons Mitchell, department faculty and others to help her organize and involve the community. She relied on her organizing experiences with SECAC at Arkansas to guide her. And she mixed in a little down home glitz and some New York glamour for good measure. The young Kentucky Museum and Art Center in Northport headed by Georgine Clark hosted a luncheon for the conference goers and Jack Warner (then Chairman and CEO of Gulf States Paper Corporation) gave a party for the whole conference - a cocktail party and dinner party at the NorthRiver Yacht Club. Liles recalls, “It turned out to be almost 300 faculty and graduate students. It all went off just wonderfully.”

Liles also pulled together a top quality contemporary art exhibition at the conference. Arne Glimcher, founder of Pace Galleries in New York, had been her student at Massachusetts College of Art. She asked him if he would send down some art work for the conference. UA professor Tom Barnes drove a truck

up to New York and brought back selections from Glimcher’s personal art collection to exhibit during the conference. “Arne himself came and delivered the [conference keynote] address!”

Liles recalls the costume party on the last night of the conference: “It was Halloween, so we had a ‘do’ at the L&N Train Station, and Arne’s wife and [artist] Dorothy Gillespie and Richard Martin, who was head of *Arts Magazine*, were judges for the costumes. The whole thing was just a coup.”

## MAKING UA COMPETITIVE

Liles made slim educational resources go farther. UA and UAB had small undergraduate programs in art history, and each wanted to create a graduate program. She and John Schnorrenberg, then chair of UAB’s art department, whom she had known since Chapel Hill, worked with art historians on both campuses to create a joint program for the master of arts degree in art history between UA and UAB. They brought in John Howett, who had established Emory University’s art history program. Liles said they wanted to make sure “we were doing it right.” Howett read through the proposal and made suggestions. “He was just wonderful,” she remembers. In 1987 Liles and Schnorrenberg started the only program for the MA in art history in the state.

Although accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), Liles felt NASAD accreditation was vital to stay competitive. “The major art departments over the country were accredited through NASAD.” Ironically, the UA art department had helped to create NASAD in 1948, but later dropped out. Now, as competing universities like Auburn claimed accreditation and art students, Liles convinced the dean and then the art faculty of the wisdom of returning to NASAD’s standards. “We had to do it. Auburn had done it and they were touting themselves as the only accredited [art] program in Alabama.”



ABOVE: Virginia and Raeford Liles at home earlier this year. Dr. Liles will have an exhibition of her art work at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Birmingham in February.



## LILES' WORK CONTINUES

Virginia Liles excels as a scholar as well as a teacher and administrator. She has published articles and numerous reviews for *Woman's Art Journal*, *Arts Magazine* and *Art Papers*, as well as other scholarly publications. She also has done her part to build the arts community wherever she has lived by lecturing to interest groups, and writing for museum bulletins, popular arts magazines, and newspaper reviews. Since her retirement in 1999, she continues to publish: *Mondrian in the U.S.A.* (Parkstone Press, 2002); and most recently *Bosch* (Parkstone Press, 2004). She has two books in progress, one a biography of the artist Carl Holty. In 1993, UA's College of Arts and Sciences' Society of the Fine Arts awarded her the Distinguished Career Award.

Liles now lives at Danberry Retirement Center with her artist husband Raeford Liles. She continues to write and is currently working on her memoirs. Her recent drawings and paintings will be exhibited at the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Birmingham in February.

From the beginning, Virginia Rembert Liles carried into every aspect of her career a deep conviction of the value of academic art departments and what they can offer, not only to academia itself but to the community. This unassailable knowledge gave her the vision and self-assurance to develop and enrich each department in which she worked, always supported by her "old school" graciousness and charm. Almost as an afterthought, but with profound implications, she also cleared a new path for her female colleagues and inspired her students to carry on her legacy. As Marilyn Brown - whose own career as an art historian spans 35 years - described Liles recently, she was a "pioneering woman art department administrator, especially in the South."

**Editor's note:** Thanks to the editors of Birmingham-Southern College's 'Southern magazine for allowing me to quote their alumni. I am grateful to Dean Robert Olin of the College of Arts and Sciences for suggesting this article, and to Keyser Wilson and Marilyn Brown for sharing their memories. Mindy Nancarrow and Robert Mellown gave invaluable editing help; I am responsible for all errors. I am most grateful to Dr. Liles for her openness and generosity in our conversations. It has been a pleasure and an inspiration getting to know her. RD

TOP: Khara Koffel, *in case of the eventual*, mixed media sculpture: shredded letters in acrylic trophy boxes, 2012, was in her solo show. Image courtesy of the artist. RIGHT: Sydney Rhodes Hauser, "The best things in life aren't things," one of her *Proverbial Cat* illustrations.

## UA ART ALUMNI NEWS

<http://art.ua.edu/site/contact-us/alumni/>

In September, KHARA KOFFEL (MFA 2003, sculpture and photography), associate professor of art at MacMur-



ray College in Kentucky, had a solo exhibition of her sculpture, *every after has a before*, in the

Marsh Gallery of the William and Florence Schmidt Art Center housed on the campus of Southwestern Illinois College in Belleville. She also recently exhibited two of her sculptures in *Kentucky.7*, a biennial exhibition of contemporary art, sponsored by the Lexington Art League. Koffel's two works, *the inescapable inevitable* and *when all else fails*, were selected by juror Chuck Swanson, owner of Swanson Contemporary Gallery in Louisville, KY. Swanson said that *when all else fails*, which depicts Koffel's to-do lists reformatted as pills, is an "excellent metaphor for our society."

## IN MEMORIAM

SYDNEY RHODES HAUSER (BFA 1967) died September 11, 2012, at her home in Sarasota, Florida. She was buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in Birmingham. According to her obituary in the

*Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, Hauser was born in Birmingham and graduated from



Shades Valley High School in 1963. She attended the University of West Alabama and received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from The University of Alabama in 1967. She also graduated from the Ringling College of Art and

CONTINUED ON PAGE TEN

# ALUMNI NEWS ART & ART HISTORY ALUMNI NEWS

ALUMNI NEWS - CONTINUED FROM PAGE NINE

Design in Sarasota. Hauser was the illustrator of the popular best seller *Proverbial Cat Calendar*. She owned and managed a studio and retail shop, "The Tabby Cat," in Sarasota for many years. In lieu of flowers the family requests that contributions be made to Old Miakka Methodist Church, 1620 Myakka Road, Sarasota, FL 34240. Her illustrations may be seen on her website: <http://www.sydneyhauser.com/>.

AMBER NICHOLE TRIGGS (BFA 2011)

writes from Memphis, "I will be teaching 7th grade English Language Arts in **Teach For America** for at least the next two years! Right now I'm helping teach 6th grade orientation. I'm also the Faculty Adviser for Art Club (which we'll probably call Art Students League; I haven't finalized my plans for that yet) here at the Soulsville Charter School. The school is on the campus of the Stax Museum of American Soul Music, so there's a heavy focus on the arts."

MEGAN KOZA YOUNG (MA 2006) accepted a tenure track position at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas. She will serve as Assistant Professor of Art History and Director of the Dishman Museum of Art.

THORNTON WILLIS (MA 1966) exhibited recent works in the Sarah Moody Gallery of Art through the month of October.

While here, he spoke to undergraduates, gave a gallery talk during a reception, and visited graduate student studios. There will be more about Thornton Willis in the next issue.

CLAYTON COLVIN (MFA 2005) was included in the 2nd annual "pulp" group show: *pulp, works on paper / works with paper* at Beta Pictoris Gallery in Birmingham this summer.



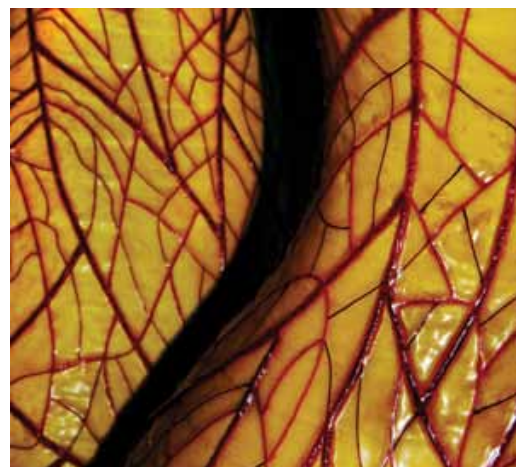
In September, LINDA BELL (MA 1993, art history) exhibited her textile work at the Bama Theatre's Greensboro Room Gallery in Tuscaloosa. Bell is a former slide curator and was also the department's first graduate of the joint program in the master of arts in art history. She wrote her thesis on Dutch Baroque genre

painting. Her textile works on display in the Greensboro Gallery are based on the Charles Perrault version of the fairytale, "Cinderella."



MARTHA MARKLINE HOPKINS (BFA 2004) has had a busy past several months. Her shaped acrylic painting entitled *Nine* was chosen for *Contemporary Women Artists XVI: Longevity*, an international biennial exhibit this fall at the St. Louis University Museum of Art. In October and November, Hopkins was in *Shape and Color: Martha Hopkins & Sandra Rice Shaped Acrylic Paintings & Hand-built Clay Sculpture* in the Kentuck Main Gallery, Northport. Her shaped canvas painting, *Corinthian White*, will be in a juried exhibition, *Bound*, at the Phoenix Gallery, NYC from January 30 to February 23, 2013. The juror for *Bound* is associate curator at the Museum of Modern Art, Cora Rosevear. The exhibition is sponsored by the Women's Caucus for Art.

TOP: Thornton Willis talks about his career as an abstract expressionist painter to UA art students recently in Woods Hall. BELOW: Martha Markline Hopkins, *Nine*, 24" x 24" x 5", acrylic on shaped canvas. Image courtesy of the artist. FACING PAGE, ABOVE LEFT & CLOCKWISE: Micah Craft, from his recent BFA exhibition. Thornton Willis in his studio. Poster for BFA exhibition *REFLECT* by Carolyn Kerr and Sloan Saunders. Alumna Patricia Davis and grad students Claire Siepser and Astri Snodgrass at the 41st Kentuck Festival. Siepser demonstrates papermaking next to the booth for the coop gallery she helped found, Alabama Art Kitchen. Poster for *You Can't Hold Water*, designed by Mark Barry. Crimson Ceramics Students at their booth at the Kentuck Festival. Astri Snodgrass, *Where I'm Coming From*, oil on paper. All images of works courtesy of the artists.



**REFLECT** BFA EXHIBITION (Part 2)  
 Carolyn Kerr & Sloan Saunders  
 December 7, 2012  
 ONE NIGHT ONLY  
 7-11pm  
 THE L & N STATION  
 301 Greensboro Ave  
 Tuscaloosa, AL 35402



## EXHIBITION CALENDAR

<http://art.ua.edu/site/calendar-of-events/>

- JAN 9-JAN 18 *Straddled: Selections from the Permanent Collection*
- JAN 17-FEB 8 Undergraduate Juried Exhibition, SGG
- JAN 17 Reception for Undergrad Juried Exhibition, SGG
- JAN 31-MAR 8 *Beverly Semmes: Starcraft*, SMGA
- FEB 4-MAR 1 *Asian Art Exhibition*, Ferguson Gallery, TBA
- FEB 22-MAR 15 *Anne Herbert MFA Exhibition | Darius Hill MA Exhibition*, SGG
- MAR 8 *18th Annual Graduate Student Symposium in Art History*, 205 Gorgas Library
- MAR 25-APR 5 *Department Scholarship Winners Exhibition*, SGG
- APR 4-MAY 4 *Windgate Fellows Exhibition*, SMGA
- APR 4-TBA *A Version of Events: Virginia Eckinger and Mark Barry MA Exhibition*, Harrison Galleries
- APR 15-MAY 10 *Suzanne Sawyer MFA in Book Arts Exhibition*, Ferguson Center Gallery



**YOU CAN'T HOLD WATER**  
 OCTOBER 1 - NOVEMBER 2  
 SUELA GRABER GALLERY  
 FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12  
 5-8 PM



The University of Alabama  
Department of Art and Art History  
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Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0270  
<http://art.ua.edu>

## Fall 2012: The Art History Issue

- Largest Class of Art History Graduate Students in 25 Years
- Students Travel the World to Research
- Feminist Art Scholar to Keynote Symposium
- Faculty-Staff News
- Student Spotlights
- UA Students & the Community
- Virginia Rembert Liles: Trailblazer
- Alumni News
- In Memoriam
- Exhibition Calendar

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*Wimberly and Fuzzy*  
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