The Department of Art Education at Florida State University has many new developments. I am currently in my 12th year in this Department, finishing up my 6th year as Chair and I have watched it go through many changes. We are excited to announce and promote all the recent activities within the department.

The department would like to welcome the new additions to the faculty and staff here at Florida State University. We are excited to announce Theresa Van Lith, who has joined the Art Therapy faculty, from Melbourne, Australia. She will be teaching Graduate courses in the Art Therapy program. We would also like to welcome Heather Forlong, who is our new office administrator. She will be aiding the students and faculty in our department. We are also very happy to welcome the College’s newest addition, Peter Weishar, the new Dean for the College of Visual Arts, Theater & Dance.

Each of the faculty members in our department is making an impact and broadening their presence in the world of academia. They are busy not only educating our students but contributing to numerous publications and presenting all over the world.

This year the department is involved in many events. We are proud to announce our continued involvement in Seven Days of Opening Nights. We will be completing this year’s Community Mural at the newly developed Cascades Park, scheduled to be finished this spring.

Our involvement is not only in the local community but also on a national scale. Many of the Department’s alumni are involved in National Conferences; for example our alumni presence at the American Art Therapy Association Conference this past year was unprecedented.

The collaboration of the three distinct Programs in our department (Art Education, Art Therapy, and Arts Administration) are at a record high. We will be entering into our 3rd complete year of the 5-year combined program for Art Education, which continues to flourish. Each of our programs is developing an impressive presence in the community.

One of our goals as a department is outreach. Alumni and friends of the Department can expect to hear from us more often. Heather Forlong is heading the charge on maintaining connections between the department and alumni. The Art Education Department now has a more significant presence on social media sites including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and our new Department blog. Our very hardworking graduate assistants constantly update all of these sites. Our hope is to strengthen the network between our network providers and alumni.

This past year we are thrilled to announce that all of the programs in our department have exceeded 90% in job placement following graduation for our students. We are determined to continue this. With so many changes happening in the department, it is impossible to explain all of our achievements, and current events, so please check us out on social media. I very much look forward to seeing you all in the Internet stratosphere and at all of our upcoming events and reunions.

Check us out on the web:
FSU Webpage: http://fla.st/1fElLhy
Blog: http://fla.st/1fEIR8X
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/arted.fsu
LinkedIn: http://tinyurl.com/lq27ocw
Twitter: https://tinyurl.com/lq27ocw
University Calendar: http://tinyurl.com/ls62qtc
David Gilchrist and Allies4Art

Funding the Arts in Innovative Ways

David Gilchrist has been a local and influential architect in Tallahassee for thirty years, during which he created a number of major projects on the Florida State University campus. As a man who always has a smile on his face, he adds personality to any room. His website describes him perfectly as “a wing shooter [that] hunts for the dinner table and not for trophies, cooks epicurean feasts for guests, enjoys fine wines, dances Argentine Tango twice a week, studies and practices the wisdom of Jungian psychology and as an extrovert is always seeking new experiences.”

David has been a crucial advocate for the Art Education Department. Along with being a key member of the Dean’s Advisory Board and a long time supporter of the arts, he has been spearheading Allies4Art for the past four years. His mission is to increase exposure and involvement between Art and Art Education students, faculty, and alumni within the community. By combining the Friends of Dance, Theater, Art History, Interior Design, and Allies4Art he hopes to promote recognition and support.

Allies4Art is an organization that raises awareness about the Art and Art Education Departments in the community and raises funds for the students through special events. Some of these events have included the inaugural and popular Wine, Dine and Dash; the Paint Around (done in cooperation with Friends of Dance); and, most recently, “Killer Art,” an evening of dining, art viewing, lectures and discussions on Art Therapy. All have been highly successful in providing additional support for our graduate students.

Kevin Mulcahy
Friend of the Department

Dr. Kevin Mulcahy is a distinguished professor of Political Science and Public Administration at Louisiana State University. He is the co-author and co-editor of six books, as well as 55 scholarly articles and books chapters.

In the spring of 2001, he was an exchange professor with the Arts Education Department at Florida State University, which was facilitated by Dr. Charles Dorn. During his time at Florida State University, he taught a graduate seminar in Arts Administration. Dr. Mulcahy said that he “loved his extended time at Florida State University, and always enjoyed the ambience of the University as well as the city of Tallahassee.”

Upon reigniting his connection with the Department of Art Education, Dr. Mulcahy describes the Department as “moving to a whole new level of excellence.” The Art Education Department is very privileged to have had such a relationship with Dr. Mulcahy, and we value his new relationship with our Department and the University, and want to thank him for all his encouragement and involvement.

For more information please contact:

Dr. Pat Villeneuve
pvilleneuve@fsu.edu

The Seven Days of Opening Nights Department of Art Education 2013 community mural showcasing “Tallahassee Through Time” is located on Tennessee Street, behind Target Copy.
FSU Welcomes Peter Weishar

The Department of Art Education is happy to announce the recent hiring of Peter Weishar as the Dean of the College of Visual Arts, Theatre & Dance. In a recent interview, Weishar spoke about his past work experience, his attraction to Florida State University, and some of the challenges that he faces in his new position.

Weishar, originally from New York City, began his career as a commercial artist working for agencies and digital media companies. Through his freelance work and management positions, Weishar gained invaluable business experience. He transitioned into academia first as a professor at New York University, eventually progressing to the position of dean at the Savannah College of Art and Design.

Florida State University’s reputation as an excellent research institution attracted Weishar to the university. He noted that the arts cannot exist in a vacuum and that collaboration with the sciences and humanities is necessary for the arts to thrive. Weishar referred to colleagues, staff, faculty and students at Florida State University as the most positive aspect of his new position.

When questioned about the most challenging aspects of his job, Weishar spoke about the constant struggle to find new funding sources. Weishar explained that College of Visual Arts, Theater & Dance has done well in the past due the generosity and engagement of its alumnae and supporters. However, it is imperative to increase that support base. In the coming months, he plans to make a concerted effort to reach out to the professional creative community in Florida to help support and partner with current students and graduates.

Many readers may not realize how successful the broad community of College of Visual Arts, Theater & Dance has been in recent years. Weishar spoke about the exceptional diversity and quality of programs across the entire College. For example, he mentioned MANCC (Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography), which is housed in the School of Dance. MANCC is acclaimed as one of the best modern dance programs in the country. In the same building as Art Education are two renowned programs: Art History and Interior Design. Interior Design was named the number one program by Design Intelligence for the second year in a row. Weishar also referenced a recent visit to New York City, where he saw a benefit cabaret produced by Florida State University alumni. It had 14 successful musical theatre graduates (many of whom are on Broadway).

As Weishar begins his career at Florida State University, he hopes to continue an open working relationship with the Chair, faculty, staff, graduates and students of the Department of Art Education. Weishar noted, “There are too many brilliant and talented people in this college for a dean to practice “top down” management. I hope to hear from you (both good and bad) so we can address issues and solve challenges together.” The Department of Art Education is proud to welcome Dean Weishar to the Florida State University community and looks forward to his positive impact on the College of Visual Arts, Theater & Dance.

Art and Design for Social Justice Symposium

The Departments of Art Education and Interior Design co-hosted the bi-annual Art and Design for Social Justice Symposium on January 20, 2014. The event took place on Martin Luther King Day on the Florida State University campus. The Symposium focused on how art and design can address issues affecting less advantaged groups within local and global communities. The purpose of the event was to promote collaboration and scholarly initiatives among participants. Coordinators of the symposium made an effort to incorporate a broad range of fields in the panels, including medicine, social work, criminal justice, and law, in addition to all of the creative arts.

The opening plenary session featured the film Concrete, Steel and Paint, which was presented by Art Education Chair Dr. Gussak. The film documented the creation of a mural that was painted collaboratively by inmates of a Pennsylvania state prison and victims of crime. It illustrated how art can be used to promote dialogue and raised questions about the American justice system, rights of victims, forgiveness and healing.
Theresa Van Lith

Theresa Van Lith, Ph.D was recently hired as an assistant professor in art therapy and is the newest faculty member of the Florida State University Department of Art Education. Originally from Australia, Dr. Van Lith came to the U.S. to gain a sense of the diverse ways that art therapy is being practiced here. She was attracted to Florida State University because of the social justice component embedded in the program. She also appreciated the opportunity to train new art therapists and to continue to contribute research in the field. Her past research integrated the social justice model of mental health recovery with art therapy.

Dr. Van Lith is interested in finding novel avenues for art therapy. She plans to survey mental health and medical professionals to gain a better understanding of current views of art therapy in the U.S. mental health system. In this way, she hopes to identify gaps in training and to influence current education practices for art therapy students. Dr. Van Lith also wants to help make art therapy approaches more understandable to clients. She believes that clients should have access to information that will help them make informed decisions regarding what they can expect to receive through art therapy.

As an Australian-born art therapist with training influenced by German, British and North American approaches, Dr. Van Lith brings a unique multi-cultural perspective to the art therapy program. She is looking forward to learning more about how social injustices and cultural influences impact the American mental health system and hopes to learn how art therapy can provide innovative solutions. Ultimately, she hopes to create a model for art therapy that will be a better fit for this system.

As Dr. Van Lith embarks on her career at Florida State University, she is happy to find herself surrounded by students who are enthusiastic and eager to learn. The Department of Art Education welcomes Dr. Van Lith as a valued faculty member and looks forward to her contributions in teaching and research here at Florida State University.

Heather Forlong

The Department of Art Education would like to welcome Heather Forlong as our new Staff Services Associate. She was previously in the Office of the Dean of the College of Visual Arts, Theatre & Dance, where she was worked primarily with financial responsibilities and personnel actions.

In her new position in the Department of Art Education, she has taken on the new challenge of learning Florida State University’s academic processes. She is involved in expanding the department’s online visibility, aiding with financial responsibilities, travel representative for Faculty and Students, as well as academic needs such as adding and dropping classes.

Heather helps supervise the Graduate Assistants working in the Departmental offices as well. Currently, they are working together to reach out to alumni, current students and student organizations to promote the students and the department via the departmental blog, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

Heather reports that the diversity of this new role keeps her on her toes. She describes herself as the students’ resource during their time in the department. Students may seek her help with registration issues, academic holds, graduation checks and more. We are excited to welcome her into our Department.

References of Selected Faculty Production


Dr. Gaelynn Wolf Bordonaro

Gaelynn Wolf Bordonaro, Ph.D., ATR-BC, earned both her Master’s and Doctorate degrees at FSU. She graduated in 2003 and remembers her time with the Art Therapy Program fondly. Currently, Dr. Wolf Bordonaro is an assistant professor at Emporia State University, director of its art therapy program, and the clinical director of Community Healing Through Art (CHART). In an interview with Dr. Wolf Bordonaro, she spoke about the opportunity she had to study under some of the leading experts in the art therapy field. She marveled that some of the speakers who came to give guest lectures were actually the authors of her text books, including Myra Levick and Vija Lusabrink. Dr. Wolf Bordonaro also had the exciting opportunity to study in Australia at Latrobe University for a year, under the Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship. She appreciated working with diverse populations, which has influenced her work throughout her career.

Since graduating from Florida State University, Dr. Wolf Bordonaro has had several accomplishments. She used her dissertation “Art Therapy with Hospitalized Pediatric Patients” to help develop the National Trauma Response, which benefits children and families who have undergone natural disasters. She also received the Ruth Schillinger Award for service to women at Emporia State. In addition to these achievements, her work with CHART has also been commendable.

Through CHART, Dr. Wolf Bordonaro has traveled extensively throughout the world and brought an art therapy training model to areas devastated by natural disaster and violence. While she has enjoyed these opportunities, she has also felt overwhelmed at times due to the lack of infrastructure and political turmoil that she found in some locations. She commented on the misperception that international art therapy is glamorous work, stating that it is actually very challenging. She stressed the importance of sustainability and applauded CHART’s ability to empower local professionals who continue to work after international volunteers leave.

Despite the challenges of international art therapy, Dr. Wolf Bordonaro remains enthusiastic about art therapy on both a national and international level. In the future, Dr. Wolf Bordonaro is excited to find additional ways to serve the field at a national level and to work internationally to build ethical constructs and competent art therapists. She also hopes to write more about the cross-cultural experience and using nontraditional media in art therapy.

To learn more about CHART and their current work, please visit their facebook page at: http://tinyurl.com/p8a9r3a

Megan Leigh Coward

Megan Leigh Coward earned her Master’s degree in Art Education from Florida State University in 2011. She had a special focus on community development, which led her to join the Peace Corps after graduating. In a recent interview from Cambodia, where Coward is currently working as an English and art teacher, she reminisced about her time at Florida State University. Coward appreciated the diverse academic topics that her program offered, with courses in socio-cultural and international development education, arts administration, social work, and art education. She enjoyed the cross-content comparison between different fields and discovering how they overlapped. She also had opportunities to apply her academic knowledge through volunteer and professional experiences.

Since graduating, Coward has put the “art for life” message into practice on the international level. She is proud to have been selected as a Peace Corps volunteer in Cambodia and of the experiences she has acquired while there. She stated that this was an important time for education in Cambodia, as there is a major effort to develop arts education opportunities for Cambodian youth. Coward has contributed to the effort by working with students in secondary school, many of whom have never had formal arts education. She has enjoyed observing how students discover their artistic abilities, develop new skills, and learn to critically think about the world around them.

Despite the wonderful experience of strengthening arts education in Cambodia, living and working in a foreign country has also been a challenge for Coward. She has struggled against heat and a lack of resources. She has also had to develop her vocabulary in the local language and work in a different culture with distinct beliefs about education. By learning to work in those conditions, Coward feels that she has begun to mature in unique ways that will benefit her future personal and professional experiences.

In the future, Coward plans to continue teaching art in the United States, while maintaining communication between her Cambodian community and her future art students. She also wants to better develop her Khmer language skills to aid in the further development of Cambodia’s art education system. Coward encouraged others to follow her lead and to “take a leap away from comforts.” Through leaving the familiarity of life in the United States and entering into an unknown world, with new ways of thinking, speaking, and doing, Coward believes that she has learned valuable lessons and strengthened her professional skills.
Network through the Alumni List Serve: arted-alumni@fsu.edu

The FSU Department of Art Education Department invites you to join our List Serve. Once you have been added, you will receive regular updates about the Florida State University Department of Art Education. If you wish to belong to this list, simply e-mail us at arted-alumni@fsu.edu, and we will add you to our list.

This list will not be shared with any sources outside of Florida State University. Also, this list will not serve as a forum, so you will be unable to e-mail directly to one another. It is set up so that you can receive messages from us and you can contact us directly. If there is something you would like the group to know, feel free to let us know and we will make sure to get this to the group. If you have any feedback, feel free to provide that as well or e-mail Dr. Dave Gussak directly at dgussak@fsu.edu. Thank you and we look forward to your correspondence!

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