Do you dream of continuing to make art after you graduate from college? Of working as a graphic designer or becoming a college art professor? If your answer is yes, then Radford University has the program for you. The booklet you hold in your hands right now celebrates the final work of four of our graduating MFA students in 2016. We hope it conveys the quality, skill and varied creative production of our students.

Catering to artistic ambition, our concentrations feature a combination of rigorous and traditional technique along with the opportunity to explore new uses of media in the pursuit of your personal and individual vision. Our small graduate program, generally between 10 and 15 students, allows for close working relationships with faculty mentors. Our program will accommodate your individual needs as a student and your personal goals as an artist.

With a museum, a large downtown gallery, and a smaller campus gallery dedicated to student projects, we have the space to bring in exhibitions of professional artists’ work and special collections, exhibition spaces for the graduation shows of our students, and displays of work done in studio classes by students in their first or second years of the program. Because of our museum facilities and the interests of faculty, we are in the process of developing a certificate program in museum studies and art history.

Faculty Work:

(Top left) Halide Salam, prof. of painting: White Light (oil on canvas); (bottom left) Z. L. Feng:, prof. of watercolor Rising (watercolor); (right) Richard Bay, art education professor: Self-Portrait _ RiCHarD (mixed media assemblage and drawing)
Our painting faculty have international reputations and graduate students come from around the globe to study with these faculty members. In addition to strong exhibition records, they also explore and encourage experiential learning. Dr. Halide Salam, painting faculty, is organizing a summer Study Abroad in Ireland. This collaborative study abroad program includes faculty and students from the Departments of Art and Criminal Justice. Professor Feng, internationally acclaimed for his watercolor paintings, also teaches courses in pastel techniques. Check our web site to find out more about our faculty.

We also have a Graduate Teaching Assistantship/Fellowship program, which we think is one of our strongest features. Because we can divide assistantships among students, more than half the second- and third-year students receive a stipend of some amount. Outstanding first-year students may also receive an assistantship or graduate scholarship.

If you think we might be the program for you, we would love to show you around and discuss your interests. Feel free to contact me or any of the faculty and arrange a personalized tour.

Dr. Roann Barris,
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Faculty Work:

(Top left) Andrew Ross, prof. of photography, Prospect Hill, archival pigment (oil on canvas);
(bottom left) Alison Pack. Prof. of jewelry and metalworking: detail from the Secret Garden (silver, copper, gold foil, paint) (watercolor); (right) Brent Webb, prof. of drawing: Just because you can, doesn’t mean you should; pastel on mylar (mixed media assemblage and drawing)
My subject matter is driven by a life-long love of the automobile. The production of my work is far larger than the mere creation of a piece of fine art. It is also the pursuit of or chase for the image. My pursuit has taken me far and wide to seek out places and automobiles that are sacred within the car hobby and significant within American history. The paintings that I create show not only a slice of automotive history but also a vignette of a moment in time in American history.

My work is driven by harnessing the free-flowing quality of watercolor, not being beholden to a medium often allowed to “paint itself.” Truthfully, I find and create my reality through the judicious breakdown of every image into abstracted shapes. After the sections of abstracted shapes have been painted and utilized to the full, then and only then can sharp detail float on top of the foundational abstracted areas.

(Top left) 1956 Buick Super Sedan (Bottom left) Bosses Ride, 1960 Cadillac Coupe de Ville (Bottom of text page) 1958 American Motors, Metropolitan, Petty’s Girl (all watercolors)
Metal has been the most challenging medium I have ever worked with and the most gratifying. I fabricate metal foliage and flowers and I cast pieces sculpted from wax for the creation of my realistic whimsical environments. Some of these realistic environments host fantastic small-scale hybrid creatures that I create, inspired by birds, bugs, and plant life. The individual creatures not only stand alone as their own sculpture, but they interact with each other in the ensemble.

Because I want the viewer to engage with the artwork; certain pieces of the objects can be removed. I want the viewer to be able to explore and discover aspects of my art that may not have been noticed upon first glance. In some of my works, I include light or water to further add dimension and unexpected elements to the piece.

All are details from Fairy Tale installation, copper and bronze
My body of work was inspired by the myth of the phoenix and my desire to personify the classical element of fire. My fascination with phoenix imagery was sparked through my study of medieval Bestiaries. The phoenix is described as a bird that builds a funeral pyre for itself when it reaches the end of its long life, using the rays from the sun to set it ablaze. The flames consume the bird and after a period of time the, phoenix is reborn from the ashes. The phoenix is used as a symbol of the sun as well as an allegory of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I have used various metalsmithing techniques in the creation of my pieces, from fabricating to lost-wax casting. These casted elements often portray a pair of hands. These hands signify the Phoenix Warrior’s relationship with fire and also serve as an example of how I use my hands, with the help of fire, to create my pieces.
Smart Girls Know Better was inspired by a villain from the Frank L. Baum’s series of Oz books. This character, a vain Princess, possesses 30 interchangeable heads which she wears as the spirit moves her. Her self-admiration engrosses her time to the detriment of her responsibilities as a ruler. Her obsession with personal appearance and its relationship to a lack of seriousness inspired the subject matter for this work. However, in contrast to the book, this artwork is about the emotional perspective of the heads, rather than the actions of the headless body.

Reminiscent of vintage advertisements, the large cartoonish bodies in my work represent the societal idealized female standard. They are interwoven with sewing patterns that measure their perfection, while cloying cut-outs spread a lacey pathogen, infecting the heads around them. Watercolor, gouache, pastel, and paper removal are all utilized in these works, creating a dissonance between the figurative and figural, contrasting the realistic heads and the illusion of bodily perfection. Ultimately, Smart Girls Know Better represents the experience of balancing one’s private decision-making about personal appearance and the resulting public exhibition.