Creative Visions in Studio Art Photography

It's all about vision in the Claire Trevor School of the Arts' photography program, where Studio Art students learn how to creatively capture the world around them.

Studio Art Chair Yong Soon Min characterizes photography as "one of the strongest and most popular areas" in the department, which she attributes to first-rate facilities and a faculty that gracefully integrates practical techniques, from the traditional to the more cutting-edge, with a commitment to aesthetics. "A visible indication of the strength of this area can be seen in the many student exhibitions held in the University Art Gallery," she notes. "The photo-based works are not only plentiful but often steal the show." Professors Connie Samaras and Miles Coolidge are responsible for much of the photography instruction. Both are accomplished artists who have exhibited their own work for years at various museums and galleries. Coolidge's artwork includes the photographic series Garage Pictures, Elevator Pictures, Safetyville, Central Valley, Moundbuilders, Golf Course, Mattawa, and the photographic installation Observatory Circle. His work has been exhibited at the Guggenheim Museum in New York City, among other institutions.

Samaras has exhibited and lectured on her work extensively at numerous institutions nationally and internationally, including the Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta, Canada, the School of the Arts Institute of Chicago, the Detroit Institute of Art, and the Berkeley Museum, among others. A recent project, Vast Active Living Intelligence System: Photographing the South Pole, took her to Antarctica where she photographed the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station and the harsh surrounding environment. "The new curriculum Miles and I have developed emphasizes the learning of technical information combined with developing critical thinking, situating the practice of photography socially, culturally and historically, and familiarizing students with contemporary art photography and criticism," Samaras explains. "We have an initial two-stage foundations course. By third quarter students are learning to develop their own ideas," she continues. "After that is a series of different studio classes which range from portfolio development to working in-depth on various critical strategies and approaches one can take to working with photographs, from documentary to constructed images, from public art to traditional art venues." Samaras adds that the photo labs and other facilities are regularly updated to give students... 

continues on page 5

Artful Devices: Electronic Music at UCI

Professor Christopher Dobrian sits in the Gassmann Electronic Music Studio, UCI's state-of-the-art lab for digital recording and MIDI composition. The room is crammed with equipment for audio mixing, digital recording, computers, digital synthesizers and samplers, digital audio processors and music software. The facility is used for production and pedagogy of electronic, electroacoustic and computer music. "I think most people are unaware that there is a large subculture of musicians composing, writing new software and finding new ways of processing sounds, and performing with computers," muses Dobrian, director of the Gassmann studio and the School's electronic and computer music programs. "To them, this realm feels esoteric and alienating.

Dobrian wants to dispel some of the mystery behind this innovative music. "Electronic music has been around since the beginning of the 20th century. People were beginning to design electronic instruments, and, after the second World War, they started... composting for these instruments and trying to incorporate real world sounds — all the sounds you could record into the vocabulary of musical sound.

In the late '70s and early '80s, there started to be an integration of computers into that world of electronic music. Not only could computers be used to send voltages to electronic instruments and cause them to make certain sounds, but the computer itself could be programmed to make sounds.

"What the computer provides is a way to record sound and turn it into a string of numbers," Dobrian explains. "It's just a bunch of numbers that the computer can understand, process through mathematical operations and then turn these numbers back into electricity and power speak..." 

continues on page 5
Dear friends,

At one time or another, all of us who have chosen a life in the arts have been asked the “why” question – as in “Why on earth are you going for a career that is so unpredictable?” Sometimes the “why” turns into the “are you sure” question – as in “Are you sure you don’t want to just do that for fun and, instead, get a real job?” Most of the time, of course, those are well-meaning questions, but they also suggest that someone has missed signs of the joy and passion at the heart of creativity. Walk around our School during the week and you will feel the contagious enthusiasm of students making music, practicing their lines, trying a new dance move, or lost in the physicality of making art. Such passion is fulfilling, energizing, self-generating. No wonder many of us feel, in retrospect, that we could not conceive of doing otherwise. Artists of all sorts know this – it is this singular focus that drives their determination to make a living in what others fear is an unpredictable profession.

But we live in very exciting times and creativity is not just the province of professional artists. Urban theorist Richard Florida has noted that, in the same way that the presence and availability of coal drove the industrial revolution, nowadays the presence and availability of creative people is driving modern business and the development of successful urban clusters. Instead of allowing the organizations that we work for to define us, we now define our own identities along the varied dimensions of our creativity. These are exciting times indeed. Our mission is both the training of professional arts practitioners and, just as importantly, the training of a creative workforce that will provide a significant spark to many modern enterprises. We are fortunate to live in this creative age.

All the best,

Nohema Fernández

In the Spotlight

Faculty

Kevin Appel, associate professor of studio art, is a featured artist in California Modem, an exhibit at the Orange County Museum of Art in Newport Beach, CA (Feb. 4-Sept. 30).

Juli Carson, assistant professor of studio art and director of the University Art Gallery, curated two exhibitions in UCI’s Room Gallery: watercolorist Sam Watters’ greenhouse (Oct. 27-Nov. 23, 2005), which is part of the gallery’s emerging artist series, and Chop Shop, a site-specific installation of sculpture, photography and song by Stephanie Taylor (Jan. 19-Feb. 10). Chop Shop travels to Galerie Nagel in Berlin, Germany this year.

Joseph Huszti, professor of music and director of choral activities, traveled to London, England (March 23-31) with 33 members of the UCI Chamber Singers who performed in the 2005 Madrigal Dinner. The choir presented a series of concerts and visited historic sites. A highlight of the tour was a Dvořák concert performed at St. Paul’s Cathedral.

In December 2005, Annie Loui, associate professor of drama, was invited to participate on a public panel on U.S. Theatre Invisible at the Théâtre des Deux Rives in Rouen, France.

Simon Penny, co-director of the Arts Computation Engineering (ACE) program, exhibited Petri Mat!, his autonomous robotic artwork, at Transmediale (International Media Art Festival) in Berlin, Germany (February-March).

Bill Rauch, Claire Trevor Professor of Drama, directed the world premiere of Tony Award-winning Jeff Whitty’s The Further Adventures of Hedda Gabler at South Coast Repertory Theatre, Costa Mesa, CA (Jan. 8-28).

Beall Center Exhibit Wins International Award

Op-era: Sonic Dimensions, which had its U.S. premiere last year at the Beall Center for Art and Technology, recently won first prize at Transito Rio, Mexico’s first video and electronics arts festival sponsored by the country’s National Culture and Arts Council. The installation, created by Brazilian artists Daniela Kutschat and Rejane Cantoni, consisted of a darkened black box where visitors interacted with three walls of “digital sound strings.” Discovery News described Op-era this way: “Customized computer software collects the whispers, giggles and footfalls of the visitors as well as their activity and converts this into a visual response from the strings. The effect is like walking into a virtual music box.

Op-era: Sonic Dimensions, at the Beall Center April 26-June 11 in 2005, won various awards in Brazil before coming to UCI.

Voices – Arts Patrons Speak Out

“Arts were a way to enrich my experience in early retirement and to indulge myself in my hobbies such as dance photography. As I became involved in the Dance Department, I found more ways to become involved in the School, some less passive ways than sitting in the audience.”

–Phil Pease, Dean’s Leadership Council

“The arts are the great creations of human civilization. Empires and economies come and go, but the cave paintings of Lescaux, the music of Louis Armstrong and the plays of Shakespeare will live—and speak to us—forever.”

–Robert Ghees, Dance Department Chair
In the Spotlight

continued from page 2

Bryan Reynolds, professor, Chancellor’s Fellow, and head of doctoral studies in drama, is currently a visiting professor of drama at Queen Mary, University of London. Reynolds has published two new books: Transversal Enterprises in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries: Fugitive Explorations (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), and co-edited, with William West, Rematerializing Shakespeare: Authority and Representation on the Early Modern English Stage (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

In October 2005, Professor of Dance Nancy Ruyter was a guest of the 20th Festival Internacional de Teatro in Cádiz, Spain. The yearly festival features performances by theater and dance groups from Spain and Latin America and panel discussions of the companies and their works. Ruyter presented a paper, Mexico City 1986–Dance in the Street, at the 2005 annual conference of the Congress on Research in Dance (CORD) held in Montreal, Canada (Nov. 10-13).

During February and March, tenor Darryl Taylor performed recitals at Westmont College (Santa Barbara, CA), College of Charleston (Charleston, SC), the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (Washington, DC), and for the Aaron Davis Hall International Series in New York City. His recording, Poetry Preludes: Music of Richard Thompson, was released on the Videmus/Albany label Feb. 1. Taylor is an assistant professor of music and co-director of UCI Vocal Arts.

Christina Zabat-Fran, a senior with a double major in Arts and Humanities and Political Science, has been selected as a 2005-2006 Millennium Momentum Foundation (MMF) Scholar, a prestigious title awarded to ten outstanding students with a dedication to public service. The scholars receive a Best & Brightest Scholarship, internship placement, mentoring with prominent leaders in public affairs, and professional development workshops throughout the year. Zabat-Fran is also a UC Regents Scholar, a member of UCI’s Campuswide Honors Program and a recipient of the select Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program Fellowship for 2004-05 in political science and for 2005-06 in Studio Art.

Students

Alumni

Jenn Colella (MFA Drama 2002) starred in the world premiere of Tony Award-winning Twyla Tharp’s Broadway-bound, The Times They Are A ’Changin’, a musical told through the songs of Bob Dylan (San Diego’s Old Globe Jan 25-March 5). Colella, who is best known for playing Sissy, the leading lady in Urban Cowboy on Broadway, recently started in the off-Broadway musical, Slut.

Jenn Colella (center) starred in UCI’s Victor/ Victoria in 2001

Patrick “Pato” Hebert’s (MFA Studio Art 1999) installation, Is There a Press Pool In Our Wishing Well?, was seen at the Oakland Museum of California, September-December 2005. In December 2005, he designed and contributed to Turnover, a collection of HIV prevention comics edited by Jaime Cortez and published by The Institute for Gay Men’s Health. His image, Once I Found My Hip, from the Tocado series, is currently on display at the Longwood Arts Project, Bronx, NY.

Three UCI drama alumni appeared in Mel Brook’s 2005 movie, The Producers, starring Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick: Jon Lovitz (BA Drama 1979), Michael Thomas Holmes (MFA Drama 1997), and Erin Crouch (MFA Music and Drama 2001).

Alumni

Students

Nzuji Magalhaes (BA Studio Art 2000) participated in a group show, Bling, at the Palos Verdes Art Center, Palos Verdes, CA (Feb. 3-March 30).


Jeannie Simms (MFA Studio Art 1998) is a faculty member of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston, MA). Simms’ video, 1974 In California, received its world premiere at the International Film Festival Rotterdam in January 2005.

continued from page 2
**DEVELOPMENT DIRECTIONS**

**The Arts Plaza – Make it Yours**

By now you have certainly heard about the new Arts Plaza, designed by famed artist Maya Lin. You may not have heard that the project was made possible by the generous support of many individuals and companies. The Arts Plaza was only undertaken after a groundswell of financial support from the community, specifically the UCI Foundation trustees.

According to Dean Nohema Fernández, “The Arts Plaza is not only a gateway to the School, but it is itself an outdoor performance space that will make art available to everyone visiting our School.” Performances are being planned in the outdoor amphitheater, as well as other sites within the plaza. In the next few months, you’ll see a new addition to the Arts Plaza—a donor wall of honor that recognizes the benefactors who made it possible. Keeping with the theme of art and function, the donor wall is being designed to enhance the plaza’s artistic feel.

Donors contributing at least $10,000 will be listed on the permanent display. Additionally, donors at higher levels have an opportunity to have individual components of the plaza named after them or an honored person. This is a unique opportunity to be a part of the Claire Trevor School of the Arts’ history, as well as create a permanent legacy of your support.

If you are interested in learning how you or a family member can have a permanent naming opportunity in the plaza, please call Executive Director of Development Michael Losquadro at (949) 824-9828. Losquadro works closely with the Claire Trevor School of the Arts and is an expert in planned gifts.

**ALUMNI PROFILE**

**Kitty Felde – From UCI Drama to NPR**

Kitty Felde, a 1976 drama graduate and host on National Public Radio, says her days at UCI learning the creative paths of stagecraft helped prepare her for an honored career on the airwaves.

“UCI allowed me to take goofy classes in all different areas, and that’s what you have to do when you’re a reporter—know something about a lot of different things,” she points out. “It is similar to what I did in theater, the only thing missing is the costumes.”

She also applauds her dramatic studies for encouraging versatility, which helped as her radio career began to take shape. Felde got her professional start reporting the scores of baseball games, eventually moving to hard news, and finally her own NPR show.

Felde’s *Talk of the City* covers political and cultural issues and a broad spectrum of guests. She says that shifting gears from former President Billy Carter to pop writer Nick Hornby to boisterous chef Bobby Flay requires skill and resourcefulness.

When asked about memorable guests, Felde doesn’t hesitate: “Actor Colin Firth—I could hardly watch him and another who choreographed an original work in Canada inspired by her uncle’s fight with cancer.

Looking back, she says it was an ideal fit. “The theater department had a fabulous reputation,” she says, “and because there wasn’t a lot of Hollywood pressure, where there might be at schools like UCLA, you could really learn your craft.”

Felde found herself immediately cast in a Mainstage production, a large feat for a first-year drama major. Today, the drama bug runs deep in Felde’s core, as evident by her original play, *A Patch of Earth*, which has been staged in several theaters, from South Africa to Southern California.

Felde says that there are many keys to her success. One of the most important is flexibility at all times. “It’s hard to make college kids understand that when one door is slammed in your face, there’s another open one right behind you,” she points out. “You just have to turn around.”

**You Can Make A Difference!**

Demonstrate your commitment to the arts by making a gift today. Here are a few ideas:

- $1,500 names a student a Medici Scholar for one summer, allowing him or her to complete a professional project.
- $25,000 creates a fund that pays out about $1,125 per year to allow a student to flourish in his or her artistic training.
- $150,000 - $450,000 endows a scholarship in your name or the name of a loved one in perpetuity.

Any amount, big or small, will enrich the experiences of students through special opportunities like master classes and performing opportunities.

Contacts:

Nohema Fernández, Dean, at (949) 824-9828

Ariel Korn, Assistant Director of Development, at (949) 824-0085

**Medici Scholarships Open Doors for Students**

Looking for a way to have a powerful impact on a student’s academic and creative career? Consider joining UCI’s Medici Scholars program, through which you can transform a student’s life as little as a $1,500 contribution.

Named after the famous arts patrons who established Florence as Europe’s cultural center during the Renaissance, members of the Medici Circle provide support for students engaging in professional-level learning opportunities during the summer, enriching their formal education at UCI. Medici Scholars are selected competitively from a pool of applicants in dance, drama, music or studio art—based on the strength of the proposed project and the student’s academic and artistic qualifications. Faculty mentors supervise each project to ensure the highest quality, and Medici patrons closely follow the progress of their sponsored student.

The Medici program had several successes in recent years, including a student who spent a summer with a renowned community-based theater company and another who choreographed an original work in Canada inspired by her uncle’s fight with cancer.

For information on the Medici Scholars program, call (949) 824-9829.
A Vigorous Look at ACE's Accomplishments

The Arts Computation Engineering (ACE) program, now nearing the end of its third year, will showcase its students in the Hybrid Vigor! exhibition at the Beall Center for Art and Technology May 18-27.

The installations will underscore the progress this innovative graduate program has made in connecting the arts to the wired world of computing and engineering. Professor Simon Penny, ACE’s co-director, refers to the evolving field as “a profoundly new techno-social phenomenon” where “digital cultures” become ever more important in our lives.

Participating in the Beall Center’s Hybrid Vigor! are Delvin Charles Hanson, Gina Hazegh, Eric Kabisch, Kevin Ponto, Greg Elliott, Pearly Ho, Shan Jiang, Frank Toonis and Angela Wilcock. The show is curated and organized by the students and represents their work while studying in ACE.

Penny, co-director Robert Nideffer, and the rest of ACE’s faculty are excited by the opportunities Hybrid Vigor! offers and how it demonstrates what the program has accomplished the past three years.

“ACE has proven itself to be innovative, dynamic, intellectually adventurous, academically rigorous, and administratively viable,” says Penny. “It has attracted the attention of academics, administrators and prospective students internationally, and is serving as a model for new programs in prestigious and respected institutions in the U.S. and internationally."

Students who have graduated from ACE further illustrate its success. Nideffer says several are thriving, both professionally and academically. Of those from the first year, three—Garnett Hertz, So Yamaoka and Eric Conrad—are now pursuing doctorates in related fields. Adrian Herbez has gone on to teach at the Art Institute of San Francisco and Sky Frostenson is working for Linden Labs, a cutting-edge game development company in the Bay Area. Ryan Schoeleman and Margaret Watson are pursuing independent artist practice.”

An artists’ reception for Hybrid Vigor! is May 18, 6-9 pm. The Beall Center is open Tue. and Wed., 12-5 pm and Thur. through Sat., 12-8 pm. Admission is free.

Visitors manipulated a frog via the internet in this student installation from the first Hybrid Vigor! show in 2004.

Creative Visions in Studio Art Photography continued from page 1

the access to new technologies, including those in digital photography.

“The curriculum and facilities,” explains Min, “ensure that students gain a stronger competitive edge when vying for positions in graduate school or in the professional arena.”

She points out that the photography area includes darkrooms for black and white, color and mural-sized print processing. There is also a printing room for digital media, a classroom designed to view and critique photographs, a finishing room for lamination and other presentation processes, and an equipment checkout room.

“The photo darkrooms were designed and built in the early ’90s and are considered to be some of the best among Southern California art programs,” says Min.

Once students have created their photos, the University Art Gallery and Room Gallery provide good showcases. Photography is a fixture in most of the undergraduate and graduate exhibitions featured at the UAG and Room throughout the year.

Juli Carson, an assistant professor of studio art and director of both galleries, says she considers photographic works, whether as stand-alone images or part of an installation, just as important as other media like painting or sculpture.

“Photography is integral to most projects” at the galleries, Carson remarks.

“It all adds up to a rich experience for students and faculty alike,” says Min, who adds that the studio art program will continue to explore the ways photography enhances creative expression in the classroom and beyond.

Artful Devices: Electronic Music at UCI continued from page 1

The computer has become basically a recording and playback device.

“Recording studios might still have tape machines, but more commonly they are recording directly into digital form,” he describes. “This is what the Gassmann studio is doing. The music is immediately converted into numbers and stored in the computer, and there is all matter of things that you can do with these numbers.”

What interests Dobrian is using the computer to explore the compositional facets of sound by trying to teach the computer quasi-musical behaviors like composing and improvising. Now that computers are so fast, they can be playing on stage along with the performers and improvising as they go.

“Actually, it’s too anthropomorphic to say that the computer is listening,” explains Dobrian. “But, in fact, you can write software that takes in the sound, and the computer can make some sort of cognitive decision about what’s going on in the music.”

Dobrian’s exploration is supported by the Realtime Experimental Audio Laboratory (REALab), which is used for research and creative work in the use of computers in live musical performance, including real-time audio processing, sound spatialization, networked performance, interactivity and alternative computer-mediated instruments. The facility also supports computer music composition and research by students and faculty, and beta-testing of music software by academic and commercial developers.

“I encourage my students to use the computer to explore musical ideas that are experimental, new and unique to them,” says Dobrian. “We do teach the ‘basics’ of digital audio, MIDI and the theory of computer music, but students are quickly urged to go beyond what is offered to them by commercial software, to develop and realize their own ideas of what computers can do for them and their music, and to do something extraordinary. What’s the point of doing something ordinary?”

For more information, visit http://music.arts.uci.edu/dobrian.php

For more information, visit http://music.arts.uci.edu/dobrian.php

Photos: Jacqueline Steinert

Unnatural Nature series by student Cheryl Mayhew

Christopher Dobrian relaxes in the cutting-edge Gassmann Electronic Music Studio

Masthead Photographer: Paul Kennedy
Marketing: Wendy Day-Brown, Jacqueline Sisemore
Editors: Mark Chalon Smith, Scottie Hinkey, Catlin Moore
Writers: Mark Chalon Smith, Scottie Hinkey, Catlin Moore

Artful Devices: Electronic Music at UCI continued from page 1

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Enjoy!

Spring 2006 Calendar

April

Gassmann Electronic Music Series

Traditional Instruments Meet New Technology: Music for Piano, Sforah and Electronics

Robert J. Gluck, piano and electronic sforah

Wed, April 5, 8 pm

Winifred Smith Hall, free

Robert Gluck performs new music for computer-mediated piano and electronic sforah, including compositions by Christopher Dahman, Tzi Amini, Robert Gluck and others.

"Art Song and Artistry Series

Master Class with Soprano Angela Brown

Mon, April 10, 1 pm

Winifred Smith Hall, free

Brown has been hailed as the brightest new star in the operatic world. She is scheduled in April to perform in Vesti’s Aida at Opera Pacific and will work with UCI student performers on issues of technique, stage deportment and interpretation.

Drama Stage 2

Our Town

by Thornton Wilder

Brian Swendsen, director

Thur-Sat, April 13-15, 8 pm

Matinee: Sat, April 15, 2 pm

Little Theatre, $10/9/8

Grover’s Corners and its everyday folk come alive in Thornton Wilder’s beloved Pulitzer Prize-winning play. With the omnipresent Stage Manager as guide, you’ll be introduced to the Gibbs and Webb families as they make their way through a touchingly human world marked by romance, happiness and loss.

University Art Gallery and Room*

Second Annual Guest Juried Undergraduate Exhibition (UAG)

Student Honors Project (R)

April 13-21

May

UCI Symphony Orchestra

Gods and Demons

Stephen Tucker, conductor

Fri-Sat, May 5-6, 4 pm

Pre-concert conversation: Fri, May 5, 7 pm

Irvine Barclay Theatre, $12/10/8

Weber: Overture to Der Freischütz

Mozart: Piano Concerto in A Major, K. 488, Nina Scokin, soloist

Beethoven: Symphony No. 3, Eroica

A Tribute to Bernard Gilmore

Wed, May 10, 8 pm

Winifred Smith Hall, free

June

Drama at UCI

All-Undergraduate Production

Under Milk Wood

by Dylan Thomas

Don Hill, director

Fri-Sat, June 2-3, Thur-Sat, June 8-10, 8 pm

Matinées: Sat, June 3 & 10, 2 pm

Claire Trevor Theatre, $12/10/8

Come spend time with No Good Boyo, Lily Small, Polly Garter, Organ Morgan, Captain Cat and other inimitable characters in the world of Llareggub. Dylan Thomas’ “play for voices” describes a day in the life of the inhabitants of a small Welsh seaside town, their dreams and habits, loves and regrets.

UCI Percussion Ensemble

Theresa Dimond, conductor

Mon, June 5, 8 pm

Winifred Smith Hall, free

University Art Gallery and Room*

Senior Exhibition

June 8-17

UCI Wind Ensemble

Victor Aguilar, conductor

Wed, May 31, 8 pm

Winifred Smith Hall, free

UCI Vocal Arts students will perform Samuel Barber’s Hermit Songs and Aaron Copland’s Old American Songs

UCI Jazz Orchestra

Charles Owens, conductor

Fri, May 19, 8 pm

Claire Trevor Theatre, $12/10/8

UCI Chamber Series

Music of Epic Proportions

Andrè Gribo and Alan Ferruccio, pianos

Sat, May 20, 8 pm

Winifred Smith Hall, $12/10/8

Town and Gown Music Season presents Honors Concert

Sun, May 21, 2 pm

Winifred Smith Hall, $12/10/8

Performed by UCI music scholarship winners Proceeds support UCI music scholarships Art Song and Artistry Series

Barber and Copland

Wed, May 24, 8 pm

Winifred Smith Hall, free

UCI Vocal Arts students will perform Samuel Barber’s Hermit Songs and Aaron Copland’s Old American Songs

*University Art Gallery and Room*

MFA 3 Thesis, Part II

May 25-June 2

UCI Choirs

May 4-12

UCI Percussion Ensemble

Theresa Dimond, conductor

Matinees: Sat, May 13, 8pm

Winifred Smith Hall, $5 all seats

Showcase Concert

Tue, May 16, noon

Winifred Smith Hall, free

Features students from the Music Department

Enjoy!