Letter from the Chair

Remarkable new faculty join the Department as we begin our second year in the beautiful McMurtry Building.

Painter and Stanford art teacher Kevin Bean, who passed away at age 60 on May 21, 2017 after a long fight with ALS, had this to say when Stanford’s Dean for Religious Life asked him: “What is the role of art-making in your life?”:

Canvas are a great place for me to think out loud. I make it a point to embarrass myself there regularly. That way I know I am not holding back.

Bean actually did not “say” these words, since by 2012, when the dean contacted him, he had trouble speaking. Instead he wrote out his answers in response to the dean’s questions. But his response—like the rest of his answers (presented in full, at the end of this newsletter)—is as direct as such things can be. The responses are wise. They are earned, too, the kind that his illness—and his long dedication to painting—gave him the insight and right to express.

In the lobby of the McMurtry Building four of Kevin’s paintings were on view much of the fall quarter, along with a beautiful photograph of him and a few short sentences about his life and art. I never knew Kevin—who taught in the Department of Art & Art History from 1999 to 2010, when he had to stop because of worsening ALS symptoms. But I have gotten to know his paintings.

In one, a naked Jesus rides on the shoulders of a jovial but eerie snowman. Snowballs or soap bubbles float around Jesus’s head. Christ is more substantial than the snowman, less given to melting than his comrade, who is hardly more than a bundle of outlines. But the insubstantial snowman bears the hot warmth of Jesus’s thighs without losing his holiday cheer. Faith and falsity abide together, solemn in their absurdity, intent upon some existential round that no idea can penetrate.

“I make it a point to embarrass myself there regularly.” Kevin’s words imply that works of art do not portray ideas or readied states of feeling. Instead they create the consciousness of the person who makes them. That consciousness remains out in front of the person who has given it form—a mystery to him as much as to anyone else. I am trying to make my own writing more like this.

Alexander Nemerov

Kevin Bean, Boy Jesus on a Snowman, 1995, Oil on Canvas, 70 x 60 in.
News from the Neighborhood

The Arts & Sciences Lectures in the Fine Arts: “The Forest: America in the 1830s”

The Nemerov’s are the desire to illuminate. Their conviction and a commitment to see its potential and turn it into something special. I really look forward to working with them.

The lectures were held at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., in the 19th century, and the first ever in the history of the series to be presented there. The topic of his lectures, “The Forest: America in the 1830s”, was the first ever in the history of the series to be presented there. The lectures presented a fun and engaging way to learn about American art history and culture. The lectures were attended by art enthusiasts, historians, and students from all over the world, and were a huge success. The lectures were presented by Professor Alexander Nemerov, Assistant Professor of Art and Art History at Stanford University. Professor Nemerov is a leading art historian and scholar, and is widely recognized for his expertise on American art and culture.

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In 2017 the Stanford Art Gallery celebrates its centennial. Built in just two years, the Stanford Art Gallery was constructed in 1917 from a generous donation from Leland Stanford, Sr.’s younger brother. Thomas Welton Stanford helped create the visual presence close to the main quadrangle. Among many contributions to the University, Thomas Welton Stanford helped establish one of the nation’s foremost campuses, and he helped establish the building that is the Stanford Art Gallery.

In the late summer of 1917, noted printmaker Pedro de Lemos was appointed as the first Curator of the Stanford Art Gallery. De Lemos’s donations of art collection and the creation of a strong cultural presence close to the main quadrangle. Among many contributions to the University, Thomas Welton Stanford helped establish one of the nation’s foremost campuses, and he helped establish the building that is the Stanford Art Gallery.

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Journeys in the Studio, Archive, and Field

We asked Caroline Joly, Amber Imrie-Situnayake, Vanessa Kam, Jamie Meltzer, Danny Smith and Lora Webb about their recent creative explorations. Here is what they had to say.

Jamie Meltzer, Associate Professor of Art History and head of the Department of Art History

My studio practice involves reassembling material from the archives, particularly in the 18th century. Often this comes in the form of letters, which I print onto transparent material and then pair with archival images. I then make drawings and paintings on these materials. These can become part of a larger project, or remain discrete units. The process of making work involves a great deal of research and looking. It involves a kind of detective work as I sift through paper collections. I also make documentary films which bring together the material on which I work in a broader way. My most recent film, "The Dream Team," focuses on three individuals who were wrongfully convicted of murder over 20 years ago and who have dedicated their lives to freeing other wrongly-exonerated men who have spent years in prison. The documentary will be broadcast on PBS in 2017 and has been honored with numerous awards including Best Director at the New York Festivals, Best Documentary at the Austin Film Festival, Best Experimental at the Newport Beach Film Festival, the Best Documentary Award at the New York Independent Film Festival, and Best Documentary at the New York Jewish Film Festival. It is currently awaiting broadcast on the PBS series "Independent Lens".

Amber Imrie-Situnayake, Contemporary Performance Artist

To mark this auspicious occasion of a one-year anniversary in her new life in the McMurtry Library, Caroline Culp, Amber Imrie-Situnayake, and I were asked by the Stanford University Art Gallery Library to explore the questions, "What does a library mean to you?" Caroline Culp, Amber Imrie-Situnayake, and I each have a personal relationship to libraries. I have worked as a writer, a journalist, and a librarian. Caroline Culp is a contemporary artist and writer. Amber Imrie-Situnayake is a contemporary performance artist. We each make sense of the question "What does a library mean to you?" in our own way. We ask these questions of students and library patrons to animate the art practice to showcase items from the Bowes Library's locked stack collections to celebrate the book's survival and flourishment, in a moment of necessity and triumph. A culture of reverence for the book has been fostered within the Bowes Library, a campus resource for the students, faculty, staff, and the community at large. The library's locked stack collections are opened to animate the art practice to showcase items from the Bowes Library's locked stack collections to celebrate the book's survival and flourishment, in a moment of necessity and triumph.

Caroline Culp, Head Librarian

To mark this auspicious occasion of a one-year anniversary in her new life in the McMurtry Library, Caroline Culp, Amber Imrie-Situnayake, and I were asked by the Stanford University Art Gallery Library to explore the questions, "What does a library mean to you?" Caroline Culp, Amber Imrie-Situnayake, and I each have a personal relationship to libraries. I have worked as a writer, a journalist, and a librarian. Caroline Culp is a contemporary artist and writer. Amber Imrie-Situnayake is a contemporary performance artist. We each make sense of the question "What does a library mean to you?" in our own way. We ask these questions of students and library patrons to animate the art practice to showcase items from the Bowes Library's locked stack collections to celebrate the book's survival and flourishment, in a moment of necessity and triumph.
Highlights of Last Year

Lectures

Studio Lecture Series

The Department of Visual and Environmental Studies at Stanford University held two lecture series in the 2016-17 academic year. The first series featured guest speakers from around the world, highlighting the latest developments in the field of visual and environmental studies. The second series invited students to present their work and share insights with the community. Both series were well-attended and provided valuable opportunities for learning and networking.

Christkins Distinguished Lecture

The Christkins Distinguished Lecture series featured three highly regarded artists in academic year 2016-17. Each artist conducted studio visits with our students and presented lectures in Oshman Hall, open to the public. Our first guest was Slovakian-born and current Professor of Critical Studies at Mason Gross School of the Arts, who took a close look at what Johns representations of the human physique, followed by an evening lecture in Oshman Hall, open to the public. Our first guest was Slovakian-born and current Professor of Critical Studies at Mason Gross School of the Arts, who took a close look at what Johns representations of the human physique, followed by an evening lecture in Oshman Hall, open to the public.

Exhibitions

Stanford Art Gallery Exhibitions

The Stanford Art Gallery is a 1,900 square foot exhibition space that is an integral part of the programs, research, and curricula of the department, and provides a dynamic learning and teaching resource for both students and faculty. The gallery features a variety of exhibitions, including solo and group shows, as well as temporary exhibitions.

Faculty Projects & Achievements

Our staff and faculty have been the recipients of several prestigious awards and grants in recent years. These include the Holcim Awards, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Artadia Awards. The Department of Visual and Environmental Studies is committed to fostering a vibrant and thriving community of artists, scholars, and critics.

Contact Information

For more information about the Department of Visual and Environmental Studies, please visit the website at:

www.stanford.edu/departments/ves/

Thank you for your support and continued interest in our work.
Exciting Events to Come

Lectures

Manuel Rocha Ituribide

Public Lecture
Thursday, February 15, 2017 | 5:30pm
Oshman Hall, McMurtry Building

In this lecture, the composer and artist Manuel Rocha Ituribide will talk about his different works (composition, sound sculpture and sound installation, conceptual art, graphics, etc.) both in the fields of visual art and music, focusing his attention on leading concepts that drive his ideas such as complexity, deconstruction, emptiness and chance, and giving attention to the different elements that conform a transdisciplinary work or art, like context, time, space and intermediality.

The Studio Lecture Series is sponsored by the Millicent Greenwell Clapp Fund for Studio Art.

Qiu Zhijie

Christensen Distinguished Lecture
Thursday, April 26, 2018 | 5:30pm
Oshman Hall, McMurtry Building

Qiu Zhijie is a contemporary Chinese artist known for his text- and calligraphy-based practice, which encompasses photography, performance, installation, painting, and video. His works explore the struggle of self-assertion, particularly with reference to Chinese history. Qiu frequently photographs or films his writing performances, and produces what he has termed “calli-photo-graphy.” Within this category, some of his most famous works include his “Tattoo” series (begun 1994), in which Qiu painted words and patterns onto his own body.

Made possible by a generous grant from Carmen M. Christensen.

Exhibitions

Stanford Art Gallery

Jonathan Cahn
January 23 through March 18, 2018

Art Practice MFA Thesis Exhibition
May 15 through June 17, 2018

Xiaoxe Xie
July 17 through August 26, 2018

Coulter Art Gallery

Annual First Year MFA Exhibition
February 4 through March 25, 2018

Undergraduate Honors Thesis Exhibition
April 17 through May 7, 2018

Undergraduate Seniors Show
May 22 through June 16, 2018

Summer Exhibition TBD
July 4 through August 26, 2018

McMurtry Building & Stanford Art Gallery

Studios

Open Studios
A self-guided art tour. Rare opportunity to see student artwork in the studios in which it was created.
Fall: Friday, December 8, 2017
Winter: Friday, March 16, 2018

Film Screenings

Across Campus

Film Production 114
Films by students enrolled in Film Production 114: Introduction to Film & Video Production
Fall: Friday, December 8, 2017
Spring: Friday, June 8, 2018

1st Year MFA Documentary Film
Films by First Year MFA students in the Documentary Film Program
Fall: Tuesday, December 12, 2017
Winter: Tuesday, March 20, 2018
Spring: Thursday, June 14, 2018

2nd Year MFA Documentary Film
Thesis films produced by graduating Second Year MFA students in the Documentary Film Program
Saturday, June 16, 2018

Subscribe to announcements for all upcoming lectures, exhibitions and film screenings.
Art Festival at the Baijia Lake Museum in Nanjing

Hybrid Print, which makes use of our new facilities.

Garage Hydraphilia at the

Many other exhibits rounded out the year, including

past summer.

Gabriel Harrison for the solo exhibit

The Fix California's Pacific coast. These works were split

Gail Wight

Chen Hongshou's Portraits," for the catalogue of

. Richard Vinograd

show "Entangled" at Emerson College's Urban Arts:

of Hagia Sophia. Pentcheva organized an interna-

mersing modern audiences in the reverberant

immersion program ITALIC.

Altman and a lecture course,

for MLN Comparative Literature. She developed

Dostoevsky, Bresson, and Kafka

Somaini. She reviewed Sharon Cameron's book

Of Cats and Men: Eisenstein, Art and

Volume 2,

mance as the title character in Sergei Eisenstein's

(on George

Lectures at the National Gallery, speaking on "The

retrospective of the artist at the Whitney Museum

essay titled "Grant Wood Goes

produced by Andy Warhol from

Meyer and Phelan opening in

premiered his latest documentary film,

Jamie Meltzer

on Amazon starting in July 2018.

Professor Meltzer's previous feature documentary

was released in theaters by Music Box Films; Off

Lens, 2003), about the shadowy world of song-

was released in theaters by Music Box Films; Off

The 500 Capp Street, using Ireland's idea

of African-American automobility.

difference in impact between black-and-white and

ed on some pictures he took at the Lorraine Motel

contributed the essay "A Safe Place," which reflect-

impression that the festival's titles were

return to the academy.

Iain Boal and Meredith Tromble and a conversation

continued apace, with essays by

The

world of Margaret Mead, and in the new book,

her first book,

tion is reproduced here.

preface by the author considers the book's rel-

Graduate Studies since last fall and will continue the

exhibition at the Denver Art Museum scheduled

in Arizona, May 2017;

2016-2017 at

American

American

Brown Institute artist-in-residence Paul D. Miller

, which resonated powerfully and mean-

ments made art work and discussed the global art

included leading a class of undergraduates to the

Professor Altman served on the executive board of

the national PBS series "America ReFramed"

had collaborated with the board of directors of the

...
Kelly Balthier - Assistant Manager

Kelly has been with the department since June 2006. She manages the administration of faculty research and grant funding, advises faculty appointees, and financial analysis projects.

In addition to her work at Stanford, she enjoys stage managing productions for Children's Musical Theatre San Jose, and following her family as a soccer & baseball mom!

Christopher J. Bennett - Finance Associate

Before joining the Department of Art, Aesthetics, and Art History in 2015, Christopher Bennett worked in various offices around campus and served as an accounting manager for a regional music non-profit organization. As the Department’s Finance Associate, he manages most of the financial transactions secured by the Department’s faculty and staff. With over 30 years of experience, he is responsible for bookkeeping, accounts receivable and payable, and financial reports.

Lauren Dougall - Experimental Media Studio Manager

Lauren has been managing the Experimental Media Studio since December 2014. She oversees all operations of the Studio, Tinker Lab, Prototyping Lab, and Digital Print Studio, ensuring that all equipment is in working order and offering clinics and training to students throughout the academic year. She also manages a team of research students with equipment check-out, open lab hours each quarter, the studio’s processes for photography and video installation and the annual MFA from Mills College.

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As Architecture & Technology, Matthew Fischl researches, implements and facilitate the use of art production and presentation technology for the entire department. He provides classroom AV support, training and maintenance for advanced digital tools, and coordinating special projects. Matthew came to Stanford from Baltimore, where he earned his MFA from Maryland Institute College of Art in 2010. He is a practicing artist with interests in animation, game design and sound.

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Mark oversees all technical and facilities requirements of the Documentary Film Program, and manages the program’s operational budget. He is responsible for class screenings as well as the weekly lunchtime film screenings and the annual film screening. He also serves as a liaison to program alumni and is in charge of new facilities and equipment.

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Joe Lewis Facilities Manager

As Facilities Manager, Joe oversees facility operations and staff for seven department buildings, including the McMurtry Building, Stanford Art Gallery, the Bleeker studio complex and the Loughlin Artist Studios. Joe executes, coordinates and problem-solves a number of activities, to support the operations, maintenance, repair, upkeep, inventory, and refurbishments relating to the physical environment and building systems of the department. Joe joined the department in March, 2017, from more than 12 years of service in corporate operations, so university life is new to him. Away from work, Joe enjoys Marvel movies and being entertained by his South African mastiff, Zeus.

Paul Meyers Film & Media Studies Technologist

Paul joined the department in late 2016, after several years freelancing in documentary film production in both the Washington, DC and San Francisco Bay areas. As a 2012 graduate of Stanford’s MFA program in Documentary Film, he has enjoyed returning to the Art & Art History Department and its striking new home in the McMurtry Building. Working closely with Film & Media Studies Technical Manager Mark Urbanek, Paul provides technical guidance to students in the Documentary Film MFA program as well as those in various undergraduate production courses, with a particular focus on post-production and editing workflows.

Sommer Wood Photography Lab Manager

Sommer recently joined the Photography Lab after extensive experience as a Lab Technician at Barry University, where she earned her MFA, as well as at Florida Atlantic University. She has fourteen years of professional experience as a photographer, including a steady exhibition record, and is active with the Society for Photographic Education. As an instructor, she has taught courses in a wide variety of photographic techniques. In her free time she enjoys outdoor activities, especially with her three energetic Labrador Retrievers.
Kevin Bean  
The Meaning of Life

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Stanford University
Department of Art & Art History

Contact Us

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Stanford, CA 94305

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artdepartment@stanford.edu
art.stanford.edu
facebook.com/StanfordART

Donations to the Department of Art & Art History can be made online at giving.stanford.edu/goto/artdepartmentgift or via our website.

Staff Day Out, California Academy of Sciences
Photo: Tour guide, California Academy of Sciences.