Undergraduate Research & Creative Project Grant Awards: 2011-2012

Awards to Students in Arts & Humanities

Student Name: Samantha Pratt
Project Title: Migratory Towers
Faculty Sponsor: Lynn Richardson, Art
Project Abstract:

“A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people.” -Theodore Roosevelt

The Northern Pass is a proposed “green energy” project that would bring reliable, clean energy (predominantly hydropower) from Québec into New Hampshire for use of the population of New Hampshire and other New England states. However, this project will result in deforestation, displacement of wildlife from their natural habitats and water pollution. In my proposed project, I intend to merge contemporary environmental issues with new media by using industrial materials to cast organic forms. Using visual media, I seek to create awareness about the fact that our fragile local environment will be threatened by the Northern Pass Project. Entitled “Migratory Towers,” my work will incorporate native wildlife as its subject matter ironically created with industrial materials to conceptualize the precarious relationship between environmental development and our natural habitat.

I intend to make repetitive molds of organic forms to convey my ideas. Currently the forms I am building examine the natural repetition of forms found in nature, for example acorns and lotus pods. These organic materials will be attached to both Styrofoam forms I construct and readymade forms. These forms will depict a cross-section of local wildlife, such as mallards, Canadian geese and white-tailed deer. I wish to incorporate many native birds to comply with the important notion that the Northern Pass Project will be blocking and disrupting major migratory pathways.

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Student Name: Kathryn Levesque
Project Title: Encapsulated Memories
Faculty Sponsor: Peter Roos, Art
Project Abstract:

I am a dual option (Graphic Design and Studio) BFA student working in studio for my BFA project. The results of my artistic expression from this year’s study will be on display at the Thorne-Sagendorph Art Gallery during the Student Exhibition in spring 2012. I am requesting funds to assist me with the completion of this project to its fullest potential.

One of the most valued aspects of my life is my family. I have chosen to explore and express the significance of their role from my birth until now. A family quilt will be the subject of multi-media works. The concept for my project comes from the quilt that once lay on my parent’s bed, which was handmade by my grandmother. It tells many stories of the nights I spent by my parents’ side as well as all of the moments that they were there, maybe not physically but emotionally, for my brothers and me. The wear and tear it endured over the years is a representation of both the enjoyable and tough times we went
through as a family. With my artwork, I intend to inspire other members of the community to reflect upon their lifetime and the importance of their own family.

This grant will be spent on materials for combining painting and printmaking techniques for the final pieces. All of the processes and mediums I will be using are essential in conveying my message to my viewers and triggering personal reactions.

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Student Name: Kerry Howe
Project Title: The “Light Box” and the “Light Web”
Faculty Sponsor: Lynn Richardson, Art
Project Abstract:

I am a BFA studio art major with a focus in sculpture. The work that I will be doing throughout this school year is in preparation for my Senior Showcase at the Thorne-Sagendorph Gallery in May. This work will be the capstone of my career as an art student at Keene State College.

I have chosen to do a metal sculpture in combination with a rope installation piece for this final project. Light will be the main focus of both the metal sculpture and the installation. Both pieces will use light as a medium and will be displayed on opposing sides of a dividing wall. The focus of this project is the opposition and duality of similar materials. Viewers will see the two pieces with the same focus, lights, in two totally different ways. The first sculpture, the “Light Box” is a rigid and straight-forward metal box holding colored lights behind a series of doors. The installation, the “Light Web” will be organic and flowing web of fabric and lights that will encompass a much larger space. The goal is to get completely different reactions and evoke different emotions from the viewers.

This grant will be used to assist me in purchasing the materials needed to construct these two sculptures. All of the materials that I will discuss are important elements that are necessary to the overall integrity of the sculptures.

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Student Name: Chris Jennerjohn
Project Title: Panels and Pyramids Evoking
Faculty Sponsor: Paul McMullan, Art
Project Abstract:

After being accepted into the BFA program for Studio Art I was excited and frightened. I know that this new major mean being part of the Student Exhibition at the Thorne-Sagendorph Art Gallery, but what would I create? What style? What medium? Where did my passion for art come from? I asked myself countless questions that summer. The most important question was, “What do I want to communicate?”

To me, art is a form of communication. I started working with this question in my mind, letting my unconscious drive me. What was my message? I still did not know what my final work would look like. After talking with peers, my faculty sponsor and feeling the pressure of graduation approaching I understood that I wanted to express that feeling you get when your clothes don’t fit right, or when the work that has to be done seems insurmountable, that needle in a haystack feeling. (You’re the needle, your life is the haystack.)
Then I knew I wanted my drawings to become an installation that would force the viewer to feel something. I have been visualizing a corner in the gallery that is covered in complex 8’ tall drawings combined with three-dimensional pyramid drawings. All working together to express the idea of being uncomfortable and over-welmed. A sensation that cannot be pinpointed as simply as happy or sad. I want to create and installation that is playing in that gray area of difficult emotions.

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Student Name:    Drew Arvin, Adrienne Osborne & Rob Panek
Project Title:    State of Liberty
Faculty Sponsor: Ted White, Film Studies
Project Abstract:

"It is necessary to distinguish between the virtue and the vice of obedience.” ~ Lemuel K. Washburn, author - 1911

Our proposed project is a 30-minute documentary entitled State of Liberty. We follow five individuals within the New Hampshire-based Free State Project, a Libertarian movement with a goal to get 20,000 “liberty-minded” activists to move to New Hampshire to create a society with minimal government focused on protection of life, liberty and property. Approximately 11,000 people have signed the FSP agreement and around 900 have moved to New Hampshire. The five people we follow already live in Keene, NH. J.J. is one of the more active members residing in Keene. Jason, an advocate for the legalization of marijuana, independently documents local acts of civil disobedience against law enforcement. Pete and Ademo are big advocates of free speech and helped to establish the National Chalk the Police Day in which activists utilize their first amendment rights in a creative way by writing political messages on sidewalks. Our fifth subject Ian, who hosts a national call-in radio show “Free Talk Live”, and kept a blog while incarcerated for several months because of a non-violent confrontation with local law enforcement.

Each of the individuals are heavily involved with activism, using different mediums to express their views. Our subjects within the movement will not be our only focus. We will have testimonials from the opposite side of the spectrum inviting police, politicians and citizens devoted to other political views.

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Awards to Students in Sciences & Social Sciences

Student Name:    Licia Spina
Project Title:    Effect of yoga on college student’s stress levels
Faculty Sponsor: Karen Jennings, Psychology
Project Abstract:

Yoga is a contemplative practice that focuses on mind-body connections. The purpose of this study is to assess the effect of yoga on college freshmen’s stress levels. Twenty freshman college students will attend a yoga class at Keene State College once a week for a period of six weeks. Yoga participation once a week is hypothesized to be associated with decreased levels of stress and improvements in lifestyle behaviors that improve overall well-being. This study will look at the changes in anxiety and stress related symptoms directly before attending an hour-long session, directly following the yoga session, and after the completion of the six weeks. The results of this study may suggest that attending weekly yoga
sessions may increase awareness of personal stressors. This heightened awareness may increase behaviors that improve well-being such as spending more time outside, spending time alone, meditating, eating healthier, and exercising.

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Student Name: Kim Kasprak  
Project Title: The Influence of Web-Invading Spiders on their Host  
Faculty Sponsor: Karen Cangialosi, Biology  
Project Abstract:

Web-invading spiders have impacts on their host spider populations. Very little previous research has been done on web-evacuations by host spiders due to the presence of multiple *N. trigonum*. One web invading species, *Neospintharus trigonum*, utilizes multiple foraging strategies, including web stealing, web sharing, kleptoparasitism, and host predation which may cause high impact on hosts. The proposed study will determine the impact of *N. trigonum* on the hammock spider, *Pityohyphantes costatus*, which is one of the primary hosts of *N. trigonum*. I plan to test the hypotheses that 1) multiple *N. trigonum* will increase the likelihood of web-evacuation by *P. costatus* and 2) *N. trigonum* with an increased starvation level of 8 to 10 days will exhibit different foraging behaviors compared to unstarved spiders when invading the host webs. Host spiders will be placed in a 90x 150x100cm screened cage and allowed to build webs. They will then be divided into three treatment groups to receive zero, one, or two *N. trigonum*, which have been starved for 8 to 10 days. My previous work on a class project indicates that two *N. trigonum* may cause more frequent web-evacuation in host spiders than zero or one *N. trigonum*, but more data is needed to substantiate this. The results of the proposed research will determine both the influence of multiple *N. trigonum* in host webs, and the importance of hunger levels in *N. trigonum* and their role in causing web-evacuation by the host, *P. costatus*.

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Student Name: Kyle Virgin  
Project Title: The Impact of Virtual Manipulatives on Spatial Visualization Skills  
Faculty Sponsor: Beverly Ferrucci, Mathematics  
Project Abstract:

Within the study of geometry in the elementary school curriculum is the natural development of students’ spatial visualization, the ability to visualize two- and three-dimensional objects. The national mathematics standards call specifically for the development of such skills through hands-on experiences. A commonly accepted method is through the instruction of mathematical manipulatives, tangible, visual aids used in mathematics classrooms. This study will focus on the impact of such manipulatives namely tangram blocks as a teaching tool in the elementary school mathematics classroom but with a twist. Two sections of Math 171 will be used as the comparison groups, and both will be taught the same spatial visualization techniques. However, the first section, the treatment group, will be taught the spatial visualization techniques by using only the digital format of an interactive whiteboard (SMART board). The second section, the comparison group, will be taught the same spatial visualization techniques, but with physical, tangible three-dimensional tangram blocks. Through a pre-test and a post-test, the classes will be compared to observe any influences of the effects of concrete versus digital manipulatives on spatial visualization skills and level of geometry understanding.