We are pleased to present the work of Paul Bahrs, Suzanne June Boekeeide, Yamini Nasir Chaudhri, Euna Goh, Jelena Opačić, Sara Pruijsser, Georgia Wohnsen, and John W. Yost, Master of Fine Arts degree candidates for the spring semester 2011. The 60-credit M.F.A. is the terminal degree in studio art. A tradition since 1983, the M.F.A. exhibition is an important way in which the University Art Museum and the Department of Art collaborate to enhance the academic environment at the University at Albany. The exhibition represents the culmination of these students’ intensive training and study in fine art practices. It provides an opportunity for them to exhibit in a professional museum setting and to share their efforts with the academic community, alumni, audiences of the Capital Region, and beyond.

We are grateful to the Office of the President, the Office of the Provost, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Ann C. Matarasso Endowment Fund, established in honor of Professor Emeritus Mark Greenwood, for support of the exhibition and this publication. The Art Department would also like to thank the museum staff for its hard work and dedication throughout the exhibition process.

Danny Goodwin, Chair, Art Department
Janet Riker, Director, University Art Museum

7. Yamini Nasir Chaudhri
Meeting with Strangers – Paranda, 2011
Video still

8. Yamini Nasir Chaudhri
Meeting with Strangers – Square Dance, 2011
Video still

9. Georgia Wohnsen
Scratch Off Navajo 2, 2011
Archival inkjet print
50 x 60 inches

10. John Yost
The Universal, 2011
HD video
Dimensions variable
Paul Baush
My role is documenter of idiosyncrasies and propagandist of my own interests, no matter how insane. I take images of people, places, things, and events from both personal and universal histories and generalize them into an inventory of archetypes and icons. I often examine subtexts in fragments and paint them with large flat planes of color. My graphic stylization serves to neutralize preconceived hierarchies. On this level playing field, an image of a friend from high school is equal in importance to an image of Queen Victoria.

Suzanne June Boatenreiter
Fuumá (pronounced foo-mah) is a character I created and perform as that represents the innocent aspects of my libeled self. Fuumá naively wanders the world as an instinctive, preverbal civilian who is both part animal and part child. Fuumá’s adventures can be playful and fantastic; depending on the situation, they can also be devastating and tumultuous. Her world moves from the everyday into a realm that is deeply subjective. Through Fuumá, I’m exploring the release of my capacity for wonder.

Yaminay Nasir Chaudhri
Part Pakistani, part American—I am in between. Though I am able to cross boundaries and inhabit both worlds, I experience the dilemma of not belonging in either place. I am interested in the emotional, gendered, and spatial disconnection between my biased perceptions of these worlds and the role I play as a mediator between them. In meetings with expatriate Pakistanis in the U.S. and patriotic American soldiers, I create situations for intimate exchange, allowing myself to be swayed in either direction and exposing my insecure longing for home.

Euna Goh
My painting is an expedition into two realms: ancient Korean folk paintings and architectural spaces. Each represents individual and universal histories and generalize them into an inventory of archetypes and icons. I have traversed this upstate landscape with admiration and expectancy, always considering the relationship between materiality and image, these fragile structures unfold before the viewer through intimate study. As if to embody the ephemeral dreamscape, a heap, slow moving vessel appears, drifting through its pale climate.

Jelena Opacic
Naked person (in costume) walks around art museum. Fashionable woman sits in hospital waiting room wearing bandage hat. Woman in room holds walks on street. Bruised woman boards bus. Skateboarder with similar bruises also boards bus, as well as fatty-cheeked and bearded artist. They are all me.

As a member of society and as a person with a carefully composed appearance and a measured set of reinventions, I provide an aesthetic and social experience. It is not defined for the audience that I am a performer. I use our closeness as mutual identification, and I risk shame or rejection in social situations to allow the audience to purposely disregard my actions. Once the audience acknowledges my intent, its perceptions and judgments become confused. Perhaps they will rethink them.

My goal is to increase the level of an observer’s awareness so I can challenge social expectations and revisit the proliferation of prejudice and cultural norms, formed over time, which play an important role in the construction of identity.

Sara Pruksa
Through the enchantment of personal belongings, the desire to play, and the beckoning of an illusionary realm, come sculptures. Sensation inspires the transformation of scraps and clutter. Hard-sewn forms and gently pressed papers are pinned into place. Goatskulls of binding and wrapping echo a feminine mystic rite. Ringed, taped, and tied together, they tetever and tip delicately. Illuminating the dance between material and image, these fragile structures unfold before the viewer through intimate study. As if to embody the ephemeral dreamscape, a heap, slow moving vessel appears, drifting through its pale climate.

Georgia Wehnsen
I was raised in Dolgeville, New York—a place habitually beige in hue, somewhat luke-warm in accommodation, but mineral-rich in the resources of rural history. Isolated from interest and sudden in diversity, the biographies of farm and farmer, shop and shopkeeper, school, student, and shoofleather coalesce into locality and the “local.” I use personal stories, cultural documentation, and fabricated animal spirit totems to explore the crossover between preserved reality and the allure of legends, spirits, and myths. I have traversed this upstate landscape with admiration and expectation, always collecting evidence of the cultural legacy underfoot.

John Yost
It would be wonderful to think that all photographed and filmed moments are honest. My dad almost died on Thanksgiving after complications from a motorcycle accident. I tried to build a time machine out of a motorcycle, to go back and warn him before the accident happened. But time travel isn’t possible.

Instead, I’ve been trying to film an honest moment. However, it’s common knowledge that all seemingly honest filmed moments have been gathered deceitfully. So I want you to decide if deception is important, or if, by being sincere in the deception, we can use film and photography to be truly honest.

I was never destined to be a filmmaker. I didn’t pick up my first 8mm camera at the age of five. However, it is still the only way I know how to communicate honestly to the world.