We are pleased to present the work of Katria Foster, Dustin Angelo Garafolo, Roberta Gentry, Wenjie Han, Angela Heisch, Monica Bill Hughes, Julie Pamkowski, and Ilana Zwiebel, Master of Fine Arts degree candidates for the spring semester 2014. The M.F.A. exhibition 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 and Art History 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 University at Albany Foundation, the College of Arts and Sciences, University Auxiliary Services (UAS), and the Ann C. Mataraso Endowment Fund, established in honor of Professor Emeritus Mark Greenwold, for support of the exhibition and this publication. The Department of Art and Art History would also like to thank the museum staff for their hard work and dedication throughout the exhibition process.

Rachel Dressler
Chair, Department of Art and Art History
Janet Riker
Director, University Art Museum

Angela Heisch
9 Painting, 2014
Acrylic paint on canvas, 24 x 24 inches

Monica Bill Hughes
Serena (with bananas), 2013
Acrylic and oil on canvas, 17 x 15 inches

Julia Pamkowski
All 2 (Garage), 2013
Archival litholaminate print, 20 x 16 inches

Ilana Zwiebel
With Glasses, 2013
Oil on canvas, 4 x 4 feet
In Chinese philosophy, the principle of yin-yang describes the natural world as abundant with opposite or contrary forces. This concept is critical to me, as it consistently influences my practice. In particular, abstraction, individual and social contexts, and the languages of Chinese traditional painting and Western modern painting. This dialectic makes my practice challenging. More importantly, these interactions are essentially interconnected and can be thought of as complementary. Ultimately they form a unity that is dynamic, harmonious, uncertain, and open. To pursue unity from contradiction is my goal; however, it is not essential that this unity be absolute or complete.

Dustin Angelo Garafolo
I have always been interested in the way photographs can evoke an experience of nostalgia. I am one of those people who keeps a collection of photographs to remind me of my past. I have this funny feeling that if I lose the photographs, I will lose the memory. While this may be an irrational fear, it is undeniable that our visual perception of images can trigger a gateway to memories.

My working pace is fast, combining wet and dry mediums. I work from my collection of photographs and the memories attached to them. Ultimately my drawings and paintings are slightly distorted to me, this is similar to the process of memory; some portions of information remain vivid, while others are hazy and distorted. If a photograph is a moment frozen in time, then my work allows me to unfreeze that moment during the process of analyzing and remaking the photograph.

Katria Foster
There is a shift in my reality when God becomes present. I experience a feeling of awe through meditative prayer and by encountering the natural world. Through the photographic process I re-imagine these structures whose function is to organize and separate, much like cabinets of curiosities, roomss in an apartment complex, or even chapters in a book.

Wenjie Han
In Chinese philosophy, the principle of yin-yang describes the natural world as abundant with opposite or contrary forces. This concept is critical to me, as it consistently influences my practice. In particular, architecture, my major subject, has become a mechanism to advance this concept. In my work, this concept can be seen in the interactions of subject and object, object and visual language, representation and abstraction, individual and social contexts, and the languages of Chinese traditional painting and Western modern painting. This dialectic makes my practice challenging. More importantly, these interactions are essentially interconnected and can be thought of as complementary. Ultimately they form a unity that is dynamic, harmonious, uncertain, and open. To pursue unity from contradiction is my goal; however, it is not essential that this unity be absolute or complete.

Angela Heisch
Without the use of an original referent, these drawings and paintings are conceived solely through the development and articulation of an abstract language. They are suggestions of forms and spaces as they appear when first glanced at, before they are categorized or named. I employ flat planes and forms that desire to construct an important and symbolic spectacle while remaining just beyond comprehension. Through the use of line, erasure, rough gradients, and grids, a battle for hierarchy begins to take place.

Endeavors—randomness versus pattern, revealing versus concealing, premeditated versus spontaneous mark-making—are tools I use to carry out the conversation between space and forms. These works offer a direct engagement of nameless and faceless forms that ultimately remain unverifiable in a constant state of ambiguity.

Julie Pamkowski
Cultural expectations of women, particularly childbearing and cultivated ideals of the female physique, are fascinating to me. My work comes from a deeply psychological and emotional place. It is this tangled, internal complexity that is a driving force for my process. My inspiration is derived not only from the media, but also through learned behavior and personal experiences as a woman.

Plastic bags, dolls, and pantyhose function as surrogates for a human presence. From these materials I create grotesque sculptures that resemble internal organs, dismembered limbs, and deformed fetuses, which I then photograph. I also digitally manipulate images as a way to transform thought processes, memories, and traumas into visual form. This work is a sinister yet playful investigation of the censorship between the internal and external selves and the female body.

Iana Zwiebel
Meaty, volumetric limbs emerge from flattened space, while the repeated geometric pattern invades the boundaries of the figure. In my paintings and prints, the figures become inseparable from the environment, challenging the foreground and background. The geometric pattern has moments of both thickness and transparency to allow the bright red underpainting to bleed through an otherwise neutral palette. This transparency, combined with moments of thick clouding, allows the rigid pattern some pulsation, giving it a kind of subtle life. The result is that the figures for each have unique spaces to occupy. These spaces aren’t separate, but rather seem to originate from inside the bodies. The environment then transforms into a psychological space, where the external world is being created by the emotional presence of the figure.