



# YEAR IN REVIEW

2024-2025



**SVAD**

SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS & DESIGN



# SVAD'S YEAR IN REVIEW



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# A YEAR TO REMEMBER

## A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

The School of Visual Arts and Design (SVAD) at UCF has had a dynamic year of creative innovation, academic excellence and community engagement. From national rankings to impactful outreach, SVAD continues to lead in visual arts and design education.

SVAD's presence at UCF Celebrates the Arts was a resounding success, featuring exhibitions in painting, 3D design, animation, architecture and more. Public favorites included the Architecture Showcase, Creative Clash and Character Animation Premieres. The school also hosted its third annual *Art Knight!* drawing over 1,400 attendees and debuting *Atmos: Fall 2024 BFA Exhibition*. Additionally, renowned artists Elizabeth Allen-Cannon, Wendy White and Noelle Mason headlined the Distinguished Artist Series. Additional talks featured leaders in ceramics, animation and design, showcasing SVAD's global reach and interdisciplinary focus.

Major awards and grants were secured by faculty including Dr. Keri Watson (\$800K+ total in grants), Professor Matt Dombrowski (NSF, GDC speaker, Luminary Award), and Dr. Stella Sung (Pabst Steinmetz Award). Nine faculty and staff were honored on Founders' Day, with four earning promotions and tenure.

SVAD students achieved excellence across disciplines. Notable awards include the 2025 Founders' Award (Architecture), Distinguished Undergraduate Researcher Award (Art History) and multiple wins at the AAF Orlando and AIGA SPOT Showcase. MFA students exhibited across Central Florida, while undergrads presented research at UCF's Scholar Symposium.

National recognition for SVAD programs included two top five rankings for our programs in animation and visual effects and a #6 ranking for public colleges for our illustration program (Animation Career Review).

SVAD expanded its partnerships and outreach through Adobe MAX, Limbitless Solutions, TEAAS Symposium, UCF SIGGRAPH and CREATE events. These efforts strengthened SVAD's local and national impact. The UCF Art Gallery hosted eight exhibitions, drawing over 8,200 guests across fall and spring shows, reinforcing the gallery's role as a central hub for UCF's artistic community.

**As SVAD moves forward, our school remains committed to supporting innovative learning, cross-disciplinary research and impactful community connections.**

For more updates, visit [cah.ucf.edu/svad/](https://cah.ucf.edu/svad/) and [cah.ucf.edu/gallery/](https://cah.ucf.edu/gallery/).

From Dr. Rudy McDaniel

*Thomas Rudy McDaniel*





# YEAR AT A GLANCE







**15**

**SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS**



**2,100+**

**ENROLLED STUDENTS**



**20+**

**COMMUNITY EVENTS**



**30+**

**AWARDS GRANTED TO  
STUDENTS & FACULTY**



**8+**

**PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY  
COLLABORATIONS**



# MEET THE NEWEST FACULTY

In 2024, the School of Visual Arts and Design welcomed nine new faculty members, each with a unique blend of talent and creativity – helping the school fulfill its mission of using art to inspire and ignite the imagination.



**INSTRUCTOR  
ANANYA SHENOY**

*ANIMATION &  
VISUALIZATION*

Ananya Shenoy is a 3D modeler and look-development artist with a background in traditional art. She has worked on multiple collaborative projects across games and short films. Her personal work involves blending the charm of stop-motion and 2D animation with 3D technology. Her approach to her work is iterative and centered on experimentation. She enjoys breaking the rules of a medium to create a new visual style. Her earlier roles involved illustration for 2D animation, social media, websites and merchandise. She has also been a tutor and mentor during her master's degree at the Savannah College of Art and Design where she assisted students with their projects and provided them with support as they navigated their college journeys. Apart from her work, she is a collector of hobbies and is always trying to find something new to try out. Her current interests include crochet, embroidery and sometimes, roller-skating.



**LECTURER  
OWEN BUFFINGTON**

*2D AND 3D DESIGN*

Owen Buffington earned a B.A. in geography and urban studies from Macalester College in 2004, and an M.F.A., with an emphasis in drawing, from the University of Arkansas in 2017. He has taught art in a number of venues including at universities, community art non-profits, juvenile detention facilities and public schools. Owen's work in drawing and related visual media explores the intersection of geography and the visual arts. In particular, the role drawing plays in shaping how we describe, define and organize our lived-in world.



**VISITING LECTURER  
ERICKA SOBRACK**

*DRAWING AND PAINTING*

Ericka Sobrack specializes in small-scale paintings depicting suburban scenes of America. Utilizing oil paint on wood panel, she renders theatrical and dramatic settings using stark lighting and selective color. Sobrack graduated with a master of fine arts in emerging media from the University of Central Florida in 2019 and was awarded a residency at the Maitland Arts and History Museum from 2019-2021. Her work has been exhibited in national and international exhibitions as well as multiple solo shows including The Lightner Museum in St. Augustine, Florida and Arts on Douglas Gallery in New Smyrna Beach, Florida.



**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
JENNIFER PRINCIVIL**

*ARCHITECTURE*

Jennifer Princivil holds a master of architecture (M.Arch) from the University of Florida. She is a founding member of the Project Lighthouse Mentorship Program and spent a decade teaching in the 2+2+2 Architecture program, mentoring aspiring architects through each step of their educational journey. In her professional work, she specializes in building envelope consulting, offering technical expertise in the design and construction of building exteriors. She is currently developing research in evidence-based design for birthing environments, aiming to improve health outcomes for mothers and infants through data-informed architectural solutions.

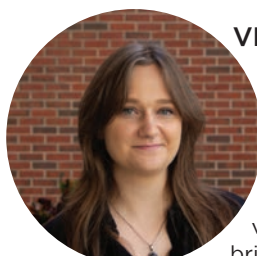




**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
MEGAN THOMAS**

*CERAMICS*

Megan Thomas grew up in Hamilton, Ohio. She studied ceramic sculpture and painting at Bowling Green State University as an undergraduate student and graduated with an M.F.A in ceramics from Utah State University in 2020. In her work, Megan seeks to tell stories about how people and animals respond to biological and emotional scarcity.



**VISITING LECTURER  
STEPHANIE TOTH**

*ANIMATION &  
VISUALIZATION*

Stephanie Toth is a multimedia visual artist whose practice bridges technical precision and conceptual exploration. Working primarily in 3D digital media, her work explores how games and animation can approach themes of identity, social structures and the human condition. As an educator, Stephanie emphasizes both fluency in production tools and the creative resilience necessary for iteration and experimentation. She is committed to helping students build strong technical foundations while encouraging critical thinking, curiosity and meaningful expression. She holds an M.F.A in animation from the Savannah College of Art and Design and a B.A. in digital media and peace-building from Eastern Mennonite University.



**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
MICHAEL TOLE**

*DRAWING*

Michael Tole was born in Texas and spent the beginning stages of his career living and working in Arizona. He earned his B.F.A in studio art from the University of Texas, and his M.F.A in painting and drawing from the University of North Texas. His 20-year career includes reviews and articles in *Art Forum International*, *The Dallas Morning News*, *The San Francisco Chronicle* and *Hi-Fructose*. Michael's exhibition record includes group and solo shows in Texas, New York and California. His work explores issues of gender dynamics and empowerment as informed by mass media, and his lived experience as a husband and father to two daughters.



**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
LINDSAY DEIFIK**

*PRINTMAKING*

Lindsay Deifik is an assistant professor in foundations and printmaking at the University of Central Florida. She practiced in Philadelphia for nine years, where she also received her M.F.A from the Tyler School of Art. She holds a B.F.A in printmaking and drawing from Washington University in Saint Louis. She is a former co-director and resident of Front/Space, a 2013 Rauschenberg Seed Grant recipient, as well as a former co-director at Fjord Gallery in Philadelphia. She has been an artist in residence in numerous locations, such as the Byrdcliffe Arts Colony, Officina Stamperia del Notaio in Sicily, ACRE and Monson Arts among others. She has shown in galleries in the state, as well as nationally and internationally.



**VISITING LECTURER  
NJERI KINUTHIA**

*2D AND 3D DESIGN*

Njeri Kinuthia was born and raised in Kenya. She received her bachelor's degree in fashion design from Machakos University, Kenya and moved to the U.S. in 2021 to pursue her M.F.A at the University of Central Florida, funded by the Provost's Fellowship Award. Her artistic merit has been recognized with awards, including the 2024 Florida Prize in Contemporary Art People's Choice Award, the 2024 University of Central Florida Outstanding Graduate Creative Research, and the 2023 Éclat Law Prize, among others. Njeri has exhibited her work in various shows and galleries, including the 2024 Florida Prize at the Orlando Museum of Art, and solo exhibitions regionally, nationally and internationally. Njeri's work explores themes of self-reflection and the suppression of women perpetuated by cultural norms.



# UNDERGRADUATE HIGHLIGHTS

## 1 Francesca La Madrid won a Student Scholar Symposium award during UCF Research Week

SVAD art history student Francesca La Madrid was awarded a \$300 scholarship at the Student Scholar Symposium, held during UCF Research Week, under the mentorship of Dr. Ilenia Colón Mendoza. The annual symposium provided students with the opportunity to present their research and creative scholarship in poster format. In her project titled "Disability in Baroque: Representation and Perception in Art", Madrid discussed artwork from various artists to explore how depictions of disability convey realism and human vulnerability.

## 4 Six students won awards at the Orlando American Advertising Awards

The American Advertising Awards is one of the industry's most prestigious competitions, drawing approximately 35,000 professional and student entries each year. On February 25, AAF-Orlando hosted its annual ADDY® Awards, where six SVAD students were recognized for their incredible work. Among them, three earned a Gold ADDY – the highest level of creative excellence. These students are Nicolas Polania '25 - Gold ADDY; Best of Student Award; Olivia Schneider '26 - Gold ADDY and Silver ADDY; Joshua Alonso '25 - Gold ADDY and Silver ADDY; and Hal Smith '25 - Silver ADDY.

## 2 Percy Brashear won a Distinguished Undergraduate Researcher Award

In March, Percy Brashear was recognized at the annual UCF Excellence Awards during UCF Research week, where they received the Distinguished Undergraduate Researcher Award under the mentorship of Dr. Ilenia Colón Mendoza. This honor celebrates exceptional students and faculty mentors who work diligently throughout the year on their research. Brashear was the only undergraduate recipient of UCF's College of Arts and Humanities, making this accomplishment particularly notable.

## 3 Architecture student Chase Scholze wins 2025 Undergraduate College Founders' Award

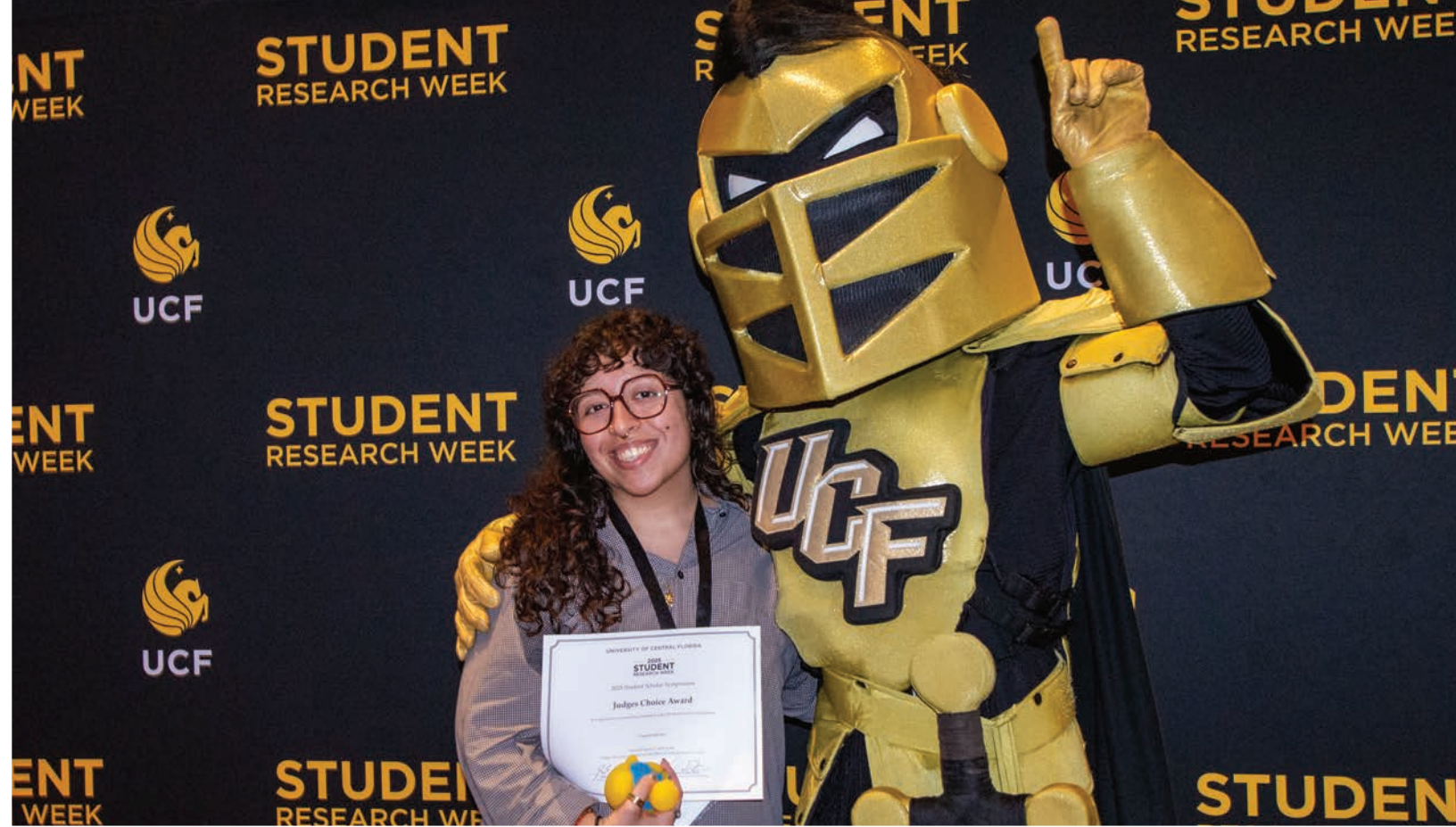
Every year on the first Wednesday of April, UCF celebrates the accomplishments of its employees, faculty and students during an event known as Founders' Day. Among this year's honorees was architecture student Chase Scholze, who earned the Undergraduate College Founders' Award, the highest honor a student can receive during their time at UCF. Scholze was recognized for his dedication and leadership as president of the UCF Chapter of the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) and lab technician at the UCF Architecture Studio.



## 5 19 students participated in the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) Orlando mentorship program, with five receiving awards at the Mentorship SPOT Showcase

The AIGA Orlando Mentorship Program pairs passionate UCF graphic design students with leading industry professionals to prepare them for successful careers. This year, 19 students were matched with mentors from notable organizations such as NASA, PepsiCo and Disney Consumer Products to develop design solutions to rebuild trust in a specific institution. Five students earned awards at the Mentorship SPOT Showcase, where mentees hosted tables to present their work and engage with the community.











# GRADUATE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

## 1 MFA Studio Art and Design candidates present exhibition and thesis defenses at UCF Art Gallery

Every spring, candidates in the MFA Studio Art and Design program showcase their research through a public exhibition at the UCF Art Gallery, accompanied by their thesis defenses, open to students, faculty, staff and the public. This year, Stella Arbeláez Tascón, Brittani Brown and Janessa Douds presented their work, drawing over 800 attendees on opening night.

## 2 The Casselberry Arts Center hosts *The Art Show* - an exhibition for MFA students

In collaboration with UCF, the Casselberry Arts Center hosted *The Art Show*, an exhibition for students in SVAD's MFA program. The exhibition invited participants to think beyond their studio practice, exploring both the challenges and successes of the exhibition format. It also offered valuable experience exhibiting in a professional gallery space outside UCF, while garnering recognition from the Central Florida community.

## 3 Stacie Becker hosts solo show *Catch and Release* at SoWhat! Arts at FAVO

In the spring, MFA Studio Art student Stacie Becker presented her first solo exhibition, *Catch and Release*, at SoWhat! Arts at FAVO. This show marked a significant milestone in Becker's academic and professional career, fulfilling a long-held personal goal ahead of graduation. With the support of faculty and her commitment to building professional relationships, Becker independently curated the show, presenting her original work while actively engaging with the Orlando arts community.



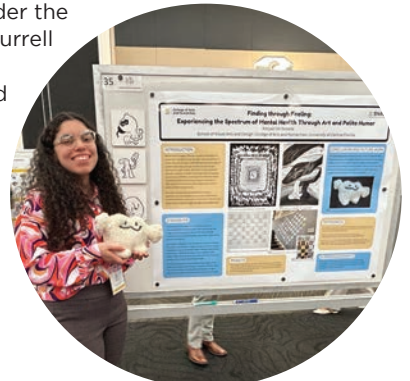
## 4 UCF MFA Students Attend SECAC 2024

In the fall, a group of graduate students - Alexander Alvarez, Brittani Brown and Stella Arbeláez Tascón - attended the 2024 Southeastern College Art Conference (SECAC) in Atlanta, Georgia. The annual conference offered a unique platform for UCF to showcase its growing influence in the arts community. Students had the opportunity to present their research, gain exposure to their work, and participate in numerous workshops and panels, where they established professional connections and explored new directions for their artistic practices.



## 5 Two graduate students won Student Scholar Symposium awards during UCF Research Week

Kenyari Gil Rosario and Stacie Becker were recognized at the Student Scholar Symposium during UCF Research Week for their remarkable research and presentations. Under the mentorship of Jason Burrell '90, '93, '94 MFA, both students demonstrated exceptional dedication to their academic work, receiving a \$300 scholarship in recognition of their efforts.



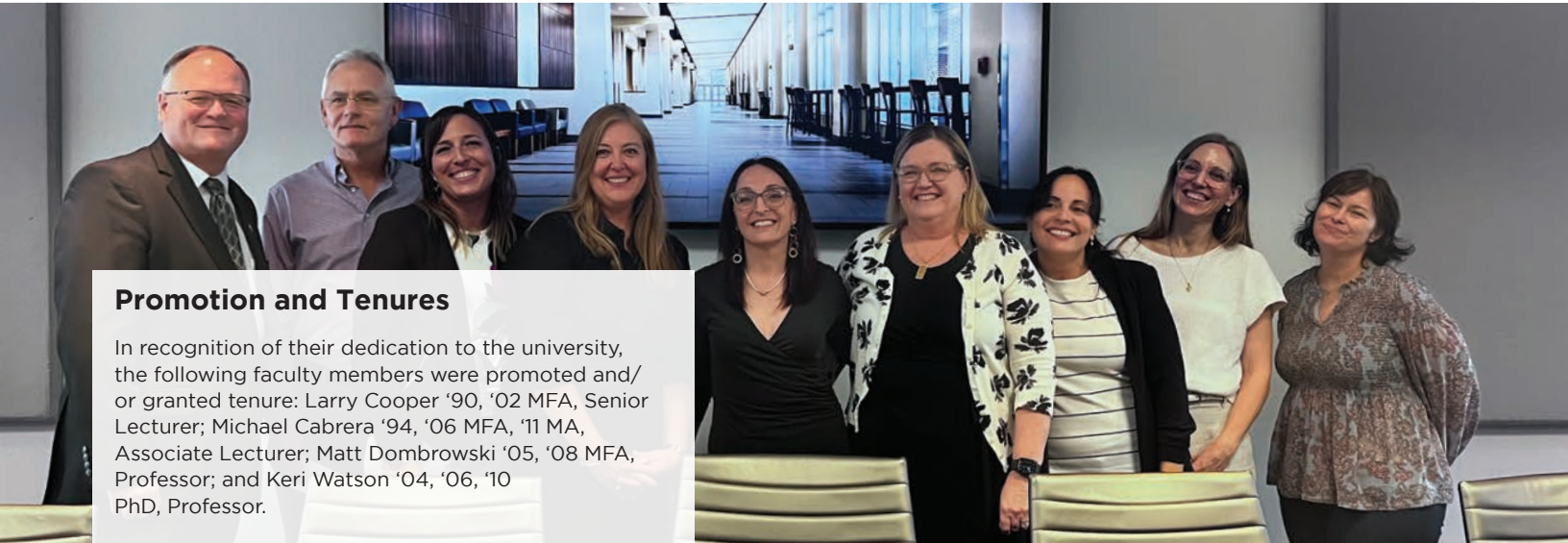


# FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS



## Shannon Lindsey was the Curator for the South Arts 2025 Southern Prize and State

Shannon Lindsey '08, '14 MFA, associate lecturer of studio art, curated the *South Arts 2025 Southern Prize and State Fellows exhibition* a program that celebrates and supports the highest quality artistic work being created in the American South. Nine-state fellows are selected through a two-tiered selection process by national juries, with the final jury selecting the Southern Prize Winner and Finalist. Lindsey uniquely blends her roles as visual artist, educator and gallery director to support contemporary professional practices and encourage students to explore their unique identities and goals both in and beyond the classroom.



## Promotion and Tenures

In recognition of their dedication to the university, the following faculty members were promoted and/or granted tenure: Larry Cooper '90, '02 MFA, Senior Lecturer; Michael Cabrera '94, '06 MFA, '11 MA, Associate Lecturer; Matt Dombrowski '05, '08 MFA, Professor; and Keri Watson '04, '06, '10 PhD, Professor.

## Nine faculty and staff members recognized as 2025 Founder's Day honorees

Founders' Day is a university-wide celebration honoring the contributions of faculty, staff, and students. This year, nine members of the SVAD faculty and staff were recognized: Hadi Abbas '85, '90 MFA, Waheeda Illasarie '03, '14 MA, Joo Kim '93, '95, '99 PhD, Janki Maraj, Joe Muley '02, Carla Poindexter '98, '99 MFA, Kevin Haran '88, '91 MFA, Robert Reedy, MFA and Margaret Zaho '89, '94, '00 PhD.

## UCF CREATE Stella Sung wins 2025 Pabst Steinmetz Foundation Arts and Wellness Innovation Award



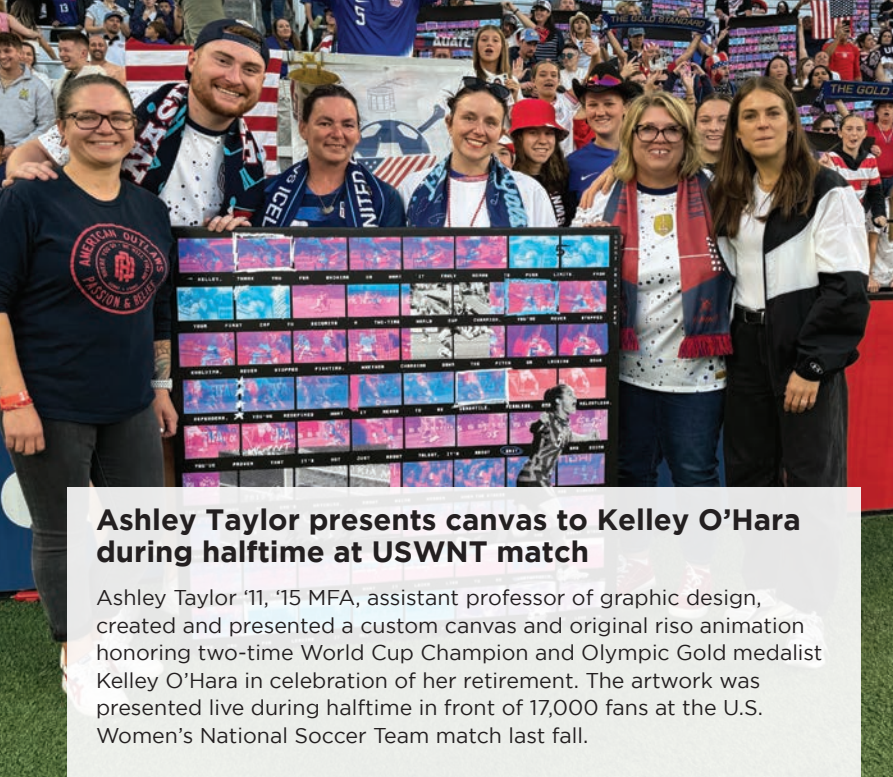
The Pabst Steinmetz Foundation Arts and Wellness Innovation Awards supports the development of sustainable models that blend arts and wellness across UCF and the Central Florida community. This year's theme, "Innovative Strategy: Bridging Arts and Wellness Technology" invited applicants to submit innovative work at the intersection of arts and technology. Stella Sung '82, '84, '91 DMA, UCF CREATE Director and Pegasus Professor, was awarded \$25,000 to support her research project titled, "Immerse, Rehearse, Perform: An

Innovative VR Experience for Overcoming Stage Fright". The project leverages virtual reality technology to address performance anxiety in schools.

## Matt Dombrowski honored with 2024 Luminary Award

UCF's annual Luminary Awards honor the university's brightest stars who illuminate their fields, shine a positive light on the university, and pave the way for those who will come after them. Honorees are nominated by deans, department chairs and directors from across UCF. This year, Matt Dombrowski was recognized for his dedication to interdisciplinary research, innovative teaching and impactful service.





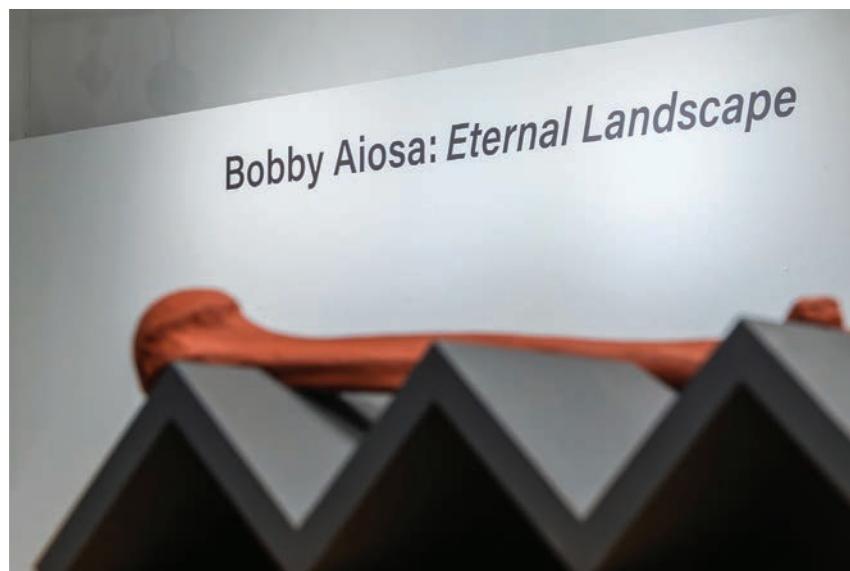
### Ashley Taylor presents canvas to Kelley O'Hara during halftime at USWNT match

Ashley Taylor '11, '15 MFA, assistant professor of graphic design, created and presented a custom canvas and original riso animation honoring two-time World Cup Champion and Olympic Gold medalist Kelley O'Hara in celebration of her retirement. The artwork was presented live during halftime in front of 17,000 fans at the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team match last fall.



### Njeri Kinuthia presents solo exhibition *Je, Niko Huru? Threads of Freedom*

In the spring, Njeri Kinuthia '19, '24 MFA debuted her solo exhibition *Je, Niko Huru? Threads of Freedom* at the Albin Polasek Museum and Sculpture Gardens. Through self-portraiture, Njeri explores her coming-of-age experiences in Kenya and challenges the relationship between cultural traditions and personal freedom. In addition to her exhibition, Njeri hosted an opening reception, was featured in the museum's annual *Polasek Nights* event, and participated in a panel artist talk alongside fellow Central Florida artists.



### Bobby Aiosa hosts solo exhibition *Eternal Landscape* at Art Center Sarasota

In March, assistant professor of sculpture Bobby Aiosa '05, '14, '15 MFA showcased his 11th solo exhibition, *Eternal Landscape*, at Art Center Sarasota. The show explores society's relationship with the built environment, offering a reflection on how we shape, and are shaped by, our surroundings.

### Keri Watson earns two grants for Florida Coalition for Higher Education in Prison (FCHEP)

Keri Watson, executive director of Florida Coalition for Higher Education in Prison, leads efforts to expand access to high-quality higher education opportunities for incarcerated individuals across the state. This year, the program was awarded a \$50,000 grant from The Laughing Gull Foundation board of directors, and a \$750,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

### Matt Dombrowski exhibits work at Games Developers Conference in San Francisco

The Games Developers Conference (GDC) is the annual premier gathering for creators of cutting-edge innovative games offering inspiring talks, valuable networking opportunities and showcasing the latest technological achievements. Representing Limbitless Solutions, Matt Dombrowski joined Peter Smith '02, '05 MS, '13 PhD and three Limbitless scholars to present their work on the EMG temporalis controller. This piece of technology, built for the training game Limbitless Journey, empowers power wheelchair users to improve independent control of their devices.



# A KNIGHT TO REMEMBER!



## ART KNIGHT!

On November 22, UCF's School of Visual Arts & Design hosted its 3rd annual *Art Knight!* event at the Visual Arts Building on UCF's main campus. The evening also marked the opening reception for *Atmos: Fall 2024 BFA Exhibition* in the UCF Art Gallery. More than 1,400 attendees enjoyed a vibrant evening of open studios, interactive activities and opportunities to connect with student artists and professors. Guests also savored food and drinks from local Orlando businesses, while enjoying live music by Knights of the Turntables and a special appearance by Knightro himself.









1

Pathways 2024: The Carlos Malamud Prize Exhibition. Photo Credit: Jessica Abels

# EXHIBITION ROUNDUP

## THE UCF ART GALLERY

1. *Pathways 2024: The Carlos Malamud Prize Exhibition*
2. *Memento Morididdle by Charles Clary*
3. *Fall 2024 SVAD Faculty Exhibition*
4. *Atmos: Fall 2024 BFA Exhibition*
5. *Out of Order | Let Down by Kristen Letts Kovak and Grace Mikell Ramsey*
6. *Haunt: 2025 MFA Exhibition*
7. *Mercurial: Spring 2025 BFA I Exhibition*
8. *Kaleidoscope: Spring 2025 BFA II Exhibition*

In the 2024-2025 academic year, the UCF Art Gallery remained a vibrant cultural hub for contemporary art, fostering intellectual and creative inquiry among students, faculty and the broader Central Florida community. Through its eight dynamic exhibitions, the gallery attracted over 8,000 visitors, offering a dynamic space for inspiration, conversation and engagement.

In Fall 2024, the *Pathways 2024: The Carlos Malamud Prize Exhibition* featured six artists working in a variety of media, themes, scales and approaches. The exhibition was presented at both the UCF Art Gallery and the Rollins Museum of Art. This collaborative partnership between the two institutions offered artists the opportunity to present their creative work at both venues, as well as be juried by an external panel of three professionals from different areas of the art world.

Teneé Hart was selected as the winning artist, receiving a \$10,000 cash prize, a solo exhibition at the UCF Art Gallery in 2025, and the opportunity to serve as a juror for the following edition of the Pathways exhibition.

“With Pathways, Central Florida will be home to a startling new project that may finally help, along with other universities, put to rest the old lone-wolf, starving-artist trope and mentor artists into the networked, financially savvy and fast-moving 21st century.”

- Richard Reep, *Orlando Weekly*.



2

In October, the gallery hosted **Memento Morididdle** by Charles Clary, an immersive exhibition that transformed the space with Rococo salon-style walls, densely packed with hundreds of frames, each containing a low-relief paper sculpture. Clary's work subverted the traditional associations of domestic picture frames typically representing joyful, nostalgic memories, like cherished family portraits. Instead, his installation displayed layers of trauma, grief and raw truth. Through this visual presentation, Clary invited the audience to acknowledge collective pain and loss, and to embrace them as badges of honor and growth. The gallery held an exhibition reception and artist talk with Clary, giving students insight into his innovative techniques and artistic practice. He also joined SVAD's mixed media class for a hands-on cut paper workshop and met with M.F.A studio art and design students during their studio visit.



**2** *Memento Morididdle* by Charles Clary. Photo Credit: Rhianna Horner

3

The UCF Art Gallery continued the fall semester with the annual **SVAD Faculty Exhibition**, which presented a dynamic exhibition of artworks by the faculty of UCF's School of Visual Arts and Design. This year, 24 nationally and internationally recognized faculty members shared their creative work and research in the gallery: Chuck Abraham, Bobby Aiosa, Jason Burrell, Owen Buffington, Larry Cooper, Lindsay Deifik, Brooks Dierdorff, Lorna Ruth Galloway, Kevin Haran, Nicholas Kalemba, Njeri Kinuthia, Shannon Rae Lindsey, Theresa Lucey, Justin Nolan, Carla Poindexter, Roberts Rivers, Philip Ringler, Ericka Sobrack, Steven Spencer, Debi Starr, Michael Tole, Megan Thomas, Ashley Taylor and Laine Wyatt.



**3** *Fall 2024 SVAD Faculty Exhibition*. Photo credit: Rhianna Horner

4

The semester concluded with **Atmos: Fall 2024 BFA Exhibition**, which showcased the work of senior undergraduate students specializing in book arts, ceramics, drawing, animation, illustration, painting, photography, printmaking and sculpture. The opening reception coincided with SVAD's annual *Art Knight!* event, drawing over 1,400 guests - double the attendees from the first iteration of the event two years prior.



**4** *Atmos: Fall 2024 BFA Exhibition*. Photo Credit: Rhianna Horner





Out of Order | Let Down by Kristen Letts Kovak and Grace Mikell Ramsey. Photo Credit: Kenyari Gil Rosario



Haunt: 2025 MFA Exhibition. Photo Credit: Grace O'Malley



**5** To kick off the spring semester, the gallery welcomed Kristen Letts Kovak and Grace Mikell Ramsey for a two-person exhibition titled ***Out of Order / Let Down***. This exhibition explored the visual language of abstraction, naturalism and fantasy. Through visual storytelling, the two artists reflected and represented ongoing issues of female bodies, gender roles, societal expectations and biases. Kristen Letts Kovak attended the gallery's opening reception and delivered a public artist talk, in addition to meeting with MFA Studio Art and Design students during studio visits.

**6** In March, the gallery presented ***Haunt: 2025 MFA Exhibition***, which showcased the thesis work of MFA Studio Art & Design candidates at the UCF School of Visual Arts and Design: Stella Arbeláez Tascón, Brittani Brown and Janessa Douds. In addition, the gallery hosted each candidate's thesis defense, providing faculty, students and community members an opportunity to engage directly with the artists and explore the concepts behind their research.

**7** Next, the gallery launched the first of two BFA exhibitions with ***Mercurial: Spring 2025 BFA I Exhibition***. This showcased the work of senior undergraduate students specializing in book arts, ceramics, drawing, illustration, painting, photography, printmaking and sculpture.

**8** The UCF Art Gallery closed the 2024-2025 academic year with ***Kaleidoscope: Spring 2025 BFA II Exhibition***, highlighting the work of Animation & Visualization senior undergraduates. The opening reception welcomed over 400 attendees for an evening of community engagement and celebration.



*Mercurial: Spring 2025 BFA I Exhibition.* Photo Credit: Kenyari Gil Rosario



*Kaleidoscope: Spring 2025 BFA II Exhibition.* Photo Credit: AJ Braddock



# EVENTS

## **SVAD participates in 11th annual UCF Celebrates the Arts at Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts**

SVAD played a key role in UCF's College of Arts and Humanities' annual UCF Celebrates the Arts – a two-week showcase of theater, dance, music and the visual arts at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts. Lobby exhibitions highlighted work from advanced painting, 3D design, MFA Studio Art, character animation, architecture students and the Florida Prison Education Project. Public events included the Architecture Showcase, Creative Clash, Graphic Design and Animation Showcase, and the Character Animation and VFX Premieres. The collaborative efforts across the college earned UCF a second nomination for the 2025 Golden Brick Award from the Orlando Downtown Partnership recognizing the program's artistic influence and community engagement.



## **13th Annual Art History Symposium takes place in UCF Art Gallery**

The 13th annual Art History Symposium offered students a platform to share their historical research from upper-level art history courses with the public. This year's presenters included Francesca la Madrid, Sara Pagán Vela and Maximilian Young, each showcasing unique insights and perspectives.

## **Architecture Symposium Celebrates Senior Undergraduates**

Architecture students closed out the academic year with their annual Architecture Symposium an evening celebration showcasing innovative student work. Friends and family gathered to explore standout projects, honor scholarship recipients, and pick up the latest edition of Nexus magazine, highlighting exceptional achievements in student architecture.

## **BFA and MFA Animation Students Premiere Original Animated Short Films**

This spring, Character Animation BFA and Animation/VFX MFA students premiered their original 2D and 3D animated films. The event marked the culmination of over two years of dedication, creativity and collaboration. Friends, family and community members gathered in the Visual Arts Building to celebrate the students' achievements and growth.







# OUTREACH & PARTNERSHIPS



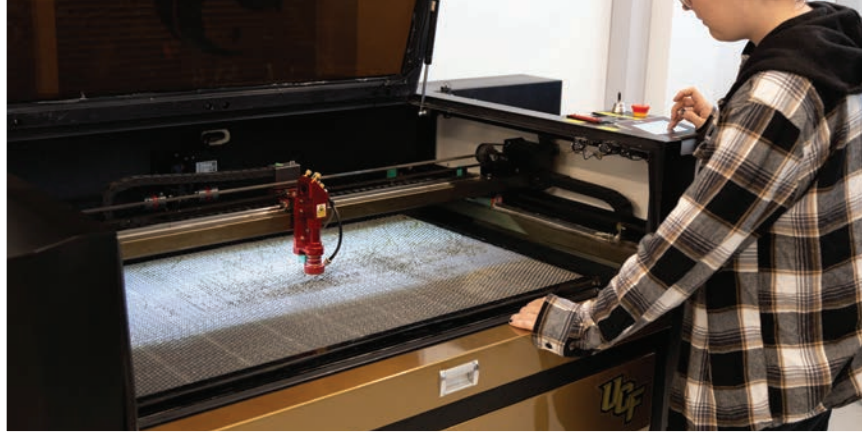
## **Four students represent SVAD at Adobe MAX in Miami**

Through partnership with Adobe and Limbitless Solutions, four SVAD undergraduates Morgan Mullen, Lindsey Simpson, Viviana Arroyo Rodriguez and Gianna Vargas attended Adobe MAX 2024 in Miami. Over three days, students explored the intersection of creativity and technology through hands-on workshops, inspiring keynotes and valuable networking opportunities.

## **WIA@UCF recognized as Advocacy Organization of the Year**

Each year, UCF's Office of Student Involvement hosts the RSO (Registered Student Organization) Impact Awards to celebrate student organizations across campus. This year, We in Animation at UCF was named the Advocacy Organization of the Year for its efforts to empower voices in the industry and support members' professional development.





## Community partnerships with Mattamy Homes and Cushman & Wakefield

The UCF Art Gallery continued its \$15,000 annual collaboration with Mattamy Homes to showcase SVAD student artwork at the Meridian Parks Art Walk, a vibrant Lake Nona community of over 4,000 families. Participating students receive compensation for their work and gain valuable professional experience. The gallery also sustained its \$10,000 annual partnership with Cushman & Wakefield, featuring 35 SVAD faculty works annually across five of the company's corporate office lobbies.

## Three renowned artists headline SVAD Distinguished Artist Series

The SVAD Distinguished Artist Series is a dynamic initiative designed to introduce students and community members to professional artists in various fields of study. This year, SVAD welcomed acclaimed contemporary artists Elizabeth Allen-Cannon, Wendy White and Noelle Mason, who shared insight into their creative processes. All lectures were free and open to the public.

## SVAD invites contemporary artists from around the world to speak with students

SVAD hosted a diverse lineup of nationally and internationally recognized artists, providing students with interactive workshops and discussions about their artistic practices. Notable guests included ceramics artist Janina Myronova, animator and director James Parris and design professionals from Counter Brand & Type.



## Boss Laser and SVAD continue collaboration with new tech and renovations

Building on a relationship that began when Boss Laser CEO Todd Rice attended the 2022 *Art Knight!* event, SVAD has expanded its partnership with the company. In response to the school's growing need for advanced creative tools, the company has donated cutting-edge equipment and supported renovations to SVAD's Boss Laser Experience Design Lab at the Orlando Tech Center. This support into the 2024-25 academic year reflects a shared commitment to providing students with industry-standard tools that enhance productivity, design skills and project quality.

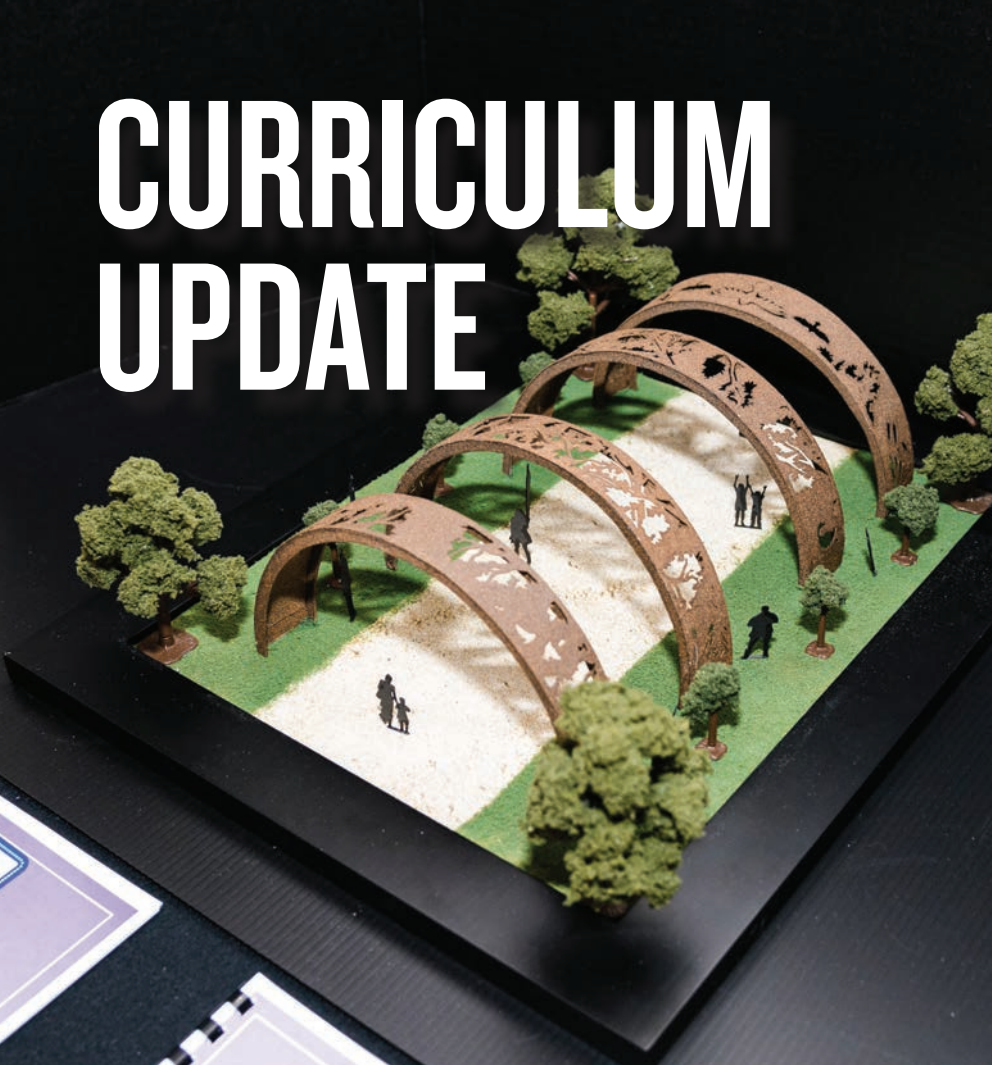
## SVAD and Wendover Housing Partners finalizes \$25,000 collaboration

SVAD has finalized a \$25,000 partnership with Wendover Housing Partners through its Catch Light Public Art initiative. As part of the agreement, SVAD was awarded a contract to contribute to Catch Light Crossings an affordable housing community being developed on Universal Orlando Resort property. The project was introduced to students through SVAD's Advanced Design Lab (AdLab) courses, resulting in the commissioning of two students to create original public artworks for the new community.





# CURRICULUM UPDATE



In 2024, the School of Visual Arts and Design at UCF launched an exciting new track within the Art B.A program: Immersive Experience Design. This innovative track prepares students for dynamic careers as studio artists, designers, and emerging media professionals, while also laying the groundwork for graduate study.

The curriculum explores a wide range of creative disciplines approached from both historical and modern perspectives including themed environments, immersive storytelling, graphic wayfinding, streetscape design, public sculpture, furniture design, product design and more. Students can choose from various course offerings such as:

- + Art in the Last 25 Years
- + Placemaking: Designing Better Communities
- + Mold Making and Casting
- + Processes and Ideas in Art
- + Experimental Studio Lighting in Photography





# ALUMNI IMPACT



SVAD alumni are making their mark across the globe, shaped by immersive learning, hands-on workshops and real-world experiences. Many have brought their unique talents to leading organizations, reflecting SVAD's commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration, creative problem-solving and impactful innovation. Across industries, their work continues to spark meaningful change and inspire new possibilities.

***“UCF SVAD provided a strong foundation for my professional journey - the classes not only taught me the core techniques but also helped me understand how to approach creative problems with confidence.”***

- James Hausman, BFA '07

## Alumni are employed or have interned at:

- |                            |                        |                      |
|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| ✦ Walt Disney World        | ✦ PIXAR                | ✦ Amazon             |
| ✦ Universal Orlando Resort | ✦ DreamWorks Animation | ✦ Autodesk           |
| ✦ Adobe                    | ✦ Sam Flax Orlando     | ✦ CBS Sports Network |
| ✦ Naughty Dog              | ✦ ABC News             | ✦ Rooms To Go        |
| ✦ Warner Bros. Animation   | ✦ Full Sail University | ✦ PlayStation        |
| ✦ Labcorp                  | ✦ Netflix              | ✦ Google             |
| ✦ Iron Galaxy Studios      | ✦ Lockheed Martin      | ✦ Orlando Health     |



# UPCOMING EVENTS

2025

AUG - SEPT

**...no place like home** | Aug. 22 - Sept. 26 | UCF Art Gallery  
Opening Reception & Artist Talk by Teneé Hart: Aug. 22 from 5-7pm

OCT

**Fall 2025 SVAD Faculty Exhibition** | Oct. 16 - Nov. 6 | UCF Art Gallery  
Opening Reception: Oct. 16 from 5-7pm

NOV - DEC

**Art Knight! 2025** | Nov. 21 from 6-9pm | Visual Arts Building, UCF Main Campus

**Fall 2025 BFA Exhibition** | Nov. 21 - Dec. 2 | UCF Art Gallery  
Opening Reception: Nov. 21 from 6-9pm (coincides with *Art Knight!* 2025)

JAN - FEB

**Deep Futures: Sites of Toxic Land Use** | Jan. 15 - Feb. 13 | UCF Art Gallery  
Opening Reception: Jan. 15 from 5-7pm  
Closing Reception & Artist Talk by Amanda Leigh Evans: Feb. 13 from 5-7pm

MAR

**2026 MFA Exhibition** | Feb. 26 - Mar. 13 | UCF Art Gallery  
Opening Reception: Feb. 26 from 5-6pm (VIP preview), 6-8pm (open to public)

**UCF Celebrates the Arts** | Mar. 30 - Apr. 12 | Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts

APR

**Spring 2026 BFA Exhibition I** | Apr. 2 - 10 | UCF Art Gallery  
Opening Reception: Apr. 2 from 5-7pm

**Spring 2026 BFA Exhibition II, Part One** | Apr. 17 - 22 | UCF Art Gallery  
Opening Reception: Apr. 16 from 5-7pm

**Spring 2026 BFA Exhibition II, Part Two** | Apr. 23 - 29 | UCF Art Gallery  
Opening Reception: Apr. 23 from 5-7pm

2026

## CONTACT

**Address:** 12400 Aquarius Agora Dr, Orlando, FL 32816

**Email:** [svad@ucf.edu](mailto:svad@ucf.edu)

**Phone:** 407-823-2676

**Website:** [cah.ucf.edu/svad](http://cah.ucf.edu/svad)

 **Instagram:** @ucfcah

 **Facebook:** @ucfsvad





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