

Six MFA candidates to open shows Saturday

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Six candidates for Master of Fine Arts degrees from the School of Art & Design at Alfred University will exhibit their work in shows opening this weekend in three different locations. Three of the shows will open at 7 p.m. Saturday (May 2) in the Fosdick-Nelson Gallery, Harder Hall, on the Alfred University campus. Students whose work will be displayed in the gallery are Chris McDaniel, Liz Sparks and Alec Schramek. Kala Stein will open her show at 7 p.m. Saturday in the Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art, located in Binns-Merrill Hall on the AU campus. Victoria Bradbury and Alicia Eggert will open their shows at the Elks Lodge, 60 Broadway Mall, Hornell, also at 7 p.m. Saturday. Shuttle buses will run between Harder Hall and the Elks Lodge from 7 p.m.-midnight. Gallery talks for all artists will be at 1 p.m. Sunday, May 3. Victoria Bradbury combines elements of video, drawing, performance, and installation with personal and media genealogies. Her work has been seen in Denmark, Beijing, Barcelona, New York, Buffalo, and Baltimore. Bradbury holds a BFA from The Maryland Institute College of Art and was an artist in residence at Imagine Gallery, Beijing. Included in her exhibition are visual documents of the simultaneous making of "Madame Blueberry's Vidiopiscope Peepshow Box", and "Raree Show", 113 opaque slides projected with a Radiopiscon projector. This is the back-story of The Pioneer, her companion, Horse, and how they ended up lost in time in the American West, Bradbury explains. Alicia Eggert is an artist working primarily in sculpture, installation and interactive media. Formerly an interior designer, she studied Scandinavian architecture and design at Denmark's International Study Program in Copenhagen, and received a BS in Interior Design from Drexel University in Philadelphia. She is also co-founder of a public art organization in Portland, Oregon, called Kitchen Sink PDX. Eggert's work often investigates time and the subtle, everyday evidence of its passing. "Time represents an accumulation of moments, an accumulation of nows," she says. "It is always and never now. It is the place we always are, but can never be. What is the length of now? What is its weight?" Chris McDaniel works with electronic time and print based media. Born in Charlottesville, VA, in 1964, he presently resides in Alfred, NY. He received his B.F.A in Sculpture from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA. According to his artist's statement: "In the quiet stillness, peering into the shimmering light, it emanates as if from some distance galaxy, bright but vague and somewhat non-descript a brave new world of sorts, looming out there on the edge of tomorrow with all its promise yet unrealized still waiting to be explored with all its futuristic potential yet waiting there still when at last still waiting to become more fully defined" Alec Schramek was born in Petersburg, Alaska in 1984. In 2007, he received a Bachelor of Science degree in art from Eastern Oregon University, where he studied with an emphasis in ceramics and painting. Using classic mediums such as figurative sculpture, decorative ceramics, and painting, Schramek describes social situations within contexts of romanticized history, and the heroic male. A combination of contemporary life and symbolic forms illuminates a unique perception of the human struggle with identity. Liz Sparks spent her formative years in Richmond, VA. She began working in clay in 1992 at Earlham College, continued her practice in North Carolina, and became a self-employed potter in 2002. "Working with clay gives me a sense of purpose and focus," Sparks says. "I view pottery making as a service to humanity, because pots enliven food, drink, and social interaction to create a mood of sharing, openness and community. I like to create pots that combine nuance, mystery, and depth of meaning with practical applications." Kala Stein began studying the nature of the earth in her early days of playing in clay-rich soils of western New York. When indoors, Stein developed a keen sensitivity to the nuances of interior spaces and the objects within them. She studied and made ceramics at SUNY New Paltz (BFA), Moravian Pottery and Tile Works (union ceramist), and Donna Polseno Studio (apprentice). "My work explores the symbolic and utilitarian value of vessels and spaces," she says. "I value my work as well crafted and useful. I experiment with the objects I make through installation work and in real time. After the objects exist together in the installation, I distribute them for daily use. The focus shifts from sculptural to functional, from the whole to the individual." Alfred University's MFA program is ranked number one in the country for ceramic art and second in the country for glass art in the U.S. News and World Report Guide to the Best Graduate Schools, released earlier this week. Overall, the MFA program is ranked 10th in the country.