

Richmond, VA - [artspace](http://artspace.org) is pleased to present the vcuarts Craft and Material Studies Department | Graduate Candidacy Exhibition, opening Friday, April 27, 2018, 6 - 9 pm through Sunday, May 20, 2018. The exhibition will be on display throughout the entire gallery and will feature the works of candidates **Hannah Bates, Marie Fornaro, Taylor Zarkades King, Emily Kuchenbecker, Dylan Loftis**, and **Hannah Shaban**. No closing artist talk is scheduled.

**Hannah Bates'** work involves pouring hot glass over oak logs, soaking steel in salt water, and bending wood into twisted forms. Working with glass has opened her up to the transformative properties of materials. They alternate between hot and cold, fluid and fragile, malleable and stiff, delicate and rigid, and organic and architectural. She draws inspiration from the mundane and observes the natural within the manmade and the manmade within the natural every day. "When the lines blur between the two is where I find interest," she says. "Conscious of the energetic vitality in living and nonliving things, my studio investigations are conducted to understand the possibilities of a material."

**Marie Fornaro's** recent work combines fabric, paper, and unexpected materials through traditional textile techniques such as piecing, quilting, smocking, and basketry. Guided by German textile artist Anni Albers' notion that any material is worth making art with, she is interested in using unpretentious materials in new ways to subvert what is known or expected. Cardboard, newspapers, tinsel, and tape are as much at home in her work as designer silk scarves and supple leather. She is intrigued by opposites interacting—chaos/order, cheap/expensive, geometric/organic—and by the joy and shame that the materialistic exuberance of fashion inspires in her as a feminist woman amidst a longstanding patriarchy." By using unexpected materials I hope to entice my audience into that same space of curiosity- into the realm where convictions are challenged and minds can be changed," Fornaro says.

**Taylor Zarkades King** is drawn to objects that participate in everyday life. "I create silhouettes that activate when put with an individual or group," she says. Using jewelry as a lens, she explores the tilt between utility and expression, both through how a piece rests on the body and how it is handled. "I enjoy the sway adornment has on our varying abilities to open and develop maps for conversation," she continues. "My work is concerned with this exchange, and plays with the obvious and obscure points of touch present in the subtleties of connection," Ms. King is a first-year graduate student focused in Metals. She is originally from Seattle, WA, and earned her BFA from California College of Arts in Oakland, CA.

**Emily Kuchenbecker** primarily uses glass to examine transparency, reflection, light, and optics...to evaluate imperfections of perception. "The act of creating takes me to a place in my mind where I am thoroughly and completely at ease. Time seems to dissipate and I am no longer important," she says. Kuchenbecker longs for the mental state of emptiness and becoming completely present in the moment. "Everything I experience is connected through process," she continues. "Intrinsic to my practice is the circle. A symbol for cycles, continuation, and the universe. Circles are present in the natural world in the celestial bodies. They are present in being a glass artist-constantly rotating the material around its own axis."

**Dylan Loftis** is a woodworker, illustrator, and storyteller. "I have spent much of my making career telling the stories of others, always shying away from spinning my own narrative threads," he says. "I did this largely out of self-consciousness and fear of failure. I recognize that now. Then came 'Chair,' a story born from my childhood love of comic books and superheroes, which I coupled with my love of woodworking and the desire to be instrumental in increasing the stock of harmless cheerfulness." Chair's protagonist is a chair. One that was painstakingly and lovingly crafted, then finished with a radioactively exposed can of lacquer, resulting in Chair's various uncanny abilities and preternatural propensity to dispel evil in the pursuit of doing good. "While my abilities pale in comparison to those of Chair, our objectives really are not too dissimilar," Loftis says.

**Hannah Shaban's** background as a Lebanese American and frequent visits to the Middle East have informed her on the rich culture and generous people of that region. "Orientalism and the evolving Western perspective is the primary focus of my ceramic practice," she says. "Western society has had a tumultuous and defining relationship with Eastern culture for centuries." Her aim is to communicate the unwavering hospitality of Arab society through spatial and physical interaction with realistic, ceramic figures. "By sculpting life-size figures and inserting them in the same environment as my viewers, I start to bridge the cultural divide that is brought about by geographical distance," she says. The presence of Westerners in historic Orientalist art is implied through the gaze. "I break the notion of the Western gaze in relation to my work by requiring the viewer to become part of the environment I create around my figures," Shaban states. "The environments are meant to temporarily transport viewers to a different location using a variety of 'authenticating details.' Meticulous patterning, vibrant tile work, and architectural elements specific to the region set the scene visually."

Gallery hours are Tuesday through Sunday from 12-4pm. Please contact the gallery administrator at [artspaceorg@gmail.com](mailto:artspaceorg@gmail.com), or phone the gallery at [804-232-6464](tel:804-232-6464) for additional information. The gallery is located at Zero East 4th Street in Richmond, Virginia 23224, and online at [www.artspacegallery.org](http://www.artspacegallery.org).