

inside (SFAI) will be published monthly during its inaugural year. Please send information on new appointments of staff and faculty, new initiatives, and other community-wide announcements to Lucy Martin: lmartin@sfa.edu.

contents

- 1 *Vernissage*
- 2 Michael Zheng's Banners
- 3 Adaline Kent and Tournesol Award Exhibitions
HR Zone
- 4 New Web Launch
Farewell to Merry Scully



Grads Shine at 'Vernissage' and Spring Shows

SFAI's *Vernissage* is the Bay Area's premier MFA exhibition. Each year it attracts a wide public audience from throughout the Bay Area. This year, 92 MFA students are included in the show. Eighty-seven of them have their work in booths throughout Herbst Pavilion and five have works in the film room. A special film screening was held in Cowell Theater on Monday, May 23. This was the second year that graduates from the Summer MFA Program participated in the

exhibition. More than 2,000 people attended the opening this year. Gordon Biersch and Young's Market Company led the sponsorship efforts by supplying beer and wine, while several SFAI staff manned the bar. It was a great party, but it certainly wasn't the end of the MFA show. "We'll probably have 4,000 people total come through the pavilion over the week," says Exhibitions Director **Merry Scully**. "This is one of the things that differentiates us from other MFA programs; our MFA exhibition is a very public event."

According to Dean **Larry Thomas**, the huge turnout for *Vernissage* can be credited to the growing popularity of the exhibition and the announcement that everyone was invited to celebrate the accomplishments of our graduates. Invitations to the opening were mailed to curators, institutions, arts

John Roloff, Okwui Enwezor, and Brazilian sculptor Cildo Meireles, this year's Honorary Doctorate recipient



organizations, and the local, regional, and national press. “Merry’s role in working with the students, laying out and preparing the space, and curating the exhibition was central to its unprecedented success,” says Thomas.

Likewise, it’s the area managers who coordinated the Spring Shows: **John Davis** (Design+Technology), **Jan Doyle** (Film-making), **Martin Schmidt** (New Genres), **Sherry Kalonji** (Painting), **Erik Nelson** (Photography), **Palmarin Merges** (Print-making), and **Daniel Tiffany** (Sculpture); while admissions staff also helped with the administrative aspects of the Spring Shows.

“We had a very successful dessert reception on campus with live music, desserts, and plenty of wine after Commencement at Nob Hill Masonic Center Auditorium,” says Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs **Michel Frendian**. The Walter and McBean gallery staff estimate that at least 900 people went through the BFA graduates’ show that afternoon.” And all week long, the shows have attracted a number of visitors to the campus.

Student exhibitions have been on view all week in studios 13 and 14, Still Lights Gallery, Diego Rivera Gallery, studios 16a and 16b, the Walter and McBean Galleries, the courtyard, Pete’s Café, along the ramp, in the sculpture area, and along the hallways throughout campus.

“All the students showed really well,” says Scully. “It is so nice to see the jump that their work makes in the last year of school. I think it’s a really important learning process; it’s a step out of the studio.”



Raise the Banners High

The sun reflects off the white backsides of the banners hanging from the ceiling at Herbst Pavilion this week, and in the afternoons, Michael Zheng’s exhibition in the air takes on a golden glow. “I was trying to give a sense of openness with the white on the back of the banners, so when you leave the show you leave with an open sense. Because that is how it should be—we should leave with an open mind. And that’s why I lined them up in this grid-like format,” says the artist—“because we are like an army of artists ready to go out into the world.”

This year there are more large-scale works than in earlier years at the MFA Exhibition, and Zheng envisioned his installation piece as both site- and show-specific. It’s composed of red banners, with each MFA student’s name printed in yellow down the center of the side facing the entrance. Zheng had attended the MFA show in previous years and noticed that no artists had yet ventured to use the ceiling. “My first idea was: ‘what can I do with the space up there,’” he says. He was surprised and pleased when his fellow artists didn’t view his idea as invasive of their own exhibition spaces below.

Zheng moved to the United States from China when he was 22, and later relocated to the Bay Area as part of the dot-com boom. His work at Herbst Pavilion reveals an interest in both communist China and Western commercial culture. “There is some sort of psychological power in that combination of red and yellow,” he avows. “Communist regimes and commercial companies always use these same color combinations. And, at the same time, these two colors really work for *Vernissage* because they are very celebratory.”

Environmental sculptor John Roloff applauds Zheng for deciding to “take on the site.” “One thing that is a little problematic in big exhibition halls is the maze of walls. You can use it as an operational node in which to address the site, but I’m thinking in the long run there might be other ways, more expansive ways, to engage with such exhibition sites, as Michael has,” he says.

Thomas Scholarship Fund

As some of you may know, San Francisco Art Institute has established the Thomas Scholarship Fund in honor of retiring Dean of Academic Affairs Larry Thomas. Echoing Larry's personal belief in the passion and future of young artists, the Thomas Scholarship will help ensure broad access to the unique and vibrant educational opportunities available at SFAI. The award is intended as an encouragement to those students who, whether because of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or economic circumstances, have had limited educational opportunity in the arts.

Students will be identified for consideration through the Institute's national and international student recruitment program. Two \$12,500 scholarships, renewable for up to four years, will be awarded annually to incoming undergraduate students. In addition, Thomas Scholars will be paired with faculty mentors for the duration of their term of study at the San Francisco Art Institute.

Contributions (of all sizes) from the Faculty and Staff are most welcome and can be made by contacting **Lisa James** (our new Vice President of Advancement) at 749.4522 or ljames@sfai.edu. This scholarship is particularly important to Larry, and offers a meaningful way for colleagues and staff to honor his contributions to SFAI.

Top:
SCOTT WILLIAMS, *Gemstone Fever*, 2003
artist's book; text and binding by Fred Rinne,
12.5 x 9.5 inches (closed)

Right:
CHRIS BALLANTYNE, *Untitled (split)*, 2005
acrylic on paper, 12 x 16 inches
Courtesy Peres Projects, Los Angeles and
Berlin

san francisco art institute



Adaline Kent and Tournesol Award Exhibitions

OPENING RECEPTION
FRIDAY, JUNE 17
5:30 TO 8:30

Two exhibitions honoring the 2005 awardees **Scott Williams** (Adaline Kent) and **Chris Ballantyne** (Tournesol) will be on view in SFAI's Walter Gallery and McBean Project Space, June 18 – July 30, 2005.

Scott Williams, a San Franciscan known for his innovative use of stencils in graffiti and graphic art forms such as 'zines, artists' books, and graphic novels, has been chosen as the 2005 Adaline Kent Award artist by the SFAI Artists Committee. The award is named for SFAI alumna **Adaline Kent** and has been given annually to a California artist since 1959. Williams's work involves complex layering and repetition of imagery appropriated from popular West Coast culture, such as Hollywood, pulp fiction, and marine life.



Alumnus **Chris Ballantyne** MFA'02 has been announced as the recipient of the second Tournesol Award by the Headlands Center for the Arts. This award is given annually to an emerging painter to assist her or him in establishing a practice in the Bay Area. In drawings and paintings Ballantyne comments on what he perceives as an American obsession with ownership and domination of the landscape. Empty pools, fences, tract homes, and highway overpasses are just some of the elements he uses to convey the complex relationship between people and their environments.

HR Zone

Get Ready For
Open Enrollment

On Tuesday June 7, from noon until 3:00pm, the Human Resources Department is holding an **Open Enrollment Kick-Off Event** in the Lecture Hall. Our new insurance brokers, Accordia of California, will be co-hosting the event with us.

At that time you will be able to sign up for medical, dental, and life insurance options and other benefits (if eligible). If you wish to change your coverage in any way (switch carriers, add/drop dependents, alter your plan), you may do so at the Open Enrollment Kick-Off Event and afterwards, until June 15, 2005.

There will be experts on hand from a number of our carriers to answer your questions, in addition to Medicare and Long Term Care experts. Questions related to specific plans and carriers and general benefits questions can be answered by attending this event.

Attendees will receive informational handouts and door prizes! You will not want to miss this exciting event at our 800 Chestnut Street campus.

Website News

We're happy to have launched a new website for SFAI on May 20. As you know, this is not only our chief marketing vehicle (next to all of you) but also our official, virtual representation of the Institute. As such, it falls under the care and feeding of the following major gatekeepers:

- **Jennifer Stein** for all Academic Programs content
- **Michel Frendian** for all Admissions content
- **Lisa James** for all Give to SFAI content
- **Erez Golan** for all Community Education content
- **Vikki Cooper** for all About SFAI content
- Various administrative department directors for all Campus Resource content (see their pages)



Farewell to Merry Scully

Merry Scully, SFAI's Director of Exhibitions and Galleries for the past two years, and a four-year SFAI employee, will be leaving the Institute this summer. "I want to take a short break and to do more curating, teaching, and eventually get back to producing multiples with other artists and for myself," she says. "I don't know where my interest with multiples came from. Maybe it's because I'm the last of an edition of 10 myself (her parents had 10 children).

Merry has a BA in Studio Art and Art History from Loyola Marymount University and an MFA in Photography from the University of New Mexico. She began her curatorial career in a southern California jail: she was the assistant to the artistic director at the Social and Public Art Resource Center in the old Venice jail building and eventually became a gallery director of the space. Merry then moved from Los Angeles to Albuquerque, New Mexico for graduate

All content revisions, corrections, and additions should be reviewed by these content gatekeepers before being delivered electronically to **Lucy Martin** for copy editing.

On the Marketing/Communications team, here's how the website works (until we have a dedicated Webmaster):

- **Vikki Cooper** is responsible for site navigation, About SFAI pages, and all functionality of the site.
- **Nina Zurier** is responsible for reviewing imagery on the site.
- **Lucy Martin** is responsible for copyediting and proofing content for the site, after it's reviewed by content gatekeepers.
- **Margaret Tedesco** is responsible for updating pages at the end of this process.

There are many improvements and updates that will take place to the website over the summer months, including the uploading of the *Now Showing* content, course descriptions linked to course titles, a full list of courses and faculty (in addition to the departmental listings now showing). Stay tuned. For now, since webmail is not available on the new site, you can use the following URL to get to your email:

<http://webmail.sfai.edu:2000>

Important Note:

Departmental websites created by faculty chairs are considered internal to SFAI. They are not edited, proofed, designed, or prepared as marketing sites and therefore they must not be linked to **www.sfai.edu**. However, individual faculty websites will be linked to faculty bios on the site during the summer months.

school. While in New Mexico, she directed Richard Levy Gallery, ran an alternative installation space called Raw Space, and taught photography at the University of New Mexico.

During her time at UNM, Merry also worked on an oral history project for the University Art Museum Joshua Gallery. She then returned to LA and took the position of Administrative Director for the Fellows of Contemporary Art and worked with Gallery of Contemporary Photography. Anxious to leave a grant-giving environment and to work more closely on exhibitions and in an academic context, Merry came to the Art Institute.

What will she remember most about SFAI? "It has been great to work with all of the national and international artists that we have brought to campus. SFAI is always a little ahead of everyone else, willing to take some risks and to be experimental," she says. "I particularly enjoyed working with the students. There is a real diversity of production here. SFAI provides an accepting environment to take chances and push boundaries."