



MEDIA CONTACT
Taras W. Matla
(301) 405-1474
tmatla@umd.edu

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**THE ART GALLERY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
ANNOUNCES THE 2013 MFA THESIS EXHIBITION**

Art Showcase Culmination of Rigorous Process for MFA Candidates

COLLEGE PARK, Md.—From May 8-20, 2013, The Art Gallery at the University of Maryland (UMD) presents the *2013 MFA Thesis Exhibition*, a group installation featuring new and engaging work by three Department of Art MFA candidates: **Mark Earnhart**, **Bahar Jalehmahmoudi**, and **Pat McGowan**. This exhibition demonstrates the high-caliber professional arts training that UMD's Department of Art offers graduate students, within the context of a great liberal arts university.

"Every year I am more and more amazed by the depth, scope, and complexity of the work that UMD's MFA students produce," says The Art Gallery's director John Shipman. He adds, "We're always thrilled to host the MFA thesis exhibition, here at the gallery, as doing so offers an important platform for viewing fresh, unique, and challenging art produced by the next generation of young emerging artist." This exhibition continues The Art Gallery's longstanding commitment of highlighting forward-thinking and thought-provoking art that engages viewers and promotes dialogue within and beyond a gallery setting.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS:

Mark Earnhart is interested in the intersection of objects and personal history. His work is about creating narratives through the familiar and unfamiliar. The orientation of the known next to the alien is the conflict. Earnhart is interested in how proximity can create dialog and how the nonsensical can create content. Such stories are rooted within himself, and each other, but end up being fictionalized by the interruption of idealizing actual events from the past.

Bahar Jalehmahmoudi's photographic and sculptural work is a response to her search for identity as well as to her alienation as a refugee, in particular. Thus, the work challenges and confronts the human condition in its entirety. Through the use of domestic and textile artifacts, she explores traces of the feminine body in space, the tension between traditional expectations, and cultural trauma of displacement.

Pat McGowan's sculptures involve the notion of expending vast amounts of energy and labor. The sensorial aspect of creating something with one's hands cannot be matched or duplicated. The detachment of that aspect has its place, yet there is no better contact than 'touching' something. He creates his own nature in which unnatural elements have been created which gives the illusion of being natural. McGowan equates the outcome of his work as being akin to apocalyptic aura of Mad Max joining together with the whimsical spirit of Dr. Seuss—an unlikely scenario, but not improbable.

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