Global Appeal

MICA Has Not Only Been a top producer of Fulbright Scholars among specialty schools, but also attracts students from across the world who receive Fulbright scholarships and choose to continue their study and research at the College. Here is a selection of this year's Fulbright Program recipients both from MICA and coming here from abroad:

Emily Zuch, United States to Germany

From the United States to Germany, MICA alumna Emily Zuch ’08 (painting) will embark on an almost year journey, revealing as much about her as about the country. The New York-born and based artist received a Fulbright Study/Research grant for 2014-2015, which will support her travel to Leipzig, Saxony, and Stuttgart, Baden-Württemberg, in Germany. For her project, Zuch will observe and make drawings of rehearsals and productions by contemporary puppeteers and students of puppetry. The drawings will then be used to create a body of paintings that will examine the ways puppets move through and interact with the space around them. “Germany possesses a rich history of this art form, which has made it home to an extensive puppetry scene today,” Zuch said.

She proposed this project because of her interest in folklore and fairy tale imagery. “I create set-ups from a variety of materials, often including figures and forms, which fly, hang, and sweep through space, leading to a natural interest in puppetry and theater in general,” she said.

For the Fulbright, Zuch has partnered with the Leipzig-based Figurentheater Wilde & Vogel and the puppetry department at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Stuttgart (State University of Music and the Performing Arts Stuttgart).

Her schooling at MICA helped her development as an artist, “by allowing me space and guidance to find my own voice, experiment with a variety of media, and fail as much as is necessary to grow.”
Silvia Mata-Marin, Costa Rica

Costa Rica-born Silvia Mata-Marin ’15 (Social Design) comes from a family of Fulbright recipients—both her parents were awarded grants to pursue their doctoral degrees. While studying graphic design and sculptural design at the Universidad de Costa Rica, she became involved with social outreach projects. “I have always had a great interest in social documentary photography, which is why I decided to document migrant populations in Costa Rica and neighboring country Panama, especially indigenous migrant groups,” Mata-Marin said.

After graduation, she began working as a graphic designer, but continued to be drawn to projects that dealt with social issues, and later decided to return to this interest. Mata-Marin then began looking for a social design master’s degree program, saying, “I quickly found out that this is a relatively new field in the world, and it’s almost unheard of in Costa Rica.”

“So, I began exploring my options outside of what my country could offer and discovered the MA in Social Design program at MICA,” she added. Mata-Marin’s Fulbright Study/Research grant proposal centered on the emerging and growing social design field in the Americas. “[Costa Rica] being a developing country, there is a great need for interdisciplinary approaches to solve and deal with pressing social issues.” She plans to apply what she will learn at MICA, and from local partnering organizations, in her home country. “My main goal is to understand how to work along with organizations and groups to address complex social problems and use design as an enabling tool in dealing with these issues” Mata-Marin said.

Sara Al Haddad, United Arab Emirates

Sara Al Haddad ’16 (Rinehart School of Sculpture) uses fiber to confront insecurities, doubts, and fears through her works, which also aim to create paths of self-empowerment. A 2011 graduate of American University in Dubai, she has exhibited internationally, including a solo exhibition, I know, I knew, at the Dubai Community Theatre and Arts Centre and group shows in New York, Germany, and Switzerland.

Al Haddad delves into her feelings to gain knowledge of the emotional human nature and how persons’ psyches impact their emotional reactions relative to time and space. “I want to give an embodiment to those feelings to extend their longevity. The possibility of a feeling being reduced to becoming just a thought scares me, because thoughts tend to get lost with time and change with place,” she said.

The artist has not explored “the possibility of a feeling, any feeling, being of any value past its initial form,” she added. But Al Haddad plans to further study this concept while at MICA.

Seeking a top art school, she began to research graduate programs in the United States and chose to attend MICA through her Fulbright Study/Research funding. “I was looking for a great sculpture program in a close-knit community, which offers the institutional support and community I need to grow, and that could embrace my fiber background and interest,” Al Haddad said. Through interactions with MICA faculty, visiting artists, and peers, she hopes to expand her knowledge, as well as use of materials, and not limit herself to the familiar, but be open to new possibilities in art.

Dinah Kubeck, Germany

For Fulbright fellow Dinah Kubeck ’16 (LeRoy E. Hoffberger School of Painting), art is about exploring, experimenting, studying, learning, and reflecting. “The same goes for new cultural encounters: opening up to new cultures helps to understand the world a little bit better,” she said. The German- and Sweden-educated artist embarks on her studies at MICA this semester.

Kubeck has a background in both illustration and painting. Over the past year, she has been working with and examining concepts of chance and planning in art. “I begin my paintings with a notion or an impulse, rather than an elaborate idea or mental image of what the painting should look like,” she said, adding, “I then try to evolve the idea, constantly talking to my paintings, seeing where they take me.”

She came to MICA because of its reputation as a leading art and design school and the structure of the Hoffberger program—frequent critiques, discussions, and dialogues with the director, the artist in residence, and visiting artists, as well as trips to major art centers. “I also talked to several people who studied at MICA, who told me what an amazing time they had there, and how much they and their work evolved during and through their studies there,” she said.

Nada Alaradi, Bahrain

Bahraini artist Nada Alaradi ’16 (Curatorial Practice) has shown in various exhibitions, including the Bahrain Female Artists Annual Exhibition and Al Riwaq Art Space, Manama, Bahrain. In 2012, Alaradi co-founded Ulafa’a, an art organization that aims to promote peaceful communities through public and interactive art, where she also co-curates.

The interactions between humans interest her. “The way we become ‘the way we are’ is largely based on how we are imprinted on by others,” Alaradi said. She works on conceptually-based art and design that possess both human and spiritual aspects. Many of her works also deal with the connections or lack thereof among people and their impact.

She has been recently influenced by the 2011 Bahrain protests and rallies that called for political reform and equality, and according to Alaradi, “created a social divide that was non-existent before [then].” Her response was to aid in resolving the rift in the country. “Humans create invisible lines between each other and categorize people to ‘us’ and the ‘other.’ This occurs all around the world, so the concept that I’m working with is universal.”

Alaradi will attend MICA’s MFA in Curatorial Practice program, which she describes as having “a wonderful balance between theoretical and practical approaches to curatorial practice that not all colleges provide.”

“I was also looking for a college that is situated in a city that is culturally permeated, and has a very active and lively museum and arts scene,” she added.

While at MICA, Alaradi intends to create well-timed exhibitions that can change and impact individuals, and discover alternative approaches to present art. “I feel that curatorial is fascinating and relevant in reaching individuals’ thoughts and reflections on important matters and should be used as a tool to create a movement in society.”

In addition to Alaradi, Kubeck, Al Haddad, and Mata-Marin, Meltem Sahin ’16 (Illustration Practice) of Turkey, and Francisca Carvalho ’16 (Mount Royal School of Art) of Portugal, have received Fulbright Study/Research grants to attend MICA this academic year.