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WVU Professor Receives Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant



As conversion of text, pictures and sounds into digital form continues to develop, anxiety runs high in the art community about the future of physical appreciation of the arts.

These anxieties are being confronted by Amy Schissel, assistant professor of painting in the School of Art & Design at the College Creative Arts at West Virginia University. Schissel was awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Joan Mitchell Foundation's Painters and Sculptors Program, which was established in 1993 to acknowledge artists creating exceptional quality work through career support.

She creates contemporary imagery that merges art and digital worlds by combining traditional painting methods with multifaceted representations of digital networks and schemata.

"The overall motive of my work is an attempt to hybridize the languages of painting and digitization," Schissel said. "By combining two very different languages, the pieces regularly flip between abstraction and representation."

Schissel hopes her art leaves its viewers questioning their sense of space in the world.

“The way we think about space now flips between the physical and digital,” Schissel said. “With that change, we also have a radical new way of moving through space and that modifies our cultural identity and consciousness.”

The grant gives Schissel the necessary funding to complete two installations during Summer 2017. More than 80 feet of paper, 40 pots of paint, 200 acrylic markers and multiple large-scale ink cartridges are needed for the pieces that will be displayed at the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts in Pittsburgh and for a project in Switzerland.

“Receiving this grant has really validated for me that I am on the right track with my research interests,” Schissel said. “It is very motivating to have that reassurance going forward with large projects that can take nearly a year to complete.”

Schissel has previously exhibited her artwork at galleries and international art fairs including VOLTA New York, Toronto International Art Fair, VOLTA Basel and the Southeastern College Art Conference. Her experiences have helped her give her students a greater understanding of what it takes to be a professional artist.

“I teach my students not only about contemporary painting techniques but the do’s and don’ts of exhibiting,” Schissel said. “We go over digital portfolios for gallery submissions, grant writing, contract and publicity negotiations and everything in between. I want to give my students these lessons as a jump-start for their careers after leaving art school, something I had to figure out myself.”

According to Alison Helm, director of the WVU School of Art & Design, Schissel’s award from the Joan Mitchell Foundation is a testament to her professionalism and dedication.

“Amy’s passion for teaching and her artwork is unparalleled. Her works are culturally significant and deserve to be exhibited for the masses. This grant allows that to happen.”

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<http://wvutoday.wvu.edu/stories/2017/02/02/wvu-professor-receives-joan-mitchell-foundation-grant>