COME INSIDE
(And see. And do. And learn. ...)

A museum is more than art hanging on walls in pristine, cavernous rooms.

Museums are living, breathing spaces where people contemplate the beauty of a photograph and discuss the deeper historic and social meanings behind a painting. They’re places where students come face to face with fossils and ancient rocks, and children get messy as they smear paint on paper.

Museums aren’t just places for looking — they’re places for doing and creating and exploring.

This report is a glimpse into the life of our museums — the University of Richmond Museums — and the many people who crossed through our doors this year. Through their stories, we hope you’ll be inspired to find yours.
THE LIBERAL ARTS ARE THE HEART
of the University of Richmond, and as the University’s museums, we offer teaching opportunities for faculty from all disciplines. That’s why any given day may find management students using a collection of modern landscapes to explore communication and critical thinking concepts, or a rhetoric and law class studying sketches from the Guantánamo trials, or printmaking students studying etchings from our permanent collection. Some days, students may even see their professor’s own work on — or performed within — our walls.

FACULTY

Volcanoes, glaciers, lava fields, and beaches — the land in Iceland is in constant motion. Associate professor of art ERLING SJÖVOLD captured this restlessness in ethereal watercolor, acrylic, and black sand images (left) that were on display in The Life in the Land. The exhibition also featured the work of Icelandic artist ANNA LÍNDAL (above), whose video and mixed media works question how to measure the land without also measuring ourselves within it.
Students were struck by the vividness of the original sketches — having previously seen them only reproduced — and spent a great deal of time studying the details of each sketch and talking about questions of point of view and representation.

— Laura Browder, Professor of American Studies and English, on visiting Janet Hamlin: Sketches from Guantánamo with her Crime in America class

“Because I do not live and work within the comfort or boundaries of the culture in which I first learned to observe, interpret, and engage the world, I have the arguable privilege of having lived more than one life,” said Professor of Art TANJA SOFTIĆ (above). In her Migrant Universe exhibition, Softić’s prints, drawings, and paintings created a visual poem about identity and the worldview of the immigrant.

In response to two prints in the Harnett Biennial of American Prints, assistant professor of dance ALICIA DÍAZ (above) and percussionist Hector Barez shared an Afro-diasporic-inspired performance in the Harnett Museum of Art. One visitor said, “There was something quite exciting about the experience. I think the conversation between visual art and dance is interesting, organic, and fruitful.”
THE 2014–15 TUCKER-BOATWRIGHT
Festival of Literature and the Arts was hosted by the Department of Art & Art History in collaboration with University Museums. Through exhibitions, class projects, film screenings, poetry readings, lectures, and more, we engaged our campus and local communities in a yearlong conversation about landscape and land use.

As the landscape genre shifts from sweeping vistas and majestic mountains to the view from a rain-soaked windshield (above) or Google Street View, we’re left wondering about the changing ways we interact with nature. Artists explored this dynamic in the student co-curated exhibition Anti-Grand: Contemporary Perspectives on Landscape.
The festival’s signature Parking Lot Project saw the transformation of a University parking lot into a yearlong, collaborative artwork, driven by a cross-section of students from art, geography and the environment, and other disciplines. Barren concrete slabs were excavated and from the ashes arose gardens, mazes, and works of art, all designed to inspire visitors to reconsider how they see everyday spaces. Throughout the year, guest artists and scholars interacted with the students and helped them develop their independent research projects. The parking lot was demolished at the end of the semester as part of planned campus construction, serving as a lesson in the legacy of art beyond the life of the work.

"A parking lot is a place that is loaded with meaning and yet seems invisible. I talked to each student about their process and intent, and asked them to consider the ways in which their work functioned in the space. I wanted them to think in depth about the experience that their work offers to the viewer."

— Vaughn Bell, artist from Anti-Grand, and guest lecturer for the Parking Lot Project

Contemporary Argentine artist MARTÍN BONADEO (below), a professor at a Richmond partner university in Buenos Aires, lit up Westhampton Lake with “Reflection,” an installation of blue electroluminescent wires representing the rivers of South America. “The idea of this project is to play with the concept of water and its importance in our lives,” he said.

TUCKER-BOATWRIGHT FESTIVAL EVENT ATTENDANCE TOTALED 7,205

3,150 PERFORMANCES | 1,879 EXHIBITIONS | 1,076 LECTURES/PANELS | 666 MISC.* | 142 CLASSES

* Events, Q&As, residencies, symposia, and additional activities
STUDENTS TAKE MANY PATHS TO University Museums. Some come to learn the ins and outs of organizing exhibitions and caring for museum collections. Others dream of seeing their own work on display. And some come to be refreshed after a night of studying.

When KENTA MURAKAMI, '15, graduated in May, he had a few items on his résumé that not many undergraduates can claim — he helped curate three exhibitions. His first was an exhibition detailing the immigration stories of Soviet Jews as part of his Museum Studies class. When University Museums began planning for Anti-Grand: Contemporary Perspectives on Landscape, he approached Elizabeth Schlatter, deputy director, about helping out. He was hired as a curatorial assistant and also had the chance to assist with Erling Sjovold and Anna Lindal’s The Life in the Land.

"Working on Anti-Grand created a conversation between the artists and their wider social, cultural, and political spheres," he said. "As a curator, it helped me realize the extent to which art can activate and inspire further learning, teaching, and creating in a way that makes the exhibition more open and collaborative."
As a Harnett Summer Research Fellow, **Mimi King, ’15**, spent a summer curating an exhibition of recent gifts to University Museums. When deciding how to cohesively present photography, pop art, minimalism, and Dutch landscapes from the 1600s, she realized they all represented each artist’s view of the world.

It’s a theme in King’s own work, too, which was on display in *Align. Alight. Awaken: Senior Thesis Exhibition*. She lays ink on Plexiglas, and then drops a solvent to remove the ink. Gravity and her working rhythm do the rest. “It’s my way of exploring the minute details I find fascinating in the everyday world,” she said. “The more I look at each drop pattern, the more I see the little fractures and interior spaces that are created.”

More than 50 unique garden gnomes (right) found new homes in terrariums created at College Night. The annual student-run event offers a chance to explore University Museums after hours at a student-only event.

After just a few minutes with Mitchell Merling, a curator at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, students in the Museum Studies class weren’t just thinking about pretty arrangements of prints, but how visitors could move through the exhibition and understand the history behind Seventeenth-Century Dutch Landscapes: “We finally understood what these prints were trying to convey,” said Kelsey Barrett, ’15, (left) “and what was the best way we could tell a story.”

“**I asked them to think creatively rather than linearly about an exhibition, as an experience rather than as an essay. That meant rearranging and rearranging, both objects and thoughts, until we came to a satisfactory product.**”

— Mitchell Merling, Paul Mellon Curator and head of the Department of European Art at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, and guest lecturer for Museum Studies
YES, WE’RE THE UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS, but we also engage with communities beyond the campus. Our exhibitions, collections, and events are always open to the greater public. But it’s more than that. Just as we’re part of the University curriculum, we use our resources to support education in our neighborhood through field trips and tools to supplement Standards of Learning objectives. We also welcome children to campus for days of creativity, and Richmond rock enthusiasts find a place to play among our permanent collections. You might even hear us say, “Please touch!”

COMMUNITY

Field trips aren’t just for kids. In conjunction with the Virginia ROCKS! exhibition, students, families, and rock enthusiasts toured Morefield Gem Mine on a University Museums-organized excursion.
With Museum in a Box, MARCIN JERZEWSKI, ’18, (above left) brings our collections to K–12 classrooms, along with lesson plans and activities rooted in Virginia Standards of Learning.

“Students enjoyed matching the smaller hand samples to the larger samples of various rocks. They only see ‘textbook’ hand samples in class so it was good for them to see how varied rocks and minerals can look.”

— Christina Owens, Albert Hill Middle School, a Richmond City Public School

Drums go bang and paint goes smush as families gather on campus for a day dedicated to play. Family Day puts the focus on children with story time, scavenger hunts, face painting, potato printing, and volcanic eruptions.

359 COMMUNITY MEMBERS CAME OUT FOR TWO FAMILY DAY EVENTS

824 K–12 AND YOUTH GROUP STUDENTS TOURED UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS

2,628 PEOPLE ATTENDED COMMUNITY AND GALLERY PROGRAMS
OUR GROWING PERMANENT COLLECTIONS and changing exhibitions are the backbone for engagement with the campus community and beyond. In our galleries you’ll find University business majors providing on-the-spot presentations to practice their communication and critical thinking skills while foreign language classes interpret Spanish prints from the early 1800s. A dance professor is inspired to perform and an elementary school teacher brings her Virginia geology classes to see the rocks in our displays.

“"I never knew that pictures and sketches could give rise to such powerful and controversial topics like ethics. It gives a whole new perspective about artwork, how powerfully it can affect us, and how different drawing techniques convey different messages."

— Pinyada Napathorn, Richmond international student, on Sketches from Guantánamo
2014–2015 EXHIBITIONS
We seek to collect and present art, artifacts, and natural history specimens that spark conversations, allowing for a wide gamut of topics. Our 2014–2015 exhibitions included drawings from the Sept. 11 trial proceedings at Guantánamo Bay, contemporary printmaking, Virginia rocks, modern photography, botanical illustration, and 19th-century American ceramics.

THE HARNETT PRINT STUDY CENTER is dedicated to the education, research, and exhibition of works on paper, and provides a forum for the study and appreciation of the visual arts. The center houses our permanent collection of prints, drawings, and photographs. It also includes an exhibition space; a print storage area; a seminar room for art history and studio art courses; and a viewing area for prints being researched by students, faculty, and visiting scholars.

“What I now know is that judging is no more comfortable for an artist than being judged. I approached the pieces submitted for this exhibit as if each was being created in a shared studio with friends. We are, after all, colleagues, collaborators.”
— Mary Fisher, artist, author, advocate, and juror for the The 2014 Harnett Biennial of American Prints

8,158 people walked through our doors for exhibitions, programs, class visits, and events.

209 artists submitted 537 pieces for the Harnett Biennial.
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Erling Spovold (American, born 1961), Bloom (detail from triptych), 2015, watercolor, acrylic, black sand on polypropylene paper, 20 x 60 inches overall, courtesy of the artist. © Erling Spovold.

Anna Líndal (Icelandic, born 1957), Baskets, 2000, video and mixed media, 200 x 246 x 59 centimeters, courtesy of artist and Art & Public, © Anna Líndal.

PAGE 3, clockwise from left


PAGE 4, from left to right

Tom McGrath (American, born 1978), Untitled 2005, oil on canvas over panel, 56 x 46 inches, courtesy of Sue Scott and Mike Stanley, © Tom McGrath.

PAGE 5, clockwise from left

Martin Bonadeo (Argentinian, born 1975), Reflection, installation of blue electroluminescent wires, cloth, courtesy of the artist, photograph by Gordon Schmidt.

Martin Bonadeo working on Reflection in Tyler Haynes Commons, University of Richmond, an installation for Tucker-Boatwright Festival of Literature and the Arts, photograph by Kim Catley.

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PAGE 7, clockwise from left

Terrariums created by students at College Night, created by University of Richmond Museums behind-the-scenes student workers, inspired by Anti-Grand. Glasses collected from recycling at Passport Café and gnomes created by Mimi King, ’15, photograph by Sunny Kim.

PAGE 8, from left to right
Community members exploring Morefield Gem Mine with Matthew Houle, Curator of Museum Collections, during University of Richmond Museums field trip, photograph by Matthew Houle.

Martha Wright, Coordinator of Visitor and Tour Services, Marcin Jerzewski, ’18, behind-the-scenes student worker, and Jessica Johnson mining for gems at Morefield Gem Mine, during University of Richmond Museums field trip, photograph by David Hershey.

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Marcin Jerzewski, ’18, and Aida Choudhury, ’15, create volcanic molds from scratch outside of Lora Robins Gallery of Design from Nature for Museum-in-a-Box, photograph by David Hershey.

Kim Lee Schmidt, photograph by Kim Lee Schmidt.

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UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND MUSEUMS
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UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND MUSEUMS

Elizabeth Schlatter, deputy director and curator of exhibitions, and Robert Temple, chief curator, lead the museum's programming. The university also operates the Joel and Lila Harnett Museum of Art and the Lora Robins Gallery of Design from Nature.