JUROR STATEMENT: Christopher Atkins

The history of art is a tenuous line that is frequently challenged by experimentation, altered by technology, and broken by revolution. The best part of my job as a curator is watching how these same creative forces affect emerging artists’ careers; they are constantly inspired as well as inspiring as they develop their own unique vision. As you’ll see in the Annual Student Exhibition, the UMD Department of Art & Design has many talented artists, working with varied and diverse practices, and creating exciting new work.

I jumped into the jurying process with an open mind and without any expectations. Yet I still asked myself a few specific questions about each and every artwork: Is there an original voice or unique vision? If so, is it innovative in content and or expression? Do I have a sense of the artist’s commitment to their work? And finally, do I see the artist’s technical proficiency and craft? It’s a long and thorough process but the criteria I used to make my selections is the same for my daily practice and any artwork that I see, whether in a gallery, museum or online.

I’d like to thank the UMD Art & Design faculty and staff for the generous invitation to serve as a juror for the 2015 Annual Student Exhibition. It’s been very informative and a distinct pleasure to see then evaluate such quality work. I know it takes a lot of time and effort, by many people, to organize such an ambitious exhibition. You have created a huge and exciting opportunity for these young artists. Last, and certainly not least, I’d like to thank all of the artists who submitted and put themselves out there. It’s not an easy exercise but I can’t overstate how important it is to have your work seen and critiqued. Thank you.

Christopher Atkins
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