Why learn about perspective or color theory or typography or proper kiln operation? Certainly these are useful skills in and of themselves, but they can open the door to deeper learning: How to observe closely and objectively, but also with empathy. How to discern relationships and interconnections between objects (and sometimes people). How to think about what one is seeing—and about how one is seeing—and how to communicate what we see to others. How to accept the inevitability of failure but find in it the seeds of renewed creativity.

Or, more succinctly, how to become a fully realized human being, an aim at the core of a SLU education.

This exhibition demonstrates the range of disciplines, talents and interests of SLU’s student visual artists, expressed in sculpture, photography, painting, drawing and digital art. It includes examples of assignments that develop technique (look for the various interpretations of certain still life arrangements), but it also gives us a glimpse into the outlooks and interests of these artists-in-development. Some works represent an engagement with the world, natural or built, while others spring from imagination or fancy. All of them are evidence of young artists honing their talent, exploring their media, and developing their voices as artists.

The quality of work in this exhibition reflects the influence of the outstanding faculty members in SLU’s Studio Art program, all of them first-rate practitioners who regularly exhibit regionally and nationally. Not only do they teach practical skills, but they advocate for their students and model being artists in-the-world.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as juror for this exhibition, and I particularly thank Amy Bautz and Jim Burwinkel for making the process seamless. While it is disappointing not to have the opportunity to see these works in person in the McNamee Gallery, we can be glad for the virtual exhibition technology that makes the show available to audiences far and wide.

David Brinker

Director

Museum of Contemporary Religious Art, Saint Louis University