

## BEHIND THE SCENES

It is in much excitement and anticipation that I begin my role as the Chair of the Department of Art. I am looking forward to taking on the torch from the previous Chair Professor Suzanne Michele Chouteau and continue working for our students.

Some highlights from our faculty in 2013 include: **Suzanne Michele Chouteau** exhibited in 8 national and 2 international exhibits including: the Los Angeles Printmaking Society's 21st National Exhibition (Leonard Edmonson Award) as well as the International Print Triennial-Krakow Istanbul, Turkey. **Marsha A. Karagheusian** participated in "Visions In Clay 2013," Delta Center For The Arts, LH Horton Jr. Gallery, San Joaquin Delta College, Stockton, California. As well as "Two (x) Two: small-scale ceramic sculpture biennial," Gallery of Art, Eastern Washington University, Cheney, Washington.

**Bruce Erikson's** painting, "Rapture" was accepted into the "85th Grand National Exhibition 2013" juried by The American Artists Professional

League, New York City. His painting received "THE ALLIED ARTISTS OF AMERICA AWARD."

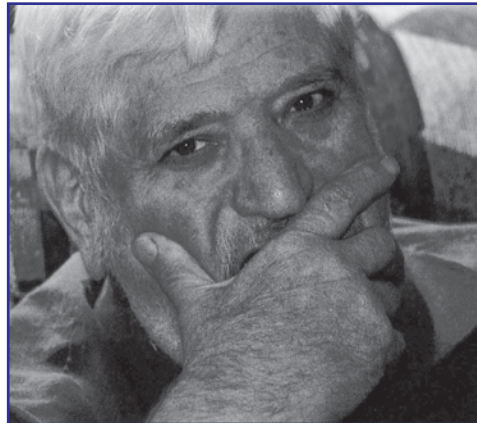
Bruce Erikson's painting, "Trois," was selected into "2013 Nude Attitude" national juried exhibition at Peoria Art Guild in Peoria, IL. **Jonathan Gibson** participated in two national juried exhibitions on the east coast "Paperworks 2013," B.J. Spoke gallery, Huntington, NY. and "Wide Open 4 Art Show," BWAC, Brooklyn, NY. And I (**Kelly Phelps**) and twin brother Kyle had the honor of a major review "American Made" published in the June/July edition of the internationally acclaimed American Craft Magazine. We also were juried into the "Black Heritage through Visual Rhythms" first annual national juried art exhibition at the National Afro American Museum and Cultural Center in Wilberforce, Ohio where our work "John Henry" placed 1st in the 3-D category. We will participate as presenters and demonstrating artists at the 2014 National Council on Education for the Ceramic Art conference to be held in Milwaukee, WI.

— Kelly Phelps, Chair

## Bernard Leonard Schmidt November 8, 1936 – October 25, 2013

by Daniel Schmidt

Bernie was born in Covington, KY just prior to World War II. Earlier stories indicate the war had a strong influence on him as well as his value in an education. Life though brought him the opportunities he needed to find his path. Benedictine Sisters and private tutors saw his abilities in art, giving him the direction he would follow for his life. He attended Holy Cross High School and Villa Madonna College (now Thomas More College). He had higher aspirations though. He was able to obtain his first of two Master Degrees from Notre Dame under famed sculptor, Ivan Meštrovi. Meštrovi had agreed to accept him as a student after he had been recommended by one of his teachers. From Notre Dame, he moved to The Ohio State University to obtain his second Master of Fine Arts.



*"It is easy to forget that each generation considers theirs to be the apocalyptic one-war, famine, disease, pestilence! Really, what we continue is our humanness—the good and the bad—are the arts. I always ask my students to name the Renaissance popes, politicians, aristocrats, merchants. Naming the artists is easy. This reveals the importance of artists in society."*

— Bernie Schmidt (Xavier Magazine 1990)

On June 1, 1967 Bernie met Patricia Brady while playing volleyball at a Catholic Alumni Club function. They dated while he finished his degree at OSU. In 1969 they married at Saint Joseph Church in North Bend, Ohio. They

began their family of three boys the following year. He was able to secure a position at Edgely College (now Xavier University) as a Professor of Art. This stability allowed Bernie to prosper as an artist. Private commissions allowed him to create some of his best works. He used numerous mediums throughout his career. Wood and steel became objects that fancied imagination and inspirational thoughts. He had a passion for working with medals and found it liberating. In a Xavier Magazine (1990) he was quoted as saying "I've had a love-hate relationship with sculpture. My mind works much more quickly than my hands. I found the medal to be quick and a respite from my larger, sometimes architecturally scaled works. The medal is really portable sculpture, and it gave me another avenue to use skills I have as a bas-relief portraitist." In his later academic years Bernie chaired Xavier's Department of Art. He retired from Xavier in 1999 as a Professor Emeritus.

## HELP ARTifacts GO GREEN!

In our efforts to be more GREEN, We want to keep in touch with you via email and phase out printed material. To do this we need you to send us your email addresses! We are happy to keep sending you printed material if you prefer — but if possible we'd like to convert as many of our alums to email as possible! This way you can send us your life and work updates and we can send you exhibit notices, etc. in a timely and eco-friendly fashion!

Please send ASAP to [yontz@xavier.edu](mailto:yontz@xavier.edu). **THANK YOU!**

## Xavier University Gallery News

January 21-February 7, 2014

Department of Art Student Exhibition  
Artists' Reception, Friday, January 24, 6-8 p.m.

February 14-March 14, 2014

Department of Art Faculty  
Artists' Reception, Friday, February 21, 5-7 p.m.

March 21 – April 4, 2014

Isabel Aquila – Drawing & Painting  
Katherine Colborn – Pastel Drawings  
Catherine Maroney – Painting & Sculpture  
Tommy Rallis – Painting & Sculpture  
Artists' Reception, Friday, March 21, 6-8 p.m.

April 11 - 25, 2014

Alex Beard – Fibers  
Artist Reception, Friday, April 11, 6-8 p.m.

May 2 -17, 2014

Emily Boutilier – Painting  
Katie Doyle – Prints  
Mallory Tulcewicz – Sculpture  
Ashley Wanninger – Graphic Design  
Artists' Reception, Friday, May 2, 6-8 p.m.

M. Katherine Uetz, Director for the University Art Gallery  
Hours: 10:00 am – 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday  
Closed during university holidays  
For more information call: 513.745.3811

## Scholarship Reminder

Alumni, friends and prospective students are reminded that candidates for the McAuley Scholarship must apply and be accepted for admission by the competition deadline February 1, 2014. Call 513.745.3811 or check out our website at [www.xavier.edu/art](http://www.xavier.edu/art) for scholarship details.

## Art Award

Senior **Elizabeth Leal** was awarded the University Art Award during the April 20, 2013 All-Honors Day Program. Congratulations Elizabeth!

## Departmental Blog and Facebook

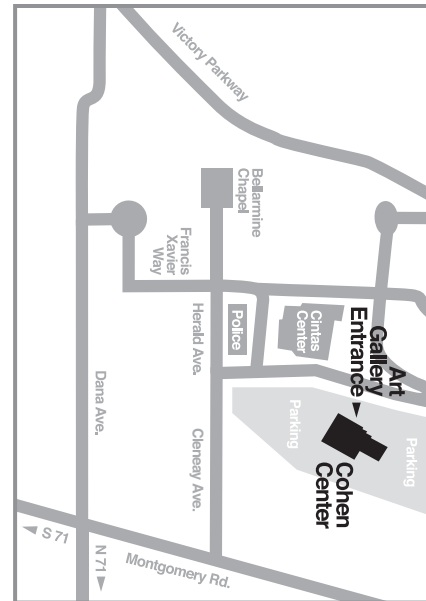
Check out the work our students are doing on our departmental blog at:  
<http://xavierartdepartment.com/>



Keep up on the "happenings" around the art department. Join the **Xavier University/Edgecliff College Art Alumni** group on Facebook.

reminder

Email your life and work updates to [yontz@xavier.edu](mailto:yontz@xavier.edu)



## KEEP IN TOUCH

Address comments, suggestions, information and inquiries to:  
XAVIER UNIVERSITY  
Department of Art Newsletter  
3800 Victory Parkway, Cincinnati, OH 45207-7311  
(513) 745-3811  
[www.xavier.edu/art](http://www.xavier.edu/art)

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# Artifacts

Winter 2014

Newsletter of the Xavier University Department of Art



Erica Fiero

## the Wayfarer, the International, the Fellow, & the Native Daughter

This issue's cover story relates stories from four alumnas who have embraced the opportunity of international travel, study and life experiences. Erica Weitzel Fiero (BFA'07) is the *wayfarer* having travelled since her undergraduate days to places like Rome, the Ukraine, and Jamaica. Hind Arrajehi (BA '11) is the *international* who came to Xavier from Saudi Arabia making her the first art major ever to hail from abroad—she continues to study in the USA as a MFA Graphic Design graduate student at Ohio University. Natalie Clark (BFA '12) is the *fellow* having secured a Brueggeman Fellowship in her senior year that took her to India. And finally, Cathy Della Lucia (BA '12) is the native daughter who has spent the past year working in the country of her birth, South Korea. All of these young women share in common the adventurous, independent and open spirit requisite to the traveller-learner—read on as they share their insights!

—Suzanne Michele Chouteau, editor

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Hind Arrajehi

## Erica Fiero

Traversing the globe sparked an insatiable curiosity in Erica Fiero and is one of the greatest sources of inspiration in her work. She has lived, worked, played, or studied in over 35 countries on 5 continents. Journeys to remote locations of the world allow her to mirror those experiences and discover remote places within herself.

In 2007, Fiero graduated from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. She earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with a double concentration in painting and photography. While on the four year full-tuition McAuley Art Scholarship, she was able to travel and study through Semester at Sea (F05), Xavier University Rome Campus, and The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Working as a photojournalist in Uganda helped in developing a global political perspective and documentary style. Her time spent volunteering with aid agencies in the refugee camps and war torn regions of East Africa played an important roll in seeing art not only as tool for effective communication and change but also a way to dissolve boundaries and connect on a very personal level.

Fiero's work in India was the start of an art school for children and women in a rural village with the help of a local non-profit. Traveling extensively throughout India and South-East Asia fueled her search for truth and knowledge. Her continued love for the connection of the human spirit is the driving force behind her desire to expose beauty in the obscure.

Currently based out of Los Angeles, California, Fiero is working on a 70+ piece freelance painting commission for a large accounting firm. She also uses her experience to build on her personal body of work and continues her earthly journey by the Ubuntu philosophy of "I am, because we are."

<http://ericafiero.com/>

## Hind Arrajehi

Hind graduated with Bachelors of Art from Xavier in 2011. Currently she is pursuing an MFA degree in Graphic Design at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. She moved to the United States in 2006 in hopes to study international relations at Georgetown University in Washington DC.

Prior to that, Hind was a business major at Kings Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. She has been an undergrad for eight years trying out a couple of majors until she found art. Hind plans to go back to Saudi Arabia upon graduation in the summer of 2014.

## Natalie Clark

Ms. Clark received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 2012 in graphic design and photography from Xavier University. In 2007, she traveled to The Netherlands as a sports ambassador, where she represented the People to People Junior USA Volleyball team. From 2009-2012, Ms. Clark worked as a graphic designer assisting with sales and marketing at Art Beyond Boundaries — an art gallery in Cincinnati, Ohio. In the summers of 2010 and 2011 she travelled to Italy to study art, philosophy and Italian. In 2013, Ms. Clark received a photojournalism research grant award, which allowed her to travel throughout Asia. Ms. Clark currently lives in Denver, CO and continues to pursue graphic design and photography as a freelance artist.

## Cathy Della Lucia

Catherine Della Lucia grew up in Royal Oak, Michigan. She received a BA in sculpture in 2012, alongside her brother, fellow XU grad and Korean adoptee, Ben Della Lucia. She has since been living on Jeju Island, South Korea teaching elementary art and ESL. She will be moving to Seoul to study Korean full time at University for the spring and continues training in Tae Kwon Do. Now, her sights are set on attending graduate school in the fall for an M.F.A. in sculpture; and one day hopes to use art to aid in the dialogue and cultural exchange between South Korea and America. [www.catherinedellalucia.com](http://www.catherinedellalucia.com)

*How did you prepare for your international experiences—what made you decide to leave home?*

**Erica Fiero:** I'll seek the unknown until the day I die, but you can never really prepare for it. The journey has a way of teaching you what you need to learn.

**Hind Arrajehi:** I wanted to get a new perspective on lifestyle, culture, and education. I came to the States with



Natalie Clark

hopes to get my degree in international relations since it was not offered in Saudi universities for women. Moving from a very traditional and conservative culture to a more diverse culture would definitely broaden my horizon. The States has people and their thoughts from many places in the world so it was the perfect place to travel to and gain as much experience as I can. My preparation was not so much physical but mental when it came to the actual move. I was excited to break out from the social traditions back home and experience a new lifestyle here.

**Natalie Clark:** My first trip out of the country without my family was when I was fourteen. I travelled to the Netherlands to play on one of the USA Jr. Olympic Volleyball teams through People to People Organization. Thankfully, my parents have always encouraged international travel and taught us to reach for what we may not even believe possible for ourselves. Since this experience I have never had to think about leaving "home." As for preparation, I did my research, organized a tentative itinerary and stayed flexible!

**Cathy Della Lucia:** When I was preparing for my last semester at Xavier, I really started becoming interested in international business (a little late!). I had a budding urge to learn more about my Korean heritage, something that I was never interested in growing up. I met with a few professors at Xavier about this, Dr. Yi of the economics department who I had met at a Distinguished Alumni luncheon that I "snuck into" because I saw that the awardee was a Korean man on a flier. I tried to visit some Korean churches in Cincinnati, and after speaking with various people, they all advised me that the best thing I could do was to go to Korea and learn Korean. A contact I made through building a City Hall replica for a campaign commercial had told me about teaching in Korea and got me in touch with people who had done it. Immediately, I was hooked. To seal the deal... well realize, I have never had any knowledge of or contact with my Korean family. When I was really starting to consider moving to Korea to teach, I received notice from my adoption agency that someone in Korea was trying to reach me. It turned out that my brother and mother had sent me hand written letters and family photos. I did not even know I had an older brother. It had never occurred

to me that I didn't know which parent I resembled...if I had my mom's eyes or my dad's smile. Those pictures were the first glimpse of my Korean family. I look just like my mother, with my father's eyes, and my brother's and my baby pictures are identical. I figured...I need to see what's out there...if I don't do it now, I never will.

*How were your finances covered, how did you manage costs?*

**Erica Fiero:** Currently I'm working on a large painting commission. I work, I save and I travel cheap. Stay away from the herds of tourists. Prices will decrease and experience will increase. I tend more towards third world countries where your money lasts longer. While at Xavier I did two international Alternative Break trips where we fundraised half of the year. I highly recommend the Alternative Break program.

**Hind Arrajehi:** I was fortunate enough to get a full scholarship from the government that would cover my education and a small stipend. I had to keep a good academic status and be a good representative of that scholarship to maintain the funding. Living alone costs more than having a family around. I had to buy everything to get situated, and grocery shopping was for one person. Here it is hard to find small portions of food to buy. It's all in large quantities more suitable for a family or a group of people. I try to buy smaller portions so it doesn't expire before I finish it, however, I always end up throwing food away. It's sad because it is such a waste. But this was one of the things that I didn't have in perspective that I had to finance.

**Natalie Clark:** After receiving the Brueggeman Fellowship Award, I immediately began planning. Thanks to Dr. James Buchanan's (Director of Xavier's Brueggeman Center) guidance and encouragement I decided to extend the initially planned duration of my trip from two to nine weeks. Although as generous as the Brueggeman grant was, I knew I needed to raise additional funds to extend my trip and add additional destinations. I was fortunate enough to receive "Best in Show" for Cincinnati's Summerfair Emerging Artist Exhibition and a Supporting Artist grant from the Cincinnati Woman's Club to help pay for my



Cathy Della Lucia

expenses and photography equipment. From there, I merely planned and budgeted along the way.

**Cathy Della Lucia:** Teaching in Korea is pretty safe in terms of financing. There are several options to go through with, but the standard is around \$2,000 a month, travel to and from the country, health insurance, a furnished apartment, and a \$2,000 bonus upon completing your 1 year contract. I teach art and English K-Elementary, less than 30 hours a week. The cost of living is fairly low, so it's very easy to save money and travel. I am preparing to backpack through Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and Burma in a few days. I've found it quite easy to save money, and still splurge on the good stuff in life! I chose to buy a scooter (seeing as I live on a subtropical volcanic island (Jeju) so transportation options are limited... and a scooter is the most amazing way to see and enjoy the outdoors. Even so, I save a lot of money on gas and insurance this way (plus I do A LOT of walking).

*What have been the most exciting aspects of your international travel and work?*

**Erica Fiero:** Exciting and challenging usually go hand in hand. It's physically and emotionally challenging quite often, but the reward is witnessing such beauty that you grow as a human being. The challenge is exciting. Navigating your way through a foreign land is not always an easy task, but it's the journey, not the destination. It's all about perspective.

**Hind Arrajehi:** Oh where do I start? It was overwhelming getting situated and understanding slang. People are very friendly here in the States: they walk and greet and throw comments. All I do is smile because I know they probably were saying good things or making light conversations but I didn't understand what they meant or how to reply. Americans have a very welcoming approach I have noticed that more in smaller cities than larger ones. I think the most exciting part is taking in all this beautiful weather. I can see all four seasons here. The scenery is amazing and traveling to different places here is very accessible. It's not hard to go venture around, it's also very safe. For me coming from a conservative background to total freedom I think just gave me power and knowledge of what I am capable of.

**Natalie Clark:** When it comes to travelling and exploring, I am like a child. I want to see, touch, taste, and experience everything within my reach. If it is not within my reach, I move closer. The most exciting aspects of my international travel are when I am completely uncomfortable, confused and lost. When I am that overwhelmed with a new experience — I thrive. It may be retrospectively, but my most invaluable experiences are when I thought I had reached my fullest capacity.

**Cathy Della Lucia:** It has opened my eyes to other cultures, not just Asian. My good friends from all over the world including South Africa, New Zealand, and the UK. I absolutely love culture, food, and new experiences.

Living here has shoved me head first into a world of exotic tastes, stereotypes, confusion, history, and moments that anger and excite me. I've eaten things that would make your stomach turn and developed an entirely new set of tastes. I've been fascinated with women's issues, Confucianism, Korea's obsession with having "pure blood," and the ridiculous education system here in Korea. I've really been able to see how I would have grown up and whom I could have been if I had lived here. I really, truly believe we are who we are because of our environment. It's interesting how fast we adapt to a new environment. My aesthetics, eating habits, and mannerisms have changed.

*What have been the most challenging aspects of your international travel and work?*

**Erica Fiero:** The journey is amplified by the people you meet along the way and this one man in particular was an exciting encounter (see cover photo). He is of the Aghori Tribe and I met him in Varanasi, India down by the ghats of the River Ganges. A Shiva worshipping Hindu sect, Aghori translates to 'no fear.' They live alone, hang out at cremation grounds, drink alcohol out of human skulls, practice ritualistic cannibalism, and extreme tantra. While many of their practices are taboo they aim to follow a spiritual path of non-judgment as they work to dissolve fear within themselves. As shocking and extreme as his presence was, he was a kind, humble, intelligent man seeking growth

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Erica Fiero

and understanding. He allowed me into his world and I left with a broader understanding of the human condition and a human skull that he gifted me.

When I was in Uganda I came upon a few situations that were extremely challenging for me. Uganda had been hit hard by a recently ended 20-year civil war. In the recovery process many religious organizations, mainly from the United States and Canada, have flocked to the country to convert the local populations. These, often times radical sects of Christianity, preach strongly against the LGBT community and have turned Uganda into one of the most homophobic countries in the world. The gay community was and still is consistently under attack and countless lives have been lost due to this imported belief that homosexuality is a sin. After witnessing severe violations of human rights, it's challenging to see the good in humanity, when day after day people are being oppressed. While challenging to witness, it was also motivation to put more love into the world to counteract the hate that is so often blindly accepted as truth.

**Hind Arrajehi:** I think the language barrier definitely affects my interaction and confidence. I have been here for a while now but I am still struggling with comprehending and expressing thought. Another challenge I find is the student lifestyle. People here go to school, work, do homework, and party! How can they manage all that? I tried but I couldn't. I realized in the States people live on the fast track. They are also very punctual. I worked so hard to become punctual and be on time, on real time. I had 3 letters from my previous school Georgetown University warning for being late every day. In my mind I was on time because I arrived at class 5-10 minutes after class started. Here it is not acceptable or appropriate, they take offense to it. I learned to be more punctual and that was a great challenge for me.

**Natalie Clark:** Deciding on a whim to trek alone over Christmas in the Himalayas for five days completely unprepared without a guide or porter. This challenged me personally on all levels; physically, emotionally and mentally expanding my capacity to a level I never knew possible. With only my backpack, limited resources and funds, I was forced to become creative with my bargaining

and foreign communication. This experience has drastically altered the way I live my life today. I now see daunting tasks and goals as merely a series of steps rather than unattainable and intangible. I would encourage and help anyone to have a similar experience!

**Cathy Della Lucia:** I have lived a year without love. Yes, I've made good friends here; however, I made the decision to set priorities and goals during my time here, and making friends and relationships were not the most important for me. With busy schedules, and 13-hour time difference, it's difficult to keep in touch back home with loved ones. I tend to do a lot on my own and take care of myself, which allows me to explore and experience things at a very personal and intimate level. Yet, there is a loneliness that comes with setting out on your own and making this kind of sacrifice... to not go out and party, or solely hang out with westerners, or choose comfort.

Looking Korean but not speaking Korean nor understanding cultural mannerisms has been extremely challenging. I do not get to play the "foreigner card," and my mistakes and poor Korean skills are not waved away or thought of "at least she's trying." I appear rude, unintelligent, ignorant, and a "bad Korean." It's very important here to fit into social and gender standards... many of which I do not. My weight and physical appearance is judged quite harshly, because I should compare to Korean standards. I learned quickly that being an athletic girl is not attractive and having tanned skin is ugly. I walk home from Tae Kwon Do receiving incredulous stares...you should see the looks I get whipping around the city on my scooter. The judgments stem from Confucian beliefs that are deeply rooted in Korean culture and from a society that went from a starving third world country to a booming economic power in one generation. I can blend in with the crowd, until I open my mouth...then I have to explain my life story...every single day.

**How has the international experience effected your art and life ways?**

**Erica Fiero:** Travel is a direct route to knowledge. When you open yourself up with the intention of learning from another culture directly, you get an education you can't find



Cathy Della Lucia

in any classroom. Not only do you expand your mind into another world but you also get a glimpse into a world inside of yourself. From that understanding I form my worldview and the inspiration for what I create.

**Hind Arrajehi:** This experience has been very insightful. People do not judge (compared to where I come from) — expect anything and be open to anything! Even if you don't agree, you have to be receptive of it, and approach it with an open mind. That I think gave me a new perspective on approaching anything. I grew so much when applying that, me being an artist I think was a result of that realization. I came with a very limited exposure and preconceived judgment on art but now I've become very much immersed into it. Trying to understand what is in front of you and giving it multiple explanations rather than judging it and dismissing it I think informs you more than you think. This international experience led me to apply that thought and is helping me to grow everyday.

**Cathy Della Lucia:** Korea shows me a new kind of beauty everyday. There are moments where I see something and feel as if someone has literally grabbed my heart and stopped its beating for a moment. How is it that I can look at ancient calligraphic paintings or listen to traditional music and be moved by something that I cannot understand? Experiencing things alone stimulates my mental dialogue, I constantly walk circles of questions around in my head...analyzing, brainstorming new ideas and directions to take my art with. I've started thinking about concepts behind my art first rather than the product.

I've learned that my birth father was once a portrait painter for American soldiers, giving it up because he knew he couldn't support the family. Meanwhile my birth brother had a passion for painting; however, society and culture says it's his duty as the son to get a "real job" and support his family. On the other hand my mom was an artist, musician, and a writer who encouraged me and exposed me to art my whole life. Who knows where my love of art came from? I can see now that I've been given the tools to do something with it...something that not everyone has the opportunity to do. This has really sparked my interest in the effects of cultural environment. I'd like to find a female writer here to work with...someone who holds the same things

in common with me that Koreans find very important: birth year, blood type, family clan name, or social status, and develop work on a similar topic and compare the similarities and differences. I'm also recently doing a lot of research on Korean landscape scroll painting.

I am a different person now inside and out. I have found a part of me that I never knew was missing. My experience here has brought excitement, confidence, color, and most importantly gratitude into my life. Sometimes people find it sad that I never discovered my heritage sooner. Yet, how lucky I am to have had a family and life so wonderful and full of love that I never yearned for something more?

My dream now is to become a university sculpture professor and work internationally, especially in Korea. I want to enhance international dialogue through art and be involved in the female rights movement in Korea. There's so much for us to learn from each other. We owe it to ourselves to go out and find it.

**What advice would you give undergraduates considering foreign study, travel or work?**

**Erica Fiero:** Go! Don't let anything stand in your way. Quit your job. Sell your things. Break your lease. Before you know it you will be sitting around a dinner table with strangers laughing in different languages and all those things you thought mattered will be a flicker of the past. Go have a near life experience. You deserve it.

**Hind Arrajehi:** I would say to try your best and make this experience happen. You will gain so much out of an international experience. Try something new! Try a more experienced you! You would find in this foreign study challenges but great rewards. It's an experience that you have to go through it to know it.

**Natalie Clark:** Dream as big as you can possibly dream. Never put a ceiling on what you are capable of, and never stick yourself in a box. After you are able to define your dream, write it down and create a plan for how you will achieve it. Then...do it one step at a time!!