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**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Smith House Galleries October Exhibition** **Features Works by JMU MFA Graduate Faculty**

HARRISONBURG, VA – Arts Council of the Valley (ACV) announces its October Smith House Galleries exhibition, *In Conversation: The MFA Graduate Faculty at JMU*. Supported by the School of Art, Design and Art History (SADAH) at James Madison University (JMU), the exhibition opens with an Oct 6 reception (5-7 pm) during First Fridays of the Valley. The JMU Jazz Combo will be on hand to provide a lively musical backdrop for the evening.

Featuring conceptually layered works by eight artists teaching in the JMU Master of Fine Arts graduate program, the exhibition includes fiber art, photography, collage, drawing, painting, mixed media, and sculpture. The makers behind the art are Dymph de Wild, Corinne Diop, R. Mertens, Mark Rooker, Martha Saunders, Greg Stewart, Allyson Mellberg Taylor, and Lisa Tubach.

*In Conversation: The MFA Graduate Faculty at JMU* runs through Oct 27, with in-person visits Monday-Friday, 11 am to 4 pm. Second Saturday (Oct 14, 10 am to 2 pm) offers another opportunity to engage with these works and connect with the artists. The exhibition will also be available online ([valleyarts.org/current-exhibition](http://valleyarts.org/current-exhibition)).

JMU's Master of Fine Art in Studio Art was established in 1980, making it the first terminal degree at JMU. SADAH professor and exhibition organizer Corinne Diop noted that "the current Graduate Faculty is made up of a select group of practicing artists and scholars who challenge and support the MFA candidates in their intellectual, philosophical, and artistic development. While a diverse array of media, research areas, and backgrounds are represented by the faculty and graduate students, they are unified by their belief in the importance of art that ensures that they are always: in conversation."

Smith House Galleries, located at 311 South Main Street, is supported in part by ACV's 2023 Cultivating the Arts Platinum Sponsors: James McHone Jewelry, Kathy Moran Wealth Group, Matchbox Realty, and Riner Rentals.

Arts Council of the Valley (ACV) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to cultivating the arts, creating experiences, and connecting communities throughout the City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. Since it was established in 2000, ACV has grown into a multi-faceted community

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[valleyarts.org](http://valleyarts.org), [courtsquaretheater.org](http://courtsquaretheater.org)

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organization that fosters innovative partnerships among area businesses, civic organizations, schools, and artists.

Today, ACV manages Court Square Theater and Smith House Galleries, funds local art projects through its Advancing the Arts grant program (awarding more than \$483,500 since 2001), supports public art initiatives, and coordinates monthly First Fridays of the Valley community gatherings.

ACV is supported in part by the City of Harrisonburg and the Virginia Commission for the Arts, which receives support from the Virginia General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. To learn more, visit [valleyarts.org](http://valleyarts.org).

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