Whatever your medium, think originally and critically. Create, express, redefine the boundaries. Explore the intuitive and subjective while experiencing the rational and scientific. The liberal arts offer a marvelous balance that can transform you and your art. And that’s our intention—we know the arts are integral to educating the whole person.
**Why Here? Why Art?**

Sing, dance, paint, act, direct, compose, and perform, all while getting the best liberal arts education available. At Mount Holyoke you’ll explore traditional and digital mediums, advance your skills, and develop your aesthetic. You’ll be taught by—and collaborate with—nationally and internationally recognized professionals and scholars.

Associate Professor Robin Blaetz, chair of the film studies department and Mount Holyoke’s arts coordinator—the overseer of all things arts related—recently spoke to *Vista* about why an MHC liberal arts education provides the best preparation for a career in the arts—or in any field, for that matter.

**Why should a student who wants to be a filmmaker or painter choose Mount Holyoke instead of a film or art school?**

**RB:** Students who are excited about actually working in the arts some day tend to want to do nothing but their artwork. But technical mastery of an art form, particularly one as technologically based as the cinema, is not terribly difficult (although people certainly have varying levels of talent). What a liberal arts college like Mount Holyoke teaches each student is the broad historical, political, and cultural context in which a given art form exists, which in turn allows her to work with greater depth.

**How do the arts fit into the liberal arts at Mount Holyoke?**

**RB:** Understanding the world through art is as complex and rewarding as knowing it through science. Throughout time, people have sought to make sense of the flux of the universe through ordering it in patterns that give some illusion of control and, more important, of meaning. I would argue that the arts, perhaps even more than the sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities, show us what it has meant and means in any given time to be human.

**We have to ask. What are your favorite films?**

**RB:** Fair is fair; this is a question that I ask my students in Introduction to Film every fall! I began to study the cinema after falling in love with the French New Wave films of the early 1960s, particularly Agnès Varda’s *Cléo from 5 to 7* and Jean-Luc Godard’s *Vivre sa vie*. My own writing involves the wealth of women’s experimental film, and I continue to be intrigued by the work of Marie Menken and Marjorie Keller. Of course, I love to teach Alfred Hitchcock’s films and the American musical, and can watch Francis Ford Coppola’s first two *Godfather* films repeatedly. But my favorite films are those by Robert Bresson and Chris Marker, whose work remains mysterious and compelling to me after three decades.
Khushbu Mishra’s home in the southern Nepalese village of Halkhori may be continents away, but it’s never far from her heart. As a recipient of the prestigious 2010 Davis Projects for Peace award, Mishra will return there this summer to carry out her project, “Painting a Peaceful Present.”

Mishra’s Project for Peace aims to help women in her village and the surrounding area preserve, develop, and market their unique folk art. Passed from mother to daughter, their craft traditionally involves painting the exterior walls of houses with colorful, stylized depictions of family and village scenes. The paint, made from locally produced pigments, washes away in the rainy season, leaving the walls a blank slate to be decorated afresh each year.

An economics and math major, Mishra plans to open an art institute in Halkhori and bring in professional artists to teach the women how to apply their technique to paper and canvas. She will then connect them with businesses and organizations that can help them market their art at visitors’ centers in Kathmandu and other cities.

Mishra’s goals for “Painting a Peaceful Present” are ambitious. By training the women to market their art, she hopes “to help them achieve economic power that will strengthen their social position and raise their families’ standard of living.” She also hopes that by spreading the lively culture, her project can help to diffuse the longstanding tensions between Nepal’s northern mountain people and the often-oppressed people of the southern plains.

Summer can’t come soon enough for Mishra. “This is the first time in years that I will be spending three months at home, and it is especially exciting that I will be working on my first independent project that aims for the betterment of my community,” she said. “I want to work for nonprofit organizations in the future, so this is my first step toward career building.”
Six

Senior Studio Art Thesis Exhibition
May 2010
Hinchcliff Reception Hall, Art Building
Han Zhang ’10

**Name:** Han Zhang ’10  
**Hometown:** Yichang, China  
**Major:** Studio Art  
**Minor:** Mathematics  

**Senior Awards:** Phi Beta Kappa and Ruth Warfel Art Prize

**Inspiration:** “At home, I wrote poetry but I couldn’t reach the same level of artistry using English. Being bilingual made me especially aware how many things are not represented by words.”

**Turning point:** “As I began exploring questions about language and translation, I started learning how to conceptualize and contextualize my work.”

**The work:** “Translation is a slight dislocation of the source meaning that occurs when the translator finds substitute words. I made sixteen woodcuts serving as a visual investigation of the destination of translation. The woodcuts illustrate the dislocation process of a sentence in this context.”

**Artist’s statement:** “Meaning does not exist in one word, but it does in between words. There are always gaps between what is read and what is understood. My work stands between the simultaneity of experience and the awareness of it.”

**Future plans:** Graduate studies in advertising design at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. “After getting more life experience to help with my conceptual ideas, I will pursue an MFA.”

Han Zhang ’10 | Bodhi (detail), 2010, handspun wool and thread
The Poet Within

Holland Glen
BY BIANCA YOUNG ’11

I should let the water beat me smooth
and touch me falling. The rocks here morph
into mossy tablets in this river stream and never stop.

I should let the water change me and make my body
wear a coat as brown and deep
as the colors that breathe here do.

It’s simple.
Colors breathe. I think they do.

Otherwise the dark earth beneath the leaves
would fade away.

How would I see the specks of green
behind the foaming streams of water cascading
down the rocky precipice if colors did not breathe?

The tree branch submerged in stream, alive
would surely drown, and fade away.

I should let the golden breath of sun,
inhale me through the green skin of the leaves
tickle my breathable, breathing tint,
my bark, my color,
my brown.

Now in its 87th year, the Annual Kathryn Irene Glascock ’22
Intercollegiate Poetry Contest at Mount Holyoke College connects
talented student poets from all over the country with distinguished
professional poets. Bianca Young ’11, an environmental studies major
and lacrosse player from Montego Bay, Jamaica, was selected to
represent Mount Holyoke at the 2010 Glascock Contest. How did she
react when she found out she would be Mount Holyoke’s Glascock
contestant? “[It] took me completely by surprise. As the competition
approached, I was both excited and nervous,” Young said. “But I’ve
written for so long, I felt confident about the poems.”
Leading Women in the Arts

Every year, Mount Holyoke invites a prominent woman from the arts world to be guest artist-in-residence in its Leading Women in the Arts program. In April, Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho, one of the world’s preeminent modern composers, came to campus for three-days filled with master classes, workshops, seminars, concerts, and a colloquium. Sunday morning, Saariaho sat in on a rehearsal of the Mount Holyoke/Smith Cello Ensemble as the musicians put finishing touches on Saariaho’s Neiges for a concert that afternoon. After the rehearsal, the musicians—Diana, Joydita, and Sara—chatted about Saariaho and her music.

Diana: We had a steep learning curve, especially at first.
Joydita: We had to learn all the funky things a cello doesn’t usually do.
Diana: Those are called “extended techniques.”
Sara: It’s a different kind of playing. We’re used to always trying to make things sound beautiful. Anssi [Karttunen, guest cellist and conductor] told us: “You have to learn to love the crunching sound.”
Diana: It’s kind of intimidating. You’re playing her work.
Joydita: We usually play dead composers. There’s a lot of variability in the music. Your instrument will surprise you. Every instrument plays it differently. She understands that.
Diana: It’s more about the sound than the notes. That’s why it was a steep learning curve. It took a long time to control what the music sounds like.
Sara: You’re going to learn a lot about classical music by broadening your horizons with modern music. Any time you’re playing something you’re uncomfortable with, you’re going to become a better musician.
Diana: After we played this morning and she said “It’s great.” I was happy!

Leading the way since 1942: Mount Holyoke’s V-8s are the oldest continuing female collegiate a cappella group in the nation.
Graduating seniors presented research on Louis Armstrong, biomimetic robots, and juvenile recidivism, among a host of other subjects, at the annual Senior Symposium.

MHC students past and present had another banner year for prestigious fellowships, including a Boren Scholarship, multiple Fulbrights, and a Zell Fellowship.

The MHC community gathered in April to celebrate the second annual Hortense Parker Day.

621 diplomas and four honorary degrees were bestowed during the College’s 173rd commencement on May 23. New York Times columnist Gail Collins was the commencement speaker.

The College’s newest facility is more than a boathouse, crew coach Jeanne Friedman noted at an opening ceremony in April. It’s a home for MHC crew team (below).

Beginning in spring 2012, Mount Holyoke will offer a semesterlong program, International Business in China, at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics.

Kathy Aidala, Clare Boothe Luce Assistant Professor of Physics, won the National Science Foundation’s prestigious Early Career Award for her work in nanophysics.

Mount Holyoke announced a $5 million gift to name and support the Leslie Miller and Richard Worley Center for the Environment.

(above), honoring the first known African American student to graduate from MHC.

Professors Christopher Pyle and John Lemly and nine students sailed the brig Niagara across Lake Erie and revisited the War of 1812 in late May.

MHC team captain Lindsay Scoats ’11 became the third rider in program history to capture the prestigious Caccione Cup at the 2010 Intercollegiate Horse Show Association National Championship.

Bryna Turner ’12, Jane Bradley ’11, and Roger Babb, Professor of Theatre: “He’s very much a part of the liberal arts philosophy that it can only benefit you to study everything,” said Turner.