Below is an overview of The Department of Art and Art History's use of the Mollie Ruprecht Fund for Visual Arts in 2012-13. The fund sponsored five visiting artists and critics throughout the year, and helped support two initiatives in our Colburn Gallery.

In September, the Ruprecht Fund supported Illinois-based artist Conrad Bakker. Bakker’s exhibitions include the Tate Modern (London), and the New Museum of Contemporary Art (New York). His visit to the Department coincided with a solo exhibition at Burlington City Arts in downtown Burlington. The exhibition, Seasonal Economies, was co-sponsored by the BCA and the Ruprecht Fund and curated by UVM Professor Steve Budington. While visiting campus, Bakker gave a public lecture on his work, hosted a student roundtable discussion, Things in Motion, had lunch with a group of senior undergraduate majors, and conducted studio visits with additional students. The exhibition allowed students to be able to see Bakker’s work as objects in a gallery, and was open the entire semester. At least four Studio Art and Art History faculty created projects and other class assignments in response to Bakker’s exhibition and visit. The BCA Center published a catalogue for the exhibition.

In October, University of Virginia Art Historian Howard Singerman, well known for his book Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University, gave a lecture based on his recent study of the ideological framework behind conferring degrees in the arts. Professor Singerman’s dense lecture introduced many students to Postmodern thought, and to consideration of the framework of their own education.

In November, New York and Amsterdam-based artist Nina Bovasso gave a public lecture on her obsessive and comical paintings, and hosted a fifteen-person roundtable discussion with students on the subject of being an artist in a market-driven art world. Bovasso visited an Advanced Painting class and conversed with the students about...
contemporary art. Bovasso has been making and exhibiting her works nationally and internationally for twenty years, and is the recipient of many honors including the Guggenheim, Pollock-Krasner, and Tiffany Awards.

In February, renowned critic, theorist, and Princeton professor Hal Foster visited. Foster has been an editor at *Art in America* and *October*, and was Director of Critical and Curatorial Studies at The Whitney Museum. He has edited and written several books that are considered seminal texts in postmodern criticism, *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, *Recodings*, and *The Return of the Real*. His lecture on British Pop Art originator and painter Richard Hamilton put forth the concept that Hamilton’s paintings, which combine photography and painting, counter the customary notion that these media are oppositional.

In April, sculptor John Newman visited. Newman, while New York-based, travels the world regularly and his work reflects the wide-ranging influences of this process. His work has been the subject of over twenty-five solo exhibitions throughout the United States, and is in the permanent collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Brooklyn Museum, LA County Museum, Metropolitan Museum, Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Newman gave a public lecture on his idiosyncratic and elegant works, hosted a roundtable discussion on the subject of contemporary sculpture, and gave intense individual critiques to five advanced painting and sculpture students. Newman had lunch with a small group of undergraduates.
The Ruprecht Fund co-sponsored two exhibitions in the Colburn Gallery in Williams Hall. Professor Steve Budington curated an exhibition of New York-based artist Karla Wozniak’s paintings. It was great for students to be able to see a cohesive, mature body of work by a relatively young artist. Since these paintings have a great tactile quality it was especially important to see them in person. Ms. Wozniak gave a gallery talk, conducted studio visits with undergraduates, and visited painting classes, all of which received excellent student feedback.

Professor Mildred Beltre presented the work of two New York-based artists, Maria Providencia Casanovas and Lisa Hamilton. These two artists talked about their works at the opening reception.

Visitors funded by the Ruprecht Fund have been thoughtfully integrated into our course curricula. Students learn about artists’ and critics’ works via slide lectures and readings prior to visits. For example, the impact of Hal Foster’s lecture on Richard Hamilton’s work can be measured by how many students’ paintings revealed an initial dialogue with popular imagery and collage aesthetics, as well as by how the students’ capacity to understand his advanced-level essays were enhanced by personal contact with him in the roundtable discussion. Foster’s writings were written into syllabi in many Studio Art and Art History courses, allowing for in-depth study of his particular frame of reference. In the case of Nina Bovasso’s work, her visit worked wonderfully in relation to a concurrent Studio Art course that explored optimism and levity in painting practices.