

'Inner Landscapes' Senior Art Exhibition Showcases Sweet Briar College Students' Vision and Voices

Five senior artists explore identity, emotion, and self-expression through painting, sculpture, and photography in their final showcase, on view through May 17.

SWEET BRIAR, VA, UNITED STATES, April 13, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A studio art major's journey at Sweet Briar College culminates in the Senior Art Exhibition, a transformative showcase of each student's creative evolution. On April 4, the Benedict Gallery opened its doors to highlight the work of five remarkable seniors—Giselle Vega, Kalin Ross, Laci Walker, Sydney Harris, and Trista Cleaves—under the collective theme "Inner Landscapes: An Artistic Exploration of Our Human Experience."



Sweet Briar College's 2025 senior studio art majors—Sydney Harris, Kalin Ross, Laci Walker, Trista Cleaves, and Giselle Vega—celebrate the opening of their final exhibition, Inner Landscapes.

The exhibition explores how memory, emotion, and identity intersect through a wide range of media, including photography, mixed media, sculpture, and painting. Each artist's collection speaks to a personal narrative while collectively offering visitors a multidimensional reflection of what it means to be human.

A Unique Program That Inspires Personal Voice

[Sweet Briar's Studio Art program is truly one of a kind.](#) Unlike larger institutions where students may work with graduate assistants, Sweet Briar undergraduates work directly with a full faculty of professional, practicing artists. The curriculum emphasizes both technical skill and creative exploration, supported by first-rate facilities—from ceramics and sculpture studios to darkrooms, digital labs, and expansive painting spaces.

Sweet Briar's permanent art collection includes 12th-century manuscripts and works by contemporary women artists like Kara Walker and Uzo Njoku. The [Friends of Art alumnae group](#)

[funds student awards, internships, and gallery programming](#), creating a dynamic, professionally enriched environment for young artists to thrive.

Profiles in Courage and Creativity
Kalin Ross's *No Shame* uses bold, unapologetic visual language to challenge societal discomfort with queer identity. Their work is both a personal declaration and a cultural critique, reclaiming space, elevating marginalized voices, and demanding visibility. *No Shame*'s use of texture, layering, and provocative symbolism invites the viewer into a conversation that is both personal and political. Kalin's ability to balance vulnerability with strength through composition and contrast showcases exceptional command of visual storytelling. Kalin's work breaks convention without sacrificing craft, making their pieces both bold statements and skillfully executed works of art.



Kalin Ross's *No Shame*, 2025 and Sydney Harris's *Photography as Art*, 2025.

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The talent and vision these women display are extraordinary—a reflection of how Sweet Briar, a category of one, nurtures bold expression, skill, and confidence.”

*Dr. Christopher Smith, Vice
President of Enrollment
Management*

Sydney Harris wrestles with the definition of photography as art. Her abstract photographs challenge traditional forms by focusing on intention and emotional resonance, inviting viewers to see beyond the literal image. Sydney's photographs embrace abstraction not just in form but in feeling. Her use of light, blur, and unconventional framing offers a painterly approach to photography, where emotion becomes the subject as much as the image. One must admire her willingness to let intuition guide the lens proof of a mature creative voice that's unafraid to push boundaries and redefine beauty in the medium.

Giselle Vega's *Life Goes On* combines film photography with printmaking to reflect on memory, transition, and the passage of time. Her multi-medium process underscores the uncertainty of life and the growth that accompanies change. Giselle's layered techniques pairing delicate printmaking with nostalgic film photography reveal a sensitivity to both material and memory. Her subtle manipulations of tone and texture evoke a

sense of quiet reflection. Giselle Vega's work displays restraint and intentionality, allowing complexity to emerge not from overstatement but from thoughtful, emotional layering.

Trista Carolyn Cleaves confronts mortality in *Clean Me*, a ceramic sculpture and mixed media installation that grapples with death, fear, and meaning-making. Her emotionally raw exploration compels viewers to face the inevitable with empathy and reflection. *Clean Me* is as visceral as it is visually striking. Trista's integration of ceramic texture and symbolic iconography creates an immersive experience that forces contemplation. Trista's fearlessness in exploring taboo and existential themes through form and fragmentation elevates the installation to a place of poetic discomfort, one that lingers in the viewer's mind.

Laci Walker's vibrant triptych, *Chaos and Clarity*, visually captures the tension between control and surrender. Through bold color and fluid form, she portrays art as a therapeutic outlet—an act of embracing imperfection and process. Laci's instinctive use of gesture and color breathes life into *Chaos and Clarity*. Her work doesn't just speak—it pulses with the rhythm of someone making sense of the world through motion and material. Laci's commitment to process over perfection stands out, resulting in a triptych that feels emotionally honest, compositionally daring, and powerfully alive.

Throughout their final semester, the seniors engaged in weekly critiques with faculty and peers to refine their ideas and techniques. This experience prepared them for professional exhibitions, graduate study, and careers in the arts. They also developed exhibition planning skills, from



Giselle Vega, *Life Goes On*, 2025



Trista Cleaves, *Clean Me*, 2025.

hanging artwork to writing artist statements.

Sweet Briar's [Kelley & C.T. Fitzpatrick Center for Creativity, Design, and the Arts](#) supports the Studio Art program, empowering students to explore their talents in an inspiring, hands-on academic environment.

Visit and Support

Inner Landscapes will remain on view in the Benedict Gallery through May 17. Visitors are welcome to view the exhibition during regular gallery hours.



Laci Walker, Chaos and Clarity, 2025

Sweet Briar's studio art program offers students a uniquely personal, hands-on learning experience with opportunities to exhibit work and engage in professional-level curation. To learn more about studying studio art at Sweet Briar, contact admissions@sbc.edu or call 434-381-6142.

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