

UMass Dartmouth student named a Fulbright Scholar

UMass Dartmouth Masters of Fine Arts candidate in painting Robert Najlis (Ridgewood, NJ) has been awarded a Fulbright scholarship. Najlis, who is graduating in May 2019, is among 2,000 people from across the globe who receive grants each year in all fields of study to conduct international research.

For his scholarship research, Najlis will travel to the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou, China to study painting and calligraphy. He will focus on the art of the Song dynasty and that era's historical integration of the three perfections of painting, poetry, and calligraphy. His research will examine the philosophical and aesthetic theories of the artwork, aided by the practical study of Chinese painting and calligraphy. In addition to studying Chinese art, he will share his knowledge of Western painting, garnered from his studies at UMass Dartmouth and the Art Students League of New York, by collaborating with other artists and giving public talks and exhibitions.

While at UMass Dartmouth, Najlis undertook an interdisciplinary model of learning. While in the MFA in painting program in the College of Visual and Performing Arts, he also enrolled in the music program, and coded computer software that allowed music and sound to accompany his paintings.

Najlis works primarily in abstract oil paintings, at times augmented by sound art. He investigates the human relationship to the resonant nature of reality and is particularly interested in questions of immanence and transcendence, and the philosophical consequences of those questions. His work makes use of both Western and Chinese artistic processes and philosophies, derived from a shifting set of axioms with which

to view the world. This allows for altering paradigms in how one thinks and perceives. His recent work brings together research in sound art and artificial intelligence, and combines oil paintings with audio synthesis and algorithmic composition mediated through sensors to create an interactive environment. The physical presence of his painting plays an important role in creating a resonant space shared between viewer and work. His work has shown nationally and internationally in locations including New York City, China, and Argentina.

To learn more, please visit his website: www.robertnajlis.com.