

Application for Faculty Development Program  
**FACULTY SABBATICAL LEAVE**



*Potential of Loss*, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches

Name: Kevin Munte  
Department: Visual Arts  
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Date of initial applicant appointment to full-time faculty status: Fall 2001

Date(s) of previous sabbatical leave(s): Fall 2007/Spring 2008

Requested Leave Period: Fall 2014/Spring 2015

Project Title: **Landscape: History, Memory and Narrative, Finding Identity through Place and Time**

Short Project Description:

Most summers I travel extensively, and the places I visit usually become my subject matter for landscape paintings. During my sabbatical leave I hope to make several series of paintings from these trips, including:

- Seasonal landscapes
- Paintings from national parks (which continues a several-year-long ongoing project to collect these paintings in a published volume)
- Narrative paintings that combine landscape with the human figure

In addition I will apply for an artist residency in the fall or spring, times of the year that are typically unavailable due to teaching obligations. The culmination of work will be shown in a future solo exhibition, as well as entered and juried for numerous regional and national venues.

A rectangular area that has been redacted, likely containing the applicant's signature.

September 9, 2013

\* By typing your name or pasting your signature in the space provided you are allowing this application to be reviewed by the Faculty Benefits Committee for a possible award. The applicant is also aware that failure to comply with the instructions may result in this proposal not being reviewed.

## Part II

### **GOALS AND CRITERIA**

The goal of this project is to make paintings for upcoming exhibitions, and to apply and be selected for an artist-in-residence program. I've recently submitted a proposal for a solo show at the Alice F. and Harris K. Weston Art Gallery in the Aronoff Center for the Arts, Cincinnati, Ohio, during 2015. My work is often exhibited nationally at prestigious art galleries. Gross McCleaf gallery in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, has inquired about showing my work in either December 2014 or sometime in the spring of 2015. The goals of this sabbatical are to make enough work for at least one solo show. Some of the work will also be peer reviewed or juried into national/international art publications and exhibitions.

The paintings that I intend to make during the sabbatical will be highly detailed and from afar will resemble photographs. Upon closer inspection the viewer will notice the various textures, colors, and brushstrokes that reinforce its nature as a painting. Often I'm asked how long it takes to make a Miente (painting, that is), and I'd have to say about 40 hours or more for a medium-sized painting of approximately 30 by 40 inches. Needless to say, because of the time it takes to produce a finished studio painting, I'm always backlogged with ideas. It's hard for me to estimate but I would guess that I have years of paintings that I want to make. I hope that with this sabbatical I can make enormous strides in finishing some of this work.

The criteria for judgment I believe will be both the academic and public appreciation of my work. Paintings will be viewed through exhibitions and public artist talks during a residency, faculty brown bag lunch, or at the public library. I will also share the new work during high school art visits through the Taft Museum of Art's Artists Reaching Classrooms (a program I've been involved with for over ten years).

### **DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

This project will focus on making landscape paintings that will be exhibited both regionally as well as nationally. I also plan on serving as an artist-in-residence at a National Park. Because my work has appeared in many national publications and reputable galleries, at present my paintings are in high demand. As mentioned earlier, to complete one medium-sized painting requires time. Having a year to paint at this point in my artistic career is vital. I've submitted a proposal to the Weston Art Gallery in Cincinnati, Ohio, for an exhibition sometime in 2014 - 2015. Gross McCleaf Gallery in Philadelphia, where I've been exhibiting since 2007, has also shown interest in giving me a solo show late 2014 or early 2015. In addition to these two exhibitions I would like to continue to supply Heike Pickett Gallery in Lexington, Kentucky, and Richard Demato Fine Arts Gallery in Sag Harbor, New York, with new paintings. Receiving the sabbatical would give me much coveted time to produce more work that would help my career and also add to NKU's regional and national reputation as a solid visual arts academic institution.

This sabbatical leave will center on making new work from previous studies and reference photographs. I plan to continue several series that I've started as well as making new bodies of work linked to these series. My paintings are very detailed—from far away many viewers

believe they are enlarged photographs, but upon closer inspection they notice the intricate and subtle brushwork and are then awed by the fact that these are actually paintings.

At present I have a few series that I've been working on. Seasonal Landscapes, National Parks, and Figurative Narrative Landscapes I've been able to make some small on-site studies and have amassed a large collection of photographic references, but I require an extended period of time to make large, studio paintings.



*May, from the Yearbook series, oil on canvas, 12 x 30.5 inches*

The **Seasonal Landscapes** series features landscapes of rural Kentucky that I hope establish a sense of place for the viewer. These paintings are a direct response to light, time of day and the fleeting experience of the moment. Often devoid of human presence they entice the viewer to experience the scene for themselves, and I've lately come to believe that some act as vacant stage sets that may help set the mood for some of my figurative paintings.

The **National Parks** series has been on hold for the past two years as I've been working with the figure in the landscape. Several years ago I was artist in residence at Denali National Park in Alaska, and Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado. I've painted in many of the country's National Parks and hope to someday self publish a catalog of my paintings of these locations. This project which I haven't been able to work on for the past couple of years is again ready. I have ideas and photo references that I've taken for Acadia, Everglades, Grand Tetons, Bryce Canyon, Grand Canyon and Glacier, as well as five National Parks in Canada.



*From the Watchman, Zion National Park, oil on board, 10.5 x 23.5 inches*

The **Figurative Narrative Landscapes** series I started about two years ago is a body of work that I've had much success with and hope to continue. For the past two years, my desire to

explore the human experience via the metaphor of landscape led me to include figures within nature. I hope that the viewer reads these as metaphysical senses of place. The landscape serves as a backdrop to moments of human action that tap into grand, universal themes. After conceiving an idea for a painting I undertake vigorous photo shoots and cull through dozens of reference photos before I start to paint. I look to my painting heroes and often borrow or adapt gestures, scenes, and compositions to have deep conversations with art history. I cast my models as archetypes and they often in some way have lived these roles. The paintings portray facets of the human condition such as loss, doubt, wisdom, and faith as to enlighten and remind viewers of their own humanity.



*Smoke Signals*, oil on canvas, 48 x 60 inches

The above mentioned series will be painted in my studio and at landscape locations.

Lastly, I wish to do one artist residency, ideally in a National Park, in the fall and or the spring during my sabbatical leave. As a landscape painter and university professor most of my time spent in the landscape is during winter and summer breaks. My plans are to win a residency during the fall or spring, two times that I haven't been able to pursue previously due to teaching obligations. I will start applying for residencies once applications become available, which usually occurs in fall and winter.

## **VALUE OF THE PROJECT**

This project will further my growth as a well-rounded painter. Although I work well under the gun, having a large quantity of uninterrupted time fosters the creative process and challenges me to take risks and chances that can lead to new directions in my work. This sabbatical year will allow me to fully delve into my work without distractions, and in my estimation will equal three years of working while juggling research with teaching. I hope that exhibiting this body of work

will strengthen my professional status and will further heighten the reputation of NKU's art department. As for the scholarly community, I will exhibit work done during sabbatical in reputable galleries and national juried exhibitions to continue the dialog of beauty in contemporary art, and how we as humans view the world we live in.

I prepare students to become professional artists. I think of myself as both a practicing professional artist as well as a teacher. However, I've only painted full-time for a whole year once before, during my last sabbatical. This would give me added knowledge in advising students to prepare for the rigors of their practice. The exercise of painting everyday will also help my speed in the classroom when doing demonstrations for the students. My intermediate painting class (ARTP 330) paints landscapes and figures, and some of the work that I do during sabbatical will serve as models for their own student research into these themes. As our department forms its strategic plan we've decided that preparing students to be working professionals is of paramount concern. We also feel it is important for our students to hear artists speak about their work. This sabbatical will give me greater experience on what it's like to solely be a working artist which I hope to articulate to our students and faculty. For the non-academic community my paintings offer slower more poetic ways to contemplate the people we are and the land we live in. I will continue to speak to high school art classes and create a love and appreciation of visual arts for the younger generation which I've been doing for several years.

## **BACKGROUND OF APPLICANT RELEVANT TO THIS PROJECT**

On a continual basis I've made and exhibited paintings that deal with a directed theme, ranging from environments in greenhouses and zoos, Alaska and Kentucky landscapes, regions of National Parks, the mysterious qualities of water, and archetypal man. I have a strong exhibition record and the talent and experience to make the continuation of these bodies of work a reality. I pride myself in being a hard independent worker and know that the work only gets done if I'm doing the work. A year to paint will achieve several goals:

My self-published book of paintings of National Parks will come closer to its realization. In 2007, in collaboration with my wife, I published *Yearbook*, which comprised 12 paintings, one for each month, accompanied by her haikus. We sold out and distributed a limited edition of 100 copies.

Paintings will be shown in various exhibition spaces both regionally and nationally. Galleries are starting to make plans for exhibits and have discussed with me possible exhibition periods. My exhibition record is extensive and I've had several solo shows while also maintaining a full teaching load. This sabbatical release would be coming at the right time for me, due to the fact that I have so many paintings I want to paint.

My previous experience directed towards residencies is commendable. The selection process is very competitive for residencies, and in past years I've been chosen as Artist-in-Residence at Denali National Park, Alaska; Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado; Wild Acres, North Carolina; honorable mention for a residency at Isle Royal National Park, Michigan; and the year before being awarded the residency at Rocky Mountain National Park I was selected as their alternate.

## **OTHER SUPPORT AND COMMITMENTS**

At present I've applied for a project grant to attend a workshop on portrait painting to strengthen my skills painting the human figure. If I receive this project grant, my department chair has set aside funds to assist with expenses. I have also applied for a Summerfair Cincinnati Aid to Individual Artists Grant, and submitted a proposal to exhibit at the Weston Art Gallery in the Aronoff Center, Cincinnati, Ohio. The more time that I have to paint will yield stronger quality works. In the field of art most often grants are awarded through competitions. The work that I've done during my previous NKU project grants, fellowship, and sabbatical leave all yielded more outside grants and awards. I believe this sabbatical will do the same.

As a painter, time is one of my most precious commodities. It takes long periods of time to make a painting. Momentum is on my side. While the committee reads this sabbatical proposal my exhibition at Richard Demato Gallery in New York will be under way. If things go well artists are usually asked to paint for another solo show a year or two later. This sabbatical will allow me the time to make sure I can supply the galleries that represent my work.

As far as commitments are concerned I see myself doing a residency during the fall or spring, times I normally wouldn't be able to do residencies due to teaching responsibilities. These will serve as a way to generate new source material for future work.

I will also continue my university outreach by working with the Taft Museum of Art's Artists Reaching Classrooms program. Through this program I visit approximately twelve high schools each year and talk with high school seniors working on directed art projects based on their experience at the Taft Museum of Art.

Part III

### **Supporting Documentation**

**Vita (Follows below)**

### **PREVIOUS FBC AWARDS**

Previous Faculty Benefits Committee awards that I've received are:

2006 Project grant:

#### **Figure Drawing Workshop with Artist Anthony Ryder**

I attended a figure drawing workshop in Santa Fe and have been sharing what I learned there with our Northern art students. This workshop provided me with several answers to student questions and has also slightly altered my teaching style and improved my drawing. During life drawing sessions at Manifest Gallery, Cincinnati, Ohio, I've shared knowledge gained at this workshop with multiple participants.

Fall 2007/Spring 2008 Sabbatical:

#### **Making Muentel's (Paintings that is!)**

During this sabbatical I made 53 paintings and 10 figure drawings which were exhibited extensively. The body of work created during this time allowed for seven group exhibitions, two solo shows, and a national juried publication. I was also awarded two artist residencies: Wild Acres, North Carolina; and Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado. During the National Park residency I gave two lectures, one interview, and a Podcast. My painting *Forest Canyon, Rocky Mountain National Park* was accepted into the National Park's permanent collection, and also appeared in the online exhibition *Through Our Eyes* in 2013.

2008 Project Grant:

**A Walk through the Woods in Washington State: A visual and written memoir of Olympic National Park**

This was a collaboration between Robert K. (Bob) Wallace, who teaches in the English Department, and myself. We made a 63-page catalog entitled *Stitches in Time* consisting of my paintings of the Olympic peninsula accompanied by an essay by Bob. Our collaboration also led to a unique exhibition that displayed his narrative and 26 of my paintings in the Third Floor Gallery at Northern. In addition we gave two campus lectures. One of my paintings entitled *2nd Beach, Olympic National Park* was juried into and published in the national traveling exhibition *Art in the Parks Top 100*.

2010 Summer Fellowship:

**Landscapes Coast to Coast**

This was an extraordinary time of creativity in the studio. I made several paintings and some frames for a solo show at Gross McCleaf Gallery in Philadelphia, December 2011. The original thrust of my research was to make paintings housed within handmade custom frames that incorporate artifacts, carvings of text, symbols, and even additional paintings, as a way to suggest narrative and introduce deeper meaning to my landscapes. This narrative inclination began with the frames, but has further evolved into using the landscape as a backdrop for figurative narratives. I finished 11 paintings over the summer, and 4 sculptural frames. Several of these paintings were presented in a slide lecture on October 29, 2011, at the Taft Museum of Art in Cincinnati, Ohio, in conjunction with their exhibition *George Inness in Italy* which featured the work of a significant 19th-century American landscape painter.

Attached as follows is my vita. Thank you for your consideration.

Kevin Muent

## Kevin James Muenta

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### EDUCATION

1997-1999 **University of Cincinnati**, Master of Fine Arts, Painting  
1989-1994 **University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee** Bachelor of Fine Arts, Drawing & Painting  
Fine Arts Summer Study Abroad Program, Paris and Florence, 1995

### AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS

2014, 2013, 2010 **Manifest Gallery**, International Painting Annual, juried exhibition in print  
2012, 2008, 2006 **New American Paintings**, Juried exhibition in print  
2010 **Northern Kentucky University**, Summer Fellowship  
2009 **Summerfair Aid to Individual Artists Grant**, Cincinnati, Ohio  
2008 **Rocky Mountain National Park**, Estes Park, Colorado, Artist-in-Residence  
**Northern Kentucky University**, Summer Project Grant  
2007 **Northern Kentucky University**, Sabbatical leave  
**Wild Acres**, Little Switzerland, North Carolina, Artist-in-Residence, Oct. 22-28  
2006 **Northern Kentucky University**, Summer Project Grant  
**Kentucky Arts Council**, Individual Artist Al Smith Fellowship Award  
2005 **Denali National Park**, Alaska, Artist-in-Residence  
2000-2001 **Albrecht-Kemper Museum of Art**, St. Joseph, Missouri  
“Annual Membership Show,” 2<sup>nd</sup> place, Painting, January 19-February 27, 2001  
“Membership Show,” 1<sup>st</sup> place, Painting, January 20-February 27, 2000  
1999 **University of Cincinnati**, Outstanding Fine Arts Graduate Student Award  
1997-1998 **University of Cincinnati**, Graduate Tuition Scholarship  
**Louis F. Dow Studios**, Richmond, Indiana  
Purchase award winner, “Assume a Muse,” October 1998

### TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2001-present **Northern Kentucky University**, Professor of Painting  
1999-2001 **Missouri Western State College**, Assistant Professor of Art  
1995-1997 **Milwaukee Art Museum**, Art Instructor

### ADDITIONAL TEACHING & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2005, 2010, 2013 **Spring Break Courses: Italy, Spain, and France/Netherlands**  
2004, 2006 **CCSA Summer Study Abroad London**  
1995 **University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee**  
Teaching assistant; French translator, Fine Arts Summer Study Abroad program  
1996-1997 **Timothy Haglund Art Studios**, Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
Mural and faux finish artist

### UNIVERSITY SERVICE, Northern Kentucky University

2010, 11, 13 RPT Chair  
2010 Chair of Visual Arts Incoming Freshman Scholarship  
2008-2012 Benefits Committee (Secretary, 2011-12; Fellowships chair, 2009)  
2007 Drawing and Painting Search Committee  
2003-2006 Budget Committee  
2005 Bachelor Arts in Liberal Sciences Advisory Committee  
2003-2004 Art Department Recruiting Committee  
2003 Graphic Design Search Committee, Shaping Dreams Campaign Coordinator  
Art Department’s Dean’s Scholarship Committee  
2002-2006 Faculty Senate; Gallery Committee  
2002 Graphic Design Search Committee (2002); Faculty Advisor, NGA



## COMMUNITY SERVICE

2003-present           **Taft Museum of Art**, Artists Reaching Classrooms  
2005-2010           **Manifest Creative Research Gallery and Drawing Center**, Studio Monitor  
2000-2003           **The Artery**, Newport, KY, Board Member

## INVITATIONAL EXHIBITIONS

2013           **Richard Demato Fine Arts**, Sag Harbor, NY  
"Into the Wild," Solo show, October-November, 2013

2012           **Richard Demato Fine Arts**, Sag Harbor, NY  
Art MRKT Hamptons, July 19-22  
**Gross McCleaf Gallery**, Philadelphia, PA  
"Wish You Were Here," July 10-27; "The Romantic Impulse, Part II," August 2-31  
**M.A. Doran Gallery**, Tulsa, OK  
"National Contemporary Realism 2012," May 10-June 9  
**Miami University**, Middletown, OH  
"Environs," Solo show, February 3–March 16

2011           **Gross McCleaf Gallery**, Philadelphia, PA  
"Traces," Solo show, December 1–30  
**Gross McCleaf Gallery**, Philadelphia, PA  
"American Landscape Coast to Coast," June 2-28  
**M.A. Doran Gallery**, Tulsa, OK  
"2011 National Contemporary Realism," Summer

2010           **Heike Pickett Gallery**, Lexington, KY  
"Places in Time" Solo Show February 19-April 9  
**Thomas J. Funke Gallery**, Cincinnati, OH  
"Summerfair Selects" October 22- November 26

2009           **Northern Kentucky University**, Highland Heights, KY  
"Stitches in Time" Solo Show August 24-September 25  
**Gross McCleaf Gallery**, Philadelphia, PA  
"Seasonal Drift" June 4-26  
**Sherry French Gallery**, New York, NY  
"The Four Seasons," January 7-31

2008           **Sherry French Gallery**, New York, NY  
"Small Sizes-Precious Pieces," November 26-January 3  
**The Collector's Art Group**, Cincinnati, OH  
"I of the Storm" September 5-Oct. 6; "Terrain" Solo show, November  
**Heike Pickett Gallery**, Versailles, KY  
"25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary show" September- October  
**Gross McCleaf Gallery**, Philadelphia, PA  
"Group Landscape Show" August  
**The United Way**, Cincinnati, OH  
"Beauty Matters" March 27-April 25

2007           **Kentucky Arts Council**, Traveling Exhibition several venues in Kentucky  
"Uncommon Wealth: Al Smith Fellowships"  
**Gross McCleaf Gallery**, Philadelphia, PA  
**The University Club**, Cincinnati, OH  
"Group Show" December- January  
**Heike Pickett Gallery**, Versailles, KY  
"Invitational Group Show" November 2- January 2008; "Yearbook" April 20-May  
**Gross McCleaf Gallery**, Philadelphia, PA  
Fresh Nine, July 6-August 1; "American Arcadia" Feb. 23-March 14

2006           **Manifest Gallery**, Walnut Hills, OH  
"Drawn from Life", Mar. 3- March 31  
**Rike Gallery**, University of Dayton, Dayton OH  
"re:place, be:longing" Jan. 2006  
**Cincinnati Art Museum**, Cincinnati, OH.  
"Portrait Miniatures-Cincy Style Feb. 1-May 28

- Lexington Art League**, Lexington, KY.  
 “Uncommon Wealth: Legacy of the KY Arts Council Fellowships, July 21-Aug. 27  
 2005 **Manifest Gallery**, Cincinnati, Ohio  
 “Terrestrial Domains” January 8- February 11  
**Xavier University**  
 3 person show, January 21-February 18, 2005  
 2004 **Knoxville Museum of Art**, Knoxville, TN  
 Annual art auction, Sept 30- Oct 1, 2004  
**Harding University**, Searcy, AR  
 Solo show, Aug 23- Oct 1, 2004  
**Closson’s**, Cincinnati, OH  
 “Celebrating Ohio Landscapes” May 5-29, 2004  
 2003 **The Carnegie Art Center**, Covington, KY  
 Solo show, Oct 17-Nov 21, 2003  
**Closson’s**, Cincinnati, OH  
 Group show “Non objective to objective”, Oct. 24- Nov. 17, 2003  
**Rookwood Tower**, Cincinnati, OH  
 Four Person show, Curator: Steven Vincent Clark, May 15-July 31, 2003  
**Northern Kentucky University**, Highland Heights, KY  
 Solo show, January - February, 2003  
 2002 **Art Institute and Gallery**, Salisbury, MD  
 Holiday Showcase Exhibition, Nov. 15-Dec. 20, 2002  
**Malton Gallery**, Cincinnati, OH,  
 Three-person show, “New Horizons” May 18, 2002  
 2001 **Missouri Theater**, St. Joseph, Missouri, Solo show, April 7, 2001  
 2000 **Katherine E. Nash Gallery**, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota  
 “From Where We Stand” Group show, October 24-Nov 17, 2000

#### JURIED EXHIBITIONS

- 2012 **Through Your Eyes: National Park Service Artists-in-Residence**  
 Online at nps.gov with pdf catalogue  
 2011 **Georgetown College**, Georgetown, KY  
 “State of Drawing,” November 22-December 15  
 2009 **Paint in the Parks 100**, Traveling Exhibition and Catalog  
 2006 **Peck School of Visual Arts**, UWM, Milwaukee, WI,  
 “Continuum 5(0)” Sept. 15- Oct 14, 2006  
 2005 **Adkins Gallery**, Morehead State University, Kentucky  
 “Kentucky Water”, March 3-May 22, 2004  
 2004 **Cordova Historical Museum**, Cordova, Alaska  
 “Fish Follies”, Aug-Oct 31, 2004 Juror Rie Munoz  
 2003 **Arts on Main**, Shelbyville, KY  
 “7<sup>th</sup> Annual Juried Art Exhibit”, July 27-Aug 16, 2003, Juror: Cal Kowal  
**Art Source Gallery**, Boise, ID  
 “2<sup>nd</sup> National Juried Exhibit” June 2-28, 2003  
 2002 **Wright State University**  
 “Drawing from Perception,” January 2- February 3, 2002, Juror: Graham Nickson  
**Period Gallery, University of Nebraska, Omaha**  
 “All Media Invitational 2002” February 7-28, 2002  
 2001 **Art in the Woods**, Overland Park, Kansas  
 April 27-May 11, 2001, Juror: Bo Bartlett

#### GALLERY REPRESENTATION

- August 2012-present **Richard J. Demato Fine Arts**, Sag Harbor, NY  
 August 2005-present **Heike Pickett Gallery**, Versailles, KY  
 February 2007-present **Gross McCleaf Gallery**, Philadelphia, PA