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### Gardner-Webb Created Career Path for Art Alumna

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# Gardner-Webb Created Career Path for Art Alumna

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Office of University  
Communications

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## *Kiah Ann Bellows ('12) Benefitted from GWU's Personal Instruction, Experiential Opportunities*

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From the moment she observed an art survey class during a visit to Gardner-Webb, Kiah Ann Bellows began creating a new family and an art career through the University's Department of Visual Arts.

"I already knew I wanted to pursue something in the art field," Bellows remembers. "The first time I had the privilege of hearing Professor Susan Bell teach was the beginning of a great relationship with the entire art department. I discovered that the faculty at Gardner-Webb offers one-on-one time and looks at each student as a unique shape and size, allowing students to approach art in a way that works for them."

In addition to the caring guidance of faculty members, the family atmosphere and mentoring approach of the GWU swimming program attracted Bellows to the University from her home in Greenville, S.C. "I swam competitively all my life and some of my teammates attended Gardner-Webb," she explains. "When my family met Coach Mike (Simpson), we felt he was not only a great coach but also a person of integrity."

Through both swimming and studies, Bellows learned the importance and the benefits of hard work while at Gardner-Webb. Her hours in the pool and in the studio provided valuable lessons that continue to drive her today.

"In art and in life, you make mistakes and some days you want to throw in the towel," she related. "If I hadn't learned how to persevere and prioritize my time in school, I probably wouldn't be making art today."

Bellows returned to Greenville after graduating from GWU and now works as a full-time artist and gallery assistant at Art & Light Gallery and Studios. She enjoys painting abstract landscapes in acrylic, oil, pastel and graphite, often inspired by her life's journey.

That perspective of creating art through experiences started during her time as a student at Gardner-Webb. The University offered her the broad spectrum of studies in a wide range of subjects, as well as opportunities to travel to galleries and museums to deepen her knowledge of art and the world. In visits to New York City and Rome, she explored famed museums and galleries such as The Guggenheim, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Galleria Borghese.

Bellows also connected with the Greenville County Art Museum in South Carolina for a summer internship. “It helped me build many skills, specifically how to speak intellectually about art in front of large groups of people,” she shares. “This is a crucial skill in the business world when trying to sell your work, taking on the role of an artist and salesperson.”

“The professors at Gardner-Webb encouraged us to explore new ideas and pushed us out of our comfort zones,” Bellows continues. “The art department at Gardner-Webb developed my skills, helped me share my name and my work in the professional art world, and prepared me for a career in art.”