



**COLLEGE OF  
PERFORMING & VISUAL ARTS**  

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**SOUTHERN UTAH UNIVERSITY**

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**Life Through a Lens with Sam Davis**

Written by Lola Taylor

**Southern Utah University, Cedar City, Utah:** Sam Davis, Assistant Professor of Photography at SUU, is presenting an artist talk about his life, artwork and artistic inspiration for Art Insights on Thursday, November 17, at 7:00 pm in the Southern Utah Museum of Art. Art Insights is hosted by SUU's Department of Art & Design. It is a free event, and the general public is invited to attend.

Originally from Pensacola, Florida, Davis received his BFA from the University of Florida in Creative Photography and an MFA with emphasis in Photography and Sculpture from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He has worked as a Graphic Artist for WSRE-TV in Pensacola, and as a studio assistant for Jerry Uelsmann and Maggie Taylor. Sam served for six years as a full-time Instructor of Photography at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena California, and for three years as a full-time Visiting Faculty at Ringling College of Art and Design. When he is not teaching, Davis actively exhibits artwork across the United States and abroad. He is currently teaching as an Assistant Professor of Photography at Southern Utah University.

When asked what led to his decision to become an artist, Davis said, "I grew up in a family of men and women who were always building and creating something. My parents were very encouraging of me following my own path and supported me in countless projects and adventures. The appreciation of art, music, literature and museums was always a big deal in our family and has continued with me as I've grown older. On a personal level, I am happiest when I am moving something from idea to existence."

Davis creates images that reference his love of family history coupled with a playful curiosity of popular and kitsch culture. His images combine obscure technology, science fiction and childhood fantasy to call into question notions regarding memory, nostalgia, imagination and pulp/cyber folklore. Davis creates images that he hopes will cause the viewer to pause and question, while at the same time provide a pathway for the viewer into another frame of thought, to proactively imagine.

"I try to structure my interests, which are vast and varied, so that my life is my inspiration," says Davis. "For the past ten years, I've been focused primarily on the notion of science fiction and pop-folklore (think UFO's and cryptozoology). Silly things like beauty, passion and the sublime are all factors in my creative process though. I'm often inspired by life itself, just through my own weird lens."

As a professor at SUU, Davis is often encouraging his students to 'Do it!' or 'Mess it up!' He said, "I find myself asking everyone 'What are you thinking?' and I try to push the idea of responding truthfully. I think art comes from that place, the distracted daydream, that we as creatives always have. I think it's good when someone asks us what we're thinking, to try to put that into works so we can put it into our art. I try to be open to daydreaming and imagining as frequently as possible."

For more information about Sam Davis, visit his website at [www.samdavisart.com](http://www.samdavisart.com).

*Art Insights is hosted during the fall and spring semesters by SUU's Art & Design faculty. Students and community members meet to experience presentations and discussions by visiting artists and art educators from around the nation who share their work and insights.*

### **About the College of Performing and Visual Arts**

The Southern Utah University College of Performing and Visual Arts is comprised of nationally accredited departments of Art and Design, Music, and Dance. The College also offers programs in Theatre Arts, graduate programs in Arts Administration and Music, as well as a Center for Shakespeare Studies. The College offers 16 different degree areas, including liberal arts Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees; professional Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Fine Arts in art and theatre degrees; and Master of Fine Arts in Arts Administration, Master of Arts in Arts Administration, Master of Music Education and Master of Music in Music Technology graduate degrees. More than 60 full- and part-time faculty and staff are engaged in teaching and mentoring nearly 600 majors in the College. Over 1,100 students enroll each year in over 195 arts classes on the SUU campus. The College presents over 100 performances, lectures, presentations, and exhibitions each year. The College's affiliate organizations include the Southern Utah Museum of Art (SUMA), Utah Shakespeare Festival and SUU's Ballroom Dance Company. For more information about the College of Performing and Visual Arts, visit [www.suu.edu/pva](http://www.suu.edu/pva).

### **For Calendar Editors: Life Through a Lens with Sam Davis**

**What:** Sam Davis, Assistant Professor of Photography at SUU, is presenting an artist talk about his life, artwork and artistic inspiration for Art Insights on Thursday, November 17, at 7:00 pm in the Southern Utah Museum of Art. Art Insights is hosted by SUU's Department of Art & Design. It is a free event, and the general public is invited to attend.

**Who:** Art Insights, Southern Utah University, Department of Art & Design

**When:** Thursday, November 17, 2016

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.

**Where:** Southern Utah Museum of Art, 13 S 300 W, Cedar City, Utah

**Tickets:** Free admission, General Public invited to attend

**Info:** Visit [www.suu.edu/pva](http://www.suu.edu/pva) for more information.

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