



Art in Translation: A Cross-County Collaboration

by Lili Un and Rana Rwaished

Lili Un, a Painting and Printmaking major at VCU's Monroe Park Campus in Richmond, collaborated with Rana Rwaished, an Interior Design graduate from VCU in Qatar, to explore the translation of two-dimensional painting into three-dimensional interior design elements. Since they were physically separated, Un and Rwaished maintained a vigorous dialogue through Skype. Once one collaborator finished a project, she would send detailed images to the other, who would then create a new work based on those designs. The paintings were scanned into Adobe Illustrator, and the lines were extracted to form a separate file. Both the qualities of these lines and the shapes in the paintings informed the design of the interior elements. The basic lines of *Burning Bush* were printed using a laser cutter and installed as a large, organic light fixture. The angles in *Paper and Crane* inspired a large-scale angular seating area meant to resemble unfolding origami, which was also activated through the use of light. This structure then inspired the mountainous painting *Desperate Wanting*, the pensive atmosphere of which then yielded the paper wall installation. The thoughtful journey evoked in the painting was translated into a written component that was spray-painted onto the paper and wall.









Un and Rwaished's research culminated in an exhibition held at a student gallery space in Education City, located in Doha, Qatar. The final element of the collaboration was a live video-feed that broadcast the opening to the Richmond campus.

Through this collaboration, Rwaished and Un fused the two disciplines of painting and interior design, which are otherwise distant allies. This interdisciplinary project was also an international collaboration in which the two researchers reintroduced the notion of reciprocal relationships and collaborative efforts between different cultures by communicating through the universal language of art.





