

## Entertainment

### First Fridays Profile: Josephine Durkin

By Colleen Curran | Richmond.com  
Published: January 7, 2010

I'll admit it. I don't always get modern art. Especially kinetic sculpture. It's a little too much for me.

But everybody's buzzing about **Josephine Durkin's** show "**Excerpt & Conversations**" at **Metro Space Gallery**. And after looking at videos of her work, I think I finally get it. Or at least, some of it. A small fraction, at the very least.

She makes drawings, videos and kinetic installations that suggest or mimic human gestures or interactions.

Watch this video of "**Bloom (I knew I loved you when...)**" to get a feel of what she's talking about. You'll see that when two viewers sit next to each other on the settee, the miniature umbrellas secured in the suitcases open and close:



Artist Josephine Durkin in her studio.

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Durkin is no stranger to the RVA. The 29-year-old artist is a former student of **VCU's Sculpture** program. This is Durkin's first show in town since she graduated in 2002 and had her senior show.

"It's quite a thrill to come back here," Durkin said, while on a break from installing her new show at Metro Space.

Since graduating from VCU, she did her grad work at Yale and is now an assistant professor at Texas A&M University - Commerce.

You won't see "Bloom (I knew I loved you when...)" at her new show on Friday. But you will see all new work, including several drawings and a new installation piece dedicated to her father, who passed away over the summer.

"**Filtered & Clipped (Please tell me again) In Memory of Paul Durkin**" features several school desks that "speak" to each other by way of a sensor sound system. Each desk is outfitted with a speaker, a CD player and a motor system, so that when a person walks by, it triggers a track from Samuel Barber's "Adagio for Strings." Each desk is also outfitted with a clipboard that moves up and down when someone walks by.

"The way they're manipulated and positioned, they work as human surrogates," Durkin says. "The clipboards become mouths. The desks become bodies. They suggest human interaction and conversation."

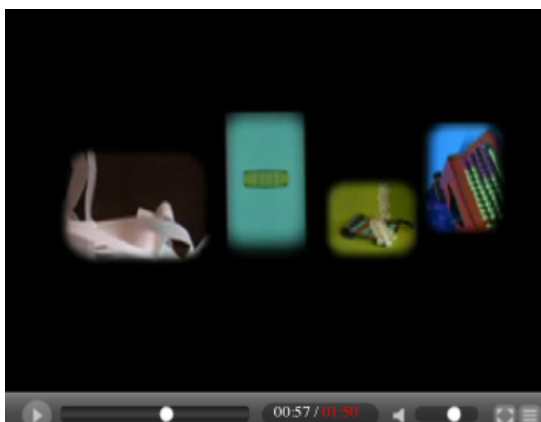
The desks play Samuel Barber's "Adagio for Strings" which is fitting, Durkin says, because it was one of her father's favorites and it also speaks to her grief because it's known as one of the saddest pieces of classical music ever written.

"My father was a really kind and graceful man," Durkin says. "He was a man who spoke as well as he listened." Durkin says she dedicated the piece to him "to celebrate his commitment to music, art, conversation and education."

Durkin's show will also feature 10 new drawings which are all variations on the theme of **"Relocation."** Working with fabric, photographs, paints and colored pencils, Durkin addresses issues of space, fabric and living spaces in the pieces. Check out a sample here.



Another installation, **"Wrap Me Up,"** will also be on view at the show. Plain plastic containers are transformed into works of art that speak when video and edited audio is projected onto them. Check out a sample here:



Durkin's show was made possible through funding from the Graduate School of Research and the College of Arts and Sciences at Texas A&M University - Commerce.

*Check out Durkin's show this Friday at the First Fridays Artwalk at Metro Space Gallery. Her work will be on view through Jan. 30 and she'll be giving a lecture at VCU on Jan. 28 at 5:15 p.m. Find out more about the popular artwalk with our First Fridays Guide.*

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