



Photography practicum: learning the basics of managing a fine art photography studio

ABSTRACT

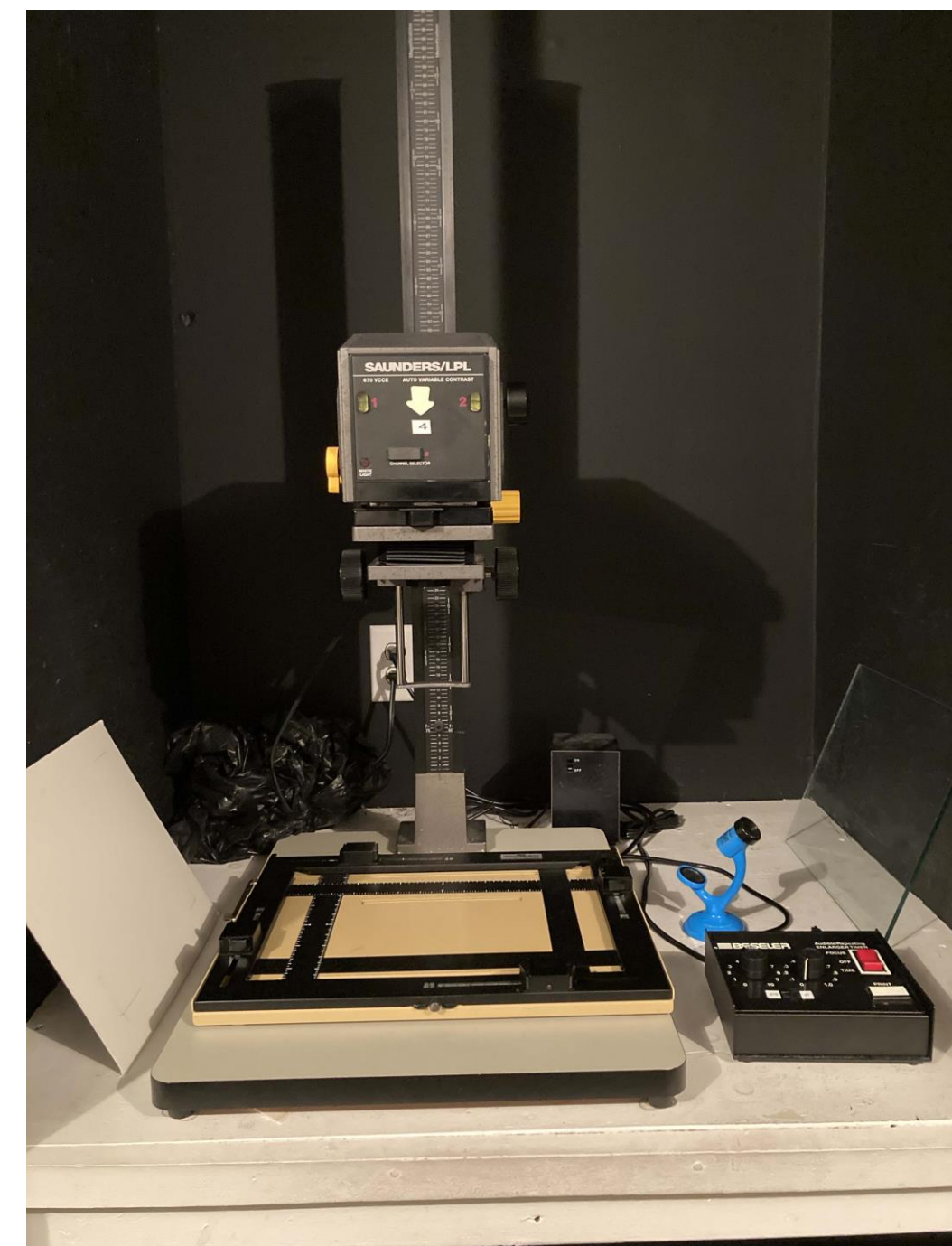
The photography practicum provides Art and Design student researchers with the practical experience of managing a fine art photography studio. Students learn how to operate, manage, and maintain industry standard fine art archival inkjet printers as well as a twelve-station traditional black and white darkroom. This project provides essential expertise and knowledge that students, as lab monitors, both share with other students and incorporate into their own fine art practice and professional activities. Student researchers learn how to mix, store, and dispose of photographic chemistry, provide daily assistance to undergraduate and graduate photography students, and generate ideas for improvements to the lab. Additionally, students improve their knowledge of various analog and digital photographic processes through self-directed research with the goal of helping other students learn how to further develop and understand their work. Students also contribute to the ongoing revision of the Photography Lab Manual, which specifies best practices and operating procedures for future photography lab monitors. The practical knowledge gained from this experience is highly valuable to colleges, universities, community colleges, artist co-ops, and professional photography labs that seek to employ individuals to manage and teach both digital and analog photographic practices. This research was funded with an Undergraduate Research Fellowship.

SUMMARY

During this practicum, I gained experience in managing a black and white darkroom as well as expertise with the operation and maintenance of two industry-standard fine art archival inkjet printers. I learned how to create and maintain a safe and effective working environment to meet the needs of students in a face-to-face teaching and learning environment during a global pandemic. This included strict daily regimens of disinfection and enforcing social distancing. I also learned how to best help my peers in the production of their photographs by providing editorial feedback as well as reviewing the use of various equipment in the lab. I provided a productive, supportive, and efficacious working environment through the weekly mixing of black and white photographic chemicals and daily maintenance of the archival inkjet printers. I also revised the photography lab manual in order to help future lab monitors and undergraduate research fellows.

GOALS

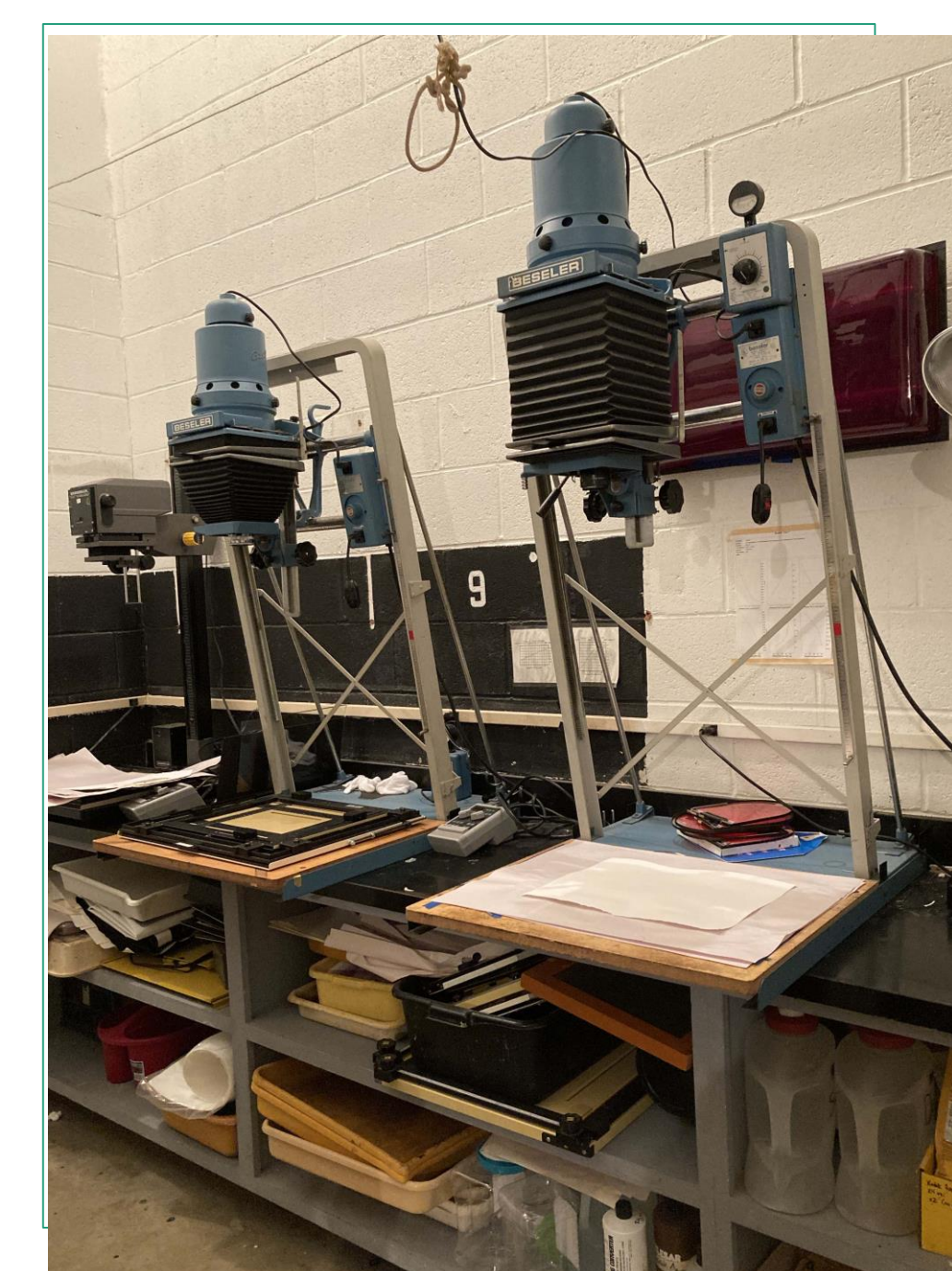
- Assist graduate and undergraduate photography students from all academic backgrounds and disciplines
- Maintain fine art archival inkjet printers and assist with student print production
- Maintain traditional analog darkroom and assist with student print production
- Contribute to the Photography Lab Manual
- Ensure the safety of students, faculty, and staff in a face-to-face teaching and learning environment during a global pandemic



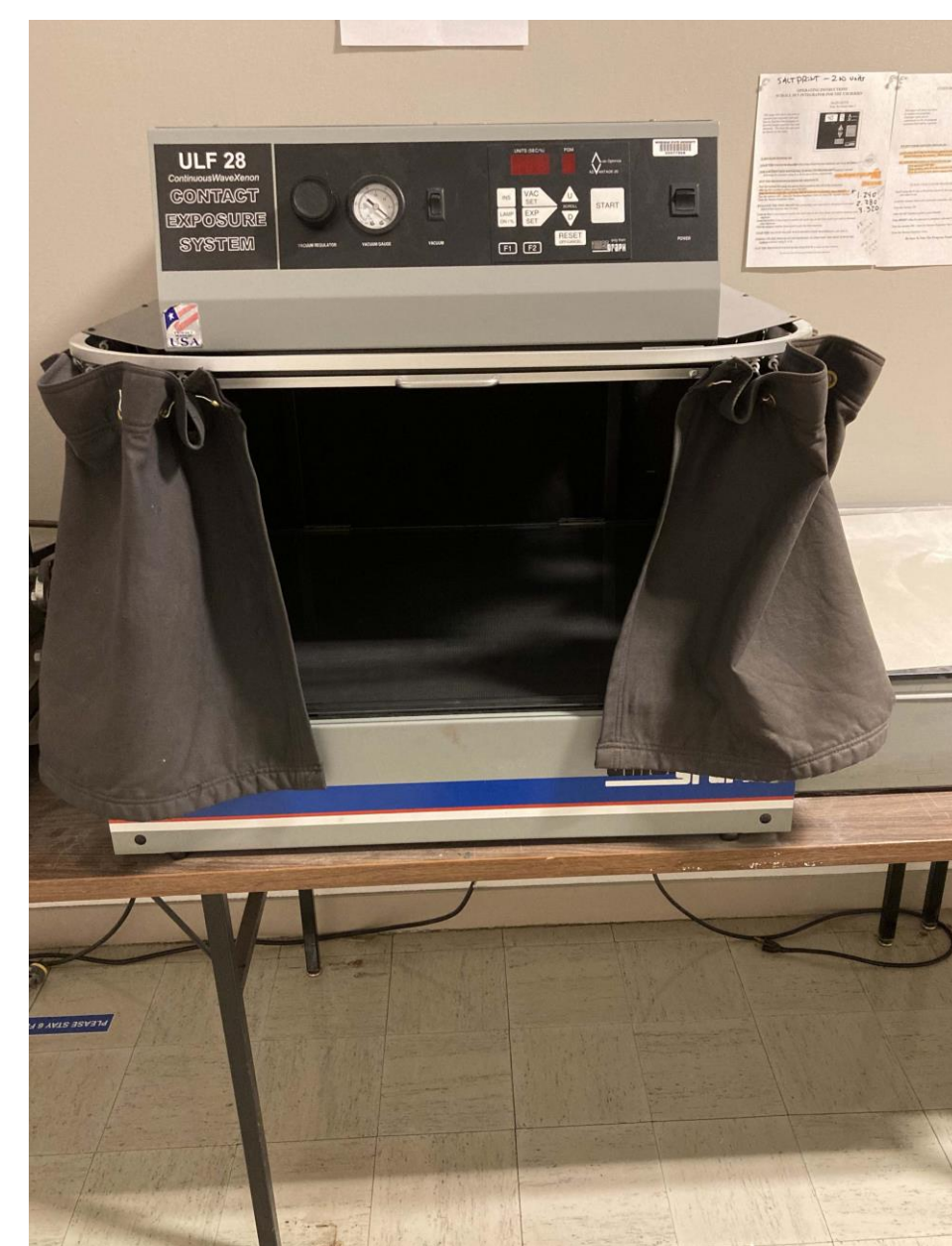
Saunders/LPL



Sink Used for Processing Black and White prints



Besseler Large Format



UV Exposure Unit



Helping a Grad Student with an Edit



Heat Press



Epson Stylus Pro 4800



Epson scanner



Epson Surecolor P7000

EXPERTISE GAINED:

- Knowledge of how to mix photographic chemicals from stock solutions as well as how to dispose of those chemicals responsibly
- Knowledge of how to best interact with students in order to help them understand fine art photography which includes analog, digital, and alternative photographic processes.
- Knowledge regarding the maintenance and operation of professional fine art archival inkjet printers.
- Gained knowledge regarding the maintenance and use of the ULF 28 UV exposure unit for the production of alternative process prints such as salted paper prints and cyanotypes.
- Improved conversation skills as well as skills needed to teach and instruct others which included providing constructive criticism on student work.
- Knowledge regarding how to maintain student safety during a global pandemic.

CONCLUSIONS

The expertise that I gained through this research fellowship helped me learn how to communicate with others in the field effectively as well as how to teach others effectively about photography. The knowledge that I gained will help me in postgraduate applications if I choose to pursue photography in an academic setting further in the future. My contribution to the life of the Department of Art and Design will help further the department's enrollment and retention goals. Through this undergraduate research fellowship I have opened the door for more opportunities for myself while furthering the mission of the University.