

Lush Life

The paintings of Page Laughlin

Some people flip through magazines like *Architectural Digest* or *House Beautiful* and idly fantasize about all the perfect interiors. The painter Page Laughlin (Col '81) uses them as a departure point for her art.

Intrigued by the contents in those glossy spreads of tasteful, well-appointed rooms, Laughlin began an exploration on canvas. After rendering images from the photographs as a first step, she manipulated the canvas and transformed the scene by sanding, scraping and smearing paint over it. Her exploration became a series. Selections from "Magazine Interiors," completed during the past two years, were recently featured in a solo exhibit at the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art in Winston-Salem, N.C.

Laughlin says that she always considered art to be a hobby—not a viable career—until she took a studio art class during her fourth year at U.Va. Meeting art faculty made her realize that artists weren't just people in art history books. Postgraduate plans to pursue either medicine or law evaporated. Laughlin is now the J. Smith Young Family Research Fellow at Wake Forest University and chairs the art department.

Swirling wallpaper and glimpses of a chair or bed give her paintings a dreamlike quality. "I am interested in what these fantasies reveal upon closer inspection and in what is veiled in seduction," Laughlin says of her magazine-inspired art. "Working with these interiors, in a way, mirrors my own relationship to painting. I, too, am creating a fantasy to be examined."

