

## **Holly Murdock Interview:**

### **How would you describe your area of study to a novice?**

Design thinking is a method of creative problem solving, which uses the design process as a framework. It focuses on empathy and the user experience, and is built on collaboration between people of different backgrounds to come up with innovative solutions to the world's most difficult problems.

### **What is your primary motivation for persevering through graduate school?**

I loved my previous career as a commercial interior designer, but I've always felt that my true calling is to teach. Earning an MFA will provide me with that opportunity, and a degree in design thinking allows me to approach design from a research-based perspective that design sometimes lacks.

### **Do you think there is any value in social networking with other graduate students in non-related fields?**

The beauty of design thinking is that it thrives on the collaboration of people from different backgrounds to solve difficult problems. The unique experiences and perspectives of students in non-related fields are essential to innovation and success in my field.

### **What is your favorite stress-reduction technique?**

Drawing has been a stress reliever for me since I was a child, and I recently picked up watercolors. No matter how busy I am I make sure I set aside a little time each day to draw or paint.

### **What is the last book you read strictly for pleasure and how long ago was it?**

I am reading *Emma* by Jane Austen right now, for the third time. I could read and reread any Austen novel and always want to read it again.

### **Please describe your most meaningful academic relationship.**

My most meaningful academic relationship is with my thesis advisor, Lori Anthony. My thesis topic grew out of a group project I completed in one of her classes my first semester in the program, and she has mentored me through each semester since.

### **What surprised you the most about graduate school?**

I am an online student, living in Utah. I've never been to Radford, at least not yet. I thought an online experience would be a lonely one but I've been able to get to know my faculty and fellow students almost as well as if I were on campus with them.

### **If travel to Mars happens in your lifetime, would you want to be one of the scientists on board? If yes, what would you contribute to the mission?**

As a child I loved space and dreamed of growing up to be an astronaut, so I would jump at the opportunity to travel to Mars. I also love gardening so I would want to help establish a gardening system to grow food on the new planet that would become an essential part of a long-term community.

**What is your favorite comfort food and why? How often do you consume it?**

My favorite food is tomato pie, made from fresh garden tomatoes. The perfect tomatoes are essential to the recipe so I only bake it in September when I am able to harvest my own tomatoes.

**If you hadn't been admitted to graduate school, what do you think you would be doing right now?**

If I weren't in graduate school I would be working for an architecture firm as an interior designer, working on education and religious buildings.

**When do you expect to complete your degree?**

Spring 2016