

Art Department Emphasizes Individuality

**By Julie Morris
Junior Staff Writer**

When one steps inside the Woods Art Building, he notices something different about it almost immediately. Rather than the usual musty odor of a classroom building, the air in the Woods building is filled with the pungent, pleasant smells of plaster, sawdust and paints.

The main corridor is flooded with sunlight streaming through large double doors rather than being dark and electrically lit like most classroom buildings.

These physical features of the art building are indicative of the entire department, — distinctively different from the other academic departments of the University.

Stress Studio Classes

Art is a department of the School of Fine Arts, a division of the College of Arts and Sciences. The approximately 250 students enrolled as art majors learn the theory and practice of art in class sessions called "studio classes" which usually last three hours rather than the normal 50-minute period.

Classes are highly informal and conducted "pretty much on a person-to-person basis," according to Duard Laging, professor of art and chairman of the department. Students work on projects in class and the instructor criticizes their work and directs them individually. Laging noted that "You don't lecture on art. It's not like other courses."

Except for art history courses, hour exams are non-existent in the art curriculum and grades depend on a final project and the grading of work throughout the semester. Each instructor compares the student's work with his classmates' to determine his grade.

In drawing and painting classes, students may work with live models, who are recruited by the department. The models are paid an hourly wage and may pose in bathing suits or in the nude. Laging said the department has difficulty obtaining models and added, "It's sort of a sporadic thing, sometimes we have to work our program around to accommodate a lack of models."

Demands Individuality

Sloppy clothes, sandals, slacks for girls, mustaches and beards are not uncommon in the department. Laging commented that "There is a prevalent notion that art students are rather eccentric, and to a certain extent this is true, because art demands a much higher degree of individuality than other fields. An artist who is a conformist is not a creative person."

David Cummings, a graduate student and assistant instructor, said that students here are not too eccentric. He said, "You might find that students in an art academy tend to be a little artier than university students."

Qualities that the art department searches for in students include "dedication and a sense of involvement," Laging commented. He said a student "must be dedicated. If he's not, he might as well get out of art." "By and large, most of our students are dedicated," he said.

Some art majors interviewed seemed to bear out Laging's statement. Robyn Brock, a junior who plans a career in interior decoration said, "I love it and I think the only reason you should be here is because you love it."

Wants To Be Artist

A freshman student commented, "All I know is that I want to be an artist."

Another student stated, "I don't feel dedicated, it's more of a practical thing with me. Art is what I'm good at." A sophomore transfer student noted that she was somewhat lukewarm about art and was planning to change to an architecture major because "I like it better." One said he thought his classmates were "pretty gung-ho" about art.

Art majors study the basic principles of design, composition, color and drawing in their first two years and may later concentrate on painting, sculpture, ceramics, graphic arts, interior design, print making or metal or stone sculpture.

"We teach the students about the field and then about the problems," Laging said. He said students "practice from the time they are freshman."

Develop Aesthetics

Laging explained, "In training an art student, you try to give him as many technical, educational and intellectual experiences as possible so that he may develop his aesthetic sense. You can't teach art, only methods of art because art is a personal expression." Laging said the department was not "much impressed with talent or what is popularly considered talent." Pointing out some paintings done by students, Laging said, "Student work is not just pure self expression, but we don't pose specific assignments for a student to fill." Students are given general directives or themes and they follow these themes.

Art students take 72 of their 125 hours in art. They work for a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. "Emphasis is on humanities," Laging said, noting that science courses remain electives and that students

are required to take 16 hours of a foreign language. All majors also must take at least 15 hours of art history and some students specialize in this area.

In addition to providing instruction for art majors, the art department has classes for architecture students, home economics students and education majors. The department provides courses to fulfill the humanities requirement of Arts and Science College students.

May Exhibit Works

"Most of our students go into several professions," Laging said. "People with Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees may begin professional careers as painters, go into college teaching or exhibit and sell their works."

Other graduates become interior designers, commercial artists or photographers. Laging said some of the graduates of the art department work through the placement bureau.

Students may go into graduate work at the University. Since 1962, the art department has offered a graduate training program leading to a Master of Fine Arts degree. Candidates for the program are handpicked from applicants from all over the country.

Laging said the MFA degree "is not to be confused with the Masters degree, it is midway between a masters and a doctors. The idea of a Ph.D. for a painter is ludicrous, because it is a degree for a scholar while an MFA is a degree for creative painters."

The program takes "at least two and a half years to complete," Laging noted. He said



Photo by Tom Rubin
GRAD STUDENT WELDERS . . . Stewart Hitch and Jon Gierlich examine their latest creations.

the first student participating in the course will graduate this January and would probably go into College teaching. There are presently 21 graduate students working under the MFA program. Some of them are teaching assistants. Laging characterized the grad students as "young, competent, ambitious."

Show Work

Students working for a MFA degree have a showing of their work rather than a thesis as the culmination of their program.

University art students have the opportunity to exhibit their work in the student art show, an annual spring event at Sheldon Memorial Gallery. The works that go into the

show are selected by the faculty. Laging said students have had private shows and have sold their paintings, but that this was a small percentage of the department.

Students in the art department have won Fulbright Awards, scholarships to the Brooklyn Museum and the Chicago Art Institute and other national art awards.

Classrooms in Woods Art Building are specially equipped for an art curriculum. Normally referred to as studios, the rooms have easels, high tables with stools, and controlled lighting. The department has a room with power tools where picture frames are constructed.

Sculpture Turntables

The sculpture studio is complete with tiny turntables for sculpture pieces and high stools for the students. A bronze smelting furnace that heats to 2,000 degrees is part of the equipment in the welding studio.

Kilns for baking pottery are in the ceramics studio and remote controlled projectors are used in the art history classrooms which are equipped with microphones for the instructor and huge screens on which slides from the department's collection of 12,000 are shown.

Printing presses, photographic equipment and a dark room are also available for student use.

Laging noted that students do visit Sheldon and to study the works there. He added, "We wish they'd do it more often."



Photo by Tom Rubin
FIGURE STUDIES . . . Liz Ostermiller and Elaine Krolikowski work with their impressions of the model.

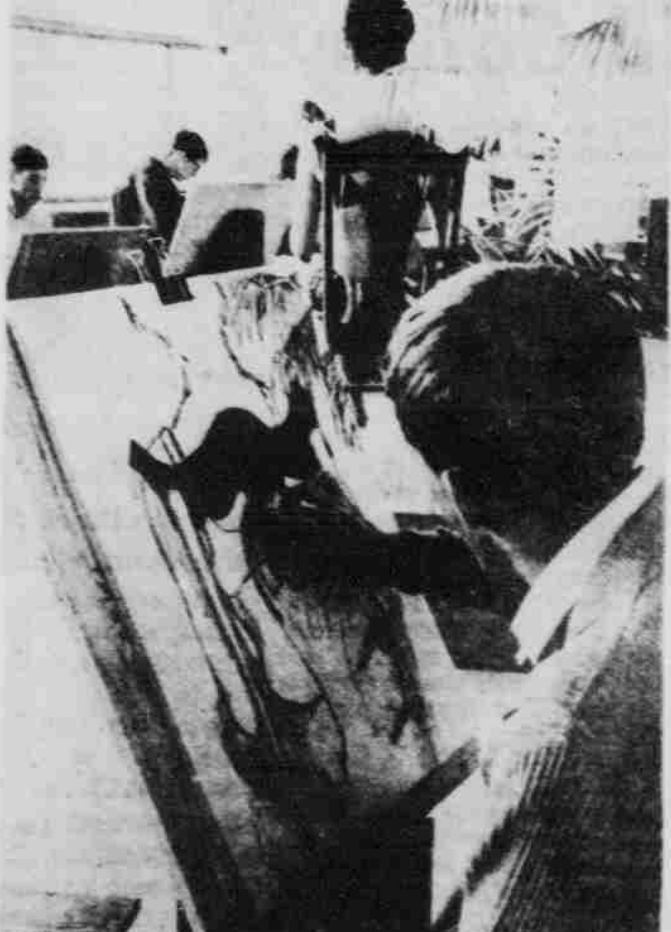


Photo by Tom Rubin
SKETCH IN CHARCOAL . . . Student creates and interprets on paper.

Students Withdraw For Varied Reasons

A total of 190 students have withdrawn from the University since school began in September, according to Lewis F. Fowles, associate dean of Student Affairs.

A total of 48 students have withdrawn for health reasons, 33 because of acquiring full time employment, and 19 because of changing their educational programs. This latter group was further explained to be those who had changed educational plans re-

sulting in mostly temporary withdrawal.

Personal reasons accounted for 17 withdrawals, financial reasons for 16, enlistment in the armed services for nine, and military personnel enrolled in the University who received a change in orders accounted for five withdrawals.

Marriage was the reason for only six students, withdrawing. Moving out of state

accounted for eight. Withdrawals because of death or illness in the family five.

The remaining 24 students withdrawing from the University could not be categorized because of the varied reasons.

Fowles said that this number is lower than usual.

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