

entertainment

Producing artist heads Art Dept.

By Dennis Ellermeier.

Dan Howard is a producing painter who has exhibited widely throughout the central and southern United States. Among his credits are 25 one-man shows since 1959, representation in nearly 250 business, private and public collections, several publications and numerous exhibition awards and prizes.

Howard is also the chairman of the UNL art department, a position he has held since September of this year.

Prior to his appointment at UNL, Howard held a similar position at Kansas State University (KSU). The 43-year-old native Iowan received both his undergraduate degree and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Iowa.

Professional challenges

Howard noted that his reasons for accepting the position here were "professional challenges" that were unavailable at KSU. Among those challenges were terminal studio degrees offered on a masters level which are not offered at KSU, "greater specialization in the individual disciplines," a solid art history department and what he termed a "strong professional attitude and sincere conviction in the traditional program of painting, printmaking, sculpture and ceramics."

In his assessment of the program he remarked on the level of student work.

"We do have, I think, very fine quality as far as our student body is concerned." He also noted the Sheldon Art Gallery as an asset to the program.

"The gallery, with its superb holding of American art, serves as a vital adjunct to our teaching program," he said. "I think an art gallery is as important to the teaching role functions of an academic program; to the proper growth and development of an artist; as important that way, in our area as, say, a recital hall would be to music students or a theatre would be to a drama student."

No radical change

As the new chairman, he said he anticipates no radical changes being implemented in the department.

"I am not a believer in change for the sake of change...at the same time I don't believe in status quo. Status quo means to me inertia—standing still—you're locked in place and what that connotes is that you eventually will have a deterioration," he said.

Howard does have several projects he would like to present to the students and staff.

"I would like to develop a series of circulating exhibitions of faculty art work and student art work on a statewide basis. He continued, "We do have a lot going here but I don't believe there are all that many people around Nebraska that are aware of that."

He also said that "there are some additional offerings that I think would be of interest and would be of value to the University as well as to the populus. Of course there is a big "if" here, that "if" being additional staffing and some additional funding.

"We could expand our areas of interest beyond our house speciality categories, meaning the traditional disciplines of sculpture, painting and what have you," he said.

General student art

He indicated he would like to see more classes offered for the general student.

For students majoring in art he would like "to involve more of our regular staff, regular faculty in our foundation level courses. I believe it's critically important for the beginning student as such a tentative, formable and critical time.

"It is keenly important in art that they get off on the right foot. They should have contact with the senior members of the department." These plans would not be implemented at the sacrifice of the competence of instruction at the upper levels, he noted.

Staff below needs

All his suggestions are "contingent on the availability of the budget to accommodate this...right now our present staff levels are far below the needs to service the numbers of students in this department," Howard said.

What should an art school provide for an art student?

"Introduce the student to as many possible ways of expression in visual vocabulary as possible. And to show them as many different techniques, as many different medias as possible so that then, with that base, with that reservoir, they can go on to make a personal selection and direct themselves to the area that is going to have the most fruitful implications for their personal development."

'Camino' starts Friday

Tennessee Williams' "Camino Real," directed by David H. Bell, will be presented December 6, 7, and 9, through 14 by the University Theatre in Howell Memorial Theatre.

A complex, surrealistic drama, "Camino Real" deals with a collection of archetypical characters fearful of both life and death. Placed in the middle of a desert, in an unknown country and at an undefined time, the characters are faced with certain death if they leave Camino Real, and eventual death if they do not.

Dominated by corruption, envy, fear, tradition and faint traces of past integrity, the characters are roughly split into two groups: the romantics, people searching for an escape from their existence; and the street people, a pragmatic lot, more concerned, if that phrase may be used, with day-to-day life.


Contrast between the two groups is accentuated by the unscheduled arrival of an airplane which will take them away from Camino Real. The romantics grasp at the plane as a possibility for escape while the street people are content to remain and pick over the luggage of the dear departed.

Despite his preoccupation with the baser instincts, Williams suggests that there may be a way to make life gentler and happier, a way that exists if people will have compassion for their fellow persons: "The Violets in the mountains can break the rocks if you believe in them and allow them to grow" declaims one player.

Performances begin at 8 p.m. and tickets are available from the Howell Theatre Box office, 472-2073.

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