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Art of appreciation

Disinterest drives wedges between students

Aside from the category of people who categorize people, there are four types of students at the University of Nebraska. There are students who like football, but don't like art. There



are students who like art, but don't like football. There are students who dig both (or, at the very least, don't object to either). And there are students who hate both. I've never actually met the fourth kind, but I don't want to exclude anybody from my simple generalizations. I'm guessing that these fourth-type people, whoever they are, also think Ted Kaczynski would make a lovely president, so enough about them.

I land in the category that digs both. Because of the natural tendency to hang with like-minded people, my perception is that the majority of students at UNL also fall into this category. Of course, I may be wrong. I do know people who reside in the other groups and, to make it as blunt as a lead pipe, they irritate me. I want to point out, however, that these people also carry many attributes that I agree with and enjoy. But it's their condescending attitude toward what they do *not* like that thoroughly annoys me.

Listening to some students speak during the last two weeks, a person might get the impression that our university is on the verge of a black plague. "How terrible!" they would say. "We must stop this infestation."

Infestation of what? Termites? Rats? Bubonic germs? No. Sculptures.

Sculptures?!? The installation of "Torn Notebook" was the ultimate in what some see as a trampling of student rights. Under the grassy knolls that hold the giant sails of the academic-inspired art, there lies the

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memory of what appeals more to their aesthetic sensibilities—a smooth, concrete surface on which they could park their cars. It doesn't matter that they never parked their cars there in the first place, as it was faculty parking. Buried with the concrete is the ideal that *someone's* car could be parked in that lot so blissfully close to a great many campus buildings. The very thought of which, I'm sure, draws a single tear down their collective cheeks.

Never mind that there's a parking garage in the works to fix this most impertinent of issues. Never mind that you have to walk far no matter where you park. Never mind that parking lots are ugly. What's done is done, and to them it's heartbreaking.

This anti-campus-art attitude is not new to this university. Three years ago when green space was thought of, there were similar groans. Granted, green space isn't technically art, but it does beautify the campus. Not coincidentally, buried beneath that spot is a parking lot. But the replacement of parking is not the only reason for grumbling. It's not even the main reason.

The major objection is due to a distaste for art in general. That's not to say these students dislike *all* art, it's a they-know-what-they-like-when-they-see-it sort of thing. They lack an appreciation of art for art's sake.

They want their entertainment to be mindless. They won't stand for the

bony finger of thought-provocation tweaking their brains and asking to be heard. They want to be passive.

They do enough thinking in school, they say, and when a sculpture is put in their path, it's only a needless obstacle to swerve by in an Indy-500 effort to not stumble late into class and be greeted by the professor's unforgiving eyes. And because they don't appreciate the sculpture, they call it a worthless pile of junk. That's what makes them feel better.

On the other side of the coin reside the ultra-artistics. They have a fantastic appreciation for all artforms. But what they do not appreciate and, more irritatingly, what they do not tolerate is that which does not appeal to their intellects, most notably Nebraska football. Quietly, deep in the back of the Coffee House, safe from the open streets of Lincoln, they diverge from their in-depth discussions of Andy Warhol or Fellini or Dadaism (take your pick) to thumb their abstract noses at the Husker program, their off-field problems, and particularly the fans thereof. Single-minded, get-a-life fanatics, they call them, the very mass-market-driven ilk that pushes America deeper down a cultureless spiral.

What if the great unifying aspect of this state was not Husker football? What if it was some kind of ultra-prolific art scene? Let's say, for

instance, that Nebraska cinema could be matched nowhere else in the world, conducting festivals that pitted such homegrown talents as Francois Truffaut, Alfred Hitchcock, Eric Rohmer, the Coens and Quentin Tarantino against Hollywood outsiders like Robert Zemeckis, John Hughes and that guy who made "Ace Ventura." Wouldn't you, as an art lover, don your Fellini's "8 1/2" shirt, your Luis Bunuel ball cap, and go running raucously through the streets shouting "we're No. 1" as the local boys swept the Cannes Film Festival?

I don't mean to preach to either side of this coin. I would rather see it tossed down a well with the wish that both sides would respect the other. I'm not saying that everyone needs to like everything. Football will never be to everyone's taste—and neither will "Torn Notebook" for that matter. All I'm asking is that people consider other people's opinions in a positive way and not make any unwarranted assumptions. Such an attitude could lead sports-only fans to feel the exciting, kinetic energy of a Jackson Pollock, or an only-art-please connoisseur to see the unpredictable artistry of a diving end-zone catch that puts the home team ahead with three seconds left on the clock. If it doesn't pan out for either person, at least it was given an open-minded chance.

But there are people who are set in their ways. No need for change, they say, they already know what's cool and what's not. On Saturday, as I walked under the shadow of the spectacular "Torn Notebook" on my way to the immense shadow of Memorial Stadium for the season opener, I wondered how it was possible that I also walked across a torn campus.

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Cliff
HICKS

The road to Gatescape

Bill's ready to take on the World (Wide Web)

Aug. 13, 1996. Bill Gates, chairman of Microsoft, announces to the world that Microsoft now owns not only the whole planet, but everything on it.



OK, a bit much, perhaps, but on that day, the first electronic World War was begun. It promises to be a big one, too. No holds barred,

anything goes, across the entire globe—virtually.

The key to the World Wide Web is Netscape. Or it was, anyway. Maybe it still will be. That is what Microsoft wants to dispute.

Netscape is the graphical browser that allows millions of users every day to use the World Wide Web, the multi-faceted sight-and-sound connection to the Internet that gives people the ability to point and click their way along the information superhighway.

It's a big business, and Bill Gates wants it—like a kid who's too greedy to share his toys with all the other children.

Sure it doesn't sound like all that

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much. I mean, it's not, like, going to replace Windows, right?

Don't be too sure about that. The winner of this fight will be worth billions. Right now, the battle is over the business of interfacing the Internet through PC terminals, but this fight's going to get a lot bigger a lot quicker.

Five years ago, this stuff was barely beginning to take off. In five years, everything may very well be connected to the Internet. Really.

By next summer, televisions that access the Internet will be a common sight in electronics stores everywhere. Twenty radio stations across the United States already broadcast through the Internet as well as across the airwaves.

Rumors about the future are full of wild speculation. It has been said that the Internet may put places like Blockbuster out of business when it offers the ability to get any movie on

instant demand. Soon it may even replace phone lines with fiber-optic connections.

The world is getting connected—and in a big hurry. Pretty soon, everything will exist for the public at large to access. Anyone anywhere will be able to do anything.

So when the people at Microsoft ask "Where do you want to go today?" they're serious about it, and THEY want to be the ones to take you there.

How serious a threat is this? Bill Gates has dedicated all of Microsoft, all \$70 billion dollars that the company is worth, into becoming the Internet leader.

Getting nervous? Both sides are. This is poker with the pot more than overflowing. With Microsoft's \$70 billion, Netscape's \$3.1 billion and the projected trillions, yes trillions, in projected income revenue, all those involved are

holding their breath.

Netscape's few edges are intense customer loyalty and dozens of perks that Microsoft hasn't gotten—yet. But since Microsoft Explorer comes free with every copy of Windows '95 and Bill Gates has \$1.5 billion in research and development, this may not hold.

Plus, once again Microsoft has been reported to the Justice Department on claims of anticompetitive behavior, which caused Gates endless frustration before.

And, of course, Netscape has a fairly close deal with the developers of Java, the language which is crossing all boundaries and empowering everything on the Internet. But Gates is trying to pry this open too, so anything goes.

In the end, hopefully Microsoft will get the shaft and go belly up, while the underdog Netscape will emerge to give Bill Gates someone to call his constant enemy.

If not, we can just rename Microsoft—either Monopoly or Big Brother. Orwell, you were 20 years off.

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