



TODD MUNSON is a junior broadcasting major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Talking 'bout the ghetto. That's right I'm talking about the 'hood, the slums, el barrio, T-town, you name it. Names like these conjure up visions of run-down housing projects, entrepreneurs striking it rich foraging for valuable aluminum, and a general populace that thinks it is socially acceptable to pack heat.

Common sense says that if you have the wits or the wherewithal to avoid living in the slums, you do it faster than a 15-year-old boy on a date with one of the Spice Girls.

As you might have guessed, it's an understatement to say that I'm not the sharpest knife in the drawer, and because I consider this \$15-a-week job a significant source of income, I can't afford to live in a trendy apartment complex named after a nonexistent, tree-lined meadow. Thankfully, I found someone as destitute as myself, so like many college students we pooled our resources and were able to afford a little slice of hell to call our own.

Actually, it isn't so bad. We live 10 feet from campus, split \$300 a month in rent, and ...

Who am I kidding? Living where we do sucks ass. Let's see, our shower is a hose connected to the tub's faucet that is clamped to the ceiling. Hot water is plentiful on 90-degree days, but since there's no air conditioning, Aaron and I usually spend our summers loitering at the local less-than-\$2 movie theater. We tried to capitalize on our pad's uncanny ability to retain heat by leasing it out as a tribal sweat hut, but there weren't any takers. Then there's the living room window that was broken out in December only to be expediently repaired this July. Nothing helps keep gas bills low like using a Hefty Bag as a window during the coldest months of the year.

In the two years I've lived as a victim of a slumlord, I've grown used to

Bats in the belfry

Perfect plan needed to end rodent rampage

the little quirks associated with ghetto living; but sometimes little events, like what happened last Sunday, make me long for tame, predictable suburban life.

I awoke at about 10 a.m., unable to sleep because of the heat. To the kitchen I went with a hankering for Coca-Roos. Sadly, my Coca-Roo dreams wouldn't be realized unless I washed some dishes.

I quickly got to work, but was struck by the smell of curdled milk. Fearing for my life, I quickly turned away. As fate would have it, the sour bovine juice was only the tip of the iceberg.

Hanging from the ceiling by its clawed feet was a bat with a wingspan the size of a Datsun. At first, I thought it was one of Aaron's weird toys. Then it twitched. Dismissing it as a battery-operated toy bat, I calmly made my way to Aaron's bedroom.

"Hey man, where'd you score the bat?" I asked, waking him up.

"What bat?" he replied.

"The one sleeping in the kitchen." Responding with words too harsh for this publication, Aaron was just a little disturbed.

In our underwear, we sat on the couch for more than an hour planning a strategy, hoping all the while that our new friend would up and fly away. Not a chance. With each one wanting the other to deal with the beast, we agreed there was only one thing we could do. It was time to settle this predicament like men, or at least chemically-dependent college students.

As Aaron fired up the Super Nintendo, I crept into the kitchen trying not to wake the sleeping vermin. I opened the cupboard and pulled out a bottle of Wild Turkey and rinsed out a shot glass as quietly as possible. I wasn't quiet enough. His sinister ears perked up and he began to stir, revealing fangs the size of Ginsu knives. I shut off the water, and it was enough to return him to dreamland.

Joining Aaron on the couch, we began to play a winner-take-all game

of John Madden '94. The winner got to watch the loser take care of the flying rodent problem. As a consolation, the loser gets a better buzz than the winner since each time a touchdown is scored on him, he has to take a pull of the ol' Wild Turkey. To make a long story short, I whupped his ass 49-28.

Now that we were good and drunk, it was time to put the smack down. Setting the mood, I cranked up Black Sabbath on the turntable. Aaron armed himself with an old textbook and a large box. His plan was to knock the bat into the box and throw it out the open window. Tennis racket in hand, I had his back.

Aaron swung, and it was over before we knew what happened. The bat fell to the ground, twitched a little, and ceased moving. A spot of blood was left on the wall. One shot and it was dead. Aaron was the man. Towering over our victim, we realized death isn't cool, because there's a bloody mess to clean up afterward.

As Aaron used his foot to sweep the bat out the window, Christie, our good friend and queen of sound judgment, walked in. Hearing about our epic battle with the beast of the night, she had a question, and a darn good one: "Why didn't you guys call animal control instead of getting all drunk and killing this poor bat?"

Did I yet mention that I wasn't the sharpest knife in the drawer?



MATT HANEY/DN

Art articulation

Indifference to culture dooms students



BARB CHURCHILL is a graduate student in woodwinds performance and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

It's time to fight student apathy, and embrace culture. In that spirit, please run, don't walk, to the art show "Dan Howard: Valedictory," which is currently being exhibited in Richards Hall until Thursday. The hours are from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Thursday. It is FREE, absolutely free, which is something you can't say about most things. You owe it to yourselves to attend this exhibit.

Culture is vital. And, as you may have read right here in the Daily Nebraskan, Howard is an important artist. He also is a vital, charming and articulate man. Howard loves talking to students, and has much of value to say to anyone, not just artists. Besides, his work deserves to be seen and appreciated by you as University of Nebraska-Lincoln stu-

dents. If you don't go in larger numbers than expected, only about 600-800 people will see Howard's work; many of whom won't even be UNL students. As Howard said, "More students would rather shell out \$30-40 for a rock concert than go to the Lied Center showcases or come here." Unfortunately, this is true. It's rather appalling that we are so apathetic that we refuse to go see a free art show. Are we really that afraid to experience culture?

Howard also stated that, "It is unfortunate that students fail to take advantage of their opportunities to expand their minds and acquaint themselves with art and music while they are here, when it's cheaper and they perhaps have more time in which to do it in." Take it from me, folks, Howard is right on the money. Bad as it is now, with trying to balance school, work, family and friends, it is much, MUCH worse once you get out into the full-time working world.

Despite the fact that I was the second Daily Nebraskan reporter to interview him, Howard was unfailingly cheerful and polite. We talked about many things, including time management, student apathy, and artistic talent, as well as the specifics of this particular show. It was an enriching conversation, something that I had needed desperately, since I

have been seriously questioning why I'm here at UNL. Howard assured me that the better part of his artistic talent has been his persistence, and that exploiting your own talents is the best way to not give up - regardless of whether your talent is in oil painting (his talent), music (my talent), or garbage collecting.

One of the questions I asked Howard specifically about painting was, "It seems to me that these paintings were meant to be seen from two different perspectives, both close up and far away. Am I right?" Howard told me that this was exactly right. (I've taken exactly one art history course in my life, and that was in high school.) Howard said he tries to paint on two levels because it is more interesting. Up close, you can see the brush strokes, the color, and the intensity, while farther away you can see a pattern or a picture and meditate on what the art is trying to tell you. This seems like a good metaphor for life, as "up close" you can see the dedication and commitment that you are putting into your education (or not), whereas from "far away" you can start to see growth patterns, how you've changed and developed over time.

Different perceptions of the same work are endemic to art. As an example of this, this faithful, intrepid Daily Nebraskan columnist asked

"It's rather appalling that we are so apathetic that we refuse to go see a free art show. Are we really that afraid to experience culture?"

him about painting No. 23, which looks (to me) like a waterfall. Howard at first said that what he was trying to do was to "engage and involve the viewer, but leave the interpretation alone." He continued, saying that he wants to elicit an emotional response from the viewer, and remind them of something - a mood, a place, a person, whatever. However, I did eventually get him to reveal what HE was thinking about while painting No. 23, and he said that he was thinking about fire and its devastating consequences. What I saw as water, he saw as haze. However, Howard said art should have no value judgments. Therefore, even though I had a radically different take on No. 23, he still saw it as a valid response.

I used our differing perspectives about the same painting as an opening to ask him about nontraditional students, a topic near and dear to my heart. Howard stated that he has found that nontrads are invariably

more focused, more dedicated, and are more willing to accept criticism. Sometimes, he said, undergrads are afraid that if they are criticized, that they just aren't doing it right and therefore take criticism more personally. However, most nontrads do NOT take it personally, knowing they're here to learn. And, since most nontrads have gone through difficult times before re-entering school, they are invariably more focused and disciplined.

Howard is an intelligent and interesting man, whom I would have been pleased to have as my professor in any class that he cared to teach. (He is now retired, so now none of us can have that privilege.) However, you owe it to yourselves to go and meet him. He is dedicated, focused and well-organized, belying the stereotypes about artists. If he is not there, please meet his paintings. They will tell you something about the world, or yourself, that you didn't know before.