



COURTESY PHOTO
"DANCERS," a pastel and charcoal drawing, is just one of the works by Edgar Degas that will be shown at Omaha's Joslyn Art Museum beginning Saturday. The exhibition, "Degas and the Little Dancer," features 55 works by the French impressionist.

Hold me closer, tiny dancer

Joslyn exhibit to feature celebrated Degas sculpture

BY JASON HARDY
Assignment Reporter

In 1881 a little girl made some French people very mad. That same little girl is now making some Nebraskans very happy.

From Saturday through May 3, the Joslyn Art Museum is presenting 55 works by impressionist artist Edgar Degas. On display will be one of the most celebrated sculptures of the modern age, Degas' "Little Dancer Aged Fourteen."

The first time Degas exhibited the sculpture was in Paris in 1881. Then the "Little Dancer" was made out of wax with a real fabric tutu, hair wig and ballet shoes. It immediately caused quite a commotion among art critics because its depiction of an ordinary girl broke with the tra-

dition of using sculpture to portray heroic or mythic subject matter. Also, the subject of the piece is a ballet dancer. In the late 1800s student dancers, known as "rats," were closely associated with prostitution.

Claudia Einecke, associate curator of European art for the Joslyn, said Degas took a bold step with "Dancer."

"As a work of sculpture it broke with all the norms and traditions," Einecke said. "You either hated it or you loved it."

Einecke said both the artistic and social implications of the piece made it hard to handle for most people. However, some art critics saw it as a valuable piece of modern art.

Eventually the sculpture was cast in plaster, and about 20 bronze replicas were made. One of those will be on display at the Joslyn, which also owns the plaster cast used to make the bronze

statues.

Einecke said Nebraskans were lucky to get the opportunity to witness such a significant piece of art.

"It was an important, pivotal piece of modern sculpture," Einecke said. "Its existence has shaped the way our pace has developed."

Jennifer Rubin, public relations associate for the Joslyn, said the exhibition offered a wide selection of Degas' works, and the Joslyn put a lot of emphasis on education for this show.

"It's probably one of our most important shows," Rubin said. "In addition to us being able to bring 55 Degas works to Nebraska, it's also educational."

She said related events to the exhibition were: a lecture by Richard Kendall, curator for the Degas show, a ballet performance by Ballet Omaha, a Degas video screening and a two-day

symposium examining impressionism. Also, the Joslyn is offering three-course dinners in Joslyn's café before or after viewing the Little Dancer. Cost for the dinner is \$18.95 per person.

Rubin said she was anxious to start the show. "We're thrilled and very excited about it," Rubin said. "I think this is probably one of the biggest shows the Joslyn has ever done."

Einecke said she hoped the show would appeal to more than just people who study art.

"I don't think this is only for scholars," Einecke said. "We all think we know Degas. He's on T-shirts, coffee cups and magnets, but I don't think we've had the chance to really examine him."

The Joslyn Art Museum is located at 2200 Dodge St. in Omaha. For more information call the museum at (402) 342-3300.

Remodeled local dinner theater now serves up stand-up comedy

BY BRET SCHULTE
Senior Reporter

It's not too tough to find things to laugh at in Lincoln: attempts to keep smart kids in the state, lines outside The Brass Rail and Stars hockey; to name a few.

Now there are even more.

O'Mally's Restaurant, Bar and Comedy Club, 245 N. 13th St., has recreated itself from the Downtown Dinner Theater at Huey's to serve as Lincoln's only consistent source for stand-up comedy.

Owner Mike Miller said the conversion of the dinner theater to primarily a comedy club took place last October, about five months after he bought it.

The venue has always featured comedy, but was primarily known as a dinner theater, which, Miller explained, was too expensive to continue.

He opted for featuring comedy on a regular basis because of its low overhead cost and greater crowd attraction.

"The cost was just really high for dinner theater, between \$3,000 to \$6,000," Miller said. "We've had a lot more success with comedy. It fits into the scheme of things

down here better."

The dinner theater will not be completely removed from O'Mally's schedule (a murder-mystery is penciled in for March), but the new emphasis on comedy is designed to enhance the bar and pool-room atmosphere of the three-room club.

"(In addition to the comedy club) we have a pool room with 10 tables and a big-screen TV, and dance room with a DJ every Friday and Saturday," Miller said.

Comedy clubs are springing up all over the place, said local comedian Darrin Meyer, who can frequently be seen at O'Mally's.

"(Comedy) is in a bit of resurgence now," Meyer said. "I think people like live entertainment and are sick of watching cable."

It was partly because of this comedy comeback that Miller decided to refocus his club.

"Comedy is on the upswing right now," he said. "People are looking for something different to do."

O'Mally's seems to be the perfect place, offering plenty of pool, live bands, dancing, occasional theater and comedy at least every other weekend.

"I think people like live entertainment and are sick of watching cable."

DARRIN MEYER
stand-up comedian

For a relatively young club, O'Mally's regularly features comedians seen on HBO and Showtime, including Mark Gross, who wrote for "Politically Incorrect" and Jeff Foxworthy.

This weekend, Bud Dingman, of HBO and Showtime fame, takes the mike, followed by local band Gigglebox on Saturday. The combination of drink, laughter and music seems to be going over pretty well, said Miller.

"Our last two shows have sold out, and we're getting a lot more calls early for reservations," he said. "It's a great change from movies or the normal bar scenes."



MATT HANEY/DN