

Pole position

Artist shares talents with Lincoln

BY LIZA HOLTMEIER
Staff writer

Gaudy plastic flowers and red roosters — for Maria Tyniec, they're the stuff of which great art is made.

Tyniec, a Polish fiber artist featured in "Different Voices: New Art from Poland" at the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, uses the above elements to elevate popular culture to the level of fine art.

Today, she begins a two-week residency in Lincoln to help young artists do the same.

"I believe there is not one kind of beauty," Tyniec said. "It only depends on from which angle you look at it. You can look at plastic roses from one angle and say, 'Look! Beautiful!'"

While in Lincoln, Tyniec will participate in two residency projects: one with Everett Elementary School and one with the Indian Center, which is dedicated to helping families through job aid and child-care programs. Graduate students from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of Textiles, Clothing and Design will assist her on both projects.

At Everett, Tyniec will help sixth-graders compose a "carpet" of interlocking wooden

shapes. The students will embellish the shapes with images from their own ethnic heritage.

Students at the Indian Center will work with the same ancestral themes but will embellish pillows that Tyniec made in Poland.

"It's like a trip to the past — to the roots — to find what kind of symbols or signs can describe their background," Tyniec said.

Nora Lorraine, the art specialist at Everett, said the diverse ethnic background of the Everett students lends itself well to the project's theme.

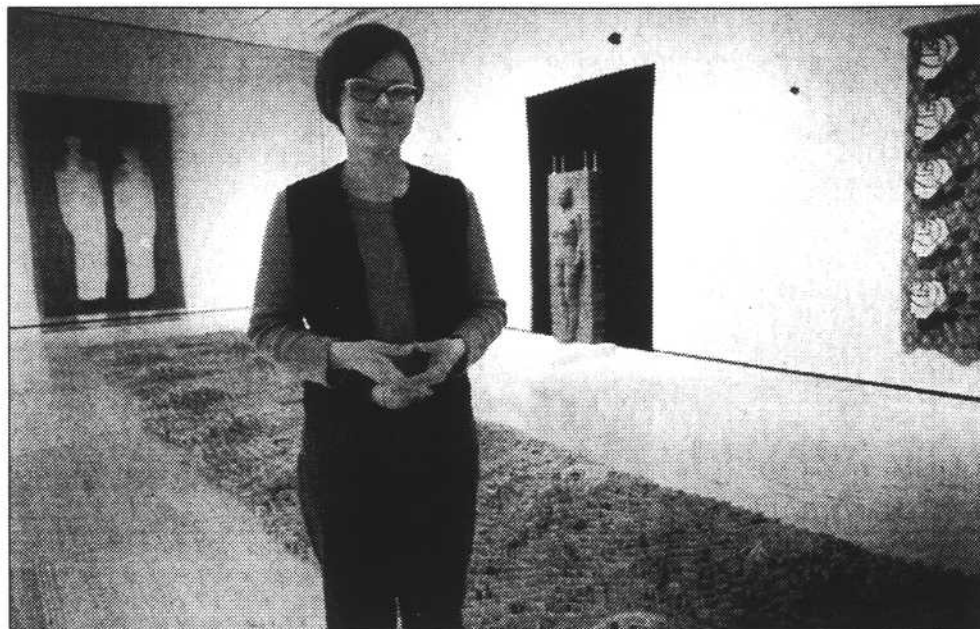
"I think it will help them know more about their own family and their own background," Lorraine said.

After the works are finished, they will be exhibited at the Hillestad Textiles Gallery on East Campus. The youths will attend a special opening of the exhibit Dec. 3, the same night they attend the closing of "Different Voices" at the Sheldon.

Tyniec's focus on cultural roots during her residency coincides with the themes of her art.

"I think what makes the difference between different regions of the world is local culture," Tyniec said. "Everything else we have in common, thanks to the computer and the television."

Therefore, Tyniec tries to celebrate images of local culture through her own work. She hopes to kindle a rebirth in Polish folk art, which she feels has become too commercial.



IN FRONT OF A DISPLAY featuring her own work from Poland, Maria Tyniec has joined her artwork at UNL to serve as a resident artist for the department of textiles, clothing and design.

SCOTT McCLURG/DN

"Difference is not something to be ashamed of," Tyniec said. "It's something to be proud of, not in a national way, but by having a feeling of being well-rooted in the ground we come from."

Wendy Weiss, an associate professor of textiles, clothing and design at UNL, said Tyniec uses bright colors and recognizable images to celebrate her cultural heritage.

"Her works are very playful. You could call them exuberant," said Weiss, who organized the "Different Voices" exhibit at the Sheldon.

Weiss said Tyniec's pieces provide a striking contrast to some of the other works in the show, which tend to be more somber and meditative.

Because of her views on the importance of cultural differences, Tyniec disagrees with the many Europeans who fear the loss of local traditions. As the economy becomes more globalized and more goods and people cross borders, Tyniec

said, people worry about the dilution of their cultures.

But Tyniec believes that even if borders between countries cease to exist, local cultures will retain their identities. Contact with other cultures can only increase our appreciation of the differences, she said.

Tyniec's trip to Nebraska represents an attempt to compare Midwestern culture with her own.

"In Europe, we only see a small part of the culture. It's really necessary to come to America to see it," Tyniec said.

Tyniec hopes the experience will inspire her to create a work based on American popular culture. However, she said, she is more interested in the cultural exchange to take place between her and the students.

"It's not that important what we will do, but the process that will happen between us," she said.

'Trash' uses motion to portray its mood

BY JASON HARDY
Senior staff writer

In the tradition of the big top, a handful of UNL students are performing this weekend without a net.

"Trash My Heart," a show conceived and directed by University of Nebraska-Lincoln theater students Jude Hickey and Kerry Gallagher, is an original movement piece put together entirely

by students without the aid of traditional theatrical elements that most consider essential, such as scripts and dialogue.

As co-director of "Trash My Heart," Hickey said the piece was a fusion of different movements and dance elements derived from a multitude of his and Gallagher's emotions and experiences.

What it all means exactly is hard to say.

"It's not dance, and it's not a play," Hickey said. "I guess it's somewhere in between."

The performance's movements range from fast and jagged — comparable to marionettes — to slow and fluid. Each motion transforms to illustrate a different mood by using a number of symbolic crescendos and styles.

Despite the somewhat vague direction, Hickey said his intent was clear: to convey a feeling of "hope for us humans and our mistakes."

By relying so heavily on something as intangible and unstable as human

emotions, the cast and directors were forced to forge ahead without the aid of dialogue, scripts or concrete character features. The process brought up a number of difficulties for both the directors and the cast.

"As a director," Hickey said, "I know I've spent many a sleepless night thinking about this show -- how I get (the cast) to interpret with their bodies' emotion through movement. The words come through the body and not the mouth."

"It's been a very difficult process, but I think it's well worth it."

Because of the piece's relaxed structure, "Trash My Heart" underwent constant change throughout the many weeks of rehearsal prior to tonight's show.

Hickey said the metamorphic nature of the piece turned out to be beneficial to the end result. With each change, the purpose of the show became more apparent, and by the end, it was manifested into a solid and fluid body of work.

For the cast especially, the transformation process wasn't easy.

Cast member Courtney Shaw said her character's development was very shaky because her movement partners were continually changing, leaving her character with a sort of split personality, depending on who she was reacting to.

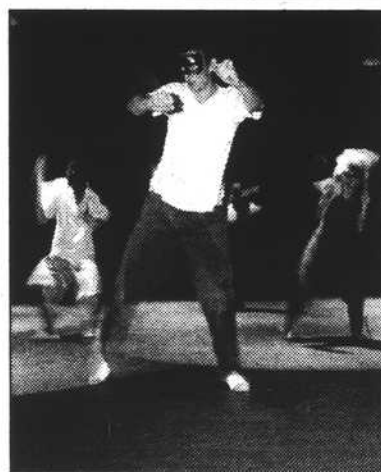
"It's like working backwards, from a play's standpoint," Shaw said. "I had to wait until the entire show was choreographed before I could really work on my character."



DAWN DIETRICH/DN

(top) "TRASH MY HEART" cast members rehearse for tonight's debut. The play strays from the usual formulas of stage theater, using almost no dialogue, no formal dance steps and working with only a loose outline for a plot.

(left) DANCERS REHEARSE for "Trash My Heart," a Theatrix production. Created and directed by students Kerry Gallagher and Jude Hickey, the play begins tonight and runs through Saturday.



Hickey said it took time for the cast, which includes both directors, to develop a cohesive style.

"I was nervous at first that it wouldn't come together," he said. "I think it finally does mesh, but there are

still individual elements apparent, which is good."

Shaw said the combination of two directors — Hickey, who has a strong theatrical background, and Gallagher who has a strong history in dance -- helped the cast become more in tune with each other and the task at hand.

"I think the contrast of directing elements helped it feel together," Shaw said.

Both Shaw and Hickey agreed, whether it is considered a dance production or a play, that "Trash My Heart" is a

unique view into the hearts of a handful of students dedicated to the performance.

"It basically says, 'This is who we are as 12 individuals.' We're wearing our hearts on our sleeves," Hickey said, with Shaw interjecting: "Trash it if you want."

"Trash My Heart" shows at 7:30 tonight in the studio theater of the UNL Temple Building, 12th and R streets. The 40-minute show is the latest of the student-run Theatrix series and runs through Saturday.