Visual Culture' exhibit opens at Sheldon

By Josh Krauter Staff writer

Imagine destroying a freshly painted Picasso by wiping away the new

image with a wet rag. You would raise the ire of not only the painter but also art lovers everywhere.

Now imagine Picasso did not lose his temper at the destruction of his work and even gave you his blessing.

A similar situation occurred to artist Robert Rauschenberg, subject of an exhibition at the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery opening Feb. 9. Rauschenberg asked fellow artist Willem de Kooning to draw something he could erase. De Kooning responded with a detailed graphite and ink drawing that took Rauschenberg a month to laboriously erase. He displayed it in a gold-leafed frame as "Erased de Kooning Drawing."

accessible yet avant-garde work will be featured in the exhibition. "Tampa Clay Piece 3," the only sculpture in the collection, is a painted, crushed box representing themes of the use and disuse of

The exhibition will also include Rauschenberg's "combines," which throw together wood panels, collages, fabric and pieces of furniture as a comment on the visual culture and icons of our society

"The images he uses are often wellknown cultural icons - rocket ships, John F. Kennedy, images we've seen in all different media," said Dan Siedell, curator of the Sheldon.

"Rauschenberg utilizes these images, and there's a hook there," he said. "He communicates in a fragmented way. It's an aggressive way to merge with the imagery.'

Siedell believes Rauschenberg's art will resonate with even art novices continues to explore how our cultural

Similar displays of Rauschenberg's because American culture is familiar surroundings affect how we live. with fragmented imagery.

"Casual art fans will encounter images they've seen before appropriated to a vision unique to Rauschenberg," Siedell said. "They will recognize the images. They're part of our visual heritage in the popular realm."

The curator believes Rauschenberg's vision has greatly influenced the media, graphic designers and even music videos.

"He wasn't an elitist. He wanted his art to interact with life, to be function-

Rauschenberg's significance is reflected in how he used the visual imagery around him, including magazine photographs, advertisements and television.

"He was able to transcend or rise above the saturation of visual imagery by using it."

Rauschenberg is still active and

"He has continued using recycled images, working in the same vein," Siedell says.

Art experts and novices alike should find points of interest in the collection because of the commingling of avantgarde and mainstream images in the work. Much like some people experience aurally experimental bands such as Sonic Youth, Rauschenberg's art can be experienced cerebrally and viscerally.

"He's accessible to the popular realm," Siedell says. "He's created a whole milieu where artists are interested in what they see."

Exhibition attendees will get an overview of one of art's most important figures, Siedell says.

"His influence is as great as probably any artist in the 20th century.

The exhibition, "The Visual Culture of Robert Rauschenberg," showcases 10 pieces of his artwork from 1962 to

Graffiti artist makes amends with society

DANCERS from page 12

the coordinator for the F Street Rec class, said an integral part of his teaching stresses that a good dancer is also a healthy dancer.

"We support zero violence and we want the kids to stay out of trouble," Lee said. "Houston stresses that. The classes can't affect school or church for any of the students, and that's the first thing Houston asks them when they get there."

Lee said so far the classes have spurred a lot of interest - people call daily asking for more information.

Through his teaching, Alexander said there is one thing he hopes always comes through to his students.

"I want them to know that (the culture) evolved in Nebraska. The hiphop culture has evolved in Nebraska from the early '80s until now, and it's still goin' strong," he said. "There are a lot of people like us doing positive things with this culture."

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