



LIZ MEACHAM/DN
LEFT: A.R. GURNEY'S PLAY "The Dining Room" explores various family relationships and takes place in the dining rooms of various characters. BOTTOM: BRIAN LUCAS, left, plays a carpenter who is called in to check on Robyn Donner's table in the first act of "The Dining Room."

Multiple personalities

Challenge:
*seven actors,
 50 characters*

BY JASON HARDY
 Senior staff writer

Here's a word problem:
 If you have one play that includes more than 50 characters throughout the duration of the performance, how many actors and actresses will you need?
 If you chose "cannot determine without more information," you are half right. If you

chose, "It's up to the director," you may have a promising future in, well, something.
 The point is that Michael Rothmayer, the director of the theater department's first main stage production, A.R. Gurney's "The Dining Room," cast only seven students to play more than 50 characters in 18 different scenes, all of which take place in the same dining room.
 Most would see this as an almost insurmountable limitation. For Rothmayer, it's an opportunity.
 "I see it as a wonderful challenge for the actors," Rothmayer said. "It's a great opportunity to show what they can do. Also, it works out to be more of an educational experience for the actors."
 "Challenge" is definitely a good word choice. Take, for instance, Mike Meyer. The junior theater major plays a total of nine characters, ranging in age from 8 to 80.

"There are two scenes that I have back to back where I walk off as an 8-year-old and walk back on as an 80-year-old," Meyer said. "It was like putting together a bunch of scenes for a class but having to do them all in two hours."
 Katie Byrd, a junior theater major who plays seven characters ranging from age 6 to 84, said even though playing seven characters is harder than focusing on just one, having a variety has its advantages.
 "It did take a lot more work, but it was really exciting because everything we learned in our movement classes really applied," Byrd said. "Also, because the characters are usually only in one scene, you don't have a lot of history about them, so you get a lot of creative freedom."
 Meyer added that not only did the actors have freedom but good direction.
 "We not only had creative freedom with the

Theatre Preview
The Facts
What: "The Dining Room"
Where: Howell Theatre, Temple Building, 12th & R streets
When: Student preview 7:30 p.m. tonight, general public Friday through Saturday and Oct. 5 - 8.
Cost: \$6 for students, \$9 for faculty/staff/senior citizens, \$10 for others
The Skinny: Play features seven actors playing more than 50 characters.

script but also with the director," Meyer said. "(Rothmayer) looks at things more as an actor than just a director."
 Rothmayer, on the other hand, gives much of the credit to his cast.

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Photography meets painting in collage

BY EMILY PYEATT
 Staff writer

In the painting, black-and-white photographs, paper dolls and French francs lie strewn across the tacky, pink shag carpet.
 The items suggest age and tell the story of a woman who can't take care of herself.
 The painting, titled "Unswept Floor: Oldest Baby in the World," is part of an exhibit of works by Judith Ernst Cherry.
 The exhibit, showing at the Haydon Gallery, 335 N. Eighth St., opens tonight and continues through Oct. 23. It features seven trompe l'oeil images and 15 photograph-and-painting collages.
 Through her images of floors scattered with objects, Cherry tells voluminous narratives of the past and present.
 Cherry paints surfaces, such as tile and shag carpet, covered with personal items. In doing so, she juxtaposes the permanent with the impermanent. Her floors suggest stability and endurance, while objects such as fruits and vegetables suggest transience and change.
 Anne Pagel, director of the Haydon Gallery, said Cherry's works are "so detailed and true to life you feel as if you could pull feathers off them."
 This realism, as suggested by the trompe l'oeil style, is dramatically effective in "Unswept Floors."
 "The sense is that (the objects) tell a story,

Gallery Preview
The Facts
What: "Unswept Floors and Other Facts"
Where: Haydon Gallery, 335 N. Eighth St.
When: Tonight through Oct. 23
The Skinny: Judith Ernst Cherry tells stories through her paintings and collages of unswept floors.

and it is very engaging to figure that story out. Cherry's works possess a very contemporary look with a historical feel that is technically superb," Pagel said.
 The ideas behind Cherry's works originate from the invention and collection of items - and even some superstition and fantasy.
 "We invent fiction from facts," Cherry said.
 Because of this invention, the artist and each individual viewer see a different story in Cherry's work.
 Cherry's artistic approach begins with the choice of a floor. She then collects various items and plays around with their arrangement.
 After physically arranging the objects, Cherry experiments with lighting, which is vital to achieve natural shadows.
 She then begins schematic, life-size draw-

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COURTESY PHOTO
 In paintings such as "Unswept Floor: Open-Handed," Judith Ernst Cherry tells thought-provoking stories through her use of scattered objects upon different floors.