

# Sheldon working to increase student attendance

**SHELDON** from page 11

The edifice that is the Sheldon is hardly intimidating, with its gentle curves and graceful arches. And it's not so much the outside of the building that students seem to ignore, but the works inside seem too imposing to draw them in for a stroll, and most likely, an eye-opener.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is unique in providing students with a resource such as the Sheldon. Many schools — such as the University of Kansas in Lawrence and the University of Missouri-Columbia — have museums on campus, but the scope and quality of the collections come nowhere near the status of the art within the confines of the Sheldon.

The knowledge that the Sheldon's collection is in the top five American art collections in the nation is relatively unknown by most students at UNL.

"I don't know if that would matter,

but my feeling is if they knew, they might possibly take the time to walk through the door," said Karen Janovy, curator of education for the museum.

### On the Inside

Mike Biggs, a UNL junior engineering major, said he was aware of the prominence of the collection, but when he walked through the gallery Tuesday, it was his first visit.

"I just didn't know this is what it was like," Biggs said as he walked through the Robert Colescott exhibit. "I just decided I wanted to see some art."

Biggs said he'd be back. "I really like it," he said.

The sculpture garden — which incorporates more than 30 sculptures — is one way students are exposed to art every day. But Janovy said it takes more for students to come inside the museum.

"You can't be on campus without seeing the sculpture," she said. "They walk by there, and for some reason just that gives them the idea that art isn't for them. I wish that were not the case, but I have to be realistic."

Janovy said as curator of education at the museum, she wished every student would appreciate UNL's art.

"If they came in (the Sheldon), they would leave with an image (of art) that they didn't have when they came in."

Janovy said she believes most students take the museum for granted.

"Unless a faculty member has a specific class or activity which requires (students) to be here, the museum is just passed by," she said. "I think a lot of students know about it and know it's here, but I don't think they know it's also free."

Chancellor James Moeser said he thought many students were unaware of the resource on their campus.

"It is a tremendous resource," Moeser said. "I think many students aren't aware that right under their nose is one of the best collections in the country."

### Demystification

Christin Mamiya, a UNL art history professor, has coordinated Sheldon exhibits with her art history courses with much success.

Mamiya worked with Dan Siedell, curator of the Sheldon, to coordinate exhibits that dealt with the classes she teaches.

"They love it," she said of her students.

Part of her goal in using the museum in class, she said, is to help students understand it's OK for them to make regular return visits.

"I hope they do (go back)," she said. "I take all my classes in there to try and demystify the museum experience. If it is made less intimidating, they can feel comfortable in the setting and be able to come to their own conclusions."

She said she thought intimidation played a big part in students' interaction with the Sheldon.

"I think, in part, it's because of modern art and abstraction," she said. "They think they don't understand what is going on, and so they don't go. I'm not

suggesting that museums try to make people feel stupid, but (students) just feel alienated because they think they are missing something."

Janovy said the relatively small community of art and art history majors on campus makes the museum an underutilized facility.

"When you have 23,000 students on one campus, only a small minority of those students are humanities or arts majors. There is a misconception that arts are for 'other people.'"

She said it wasn't until students got into the "larger world" that they realize how important the arts are.

"They begin to understand," she said.

### Reaching Out

Matt Becker, a senior computer engineering major, has never been to the Sheldon to look at art.

"I think I have been there once to see a movie," Becker said.

Becker said although he does like some of the campus sculptures, he would probably not go to the Sheldon.

"For one, I just haven't had the time," he said. "I don't think I'd go there. It just doesn't appeal to me."

Janovy said she thought when students are on campus they are preoccupied with classes or studying.

"They just concentrate on getting from A to B and accomplishing what they need to get done in a day," she said.

"Unless someone says 'go there,' they don't think about (the Sheldon) as a resource. I may be wrong, of course, but that's what I think."

Beth Wilbrand, a freshman biochemistry and pre-medicine major, said she has never been to the Sheldon.

She said she liked many of the campus sculptures, especially "Torn Notebook" — or "the one with the pages," as she said.

"I am sure I will see (the Sheldon) sometime while I am here, but right now, I just don't have time," she said.

Janovy said the museum works to bring students into the museum, but there is only so much it can do.

Its newly created Wednesday Walks — events that invite people to come to the museum on the third Wednesday of each month — are part of the outreach program the gallery is building.

The walks take place from 12:15 to 1 p.m. once a month and offer informal tours of featured exhibitions. The walks are free and open to anyone.

The gallery also provides seminars, lectures, guided tours and brochures.

Janovy said the question that plagues the museum is how to bring students in who don't necessarily want to come in — a formidable task.

"We can provide all of those things, but until the student population takes advantage of it, it won't change," Janovy said.

"There are different schools of thought on how to provide education to the public, and there are lots of people who say, 'Hey, we hang it here. Here it is. Take it or leave it.'"

"But looking at a work of art should be an educational opportunity open to everyone. There are things here for any-

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**JAMES MOESER**  
chancellor

one who takes the time to come through the door."

Behrouz Zand, a junior psychology major, was strolling through the Colescott exhibit Tuesday afternoon.

He said he wasn't aware of the gallery's reputation.

"I thought it was just another art

gallery when I was a freshman," Zand said. "I thought students had paintings in here."

But Zand said his view changed. "I never realized the importance of art on culture," he said. "The more you learn about art, the more you learn about yourself, and I guess about humanity."

## Exhibit integral part of art history class

BY SARAH BAKER  
Senior editor

"I really feel that students want to be challenged."

**DAN SIEDELL**  
curator of the Sheldon

If Dan Siedell could have taught a class where he flashed slides in a dark room in front of the dazed eyes of a packed room of students, he probably wouldn't have done it.

Instead, Siedell, curator of the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, chose to teach about one of the most well-known art movements in the history of the United States, and he installed an exhibit at the gallery to be a major part of the class.

Art History 498, The New York School, was Siedell's attempt at using the gallery he curates as an integral part of the classroom.

The course centered on the Abstract Expressionism movement that emerged in the mid-1940s and attained prominence in American art in the next decade, also known as the New York School.

Major artists in the movement included Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning and Mark Rothko, all of whom have works in the Sheldon's permanent collection.

Siedell said the New York School class was his own invention.

"The Sheldon had a rich collection of work from the movement," he said. "So I put it together and conceived the class within (the gallery) context."

The class was a success. "It was the first time I think the students had encountered something like this thing," he said.

Siedell said his class was not the only one that could utilize the gallery in such an interactive way.

"Getting students interested in thinking in terms of the collection and what that could mean in the classroom — I think that is something worth pursuing," he said.

John Shulters, a senior fine art major, said he took more away from Siedell's class than from other art history course he's taken.

"Most of the typical art history class is a lecture with slides, and I felt like this class was more interactive," Shulters said. "There was a greater level of discussion. Dan tried to pique our interest."

Aja Engel, a senior studio art major, said she took the class because she was interested in learning more about abstract art.

"I thought the New York School was interesting, and I wanted to learn about the artists and their processes and how they did things," Engel said.

She said the class was more in-depth than she expected.

"It was all new to me," Engel said. "But Dan was really helpful as a teacher."

Shulters said he felt the class wasn't for everyone; only those with a high level of interest.

"I think it is highly selective and takes a student that is pretty artistic intellectually," he said. "It was an

intense class, and it takes a certain amount of passion about the subject to get something out of it."

Shulters said he thought the "normal" student could take the class but would probably not excel as much as those with an instilled interest in the subject.

"It's probably my own view of the arts that makes me think for someone to gain what they should, they need to have a higher level of interest than what the general student may have," he said.

Although she said many of her classmates were ahead of her knowledge-wise, Engel said she thought anyone would enjoy the class.

But she added that a student must be earnest about working in a class such as this one.

"It takes a serious student, just like any other class," she said. "As long as they are serious about it, they will excel."

Siedell said he expected to have students in his class who were not art or art history majors.

"My teaching experience has been in classrooms where it wasn't just teaching art history majors or studio majors," he said. "The way I want the students to think about the visual arts is question raising rather than question answering."

Siedell said that kind of a class is a challenge to all majors.

"What I am interested in doing is making the subject relevant for everyone in the class in terms of where they are," he said. "That is just the way I teach. I can't be like other teachers. This is what students are stuck with for better or for worse."

Siedell said he thought classes like his had a mass appeal.

"I really feel that students want to be challenged," he said. "Every semester, I have students come to me and ask me, 'Is this going to be hard because I am not an art major?' I find that often those students are the best students. They are interested in art, and they are challenged by it."

He said through classes such as the New York School class, the museum can return to its roots.

"If you can make the visual arts interact, you take the museum out of the church realm and put it back into the messiness of its making," he said.

"It's exciting in some way for students. They don't have to be art lovers. They might come to be, but they don't have to, and they can still take it seriously and see that it is worth taking seriously."



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Questions? Comments? Suggestions?

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## NU Sport Clubs

### On the Road this Weekend

**CREW** - Another weekend full of regattas for this NU Sport Club. The team will be competing in the *Kansas City Royal Regatta* on Sat. and the *Head of the Kaw* on Sun.

### ROW BIG RED!

**RUGBY** - Both the Men and Women will be travelling to Ames, IA this weekend. NU Men will take on Iowa State at noon on Saturday. The Women will play two matches - one against Iowa State and the other versus the University of Northern Iowa, also on Saturday.

For more information regarding any of the UNL Sport Clubs events - Please contact the Office of Campus Recreation 472-3467

Don't miss your chance to support the

• NU CLIMBING CLUB •

Stop by their booth at the City Union today from 10:00 - 2:00.

### Upcoming Meetings

**HOCKEY** - Information meeting 5:00 PM tonight Campus Recreation Center TV Lounge. Everyone Welcome!

### Club Results

**CREW - HEAD OF THE ROCK 10/10/99**

Mixed	8+	2nd	17:23:51
Novice Womens	4+	9th	21:25:62
		10th	22:45:98
Varsity LW Womens	4+	10th	20:13:97
Light Weight Mens	4+	12th	19:09:71
Open Mens	8+	17th	16:07:68
Light Weight Womens	8+	6th	18:12:87
Open Womens	4+	23rd	22:58:68
Novice Womens	8+	16th	20:00:11