

## Jamaica, Midwest visit Omaha gallery

■ Two exhibits opening at the Joslyn Art Museum on May 13 showcase two different parts of the globe.

By Sarah Baker

Senior editor

If diversity is the spice of life, two exhibits opening concurrently in Omaha have a corner on the market.

"Soon Come: The Art of Contemporary Jamaica" and "Midlands Invitational 2000: Works on Paper" both open May 13 at the Joslyn Art Museum, 2200 Dodge St. in Omaha.

But about the only thing the shows have in common is their opening date.

"Soon Come: The Art of Contemporary Jamaica" features paintings, drawings, ceramics, sculpture and textiles by 20 artists.

The works in the show reflect Western artistic influences but also deal with issues such as slavery, immigration and the history of Jamaica. Jamaica is a former British plantation colony.

The exhibition's major theme is an exploration of differences between artists who studied in the United States and Europe and those who use the historical artistic traditions of Jamaica.

Janet Farber, the Joslyn's associate curator of 20th century art and the curator of the show, said the exhibit has many works pointing to traditional Caribbean culture.

"If you are familiar with the culture of

Caribbean art, you might be able to point to figures or signs that show the art is from the islands," Farber said. "One of the things the show demonstrates is that there is no one regionalist voice (for Jamaican art), but that it is broad in scope."

The show highlights the work of artists working today in Jamaica and also includes Jamaican artists living abroad.

The title of the exhibition comes from the Jamaican vernacular expression "soon come" which translates into "great things happen

when the time is right."

Farber said the title definitely works within the context of the show.

"I certainly hope it lives up to its title," she said, laughing. "Jamaican artists have come into a strong voice in the last year, so maybe it is the right time to show this art."

The second of the two shows, "Midlands Invitational 2000: Works on Paper" focuses closer to home.

The exhibition is the fourth in the Joslyn's series honoring artists in Nebraska and its six contiguous states, including Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, South Dakota and Wyoming.

The show features 55 works by 18 artists and concentrates on artists who create drawings, prints and other works on paper.

Farber said the museum decided it was the right time to make works on paper the focus of a show.

"We looked at the past (Midland Invitationals) and felt they were lacking in a look at prints," she said.

The Invitational in 1990 focused on painting and sculpture, the 1992 exhibit on installation art and the show in 1997 on photography.

The majority of the show's artists work primarily in drawing or print-making, but they use varied approaches.

Karen Kunc, an artist from Avoca and an art history professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, has three works in the show, all of which she did in 1999.

She said the exhibit was important for artists such as herself.

"It's about time that they've done this," Kunc said.

Kunc said the Joslyn used to have a large biennial

exhibition open to all media, but it proved to be too cumbersome and controversial for artists.

She said because of the dissatisfaction, the museum changed to "focus shows," in which it selects a particular medium and invites artists to participate.

For the most part, she said, the exhibitions are positive.

"To have the featured selection (of works on paper only) does give more of an idea about what's happening," she said.

But she also said the concentrat-



LEFT TOP: DAVID PINTO'S "Native Hybrid" is part of the Joslyn's Jamaican art exhibit opening May 13.

LEFT: ALBERT CHONG'S "Self-Portrait with Eggs" is a gelatin silver print which will be on display at the Joslyn Art Museum, 2200 Dodge St. in Omaha.

RIGHT: CIMA KATZ'S "Dancing Feet" is part of the Joslyn Art Museum's special exhibition "Midlands Invitational 2000: Works on Paper" which opens May 13.

ed exhibits make for a long wait before some artists in certain media have a chance to be in the spotlight.

She said she'd been waiting for this exhibition for about nine years, but added that it was worth the wait.

"It's a great opportunity," she said.

The artists in the exhibition were chosen by the co-curators of the show, Joslyn Director John E. Schloder and Farber.

Of the 175 original artists asked to participate, 64 were then selected for closer scrutiny, and after seeing each artist's work in person, the final 18 artists were chosen.

"It's a several-tier selection process," Farber said. "It also always makes for a hard decision."

Works such as the ones in the

show have continued to gain authority in the art world and also have gained stature in a postmodern art world where the boundaries of "fine art" continue to blur.

"I think everybody is challenging the perimeters of their own medium, and that is a postmodern approach," Kunc said. "When you deconstruct the work itself, what happens on paper and in the print medium, you are breaking those traditions in a more subtle way. You still have the reverence of tradition."

"Taking it to those possibilities allows mixed media to look in all directions and expand its definition," she said.

Faber said works on paper have continued to gain prominence, and this show reaffirms that growth.

**At The Joslyn**  
Midlands Invitational 2000:  
Works on Paper  
May 13 - July 2  
Soon Come: The Art of Contemporary Jamaica  
May 13 - June 25  
Joslyn Art Museum  
2200 Dodge St., Omaha  
\$6 for adults, \$4 for students  
Duel exhibitions explore art on paper and Jamaican culture respectively.

Delan Lonowski/DN

"Prints historically have been thought of as intimate, as separate from painting and sculpture," she said.

"The works these artists do have become vital to the individual voices of art."

## Mixed media class displays futuristic, nontraditional art

By Jason Hardy

Staff writer

Every year, more and more studies are done to find ways to refine and improve the education process. By the time students reach college, they have probably tapped into the way they harness their creative energy.

In his Experiments in Mixed Media class, visiting professor Jim Woodfill told his students to forget all of that.

"This class has been all about freedom," said John Shulters, a senior sculpture major and a student in Woodfill's class.

"The way that I used to work was very analytical. There was research, sketches and computer designs, but now it's different. One of the most

important things he told me was to break out of the box."

"He said to just get the idea working and to not be so concerned with art making but to work through your ideas," Shulters said.

The class focused on using different pieces of technology and other mediums to create artwork.

The work was very different from traditional artwork. Students were given total freedom to create whatever they wished.

Tonight, the fruition of the students' work this semester will be on display for an exhibit of light, audio and video artistic gadgetry.

Shulters said he's including a piece he created using a video loop projected on a wall where people can sculpt the light with their body.

He said the other work presented

in the show was just as experimental as his, including a portable beach with sand, sea breeze and traditional beach smells.

"There are no paintings, no prints or traditional artwork," he said.

"There are lots of bizarre devices because the pieces beautifully reflect the personalities behind the artists."

"I think it reveals more than when you lump a bunch of people in a painting class who already know about painting."

"This class has been all about re-discovery."

Shulters, a graduating senior, said the class was different from other classes because the students were given more freedom.

The class format was nearly non-existent, and the class subject matter

was, for the most part, up to the students.

"People sometimes get stuck in making art to fulfill assignments. Since his class has no assignments, there was an amazing amount of freedom," Shulters said.

"It makes you look at your whole process a different way. He got me to worry less about the finished project and more about getting it to work the way I wanted it to."

All things considered, it is probably safe to say that tonight's show is definitely not a run-of-the-mill University of Nebraska-Lincoln art exhibit.

Shulters said the exhibit will break down boundaries between the artwork and the viewer, which people will appreciate.

"I think they'll be very surprised.

### PREVIEW Experiments in Mixed Media showcase

**WHERE:** In space above Homer's Music, 14th and O streets.  
**WHEN:** tonight, 6 - 10 p.m.  
**COST:** free  
**THE SKINNY:** Exhibit of light, audio and video artistic gadgetry.

I think it's unlike any show at the university," he said.

"You might walk in and say 'what is this, art?' but there was a reason it was made."

"This is not a pretentious exhibit. It's not like a museum where everything is behind a glass case."