



Artists draw attention



Photos by Phil Jarrett/Index
Melinda Laz' monoprints, as well as the work of the other winners, are on display in the University Art Gallery located in Ophelia Parrish.

Seven students participate in National Art Competition at University Art Gallery

Lauren Miller
Staff Reporter

Diversity is the name of the game at the 16th Annual National Art Competition at Truman.

Located in the University Art Gallery, contemporary prints, paintings and photography are some examples of the media used by the seven winning artists.

Not only are the types of art diverse, but so are the artists. The winners come from places such as Denver, Boston, Chicago, St. Louis, South Bend, Ind.; and Long Island, N.Y., said senior Paul Scruggs, who has been working in the gallery for three years.

"The appeal of this show is to really see what else is out there besides Truman student and faculty art," Scruggs said. "It is neat that this is what these people do for a living."

Aaron Fine, associate professor of art and art gallery director, agreed that bringing in outside artists is important.

"This type of show is a fairly common thing for schools to do," Fine said. "Many places, especially schools in smaller towns, do this as a way to bring in new and more contemporary art."

Shannon Fitzgerald, chief curator of the Contemporary Art Museum in St. Louis, chose this year's winners. Fine said Fitzgerald judged about 100 artists' submitted slides, and then chose seven artists to showcase their art at Truman. The winners include Arielle Sandler, Melinda Laz, Ken Konchel, Susan Moore, Timothy Hutchings, Walter Kopec and David Peterson.

Fine, who chose Fitzgerald as juror, said having a professional examine an artist's body of work is part of the appeal for artists to enter this type of competition.

In fact, Hutchings said Fitzgerald was the reason he decided to enter the competition. He said that although he is excited that his artwork was chosen, winning was not necessarily a good word for being chosen. Instead, he said he thinks it is important to note that the artists were chosen because their art fit the juror's ideas and artistic requirements.

"I really like her taste," Hutchings said. "It was, and is, a great opportunity

to let her see my work."

Senior gallery worker Katherine Goodwin said she thinks one of the most intriguing works was Kopec's, formed from hangers shaped into words.

"The pieces that play on words really make you think," Goodwin said.

Fine said the array of work and topics highlight the way in which artists respond to our times. He said the way artists address issues of the contemporary world can be enlightening.

"On one hand, there is a return to formal beauty and simplicity of shapes, like Kochel's photography," Fine said. "On the other hand, there is conceptual work that challenges us to think about the world around us."

This year brought change to the National Art Competition, Fine said. In previous years, the juror would choose anywhere from 30 to 40 artists, and the artists would each exhibit two to three pieces, and then the juror would pick a handful of winners, he said.

"Now there are seven artists with seven to eight pieces each," Fine said. "And, the bodies of works chosen are distinctively the juror's choice versus a wide array of things."

Fine said he believed this made the competition and professional because choosing seven artists out of 100 is more limiting than choosing 30 or 40 out of 100.

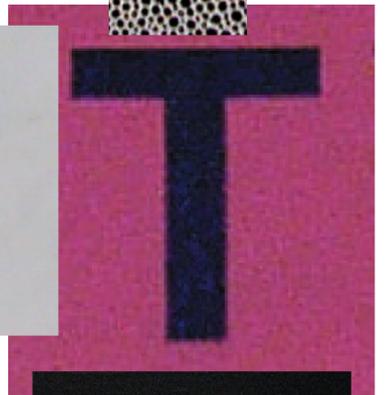
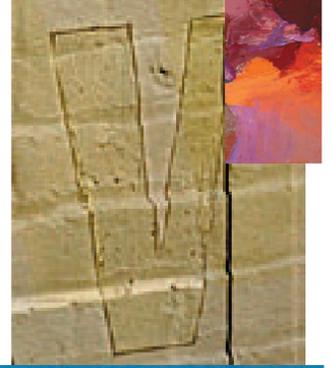
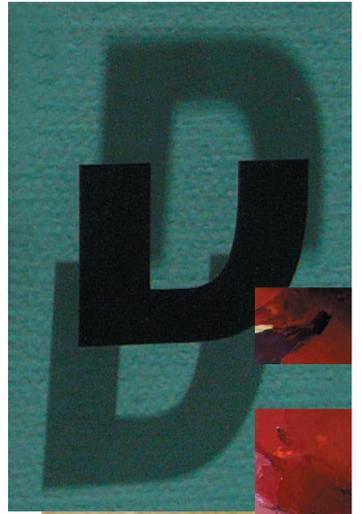
"I am really excited for this year's exhibit," Fine said. "I think it will bring in a lot of people."

Scruggs said the Annual National Art Competition gallery show is fairly popular and might be even more so with the new changes.

"It really can depend on the art that we get in on whether it will be one of the more popular shows," Scruggs said. "Diversity really appeals to everyone."

Fine said the seven artists split the award money, which will help defer the entry costs. Fitzgerald will speak to students and faculty about her choices at 6 p.m. Feb. 20 in OP 2210.

The artwork will be on display through Feb. 24.



Photos by Phil Jarrett, Designed by Lindsay Koski/Index

Design compiled from artwork by Arielle Sandler, Melinda Laz, Ken Konchel, Susan Moore, Timothy Hutchings, Walter Kopec and David Peterson.