

Art Front lets creative juices flow freely

By Tierney Oberhammer
STAFF WRITER

The student-run organization, Art Front, gets its annual chance to shine this month at the UNC Asheville Highsmith Union Art Gallery.

"We help hang shows here year round," said Angela Polly, Art Front president and senior art student.

Art Front hangs a show featuring its members only once a year. The show displays several different artistic mediums including paintings, sculptures, printmaking, ceramics, mixed media and drawing. All of the featured artists participate in Art Front.

All of Art Front's members major in art, but the group welcomes non-art majors as well, according to Polly. While mainly concentrating on painting, Polly shows several mixed-media sculptures in the show. Her series called "Three Nudes" uses flesh-colored nylon stockings and polyester stuffing. Polly called the piece her abstraction of the figure.

The sculptures brought to mind images of the brain and the intestines, according to Alex Williamson, a freshman student, though without the disgust he usually finds in depictions of human internal organs. "It was soft and appealing," Williamson said.

Artists keep some things hidden and the concept behind the piece revolves around revealing these things, according to Polly.

"It's about opening yourself up to new experiences, ideas, anything," Polly said. "Being exposed."

A large oil painting by the vice president of Art Front, titled, "As A Grown Man Holds His Mother", shows a large baby and a smaller



SHANA ARNEY - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Justin Burkins, a local landscape designer, takes a closer look at "Untitled," by Elizabeth Ewing, senior art student. The piece is made with wood, glass and clay.

human figure grasping one another. The artist, Larkin Ford, said the title is purposefully vague. He called it a surrealistic take on the traditional nativity scene.

"It's a hallucination of somebody terrified of the prospect of their own unborn child," Ford said.

Ford said he sometimes uses cheese knives to apply paint to the canvas. His other paintings develop into works even more surrealistic than his current exhibition. Ford described them as severely mutilated figures.

Jeremy Drake, a senior art student, exhibits two pieces. He marked both as "not for new experiences, ideas, anything."

Drake explained he wants to keep them for his final senior exhibition, and he's just not ready to part with them. His mind might change if the price was right.

"I'm sure if someone came in with \$800 or \$1,000, I would probably sell," Drake said.

Alyssa Ray, a student-teacher at Claxton Elementary School, shows a tall earthenware totem pole titled "Heritage." It rose above the heads of most of the people at the opening.

"We've actually been talking about heritage in the fifth grade this whole week," Ray said.

The animals in the totem pole play a role in everyone's heritage, according to Ray. These animals include a rattle snake, a beaver, a monkey and a rainbow trout.

She said it took all semester to build the sculpture and she ran into some problems along the

way. "I was making it, and somebody comes in and says, 'Your totem pole is leaning to the right!' and I thought, 'Oh, shoot.' So, we pulled it out and I tried to straighten it out," Ray said. "It's been a real pain."

The totem pole started her new adventure in art this semester, according to Ray.

This spring, Art Front hosts the annual juried student art show. Each year Art Front organizes the entire event and uses its funds to finance it. The head of the NC

School of the Arts in Winston Salem will judge the show this year which opens on April 12.

"We put out a call for entries in April; anyone can submit work for \$5 per entry," Polly said.

Art Front also hosts and helps with several other art related events at UNC Asheville. Several times each year they throw "Creatathons". During a "Creatathon", the art department stays open over night.

"We stay in the building all night long and work on our stuff," Polly said.

On any other day, administration kicks students working on projects out of the building at midnight, according to Polly.

The Art Front student show is on display in the Highsmith Student Union Art Gallery now through February 2.

For more information on Art Front activities visit <http://orgs.unca.edu/ArtFront/> or www.unca.edu/highsmith/gallery.

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