

# Performances, classes of ArtSchool need funds

By **KATIE WHITE**  
Staff Writer

The first thing newcomers to the Chapel Hill-Carrboro area ask is: What's there to do? There's the night life, the restaurants, the movie theaters and usually something entertaining to watch on the downtown streets. And then there's the Center for Visual and Performing Arts, an organization known to town dwellers as the ArtSchool.

The ArtSchool was started in 1974 in a loft on Main Street in Carrboro by Jaque Menache, an art teacher with a master's degree in art from UNC, now executive director of programs at the ArtSchool. His idea was that he wanted to rent a space to teach painting and drawing and he began with 30 students.

By 1979, his school had attracted more interest. Not only did Menache continue to teach painting and drawing, he added programs in drama, poetry, photography and other visual arts. With a repertoire

of 17 programs attended by 300 students, he began to look for more space as well as grants. He then became involved in saving the old mill which is now Carr Mill Mall, and by luck, he landed an eight-year lease of the warehouse for his expanding organization. Because of a miscalculation in the amount of funds needed to fix up his new space, the ArtSchool ran out of money.

The only thing that Menache could do was appeal to the community, and it came through for him. The Town of Carrboro came in, a board of directors was formed, grants and loans came in, Friends of the ArtSchool was established to continue the needed renovations, and the ArtSchool was born. It's been a success story from the start and is growing rapidly.

"The ArtSchool is for everybody," says Menache. He explains that it has two main concerns, teaching classes in the various aspects of art and showcasing the performing arts.

There are two semesters, Fall and Spring, during which instruction is offered in subjects such as photography, drawing, painting, acting, music, writing and special programs for children.

Menache says that the programs for children have become very popular, especially in the summer when the ArtSchool offers a type of summer camp for children of all ages.

ArtSchool instructors also go into the public school system to teach. University students, professionals, doctors, engineers, townies and teens are just some of the people who utilize and enjoy these classes.

Menache is quick to stress the performing side of the ArtSchool.

"We're a presenting/producing, community/professional organization," he explains.

One can see professional performances and theater companies including groups like the Touch Mime, the Transactors and Puppet Express. Local talent is very prevalent in play productions and music performances. There is a televised talent show, filmed at the ArtSchool by a local television station. Some big-name bands in traditional, folk, classical, jazz, rock and reggae often stop in Carrboro to play as they move down the East coast. Local bands also enjoy playing at the school. There are also many affiliates, such as The Children's Tap Company, Poet's Co-op, Writer's Co-op, Actor's Co-op, Community Holistic Health Center and Gallery Committee as well as satellite galleries and exhibits which provide outlets for the outpouring of talent.

"It's wild," says Menache. It would seem that way, looking at all the things that the ArtSchool can offer to the community, yet it is done in a very organized and orderly manner.

The organization is controlled by a large board of directors which organizes at least 12 committees at one time to orchestrate the center. Since it is a non-profit cultural arts center, it depends heavily on grants from local, state and national foundations. Remarkably, 60 to 70 percent of its budget comes from its own income. In 1984, Menache was able to hire a small staff that since has grown to 12 full and part-time employees.

Now, again, Menache has to relocate. The lease he had procured eight years ago in Carr Mill is up

in December, but he has known that his dream was growing too big. He began to research for some space. What he found is the former Piggly Wiggly food store at 3001 E. Main St., Carrboro. He desires to build an "arts inclusive, mixed-use development" which will include shops and businesses with the art center as its hub. This idea has worked in other places and has now inspired a group of people to go into a partnership with Menache. The partnership has bought the whole shopping center and is looking for more land. They've acquired a 20-year lease.

It has not been easy for the ArtSchool. A simple idea born in a loft now has grown to a large organization. Obtaining the funds to move the school has been a real challenge and now the idea is in jeopardy; it is \$45,000 short of

beginning moving expenses and has to vacate Carr Mill by December.

"It's not panic city yet," Menache says. He predicts that the center will probably go dark for a few months, but one of the keys to the ArtSchool's success is the fact that it produces so much of its own budget. Closing for three or four months could cause the multi-faceted organization to fold. If the move is successful, the potential for the Carrboro downtown area is large, he says.

"It could possibly redefine the whole area," Menache says. "Trying to make it is one of my philosophies."

If you're newly arrived in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro area, go by the ArtSchool before it goes dark to catch the show or take a class this fall and while you're there, look around and experience the potential.

## Self-portraits of artist realistic, melancholy

By **ELIZABETH WHITE**  
Special to the STH

"Self-Portrait in Profile" by Kathe Kollwitz (1867-1945) is one of several self-portraits now on display in the exhibit "Likeness and Character: Portraits in the Ackland Art Museum."

One of 84 self-portraits done by Kollwitz, this 1927 lithograph is an extremely intense piece. Kollwitz was a master of chiaroscuro. Her control of a range of values of light and dark is evident in the piece's dramatic dark deep-set eyes, strong chin and mouth. Her emotional self-presentation is not narcissistic but frank and unrelenting. One gets a sense of power and determination in the profile, perhaps mixed with melancholy. Not a compromiser, Kollwitz believed in showing things as they were. In this realistically rendered work, the



The Ackland Art Museum, UNC-Chapel Hill

### A self portrait of Kathe Kollwitz

strong features seem appropriate to her attitudes and life.

A Socialist and an avid defender of workers', women's and gay rights, her art was banned in Germany during the Nazi rule. Many of her pieces were destroyed, both deliberately and in a bombing of her home in 1943. Best known for her work in lithography and woodcut, Kollwitz was a compassionate woman, a celebrant of revolution, and a mourner of life's tragedies. Perhaps this piece's melancholy derives from her understanding of human suffering and its inevitability.

Kollwitz is celebrated in this exhibit of more than 100 paintings, drawings, photographs and sculptures, along with such diverse masters as Rembrandt, Rodin, David Hockney and Andy Warhol. Ackland's curator Dean Walker will give a gallery talk Wednesday, Aug. 20 at 12:15 p.m. The Ackland Art Museum is open Tuesday - Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free.



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