

# t with re-opening

n." museum's collection of more than 12,000 paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings, photographs and pieces of decorative art, as well as its 18-member staff.

"I think the way the museum develops depends on how the members of the staff respond to the expanded spaces and to their own imagination and desires for programs," Millard said. "It is a group effort and the shape the Ackland takes will be given by the staff."

Millard said he is interested in pulling in more of the community now that there is a building to bring people to. He even hopes to bring the power of the exhibition to the state as a whole.

"I would like us to reach all the people we can," he said.

Ray Williams, curator of education, said: "We have always run small-scale exhibitions of the permanent collections that can be used by the departments (at the University). We are interested in having temporary exhibitions to support teaching courses."

"If you are involved with a student organization and wanted a tour, we could arrange that," Williams said. "If an RA wanted to arrange for a dorm hall tour, we could arrange that. We want people to have a greater aware-

ness of the Ackland as a community resource."

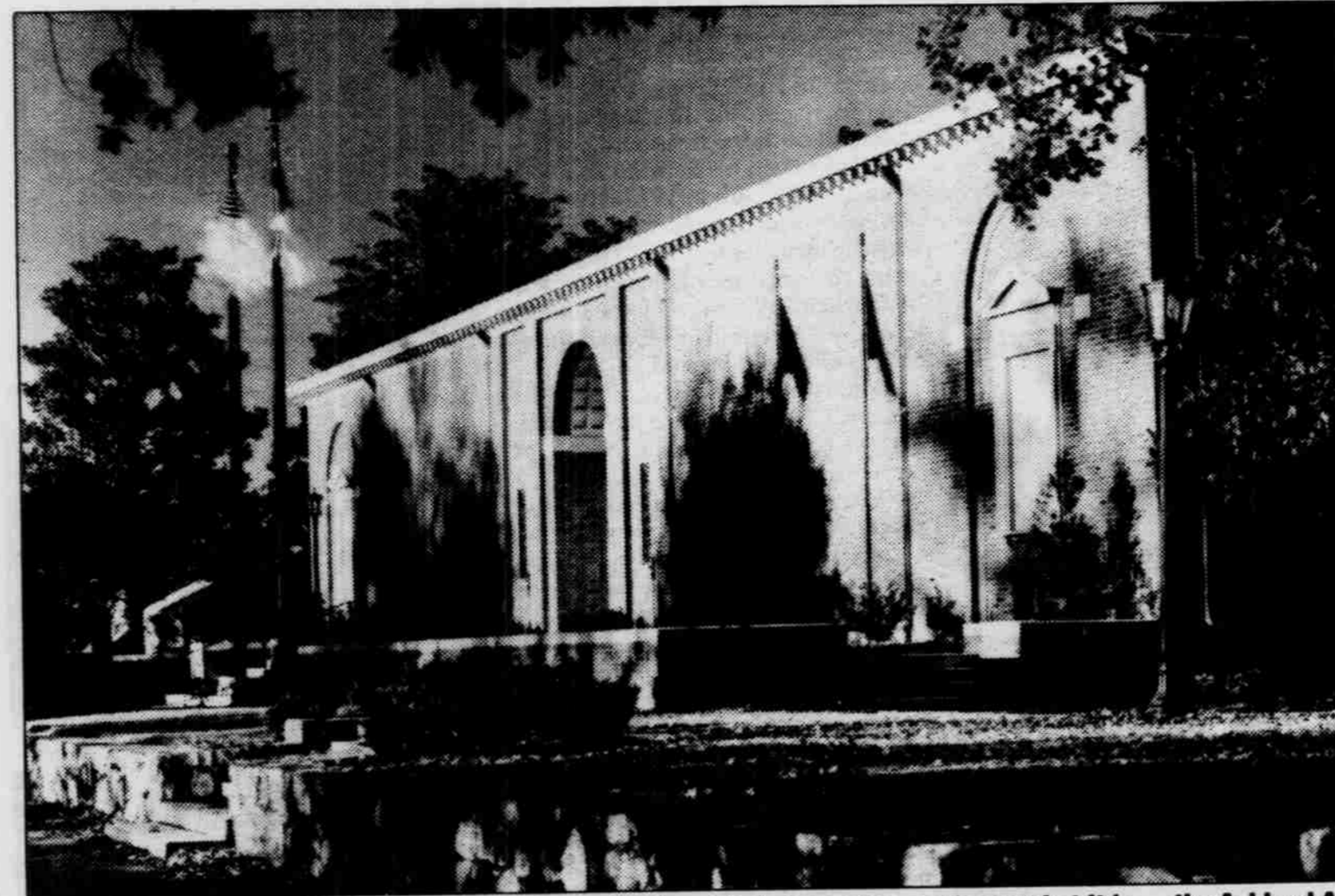
To achieve this, the museum will expand its educational programs, promoting activities like a Saturday morning story hour for children and their families twice a month.

"The story hour will use picture books and stories to better explain pieces of the museum's collection," Williams said. "For example, the Ackland has a new dragon sculpture from Thailand that we might introduce with an Asian story about a dragon."

In addition, the Downtown Commission's Arts at Lunch series will be held at the Ackland twice a month and the museum is organizing a Young Associates membership group.

"This group is for people who want to learn more about art, be sociable and have fun," said Laura Kreps, an Ackland volunteer staff member who is helping to organize the group. "We should probably call them the Ackland Young-ish Associates, since the age range is from 'twenty-something' to 'forty-something.'"

With the reopening ceremonies just around the corner, the Ackland Art Museum is poised to become once again a force in Chapel Hill's art world.



Yes, you've seen it, you've driven by it, you've walked past it, but now you can know what it is ... the Ackland Art Museum. If you've read anything on this page, you might have figured out that it's opening December 2 after many years of being closed.

## Gallery debut breathes life into art scene

By ISABEL BARBUK  
 Staff Writer

The Ackland Art Museum, located on Columbia Street, represents the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's own display of "serious culture." Closed since 1987 for renovation, it re-opens this week as a facility for students and the community alike.

It contains a large section devoted to European art, and in March will open galleries devoted to Ancient Greek, Roman, Asian and Oriental works. Basically, the Ackland's major premise is to give a broad view of art through the ages.

The gallery is divided between two floors. On the upper level is a rotating exhibition devoted to drawings. Like the rest of the gallery, the works are displayed on a chronological time scale, beginning in the 16th century and working up to the contemporary. The pictures incorporate a variety of media, but utilize primarily pencil and ink. Of particular interest are the 17th- and 18th-century sections, which illustrate the influence of the classical image on artists of these periods.

Unfortunately, the earlier works tend to be somewhat drowned by their frames. Delicate pencil drawings, minutely detailed, tend to disappear

when surrounded by heavy gold.

Some aspects of the contemporary section are interesting, in particular the attempt to get away from preconceived notions of modern art. However, one wonders why they chose to display some of these prints over others. The pictures vary greatly in quality, yet the gallery has a collection of more than 10,000 drawings, prints and photographs from which to draw excellence.

This section of the gallery relies on intimacy to draw the viewer in. Unfortunately, the somewhat close atmosphere means the pictures lose some of their power. The impression one gets is that of entering a library rather than an art gallery — studious rather than inspiring.

Downstairs, eight galleries are devoted to painting and sculpture. This too is ordered chronologically, but is also divided by country. This is commendable, as style in art revolves around certain schools of thought. Consequently, 17th-Century Dutch art has its own distinctive quality, but hardly resembles 17th-Century French art. Perhaps the Ackland should also look at subdividing the upper gallery drawings as well.

The journey of art through time starts with a short look at the Middle Ages. These works incorporate largely

religious themes and a lot of gold. Wisely, the gallery swiftly moves into the High Renaissance and 17th-Century art. This section is full of wonderful Baroque paintings with vibrant colors and considerable power.

A divided gallery continues the journey. One wall is devoted to Dutch 17th-Century art, the other to the French and Italian 18th Century. This mixture works surprisingly well, with the puritanical and sober aspects of the Flemish works juxtaposed with the overly-romantic 18th-Century pictures. Works like "Venus Disarming Cupid," by Jacopo Anigani, demonstrate the neo-classical learnings in art of this period. The picture's soft lines and muted colors are romanticized, idealistic and pleasing to the eye.

The 19th-Century Robert L. Myers gallery more flaunts than simply illustrates the Ackland's ability to purchase major works of art. Among its artifacts, it counts two superb samples — "Cleopatra and the Peasant" by Eugene Delacroix and "The Call to Arms" by French sculptor Auguste Rodin.

The Delacroix is a fine example of his work, excessively vivid in imagery and lurid in color, a powerful picture of an intimate scene. The Rodin — an early work commemorating the

Franco-Prussian War — demonstrates his superlative ability to convey emotion through bronze. This section of the museum also includes works by Pissarro and a delightful picture by F. Barrias.

Lastly, the twentieth-century Charles and Isabel Eaton gallery is dominated by a Morris Louis picture called "Theta Beta." This largely-white canvas daubed with six stripes of colored acrylic paint finds its strength in its simplicity. It is both calming and disconcerting. The other works, although not on par with this, are interesting in their variety.

The Ackland is trying very hard to achieve the standard of a serious gallery. Its work is well-displayed and effectively lit. Unfortunately, it is still based in the 19th-Century interpretation of museums. The serious and conventional displays in the Ackland continue many existing notions about the elitism of art.

Art should be accessible to a wider audience and the overly intellectual approach here seems to narrow that possibility. However, the museum's eclectic approach is commendable for trying to reverse this. Chapel Hill desperately needs the infusion of culture and view of the world outside the Triangle that the Ackland can provide.

## Symposium opens doors

By MONDY LAMB  
 Staff Writer

The long-anticipated opening of the Ackland Art Museum, following a three-year, \$3 million renovation, will take place at 1 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 2, accompanied by reopening festivities.

The re-opening celebration begins Saturday, Dec. 1 with a symposium co-hosted by the Ackland and the UNC Institute for the Arts and Humanities. The Beatrice Cummings Mayer Symposium, "Does Art Work in Museums?" will last all day and is open to the public. This series of talks and panel discussions will debate the academic aspects of renovating museums and re-installing art collections.

"We thought the symposium would be an occasion to assemble art scholars, architects, and curators who normally don't talk to each other about the construction of a museum," said Ruel W. Tyson Jr., Director of the Institute for the Arts and Humanities.

Opening public ceremonies will be at 1 p.m., Dec. 2 and will feature comments from UNC President C.D. Spangler, UNC-CH Chancellor Paul Hardin and Ackland Director, Dr. Charles Millard.

In the first six months the museum will only display works of art from its own collection, which includes paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings, photographs and pieces of decorative art. A number of new works have been acquired since the

museum was closed, and the re-opening will be their first public display. Several of Ackland's best-known paintings were restored while the museum was closed.

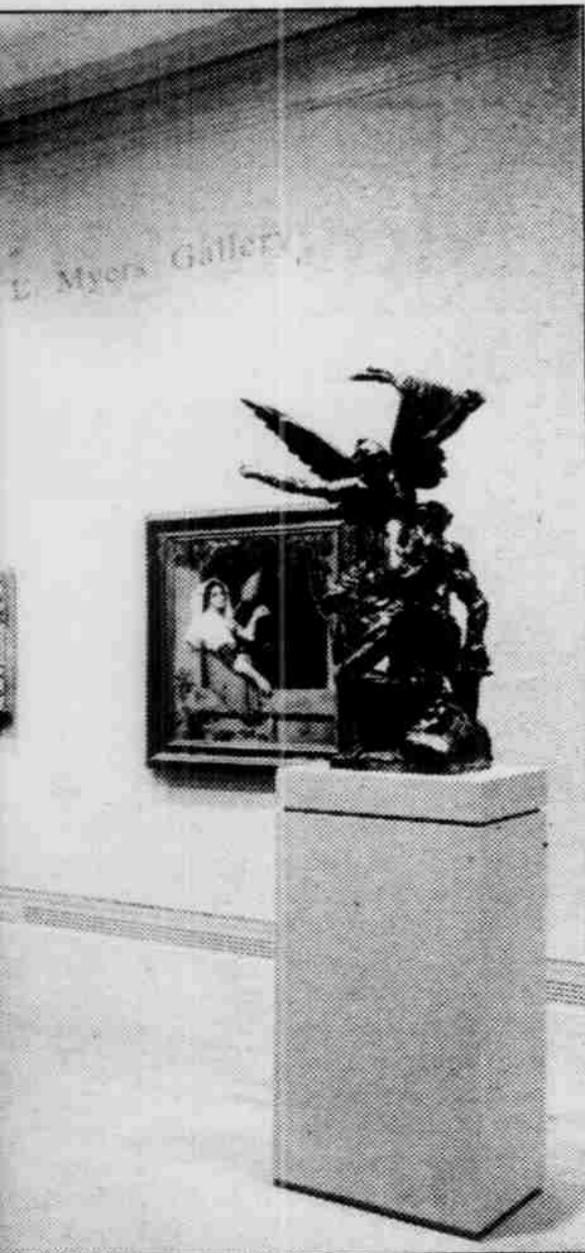
Although the outside appearance of the 32-year-old museum is the same, three years of construction have entirely remodeled the interior. The architect worked closely with the Ackland staff to create a new museum without harming the original building.

Dr. Charles Millard said that in the new space, the works acquired by the museum will seem different.

"Exhibited in new space, the entire collection really comes alive," Millard said. "The Ackland now has an up-to-date, airy, well-proportioned interior — the perfect setting for its broadly representative collection, one of the finest in the Southeast."

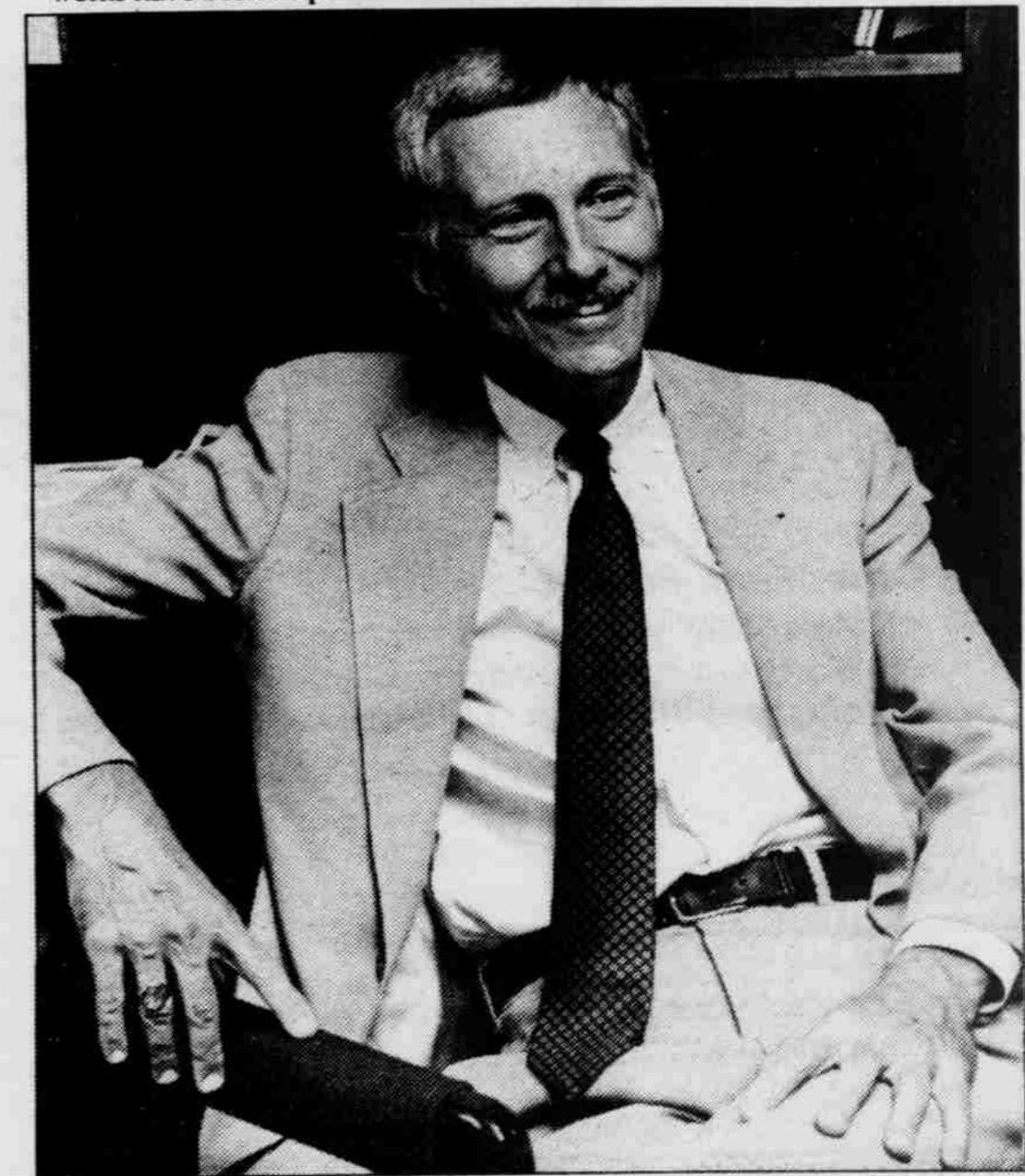
The main floor of the museum features eight galleries with European and American paintings and sculpture from the past six centuries. Five more galleries with art from ancient Greece, Rome, China, Japan, India and native North Carolinian crafts will open in March 1991.

The Beatrice Cummings Mayer Symposium "Does Art Work in Museums?" will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Dec. 1 in the Hanes Art Center auditorium. After the re-opening, Ackland will remain open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is free.



Special to Omnibus/ David Minton

Ackland Art Museum. "Cleopatra and the Peasant" by Eugene Delacroix. See this painting on the cover of the new



Dr. Charles Millard is the director of the Ackland Art Museum