

Rochester senior lecturer explores art, collaboration

Stephanie Butzer
Senior Reporter

The definition of heroism is constantly changing, since competitors are judged on their background, nationality and personality. Heather Layton, a senior lecturer in art at the University of Rochester, opened the doors to Arts West display room and revealed how the hero is not always the person we think.

Layton's opening reception Nov. 9 wasn't a showcase of sculptures or a handful of her best canvas paintings. Instead, she cracked open cans of paint and painted directly on the display room walls. After presenting her work, Layton invited students to stay and paint the room with her. But first, she wanted to explain the work she was doing.

"I've always been interested in conflict, who is in conflict, why are they in conflict and the idea that a lot of it can be saved by communication and understanding somebody else's perspective," Layton said.

She said she aims to provide opportunities to understand the person whose opinion was not supported by the majority. She also wanted students to explore the process of choosing the ally and the enemy in a conflict, naming the exhibit "Ally/Enemy."

The walls of the room display three conflicts: the Los Angeles conflict, the Egyptian revolution and the occupation of Indian army forces in Nagaland.

"All three of the situations are situations where I thought I knew who I sided with, and then within an hour of hearing the other person's perspective, I switched," Layton said.

The Indian army in Nagaland is the main scene. This little-known conflict in northeast India is between Indian army forces and the tribal Naga people. India has taken over the area by force and killed more than 200,000 Nagas.

"When you're fighting over the land, you're not just fighting over the dirt, you're fighting over all the memory," Layton said.

After the reception, Layton did a demo on how she painted the room.

"Five or six students stayed and actually worked on it," she said.

She had students flow in and out of the room to contribute to the exhibit Nov. 9-10. But the exhibit will continue to be open for students to add to until Nov. 22.

"Some come in and work for two hours and others will work for two minutes," Layton said.

The opportunity to contribute to this collaborative project is open to all students, not just art students.

Layton's artistic work is not solely focused on large-scale paintings. She said her next project might be a miniature painting, while the following one might be a sculpture. Keeping her work new gives her more inspiration to excel.



Heather Layton painted the display room in Arts West on Nov. 9 and invited students to join her after presenting it. STEPHANIE BUTZER | Senior Reporter

Ken Hassell, associate art professor, acknowledges the growth of Layton's projects.

"She doesn't just have this kind of single idea, and then goes with it no matter what," he said. "She sees that maybe the project needs to expand, and be more inclusive. She alters it, which is a really interesting idea."

Sophomore Elizabeth Amontette felt inspired by Layton's work.

"I came in not knowing anything, even about the artist, so I was really surprised and inspired by her work," Amontette said. "She really cares about the impact she has on people that will see her work and their role in her installations, or whatever she does."



Heather Layton painted the walls with three conflicts: the Los Angeles conflict, the Egyptian revolution and the Indian occupation of Nagaland. STEPHANIE BUTZER | Senior Reporter

Student Juried Exhibition gives showcasing opportunity

Cassie Grimm
Reporter

The annual Student Juried Art Exhibition will open in the Isabella Cannon Room in the Center for the Arts Nov. 21 at 5:30. The exhibit is organized every year by the ART 380, Professional Practices class, a required course for art majors. The exhibition is a way for Elon students to showcase their works.

Professional Practices is designed to teach art majors necessary skills such as designing websites for their artwork, applying to national art shows, running an art exhibition and more. This year's theme is Prospectus.

Natalie Butler, senior art major, said the class is important because it teaches students "things that might not typically be encountered in a studio class, but are essential skills for any artist."

This year's exhibition may capture a larger audience because of its central location on campus.

"Honestly, a lot of student exhibitions happen in Arts West, which is a building that most students don't visit — some even never at all," Butler said. "So I believe that holding an exhibition of hand-picked, top-notch student work in the Center for the Arts is the best way to promote the visual arts on campus."

An array of creative pieces will be on display this year. Students may submit up to three pieces along with a \$5 entry fee. Senior Laura Brentrup will showcase her pieces, including plates of ceramic "food."

"The larger issues I am commenting on surround the influences of cultural traditions, rituals and customs surrounding food," Brentrup said. "For many people, it is slightly bizarre seeing something that appears as

'real food' at first glance, but then they realize it is actually made out of clay, portraying the idea of do we really know what we're eating?"

Brentrup's pieces, which will be displayed buffet-style, include a clay hamburger, fries and three Italian dishes.

Senior JR Riegel will also be submitting ceramic pieces but his have a different focus than Brentrup's.

"I'm submitting functional ceramic work with sculptural elements," Riegel said. "In one piece, two mugs each with an eye will be looking at one another. In another, I made the opening of a jar into a mouth with a protruding tongue."

This year's exhibition winner will be chosen by local artist Frank Russell. As a practicing artist, Russell will be able to provide feedback to those participating. The winner will receive a monetary prize.

"Students and faculty should come see the show for the same reasons that anyone attends a sporting event or a musical performance," Brentrup said. "It is a showcase of skill and talent of Elon students. Additionally, there are some really thought-provoking pieces that comment on a wide spectrum of issues."

Although the exhibition will be displayed throughout Winter Term, the opening reception will be an opportunity for attendees to interact with the artists.

"Everyone will be able to talk to the artists and professors to find out more about each work," said Riegel. "The reception is an opportunity to hear about the conceptual issues artistically-inclined students are dealing with."

The opening reception will be held at 5:30 p.m. in the Isabella Cannon Room Nov. 21.

Check It Out:

What: Annual Student Juried Art Exhibition

Where: Isabella Cannon Room, Center for the Arts



MOLLY CAREY | Staff Photographer

Student artists' work will be judged by a local artist. The winner will receive a cash prize.

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