

September 27, 2011

Art capstones provide real-world experience for seniors

HEATHER HOWELL
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The word capstone is commonly defined as an individual's crowning achievement. For art majors graduating from NSU and individuals who are interested in showing their work, they have the NSU Art Gallery. Jacob Cotton, Tahlequah, Program Coordinator of Art, manages the NSU Art Gallery. "The capstone show works as a way of introducing fine art, education, and visual communication students to professional practices of being an independent and self-sufficient artist," said Cotton. "It shows them the proper hanging method and the proper framing methods. It teaches them self promotion as well as editing their work for shows." Each year graduating seniors are required, as a part of fulfilling their curriculum, to exhibit their work in a senior capstone exhibit. This allows students to experience first hand what goes into the preparation and successful completion of exhibiting work. They are taught hanging styles and standards along with proper framing techniques. Exhibitors are also required to produce the media for the show promotion.

"It's like any other art assignment," said Cotton. "They are then required to then do it and I come in a critique it and tell them what areas are wrong and they have the opportunity to fix it before the public views it."

The Art Program offers a Bachelor of Arts degree in Fine Art, Graphic Design and Art Education. The students combine intensive study in their emphasis areas along with studies offered by NSU's General Education Curriculum, which helps them to become productive members of

the workforce.

"Mr. Cotton is awesome," said Erin Littlechief, Anadarko senior. "I've learned a lot from him, especially viewing style, and because of his input I believe we are going to have an awesome show."

Being an artist is no easy task. The labor involved in preparing pieces for viewing is extensive. The artist is solely responsible for hanging, making sure the work is cropped for proper framing, and then the framing itself.

"It costs a lot of money," said Littlechief. "There's an expense involved. I had a lot of advice I didn't take. A lot of people told me to frame as I go along and I didn't."

The experience as a whole works as a way to give students from different degree fields to a trial dose of reality.

"The main point for the capstone is really to prepare you for what you're going to experience in real life," Briana Maxwell, Tulsa Alumni. "As an art major you become your own boss and this is a trail run on a small scale."

Seminars are given throughout the semester to help prepare students for the different aspects of showing work and how to receive visitors.

"Now I give seminars on framing and how to hang the show and what's expected from the reception," said Cotton.

The gallery itself is a unique opportunity for students where it is used more of a lab than an actual gallery. Some artists visit, but as a whole it is lab space for graduating seniors.

"In most universities students don't get this opportunity unless it's a student juried show," said Cotton. "It's one of the unique opportunities that students get here at NSU." Although the work is tough and the professor is tougher, the overall opinion is that in the end all the hard work is worth every bit.

"I feel I learned a lot from it," said Maxwell.

Students who are not affiliated with art are excited about the show and what the artists have to offer.

"I'm really excited to see the show," said Nicole Lehnick, Tahlequah junior. "I've been to a faculty exhibition, but not a student show. This should be awesome." The capstone show for Erin Littlechief and Teleah Stand will take place Sept. 30 at the NSU art gallery, located at 232 N. Muskogee Ave. The gallery is open from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday. Admission is free for everyone.

"What I hope to gain is to show people that Native American artist don't have to show Native American themed art," said



Courtesy Photo



Senior art majors display their capstone projects at The Art Gallery in downtown Tahlequah. The next show will be Friday.

Littlechief. "I paint what I see in everyday life. Native Americans when they were doing legend drawings on hides or buckskins, I can't really relate to a Native

American on horseback, but I can relate to Native Americans doing everyday things."

For more information, email howellh@nsuok.edu

ROBERT P. WEBB III D.D.S.
FAMILY DENTISTRY
400 EAST DOWING
Tahlequah, OK 74464
OFFICE PHONE: 456-4477
HOME PHONE: 456-2977
FAX: 456-4588
WEB: webbsmiles.com

SCREEN PRINTED STUFF
T Shirts Caps
Sweats Jackets Uniforms
PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS
Mugs Pens Key Chains & More

HART'S AWARDS
Trophies Plaques
Medals Engraving

EMBROIDERY
ROBIN JACKSON

420 S. Muskogee Ave
Tahlequah, OK 74464
918-456-5321
hartsok@sbcglobal.net
www.hartsok.com

