

# WINTHROP MAGAZINE

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# Arts Infusion: Gallery Work





# Is in Tom Stanley's Veins

By Karen Martin

**F**ive giant steel chairs of varying heights rise from the campus landscape like daffodils in the spring. Recycled plastic grocery bags hang on a gallery wall, fashioned into a variation on the American flag. A fierce black cobra sits atop a pedestal, poised to strike, its iron construction not immediately apparent.

What do these disparate icons share? A strong connection to the regionally distinctive Winthrop University Galleries. They, and a host of other projects, exhibitions and activities, comprise a program that is representative of Winthrop's commitment to an arts-infused learning environment. And while some might wonder about their relation to traditional forms, Galleries Director Tom Stanley is working with students, faculty and administrators to change the way art is presented to, and understood by, campus viewers.

Fifteen years ago, Stanley joined the galleries program, broadening the scope of its activities, enhancing the exhibition schedule, and later, guiding the renovation of exhibition spaces in McLaurin Hall and Rutledge Building. Under Stanley's direction, the galleries has hosted works by such regional, national and international artists such as Ansel Adams, Judy Chicago and Benny Andrews.

For his part in the galleries' success, Stanley attributes a hands-on understanding of both creator and creation. An artist himself, Stanley describes his job as an "artist administrator" versus an "arts administrator." The difference, as he explained, is his approach in building a network of allies within the arts community and on campus – a support system which many believe has resulted in a stronger, more dynamic galleries program.

## The Other Classroom

"At its best, the gallery functions like a classroom where you don't really receive grades and it's open to anyone — not just art and design students," Stanley said.

Most of the galleries' guest artists hold lectures in conjunction with their exhibits. Winthrop hosted four such events this past spring, which gave students an opportunity to ask questions and to have their work critiqued by artists, who saw the students' work in progress while visiting the studios in Rutledge.

"This whole art thing needs to be presented at a human level, and it helps to have an articulate artist, who can speak about their work to a broad audi-

ence," Stanley said. "Otherwise, it'll just sit there or be a painting merely hanging on the wall."

Paul Matheny '96, chief curator of art for the S.C. State Museum in Columbia, knows firsthand how the galleries program can enrich the career development of Winthrop's arts majors. During Matheny's undergraduate studies, he completed Stanley's course in museum and gallery practices, which he credits for igniting his interest in curating art.

"Tom's passion and energy brushes off on students," Matheny said. "When I was at Winthrop, he was bringing in theories and art ideas from all over the world, but it was the local, southern art that inspired me the most. His exhibitions were good for the whole community, not just for students."

But a focus on students is, in fact, a major component of the galleries program. While the Lewandowski Student Gallery in McLaurin is the main venue for student work, the Rutledge Gallery opens its doors to students each spring for the undergraduate juried exhibi-

tion. This year Melissa Post, curator of Charlotte's Mint Museum of Craft + Design, selected 48 student pieces that comprised the 17<sup>th</sup> annual show. A total of \$11,000 was raised in purchase and merit awards, affirming the popularity and value of student work.

Just as Stanley considers the gallery to be a classroom, he sees Winthrop's outdoor spaces as a canvas just waiting for the application of art. The lawns opposite McLaurin and Rutledge function as a primary showcase for displaying sculpture and three-dimensional pieces. Each spring, as a part of students' course work, these public art creations are interwoven among tree branches or painstakingly arranged across a clearing of grass. It's an opportunity that very few universities provide students – to temporarily display their work in such visible locations.

"It's able to happen with the encouragement of Winthrop's administration as well as with energetic and innovative faculty like Shaun Cassidy, head of the sculpture area," Stanley said.

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*Galleries Director Tom Stanley (standing, right) is joined by a few of the folks who are helping change the way art is presented to, and understood by, the campus and external communities—Associate Professor of Sculpture Shaun Cassidy (far left); art history major Cara Bolton (center); and the galleries' graduate assistant, Karen Derksen (far right).*

## Support for Those Who Teach

Faculty equally benefit from the galleries program through participation in the annual Art and Design Faculty Exhibition. Each fall, the work of four artists is highlighted for nine weeks. Class visits and public lectures provide an understanding of the wide-ranging work and the creator's singular vision.

However, none of it can happen without sufficient financial underwrit-

ing to provide for research, travel and material costs. One resource available to assist faculty is the Elizabeth Dunlap Patrick Endowment, established in 1999 by patrons Wayne and Lib Patrick '58. The endowment supports many aspects of the galleries program, among them financial assistance for faculty preparing for the show.

"Growing Winthrop's arts program is a two-fold process," Patrick said. "The faculty needs to be of a certain caliber, with ample time and resources to explore and improve their individual work, and that will attract more talented students."



Bird Series: (Towhee), Marge Moody, Faculty Exhibition



Sweet Dreams, Doug McAbee '94, '03



Camouflage Man and Reflections on the Twentieth Century, John Acorn



Sculptural Basketry, John Skau



Elizabeth Dunlap Patrick '58



Elizabeth Dunlap Patrick Gallery

### 1990

Tom Stanley appointed director of Winthrop Galleries

### 1995

"New South Old South Somewhere In Between" garnered Regional Designation Award in the Arts from the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games Cultural Olympiad



### 1996



Photo courtesy Phil Moody

"Earl Robbins: Catawba Potter"

"Ansel Adams: The Man Who Captured Earth's Beauty"

### 1997-98

Renovation and naming of the Edmund D. Lewandowski Student Gallery, thanks to a \$100,000 endowment by the artist's friends and family



### 1998

"Still Worth Keeping: Communities, Preservation and Self-Taught Artists"



### 1998-99

Renovation and renaming of the Elizabeth Dunlap Patrick Gallery, thanks to a \$250,000 endowment benefiting the art and design program

## Partnerships for Added Value

Whenever possible, Winthrop Galleries collaborates with other arts organizations on high-profile exhibitions. Such was the case with Stanley's 1995 exhibit "New South Old South Somewhere in Between," a provocative body of work revealing artists' impressions of Southern culture and history. For its ability to challenge, celebrate and even provoke the populace, the exhibit was resurrected in 2003 at the Levine Museum of the New South in Charlotte, N.C.

In 2005-06 the galleries will be a major player in a regional project that centers on connections between South Africa and the American South. The

project will rely on art exhibitions, performances and civic dialogue to dispel misinformation and prejudice, while generating discussion on freedom and democracy. Stanley noted that Winthrop Galleries is the only Charlotte-area university program involved, working alongside the Mint Museum of Craft + Design, Afro-American Cultural Center, Levine Museum, Opera Carolina, Charlotte City Partners, and N.C. Blumenthal Performing Arts Center, among others.

The galleries program also reaches out to youth and the community. In 1996, Stanley collaborated with Rock Hill's School District Three on the Earl

Robbins Catawba pottery exhibit, inviting third-graders to view and interact with Robbins' work. More recently, in conjunction with a 2003 exhibit, acclaimed artist Benny Andrews held a day-long workshop for area fifth-graders and their art teachers.

This fall, the galleries will host a display of local photographers' work in a collaborative project with The Herald newspaper entitled "Lives of our Times." The year-long documentary project examines diverse expressions of American identity and public life by chronicling the community's struggles and achievements.

## Assessment for the Galleries' Future

With all that the galleries program undertakes in a given year, it's a wonder that Stanley had time in 2004-05, to work with a self-study team to assess policies and procedures. The handling and care of artwork, arts educational programs, and public access to exhibitions were among those evaluated. The goal was to measure the adequacy of those aspects as well as determine ideal staffing and facilities.

The self-study was a part of the Museum Assessment Program of the American Association of Museums, in con-

sideration of seeking galleries accreditation. The process, Stanley pointed out, has been helpful in determining ways to better care for and share the university, student and archived collections.

With 511 pieces in the active (non-archived) collections, Stanley and graduate assistant Karen Derksen have their hands full, inventorying and accounting for these works. A new project to digitally record each piece will eventually yield a valuable database for managing the collections and for teaching purposes.

## Upcoming Exhibitions

**"One Big Self: Prisoners of Louisiana"**  
Sept. 16 – Oct. 28,  
Patrick Gallery

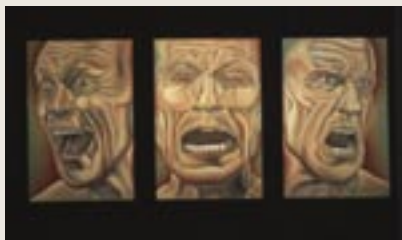
**"Lives of Our Time"**  
Sept. 16 – Oct. 28,  
Rutledge Gallery

**"Photography from  
Mark Hamilton's Classes"**  
Sept. 9 – Oct. 6,  
Lewandowski Student Gallery

For more information on the galleries, contact Stanley at 803/323-2493 or visit:  
[www.winthrop.edu/vpa/galleries/](http://www.winthrop.edu/vpa/galleries/)

### 2000

"Judy Chicago: Trials and Tributes"



### 2003

"Benny Andrews: The Human Spirit Series"



### 2005 (fall)

"One Big Self: Prisoners of Louisiana" by photographer Deborah Luster

"Lives of Our Time," documentary photography project

### 2006 (spring)

"Two Worlds Outside: Nukain Mabusa and Joshua Samuel," "Beautiful Things," and "The Children of Ixopo"

