Securing a Strong Future
For the BGSU School of Art
The Medici Circle

2007

The Medici Circle
1000 Fine Arts Center,
Bowling Green State University,
Bowling Green, Ohio 43403-0204

Non-Profit Organization
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Dear Friends,

Do you remember the first time that you traveled abroad or traveled to a part of the country where people behaved and spoke differently from yourself? I do. I first traveled abroad after college on a road trip with a teaching buddy. That was almost forty years ago. But I can still remember two vivid feelings right before I left: a huge amount of excitement tempered with a small (but never until here admitted) dose of fear. We were to land in France. Would I encounter hostility because I was an American? Would I be able to function in a non-English speaking country? Would I be safe? Intellectually, I knew these fears were likely irrational and the excitement of the coming experience kept the fear in a small, back part of my mind. But, I have to admit to some degree I was scared.

Having now traveled to many foreign countries, I realize two things. My fear was the fear of the unknown. I am a better world citizen having discovered that nearly all human beings in all countries are at their foundation warm, friendly, curious and desirous of a positive relationship with you.

It was these experiences that came to mind during a conversation I had last September (gloriously in Florence, Italy accompanied by several bottles of wine) with Jules Maidoff and Mary Beckinsale, the founders of the Studio Art Centers International (SACI) which is BGSU’s sister art school in Florence. While SACI has a close relationship with BGSU, it has many U.S. affiliates from which to draw students. Given the many relationships that SACI has, I asked Jules and Mary why was the relationship with BGSU so special. There were historical reasons, but they became very animated when speaking about the students that come to them from BGSU. It turns out that most of the students from SACI’s other affiliates have had previous international travel or study experiences. For BGSU students, however, their SACI experience is almost always their first experience abroad. They bring with them that combination of excitement and fear that I first felt forty years ago. Those emotions make them SACI’s most eager and receptive students. The students Jules and Mary love to teach.

I have always been proud that BGSU ranks at the top of schools having the highest number of students who are the first member of their family to attend college. This means that the family has sacrificed greatly just to enable their child to attend. International study is very expensive. These circumstances mean a very small percentage of BGSU art students get a chance to study abroad. There are people who are trying to change that. Most recently Dr. Ramona Cormier gave a challenge grant to the Medici Circle to start a new scholarship fund to send students to SACI and other international study opportunities. To meet the challenge, the Medici Board has decided to include a special invitation to our members to contribute to the fund during our 2008 membership campaign to begin this fall. Events of recent days demonstrate how important it is that BGSU create not only good American citizens, but good World citizens. Helping them to overcome a fear of the unknown is a good start.

Dave Bryan, President, Medici Circle of Friends of the School of Art
Falkenhagen Metals Workshop

In February, Medici Circle helped bring metal artist Diane Falkenhagen to BGSU from her private studio in Texas for a two-day workshop in mixed media for jewelers and metalsmiths. A studio jeweler for 30 years, Falkenhagen is best known for her fabricated, one-of-a-kind jewelry and is exhibited widely with pieces held in numerous private collections. Tom Muir, distinguished professor in metalwork, said the workshop was an overwhelming success with unanticipated discoveries for all participants. The experience opened doorways to integrate alternative materials while pushing the traditional boundaries of the field. Muir thinks it may be the most highly attended workshop ever hosted by the metals program with 25 active participants and many more attending the public lecture. Falkenhagen addressed the development of her visual vocabulary as well as discussed professional possibilities in the metals field.

Fredrik Marsh

Fredrik Marsh, a senior lecturer from Ottenbein College, shared his photographs of landscapes of the Badlands and Dresden as well as his 14 x 17 view camera with students in Dr. Andrew Hershberger’s history of photography class this spring. The Medici Circle also helped fund his well-attended evening presentation of his continuing work in Dresden, Germany.

Sponsored by Medici Circle Grants 2007

Grants for Student Field Trips and Conferences

- Ottawa International Animation Festival - 3 students
- Mid American Print Council Conferences - 2 students
- SOFA - 2 students
- Northern Arizona University Wood Firing Conference - 2 students
- NAEA (Art Education Association) - 7 students
- Southern Graphics Conference - 11 students
- NCECA Conference - 2 students
- Glass Society Conference - 2 students
- SNAG Metals Conference - 3 students
- SACI Travel Grants - 13 students
- 2-D studies field trip Chicago - 30 students
- West Coast field trip - 4 students

Grants for Visiting Lecturers

- Louise Sandhaus - graphic designer
- Mary Flanagan - media artist
- Joan Livingstone - sculptor
- Richard Benson - photographer
- Brian Hock - graphic designer
- Fredrik Marsh - photographer
- Diane Falkenhagen - metal artist
- Scott Short - painter

Above: Fallen Leaf, 2000, fabricated brooch by Diane Falkenhagen.
Right: visiting artist Fredrik Marsh.
Events in the past year demonstrate the wonderful link between the Medici Circle at Bowling Green State University and Studio Art Centers International (SACI) in Florence, Italy. For the past ten years, the Bowling Green School of Art has been sending students to Florence to study art, some sponsored by Medici Circle scholarships. BGSU faculty members such as Janet Ballweg, Heather Elliott-Famularo, Mike Arrigo and Charles Kanwischer have taught at SACI. Last fall, Heather gave a presentation to the Medici Circle Board describing the school and facilities in Florence, relating how Medici Circle scholarships to SACI expand students’ horizons and expose them to an abundance of original art as well as different cultures.

In September the opening of the SACI Faculty Show in the BGSU Willard Wankelman Gallery exhibited the work of 23 artists who are faculty members currently teaching at SACI. Two of those artists, Paul Beel and Dario Arcamone, are graduates of the BGSU School of Art.

Paul Beel in a wonderful example of SACI’s impact on BGSU students. After receiving his BFA degree, Beel studied at SACI and then returned to BGSU for his MFA. After graduation he headed back to Italy as an instructor at SACI and since then his career as a painter has taken off. He has exhibited his drawings and paintings in numerous European and US galleries. The Medici Circle is very proud that Beel was the winner of the 1993 Medici Purchase award for his painting, “Id, Ego and Eternity”, which hangs in the Medici Circle student lounge.

After receiving a Diploma in Sculpture from the Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze, Dario Arcamone came to BGSU for his master’s degree. He taught at BGSU, returned to SACI to teach...
sculpture and has a growing exhibition record at galleries in Italy, Austria, Germany and the US. In 2006 he was seen by millions of US television viewers teaching Katie Couric how to carve in stone on the Ponte Vecchio in Florence. Another point of pride is that in 2003 Dario was awarded First Prize at the Toledo Area Artists, 85th Annual Exhibit at the Toledo Museum of Art.

In parallel with the SACI Faculty Exhibit, Heather Elliott-Famularo, the School of Art SACI Coordinator, led a SACI alumni panel discussion and brought many people involved with SACI to Bowling Green. The Medici Circle hosted a reception in honor of those attending the exhibit and invited Medici Circle members to hear firsthand how their donations allowed students to study in Florence, giving both students and faculty a wider view of the world and bringing international recognition to BGSU. In attendance were BGSU faculty involved in the administration as well as teaching at SACI including Heather, Dr. Allie Terry, and Tom Hilty, a SACI Board of Trustees member. Dr. Allie Terry will be teaching art history and Dennis Wojtkiewicz will be teaching painting this summer at SACI, further strengthening the bond between Bowling Green and Florence.

**SACI - IN THE PRESENCE OF GREATNESS**

**BY BEN MORALES - 2006 LORENZO SCHOLARSHIP WINNER**

Needless to say, my experience in Italy was a positive one. Never before have I seen a culture so immersed in beauty. No description can do it justice, but for a student (or anyone) it is the ideal environment to nourish one’s skills and gather inspiration. There’s a feeling that some of us get when in the presence of greatness: in quiet awe the heart skips a beat and suddenly you’re alone with that work of art (even with a room crowded with tourists). In Italy, that feeling is very easy to come by. Around almost every corner you can find something to admire, whether it’s a building or a da Vinci exhibit. It enriches the human spirit to be among such wonders, to walk where the Romans walked, and gain new perspectives that will leave you forever changed.
Special events organized by the Medici Circle provided yet more opportunity for members and friends to meet and celebrate the artistry of students and faculty.

- In December 2006 Medici Circle and Pro Musica members interacted with faculty and students at a special reception during the annual Arts Extravaganza, this year including performances by the Department of Theatre and Film, as well as the College of Musical Arts, and the Creative Writing and Dance programs.

- The 27th Annual Primavera Gala in March was a wonderful success, with more than sixty members, faculty, students and friends attending. At the Gala ten student scholarship recipients were honored, and two new scholarship initiatives celebrated. Members welcomed the first recipient of the Robert ‘Bud’ Hurlstone scholarship, launched in 2006 by a lead gift from Dr. Ramona Cormier, and applauded the new challenge grant from Dr. Cormier to support student travel to SACI. Members, and especially students, were thrilled to hear that the first thirteen SACI scholarship recipients would be traveling already in summer 2007. Dr. Cormier herself was also honored at the Gala as the Medici Circle’s 2007 ‘Il Magnifico’ awardee, in recognition of her outstanding service to the School of Art. Afterwards one participant was heard to remark that the Gala was ‘the best dinner in the BGSU year’.

From the top:
Leigh Ann Wheeler and Ramona Cormier at the Primavera; Primavera Gala decorations; Sharon Gargas and Tim Smith welcome members to the art show preview.

Facing page:
Koneta Hurlstone with Kristine Rumman, Robert ‘Bud’ Hurlstone Scholarship recipient; Brittany Laughlin, Cole Scholarship awardee; Justin Delli Bovi, Singleton/Medici Circle Graduate Leadership awardee.
The winning artwork chosen for the 2007 Medici Circle Purchase Award was “John”, oil on panel, by Frank Oriti from Parma, Ohio. Frank graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in two-dimensional studies in December 2006. Many of his subjects are friends (in this case roommate and fellow art student John Hierholzer). Frank used photographs of the figures and has been fascinated by the loneliness the black and white paint brings to the image.
The Medici Purchase Award honors an outstanding student creation. Not only does the award provide much needed scholarship support; it creates momentum for launching a student’s successful career in the arts. Here is an update on two previous award winners.

**JUDI WARREN BLAYDON - ’84**

After receiving a BS from Eastern Michigan University, Judi Warren Blaydon came to BGSU to pursue a master of fine arts degree, which she received in 1986. In 1984, Judi’s hand-cast paper piece, “Heart-warming”, was selected as the Medici Circle Purchase winner. Since 1986, Judi has lectured and taught Design and Color workshops for quiltmakers in Switzerland, Canada, Japan and the US. Her work is in public and private collections in the US, Japan and Australia and her pieces have been published in “88 Leaders in the Quilt World Today”, “The Art Quilt” and in “Uncommon Threads/Ohio’s Art Quilt Revolution”. A collection of Judi’s work was shown at the New England Quilt Museum in Lowell, MA and her quilt, “The Mountain and the Magic: Night Lights”, was purchased for the permanent collection of The Museum of the American Quilter’s Society.

**AARON HALIFAX - ’00**

A talent for drawing and a focus in computer art led Aaron Halifax to come to BGSU’s School of Art in 1998. His computer print, “Untitled”, won the 2000 Medici Purchase award. Graduating with a bachelor’s degree in fine art, Aaron taught classes at BGSU in advanced character animation and 3D modeling. He completed his master of fine arts degree in digital arts in 2003. Aaron’s career as an animator began at Blue Sky Studios in White Plains, New York where he contributed to well-known animated films Robots and Ice Age 2. He has recently moved across country to work in Washington state. There he is an animator at Valve Software, creator of the popular PC series, Half-Life. Besides recalling the great facilities at BGSU, Aaron remembers “the instructors were always very supportive, enthusiastic and interested in what I wanted to do and how I planned on doing it”. He finds it rewarding to maintain communication with current digital arts students, to offer critiques, suggestions and other tips to “help them get a foot in the door” as others had helped him.

Building an amazing collection of student artwork since 1982, the Medici Circle Purchase collection now has more than 100 pieces of art that are currently being photographed, inventoried and catalogued. It is the only student artwork collection at BGSU. Many School of Art alumni list a purchase award as their first piece in a collection. The variety of artwork from sculpture to painting, digital print to textile makes this collection a diverse cross section of the talents of the BGSU art students through the years. According to gallery director Jacqui Nathan, currently 37 pieces are on loan at BGSU located in various sites on campus such as the office of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Chemistry Department and the President’s suite. Many faculty and staff as well as students have a chance to view and appreciate artwork by BGSU art students. Two pieces from the collection were selected last year for display in the university President’s residence. Other pieces are displayed in the Medici Circle student lounge in the art building. The Medici Circle Board is considering an exhibition of the works from the collection in the School of Art gallery in the future.