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As Time Goes By

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EMORY COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES



If These Walls Could Talk

by Hal Jacobs

When it was time for Randy Fullerton, a lecturer in the theater studies department, to choose artwork for Emory College's newest building, Psychology and Interdisciplinary Sciences (PAIS), two factors weighed heavily on him.

One, the facility was designed to foster collaboration among psychologists and other scholars at the University (see *Quadrangle* Fall 2007, p. 14: college.emory.edu/alumni/quad/archives/Q07F/Q07F.pdf). Two, the economic downturn left him with only a fraction of the original budget to work with.

That's when it dawned on him. What if the artwork itself contributed to interdisciplinary approaches and connections among faculty and students?

"Because there's such a vast array of talent on the Emory campus," says Fullerton, also general manager of the Center for Creativity & Arts, "the psychology faculty thought it would be a great idea to showcase the work of creative individuals in departments and disciplines throughout Emory."

To find a dynamic piece that would adorn the high-ceilinged lobby in the north end of the building, he commissioned Sara Ward, a scenic artist and scenic designer in theater studies/Theater Emory.

Ward says she approached the space by considering its uses as a student lounge, study area, and place to network. This led her to think about ideas of "connection" and "absorption of knowledge." The result is a symphony of textures and layers, with a streak of green and faded cream orange suggesting motion. The piece infuses the open space with a sense of energy and purpose, even the sense of theatricality one might expect from a set designer.

Fullerton turned to faculty in biology and chemistry for other sources of inspiration.

Biologist Leslie Real, Asa G. Candler Professor, learned his way around a darkroom at the age of twelve. In graduate school he was able to pursue his interest in drawing and painting despite

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the concerns of faculty mentors who wanted him to focus solely on science. He sees photography as “just another way of exploring the natural world.” His prints in the PAIS building reflect his attention to the color, texture and form of landscapes. (Some of his work can be seen at larealphotography.com.)

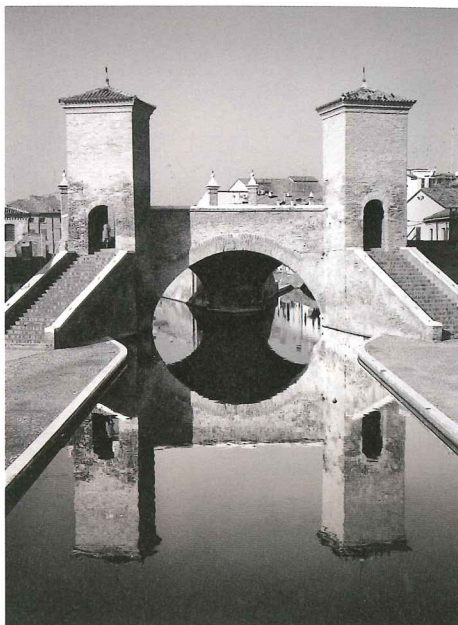
Chemist David Goldsmith received the College’s 2009 Distinguished Faculty Emeritus Award; he also received space on several walls for his striking photographs. From 1963 to 2002, he carried on an extensive research program in organic chemistry while also keeping up an active interest in photography. His prints have been shown in exhibitions at the galleries of the Atlanta Photographers Group, the Alliance Française and the Unitarian church; he’s also shared his talents in photography-related courses at Emory’s Center for Lifelong Learning.

Psychology is represented on the walls of the PAIS building by associate professor Stephan Hamann. More than 30,000 years ago, cave painters adorned their walls with drawings of wild animals. Hamann prefers to work with images from research and neuroimaging (the modern equivalent of stalking wild creatures?). While his research and teaching focus on the study of memory and emotion using neuroimaging and other approaches, turning his research into art is a fairly recent phenomenon for him.

For the PAIS building he created several pieces: one takes a “Warholesque” look at brain scans, and another involves a photomosaic composed of about 160 small images culled from the web pages of faculty and graduate students—and many hours of Photoshopping. The image is adapted from one of those old phrenology busts (sketching areas on the skull from which to read personality, intellect, etc.). Hamann has received “very gratifying” feedback from his colleagues, he says; his next opus is yet to be determined.

In addition to the building’s artwork, there are other design elements in the building to stimulate the senses. The wood-veneered panels on the second floor are an example from quarter-sawn eucalyptus logs (hence the striking pattern in the grain). Throughout the building, white gypsum panels give the walls a fluid, dynamic quality.

If these walls could talk, what would they say? Fullerton believes it might be something like, “Enjoy. Now go out and do something creative.” ∞



Opposite page: Stephan Hamann. Left: Leslie Real.
Above: David Goldsmith. Below: Sara Ward.

