

Art exhibits limited by funding

by Ann Ramsbottom
Battalion staff

Although it is said that art cannot be separated from life, it has been a Texas A&M tradition to separate art from life. University — a tradition some are trying hard to overcome.

"Texas A&M is incredibly deficient in the arts," says Joe Arredondo, coordinator of the University Art Exhibits, "and if it weren't for Stark's efforts to bring art to the campus, there would be no art at all."

J. Wayne Stark, special assistant to the president for cultural development, has been at the University since 1950. It only has been in these last 33 years that any effort has gone into a University art program. And even these efforts have been met with frustrating results.

The University Art Exhibits traditionally have been funded by the MSC bookstore. The Art Exhibits, located in the office of cultural development, currently receives its funding through student service fees.

"This year we were cut by one-third of our normal funds," Arredondo says. "That leaves us \$30,000 short this season."

The reduction was a result of a misunderstanding in which it was thought that fewer funds were needed because of plans to eventually build a University visual arts center, Arredondo says. But the plans are for 10 years in the future. Meanwhile, the program suffers.

Arredondo, a former graduate student in landscape architecture and a former member of the MSC arts committee,

ran the arts committee gallery as a student a few years ago.

The University Art Exhibits is not associated with the arts committee, but occasionally the two groups co-sponsor a show held in the arts committee gallery. Most of the University art exhibits are displayed in the Rudder exhibit hall.

"We coordinate large budget exhibitions which are held in the exhibit hall as well as other locations on campus," Arredondo says.

The Art Exhibit's latest show, which ended Sept. 26, was displayed in the medical science building. The exhibit, sponsored by the Blaffer Foundation of Houston, included 12 European Old Master paintings. The Blaffer foundation is made up of art purchased to be circulated at

minimal cost throughout the state of Texas.

The Blaffer Foundation is funded by an anonymous woman who "wanted art to be circulated in places it wouldn't otherwise be seen."

The University Art Exhibits sponsors two to five exhibits each year. The number of exhibits and type of exhibit is largely dependent on funds. Advertising, brochuring, transportation and security, as well as the actual cost of the exhibit can run into a lot of money.

The University Art Exhibits runs a risk every time they book a show. Since most exhibits are reserved one to two years in advance, they can only hope they'll have the funds to finance the exhibit one or two years later when they are scheduled for

exhibition.

Insurance risks often run high and security in the Rudder Exhibit Hall is especially poor. Guards must be on duty throughout the exhibit.

Besides the risks once the exhibit arrives, transporting the art may be risky. Transportation involves a good days work for several people. All art must be specially wrapped and sometimes custom boxed to insure that it won't be damaged.

Another big expense is brochures. Since art often means little or nothing by itself, biographical sketches must accompany the exhibit, Arredondo says.

As far as exhibit selection,

(see EXHIBIT, page 11)

Group integrates a variety of arts

by Connie Hutterer
Battalion reporter

Whether your artistic interests include opera, historic architecture or weaving tweeds, the Arts Council of the Brazos Valley has something for you.

A non-profit organization which coordinates and funds arts groups in the area, the council was formed in 1970 to integrate a variety of arts organizations, with the conviction that "union gives strength."

The council has 14 member groups which range from the Brazos Valley Embroider's Guild to the MSC Opera and Performing Arts Society, from KAMU-TV and FM stations to the Brazos Valley Museum.

"We serve the whole community," says council director Bonnie Yarborough, "if they

want to participate."

The council acts as spokesman for all the arts in the Brazos Valley. It aids, advises and correlates the activities of its members with such services as grants to member groups, a technical library and a ticket outlet for arts groups.

Council grants provide funds for a variety of events such as school poetry contests, a weaving workshop, free summer jazz concerts in Central Park and children's drama classes.

The magazine, Pulse, informs members of current and planned events. This month's projects include a Friends of Bryan Library exhibit titled "The Making of a Book," Texas Opera Theater performances of "Is It Broadway or Is It Opera?" at local schools and the StageCenter

play "Sly Fox" which opened Sept. 29.

Future plans include an Oct. 8 to Oct. 9 twill workshop sponsored by the Brazos Spinners and Weavers Guild, the Music Teachers Association's student recital on Oct. 22 and the Community Singers' "Choral Tapes-try" on Oct. 28.

The council is funded by member dues and donations, by a percentage of funds from the local hotel-motel tax and by other city and county funds which are matched by grants from the Texas Commission on the Arts.

Council staff member Lee Schink says each spring a special grants committee of council members and community appointees evaluates member organizations' requests for

funds. It awards the grants for specific projects that will expand arts audiences and upgrade the artistic quality of a group's programming, she says.

According to Pulse magazine, this year's grants include \$75 for school poetry contests, \$200 for a Heritage Park design competition sponsored by Citizens for Historic Preservation and \$4,539 for KAMU-TV's filming of a community theater production.

For more than 10 years the council has sponsored annual Youth Symphony Concerts for 6,000 Brazos Valley students and has co-sponsored a Youth Art Show with the Bryan-College Station Eagle. The council works with many community groups such as RSVP (the Retired Senior Citizens Volunteer Program) to promote and publi-

cize art-oriented workshops and programs.

The council has more than 250 members, both individuals and business contributors. It is governed by a 14-member board of directors and is guided by six or more committees which meet monthly to discuss and plan projects.

Each of the 14 arts groups served by the council has a representative on the arts advisory panel, Yarborough says. The arts panel meets every two months with a public advisory panel of local government and community leaders to discuss local problems and needs, she says.

Council membership is open to anyone, and interested persons may contact the council office in the Brazos Center.

Group solves miseries, plays classical music

by Louis Hilgartner
Battalion reporter

If country music makes you cringe, if rock and roll makes your ears bleed and if jazz just puts you to sleep, the Classical Musician's Guild may be the answer to your musical miseries.

Dr. Joe Ham, guild faculty adviser and classical pianist, says the group first was organized in 1978 as a piano club aimed at giving students the opportunity to get together and play classical music. The club has expanded to include a variety of instruments, such as violins and cellos.

One problem pianists have, Ham says, is the fact that it takes a lot of practice time to be good.

A classical pianist himself, Ham explained that as you get older, it becomes more difficult to find time to practice. This leads to a loss of skill. A vicious circle begins, since the more dis-

couraged you get, the less you practice. The less you practice, the worse you sound.

"This is sad," Ham says, "because music should be fun."

Having fun is the main idea in the guild. Meetings are informal, and business items are kept to a minimum.

"Our dues are small, and we only collect them when we need the money," he says, "and if we spend too much time on business items, we don't have as much time to play."

Because Texas A&M has few music classes and no programs to train students to become professional musicians, the club is one of the few outlets classical musicians have for their talents.

The best way musicians have to maintain their interests, Ham says, is for groups of people to play. This makes the atmosphere more relaxed, and encourages the players to set goals for themselves.

The club is small, and relies mostly on word of mouth to inform the public, although anyone with an interest in playing classical music is welcome.

"We had a table at (MSC All University) Open House," Ham says, "and sometimes we find people playing in the lounge or practice rooms in the MSC."

So far, the biggest accomplishment of the guild has been its growth, and ability to stand the test of time.

"We had one of those semesters when all the officers either graduated, quit school or flunked out," Ham recalls. Interest died down, but has recently picked back up with the addition of new members this fall.

The guild has sponsored concerts and recitals for amateur pianists to get exposure to larger audiences before trying to turn professional. It is working on a possible concert in Rudder Forum in the spring.

✦ MSC Craft Center

FALL CRAFT FESTIVAL

Quality handcrafted items at prices you can afford...

October 4 & 5, 9:00 - 5:00
RUDDER FOUNTAIN MALL



Pottery
Stained Glass
Jewelry
Weaving
Woodworking
Photography
...and more!

For more information
call 845-1631