

# State of the Arts

by Lydia Berzsenyi

Texas A&M University has often been referred to as a cultural wasteland, devoid of any semblance of sophistication or elegance. Originally founded as an Agricultural and Mechanical University, its name does not evoke an image of high cultural standing.

However, culture, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. The school and the surrounding Brazos Valley community are becoming more and more aware of the need for culture and are making positive steps toward becoming a more cultured society.

One of the major reasons for A&M's poor cultural image is the lack of a fine arts department. Because of the original role of the University, A&M is without such a department. This void causes culture-minded people to look

down on Texas A&M. Anyone planning a future in the field of fine arts certainly does not hold A&M at the top of their list of university choices.

In comparison with other schools of similar size and standing, A&M is virtually alone in its lack of studies in the fine arts. In fact, Joe Hutchinson, a professor with the College of Architecture and Environmental Design, says that of all the major institutions in the United States, A&M is one of only 10 without a fine arts department.

Why does A&M appear to have no interest in artistic matters? Economic pressures play a large role, of course. Any major change in a university's structure requires financial assistance. An arts department would require a headquarters, administrators and secretaries, and a countless number of new



Special Assistant to the President for Cultural Affairs J. Wayne Stark sits amidst his cultural collectibles.