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— TONY ESPRITTI
Omega Psi Phi president

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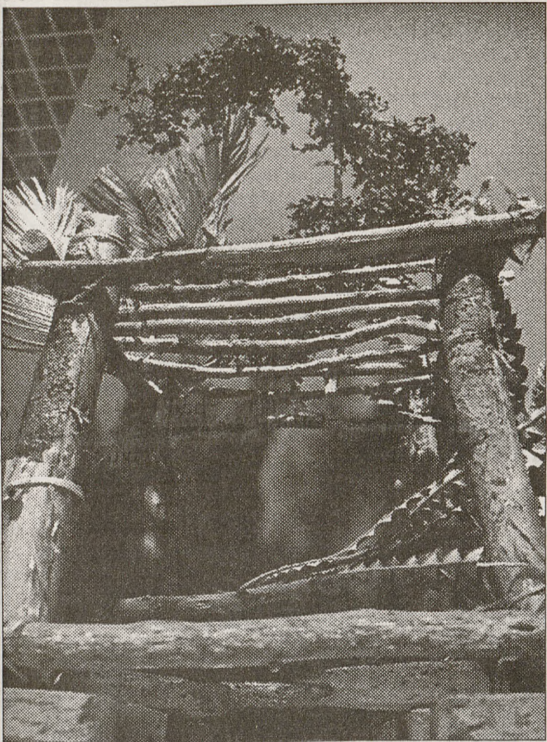
TUESDAY
April 30, 1996

Perspective '96 exhibits floral interpretations of art

By Kristina Buffin
THE BATTALION

Art is meant to be interpreted for the viewer, but The Office of University of Art Collections and Exhibition's "Perspective '96" exhibits work students have interpreted at the J. Wayne Stark University Center Galleries until June 6.

"Perspective '96" began in 1989 as a project in the Horticulture 453 floral art class. Students are required to take a piece of art in the



Dave House, THE BATTALION

Students used floral materials in Perspective '96.

A&M collections and interpret it through the use of floral arrangements.

Jim Johnson, a senior lecturer in the horticulture science department and director of the Benz School of Floral Design, said this project is one of the best ways to open students' minds.

"One of the best ways to open students' minds is to look at other art forms," Johnson said. "In the beginnings of the classes, I would take students to museums in Houston, and I saw this project as the next logical step."

"One of the best ways to open student's minds is to look at other art forms."

— JIM JOHNSON
director, Benz School of Floral Design

At first, the class was created for horticulture students, but Johnson said students with a wide variety of majors sign up for the class.

"Students of other majors are not preconditioned to think a certain way about art," Johnson said. "They are open to concepts, and I personally like having a mixture of people. It is more interesting to me. It allows people to see more different things."

This year's exhibit features 21 pieces from 25 students. The only requirement the students meet is that their interpretation must include natural flowers.

In the exhibit, students have used other objects ranging from steel pieces to driftwood to a propeller piece.

Catherine Hastedt, the curator of the Stark Gallery, said this show is one of the gallery's most popular.

She said one of the reasons students sign up for this project is because it provides an opportunity for them to express themselves.

"Students' ideas are not always what you might expect," Hastedt said. "The best work is the interpretation you would not expect. Some of the interpretation comes from personal background, and each student has to write a paragraph explaining their interpretation. We have a lot of talented students at A&M."

Johnson said the show has gone extremely well, and as students develop more points of reference in their lives, the more adept they will be in their interpretation.

"Sometimes in the beginning, students get excited, nervous and unsure," Johnson said. "But our goal is to help students establish a thinking process, and I've never heard a student complain."

"Many students pull from their past experiences and say 'this reminds me of this.'"

Johnson said the best part of the project and being able to display their results is that it teaches students problem-solving skills.

"Coming up with art interpretation is like finding a solution," he said. "Anyone with the courage to find a solution to a problem should be interested. The best part is the problem-solving skills."



Dave House, THE BATTALION

Students interpreted artwork that had an impact on them in Perspective '96.

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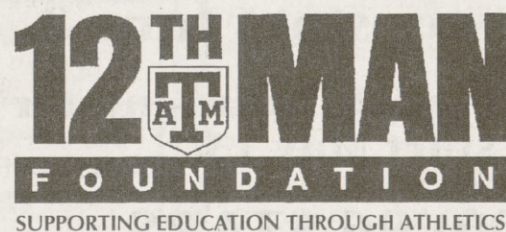
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