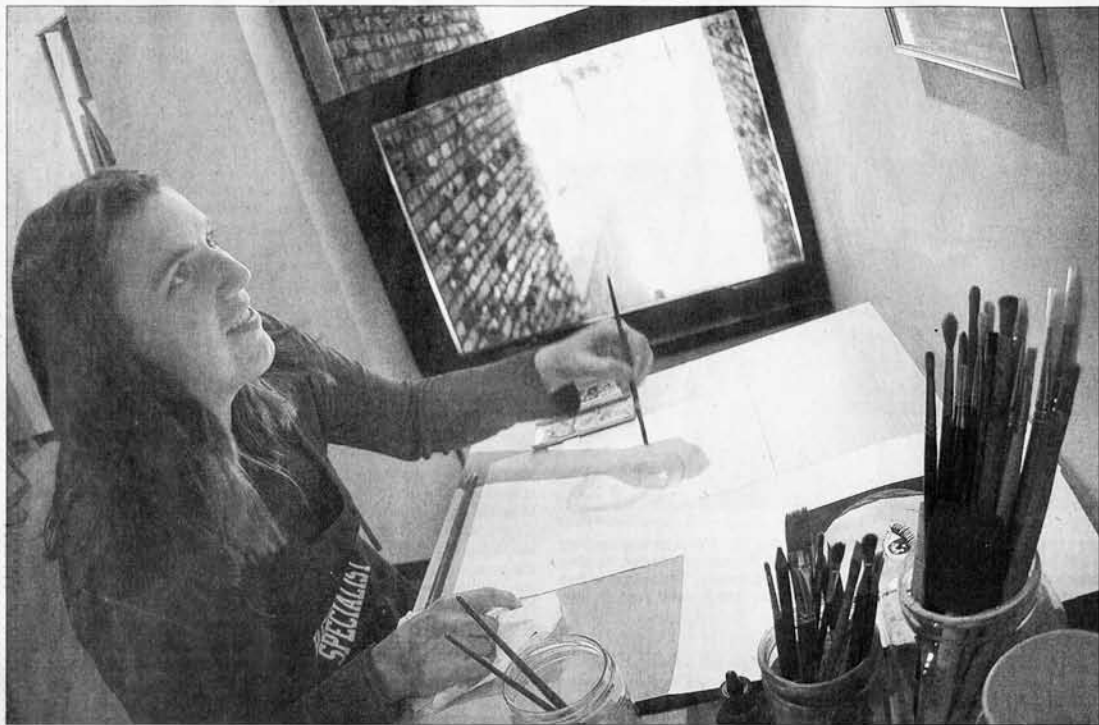


Living & Leisure



Photos by Joe McIntyre/staff photographer

Joanna Spitzner works on a watercolor reproduction of a work by French surrealist Rene Magritte as part of an exhibition at the Dowd Fine Arts Gallery at SUNY Cortland. Spitzner's "Collection-Exchange" invites viewers to exchange a piece of their own collection for a copy of a work in the gallery's collection.

Viewer gets to choose the art work

By KATIE HALL

Living and Leisure Editor

Andrew Mount said it's a common cliché — how people need art work in their lives.

But he decided to flip-flop that idea for the next Dowd Fine Arts Gallery Show, by inviting the public to choose what it will see on exhibit at the SUNY Cortland college.

"The show will be empty at first ... it's quite literally chosen by the public," Mount, the gallery director said.

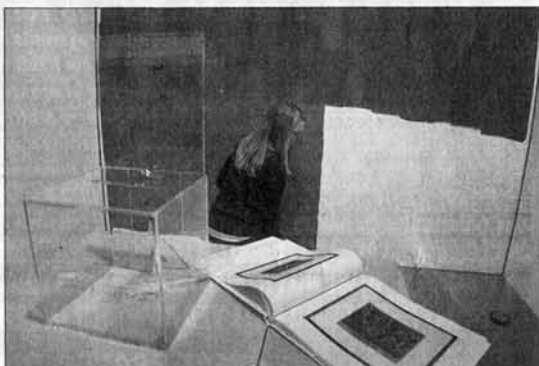
He pointed to a white wall, lined with an empty shelf, waiting for people to fill it up through the summer months.

"Because I am new here, I wanted to do something with the collection," said Mount, who started at the gallery in the last year. "I wanted to reach out to the public of Cortland," he said. "Rather than go downstairs and curate a show, which I could do, I wanted this show to be interactive. I wanted it to need the public."

"Collexhibition," which opens Tuesday with a special reception from 4 to 6:30 p.m., has two parts to it. Cornell University photographer Greg Halpern has created a picture book of pieces in the Dowd Fine Arts Collection, which houses over 500 works in its space. People can come to the gallery and sit at a table and look through the book, which contains paintings, prints, etchings, photography and drawings. Ballots will be available and people can select the work they'd like to see. A couple times a day, a staffer will take out requests and retrieve the work for viewing.

"Over time, the shelf will get busier and busier," Mount said.

Pieces will be moved to the wall in the main gallery as time goes on and more requests come in. "Greg's part of the piece is called open curating," he said.



Gallery assistant Tara Evans prepares for the opening of an art exhibit at SUNY Cortland's Dowd Gallery. "Open Curating" by artist Greg Halpern, will allow the Cortland community to cast a ballot for the work they would like to see on gallery walls from the Dowd Gallery's own collection.

Halpern's book has 180 pages with 300 or more pictures. "Approximately half of the collection is represented in the book," Mount said.

Some are manageable at say two feet by three feet, but others are large. "This piece is seven feet wide," he said, pointing to an abstract painting.

"Part of the beauty of the thing is that it involves the general public ... We are hoping that the public will come back and look at it," he said.

All gallery events are free and open to all. Summer hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays or by appointment. People can call (607) 753-4216 for more information.

The second part of the exhibit will be a "Collection Exchange," featuring the work of Syracuse University art teacher Joanna Spitzner.

Spitzner will be making reproductions of works she has selected from the Dowd Fine Arts collection. People can access a Web site to view the works. They can order a copy,

which Spitzner will hand paint, hand draw, or make a high quality photo copy of and give to the person. In exchange, people will donate what they consider art to the Dowd Fine Arts collection.

"New acquisitions will be on display during the show," Mount said.

A special exchange auction, where people will bring in their art works in exchange for the Spitzner copy, will take place 1 to 4 p.m. July 19. Spitzner will be there and possibly Halpern, for a special reception.

People can visit www.collection-exchange.com, to see what Spitzner has selected. Orders are ongoing until the end of the show, which runs until Aug. 22.

"I am doing it because I am interested in the exchange that people will be making," she said. Plus she will get to meet the people donating work and obtaining her copies.

"Right now I have 40 pieces," Spitzner said of the pieces offered to the public. She plans to add to the

selection, which right now includes a 1937 oil by Nicola Annunziata, which is a copy of Duplessis' "Benjamin Franklin," and a 1937 Eugene LaForet oil of a copy of Mary Cassatt's "Mother and Child." Former art professor's George Dugan's "Self Portrait" oil is included, as well as current professor, Charles Heasley's, 1977 lithograph, "Holy Moly Chairman Mao."

"Some of them are pieces I just like, others just because there is some kind of connection the artist has to the area. Some are random. Part of it for me is getting to know the collection," Spitzner said.

"What I was struck by was, it seemed to be made of the people's involvement with this place. A lot of work is donated, maybe 40 percent donated, and then there's a lot of really well known artists, but as prints or lithographs."

Spitzner wants to see her work get out of the shelves and into people's homes. She said the artwork she's looking for in exchange is "anything."

"That's kind of the interesting thing. We will get all kinds of definitions of art."

Some works will be more sentimental in value, she said. And she was reluctant to put a dollar figure on the value of works in the collection or works sought for donation. She has started the project with \$500 worth of supplies and her time.

"The value for me — a lot of my other work is conceptual, a lot of it is about ideas. A lot of it, I am not making traditional art work. It's sort of nice for me to return to this."

Plus artists traditionally learn their craft by copying masters, she added.

"I am hoping the public will start to feel invested in this gallery, in this artwork itself," Mount said. "I am really excited about it. I hope it turns out well."