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OU art grads' work displayed in Lansing

By **Rebecca Wyatt Thomas**, OU Web Writer

Artwork by recent OU grads Nicole Vinegar and Chris Ames is getting quite a bit of exposure. A painting by Vinegar and a drawing by Ames were selected to be displayed in the Senate Farnum Office Building and the Anderson House Office Building in Lansing, Mich. as part of the Art in the Senate and Art in the House Program.

The art program features the artwork of students from Michigan's 15 public universities. The artwork was placed in October and will remain in Lansing for one year.

Vinegar and Ames are both December 2007 graduates. Art and Art History Director Andrea Eis selected their artwork to represent Oakland University.

Vinegar's 3-foot-by-4-foot oil painting is a contemporary piece that looks at the retail shopping environment.

"I work in retail and I wanted to portray the interaction between the retail employees and the guests in the store," Vinegar said. The painting on display in Lansing is the middle portion of a three-section painting that Vinegar created for her senior thesis. "I didn't think this painting would be displayed anywhere but my senior thesis. I wanted it to be viewed by the public just to see what their reactions would be and to see how they relate to the piece."

Vinegar's piece is on display on the second floor of the Senate building and is visible to those exiting the elevator at that floor or using the floor's copy machine.

Ames' piece is a 3-foot-by-3-foot drawing made of charcoal and graphite. It's a self-portrait representing issues Ames has dealt with in his personal life. Ames created the work about a year ago and it was purchased by an English professor at OU. Eis suggested Ames use that work for the Lansing display and helped him borrow it from the professor.

"I was so excited to find out it would be on display in Lansing. Out of so many really talented art students at Oakland, I was honored to be chosen as one of the students selected to represent OU and the art department," Ames said.

Ames' piece is on floor 13 of the Anderson House office building.

Both Vinegar and Ames have been interested in art for many years.

"When I was 10 years old, I drew a picture of the Little Mermaid freehand, without tracing, and I realized I had a talent," Vinegar said. She decided to major in studio art at Oakland since it had been part of her life for so long. "I like the idea of making something from scratch and making it your own."

As a recent grad, Vinegar is looking into many options for her future. She's pursuing a career as a Disney artist or getting into concept art in advertising. Right now, she's doing projects for friends and church members.

Ames has been drawing since he can remember, but he only had one art class in junior high school before coming to OU. Art was something he always considered a hobby until he got into college. Ames plans to move to New York in July to pursue a career in music. Art is still a passion for him but he doesn't like to do too much of it.

Once the display is over in Lansing, Ames' work will be returned to him and Vinegar will look to have her piece displayed in a gallery.



OU alumna Nicole Vinegar's painting is one of two pieces representing Oakland in Lansing.

SUMMARY

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