A True Impact: Celebrating the Stamelos Legacy

The UM-Dearborn Art Collections and Exhibitions Department is proud to present “A True Impact: Celebrating the Stamelos Legacy” in the Alfred Berkelwitz Gallery from Sept. 18, 2015, to Jan. 15, 2016.

This exhibition honors the significant contributions to the university by William and Electra Stamelos over the last thirty-five years. Electra Stamelos (1927-2008) was a beloved UM-Dearborn art professor from 1980 to 1994 and an accomplished artist. She held the position of director of Art Acquisitions and Exhibitions for UM-Dearborn for many years and also taught on the Ann Arbor campus. Bill is a longtime generous donor and gallery volunteer, who acted as honorary curator for a period of time. Electra and Bill contributed greatly to the university’s art collection for decades, including donating the majority of Electra’s body of work and many other art pieces that they collected throughout their years together.

Bill, a native Detroiter, met Electra while he was stationed in Virginia with the Army. They were married in 1953 and moved to the Detroit area soon after. Electra earned her B.F.A. from Wayne State University and her M.F.A. from Eastern Michigan University. She also studied at the Corcoran Museum School and the National Art School in Washington D.C., and the Center for Creative Studies in Detroit.

Devoted to her UM-Dearborn students, Electra spent many late evenings on campus mentoring them. She also worked tirelessly coordinating gallery exhibitions and receptions, and developing the university’s remarkable art collection. Electra organized monthly art critiques with her artist colleagues in the community and was heavily involved with many regional arts organizations. Bill had a long career with Packard and Ford, and nurtured his own artistic talent in photography. He says his passion for art is “because of Electra.”

Electra was highly allergic to oil paint and used only acrylic and watercolor. She preferred to paint only during nighttime hours. Deriving inspiration mostly from the natural world, she planted and took care of a glorious garden that Bill photographed. His light-filled images

“San Ildefonso Sky” by Colin Poole
Oil on board
Gift of William and Electra Stamelos

“FS #196 Variations on Green Pea Pods” by Electra Stamelos, watercolor,
Gift of William and Electra Stamelos
As a newly graduated Art History major from the University of Michigan-Dearborn, I have had the privilege of interning at the Alfred Berkowitz Gallery in the Art Collections and Exhibitions department in the Mardigian Library. I always thought a curator’s position consisted of seeking out up-and-coming artists, planning the next big exhibition, and hosting fabulous opening night receptions. While a curator’s position does include all of the above, I now realize that is only a fraction of what a curator is actually responsible for.

After interning at the Berkowitz Gallery, I now have a strong understanding of curatorial work and the duties associated with the running of a gallery. In my mentorship, I have worked under the university’s Art Curator and Gallery Manager Laura Cotton “my mentor,” and Exhibition Coordinator and Registrar Tim Ammons. Being able to work alongside both staff members has given me experience in both roles and helped me narrow down which career path I prefer for my future.

From the beginning, I have felt included in all aspects of my mentor’s job. From being included on e-mail correspondence regarding upcoming exhibitions, accompanying her on visits to institutions, sitting in on meetings, and interacting with donors and artists, I now see the full picture of a curator’s position. This has, in turn, given me a greater understanding and appreciation for all the hard work that is put into running a gallery efficiently and successfully while managing the care and display of a collection of 3,500 artworks.

During my time with the department I was given hands-on experience installing exhibitions and working with the collection. I learned the correct procedures and practices for handling objects, cataloging, inventoring, and exhibition development. Learning these best practices is extremely beneficial to my future in museum or gallery work, and is a valuable asset I would not possess without my internship.

I was also given responsibilities in public relations and media outreach. Each of my tasks gave me relevant exposure to the behind-the-scenes aspects of what goes into taking care of a collection and developing exhibitions. My favorite
Do you enjoy talking about the books you are reading with others? Join our R.E.A.D. (Read, Eat, and Discuss) book club!

We have a small, but dedicated, group of campus and community readers who come together five times a year to discuss books. The group meets in the library from noon until 1 p.m. Each summer the group selects five titles to discuss at meetings from September through June. For 2015-16, we are reading “Etched in Sand” by Regina Calcaterra, “The Teacher Wars” by Dana Goldstein, “All the Light We Cannot See” by Anthony Doerr, “Great Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe,” and “The Girl on the Train” by Paula Hawkins.

If you would like to be added to the book club’s e-mail group, contact Barbara Kriigel at bkriigel@umich.edu or 313-593-5614. More information about the book club can be found at the library’s website: library.umd.umich.edu. Click “More News” and select the category “Book Club.”

Light refreshments are provided. We hope you will join us!
The Mardigian Library awarded two scholarships to library student assistants for the 2015-2016 school year. Student assistants are selected by the Scholarship Committee based on their dedication, hard work, and academic endeavors. This year the committee selected Angelina Camilleri and Andrea Painter because they best represent the commitment of our student employees.

Angelina (circulation, technical services) is currently pursuing degrees in both Anthropology and Art History. She recently returned from an amazing experience at a field school in Malta and hopes to build on that experience by pursuing a career in academia. “Field school has shown me that I want to learn as much as I can by studying around the world. This scholarship will give me the opportunity to save more for graduate school.”

Andrea (research, circulation) is majoring in Human Resources Management as part of her Bachelor of Business Administration. Through her internship with Flextronics this summer, Andrea gained valuable experience working in Human Resources for the automotive industry. The library scholarship allows students like Andrea to focus more on their career goals, and less on how to pay for school. “I pay for my own tuition, which can be a heavy burden at times. I’m very grateful for the generosity of donors.”

For every one of our student assistants, financial assistance can make a huge impact on what they can achieve. Please join us in raising scholarship funds for current and future student assistants who exemplify outstanding service and commitment to our student body. Donors to this fund will be honoring the incredible service provided by our student assistants, helping them fulfill their dreams of becoming successful UM-Dearborn alumni. If you are interested in supporting the Mardigian Library Student Assistant Scholarship Fund, please visit the Library Giving Page http://library.umd.umich.edu/Us/give.php or contact Sue Flannery at sasbury@umich.edu or 313-593-5236.