

“Interdependence” Tree to be Shown at Panoply

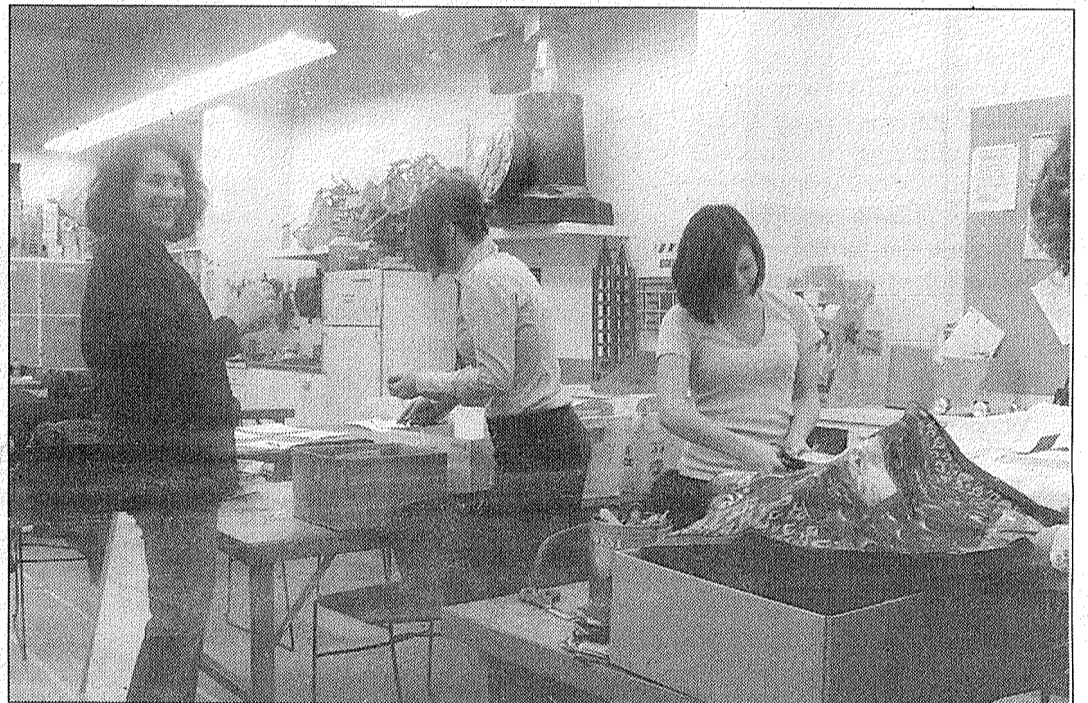
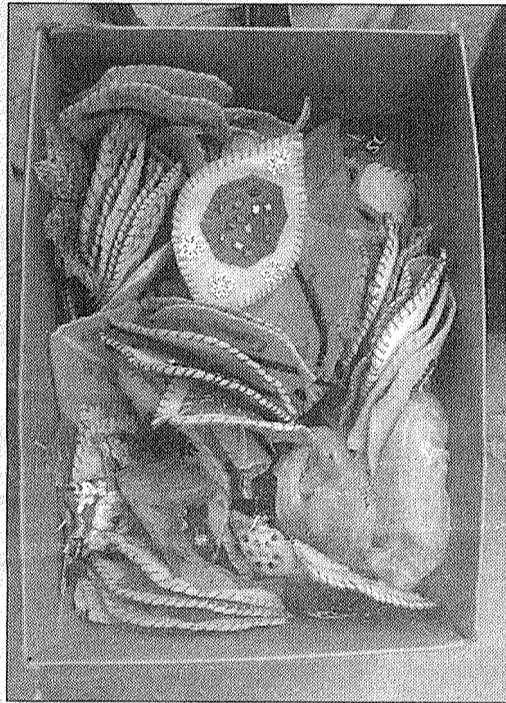
ABIGAIL BROWN
Senior Arts & Leisure Writer

Last semester, visiting art professor Jennifer Marsh introduced her collaborative art initiative, International Fiber Collaborative, to UAH. This semester, Marsh is at it again, teaching a Public Art course which incorporates a public art collaborative project much like that done with IFC.

The course, “Technical Problems: Public Art Sculpture,” teaches advanced art students the business essentials that are often left untouched in classes that concentrate on the creative elements. The coursework includes much research and business planning which educates students about attaining funding, scheduling interviews, and running workshops in local schools. Of the six students, Marsh compliments, “I think they’re going to conquer the world.”

The world tomorrow, maybe, but for now they are zoning in on Panoply Arts Festival (April 24-26 at Big Spring International Park). The students are prepping a huge collaborative project which reflects the focus of IFC. A striking 18 foot tree which Marsh hopes will mimic a living oak will sit proudly amongst its real-life counterparts at park during Panoply. The tree is composed of a steel mainframe with branches that each hold approximately 150 leaves. The tree will stand one week prior to, during, and one week after Panoply.

These atypical leaves, though, are not green or fleshy but are instead comprised of old and recycled garbage bags, clothes, potato chip bags, felt, and other miscellaneous fabrics. Each leaf is hand



Top Left: Colorful branches. Top Right: Back row, left to right: Megan Quinlan and Marcia Freeland and front row: Jessica Lund and Theresa Summer pose by the tree trunk frame. Bottom Left: These colorful leaves were made by students from Costa Rica and will be put on the tree. Bottom Right: Marcia Freeland, Jessica Lund, and Megan Quinlan chat and work on the project. (Photos by: Teri Bertulfo)

prepared not only by art students but by people around the world.

A children’s association in Costa Rica has shipped its batch of leaves and homeless shelters, retirement homes, nursing homes, and schools are submitting their contributions as well. Marsh also points out that a special needs school from Ontario

is also supplying some leaves.

The notion of a collaborative project is pretty clear—people working together to make one whole product—but perhaps the tree is not. Marsh explains that a tree best illustrates the theme and

title of the project: “Interdependence.” The tree illustrates the give and take of both the project and the daily activity of our lives. Marsh explains on the IFC website: “Much like a live tree is interdependent on its leaves and roots for survival, societies are interdependent on the greater whole, family units, communities, and countries.”

Right now, about one tenth of the tree is completed. Marsh and her students are working diligently to get both sponsors and contributors. If you are interested in contributing a leaf or leaves, visit the IFC’s website at www.internationalfibercollaborative.com or drop Jennifer Marsh a line at 614-561-9057. The deadline for submission is March 15.

Unfortunately, and as the saying goes, all good things must come to an end. “Interdependence” may be Marsh’s last hoorah here at UAH since as her time here ends this semester. However, Marsh is encouraged by the arrival of a yet another collaborative opportunity. The project is under wraps for now, but expect a big reveal sometime this summer. Marsh hints that it may be the largest of her collaborative projects yet and that its arrival will be in 2010.

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E-mail: editor@exponent.uah.edu

Website: <http://exponent.uah.edu/>

Post: University Center #104, Huntsville, AL 35899

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