9-22-2011

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Under One Roof

09.23.2011 | Campus and Community, Fine Arts  The University of Dayton visual arts department has a new home, which comes with improved technology, tools, gallery space, classrooms, storage and more.

For the first time in decades, all students, faculty and staff in the department will share a common space, now located on the second floor of the College Park Center, 1529 Brown Street.

Students had their first look at the 33,000 square feet of new space when classes resumed in August. The public is invited to an open house 5-7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 29, which will also include a reception for the first exhibit at the new "Gallery 249." Passage is a 2011 sabbatical exhibit featuring works by visual arts faculty Jeffrey Cortland Jones and John V. Clarke, on display now through Sept. 29. See below for more information about parking, hours and access to the gallery.

The programs of fine arts, art history and art education moved into the College Park Center this summer, joining photography and visual communication design, which had moved in 2009. The department previously occupied the Rike Center since the early 1970s with programs spread out at various campus locations, including Chaminade Hall, the Learning Teaching Center in Roesch Library, Marianist Hall and the former Mechanical Engineering building, which was demolished in 2009.

The historic Rike Center is slated for a $3.7 million renovation and conversion into a highly visible home for the Center for International Programs. "Gallery 249" takes the place of the Rike Center gallery as the main exhibit space for visual arts on campus.

The new gallery is about the same size as the one in Rike, but the long hallways equipped with track lighting and walls for easy mounting expand the display space outside the gallery's walls, said Judith Huacuja, visual arts department chair.

"The gallery and even the entire floor are designed to merge interior and exterior spaces, thus bringing the professional work of artists, designers and photographers closer to the students' everyday visual realm," Huacuja said.

This is most evident in the glass walls of many classrooms. Large east-facing windows flood the painting, drawing and design rooms with natural light, and the natural wood floors — the original NCR factory floors — complete an ideal environment for working artists, Huacuja said.

"The wood floors are fantastic, they add a lot of character," said Brandon Lowery, a senior fine arts major from Beavercreek, Ohio. "I also like the open ceilings, added storage space and the addition of a special outdoor area for sculpture."

Senior graphic design major Andrew Clavin, of Painesville, Ohio, has used the new space since 2009. He is excited about the other disciplines of visual arts moving in and said the new space is very community oriented and has everything the artists need.

"It's nice to have all of the other students and faculty here now, all in one place," Clavin said. "We play off each others' creativity, and whatever room you're in, there is probably someone else in there with you."

The renovation included several upgrades to tools and technology, including:

• A large professional-size kiln allows students to create massive sculptural works in ceramics. A new glaze-mixing station allows students to custom mix glazes.

• The woodshop offers a broad range of electric tools such as joiners, table saws, jigsaws and a planer. The welding room is equipped with a mig welder, tig welder, plasma cutter, fume extractor and a heavy metal welding table.

• An outdoor sculpture work yard on the west side of the College Park Center includes a shelter and crushed limestone paving.
An air compressor generates power for tools designed for large stone and metal work as well as ceramic casting.

- The printmaking studio has a new printing press for intaglio prints and the addition of woodcut and silkscreen processes.
- Art education classrooms feature Smart Board technologies to support interactive learning. Art history classrooms support interactions with up-to-date digital imagery and research databases.
- The Visual Communication Design labs offer advanced design and typography applications in multiple computer labs. Students now have the capacity to produce highly refined prints in mural sizes. A darkroom introduces photography students to traditional film processing as they also learn the latest digital tools for visual imagery.

Limited visitor parking for Gallery 249 is available at the College Park Center. To gain access to the second floor, obtain an access card at the front desk on the first floor of College Park Center. Gallery hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, with additional evening hours on Thursdays until 7 p.m. For more information, contact Todd Hall, Rike Center gallery coordinator, at 937-229-3261 or todd.hall@notes.udayton.edu.

For more information, contact Cameron Fullam, assistant director of media relations, at 937-229-3256 or fullam@udayton.edu.