SOA Artists Bend Themes of Perception and Reflection in Thesis Exhibit

By Kristin Sterling

Several treatments of erotic vistas and distorted reflections are just some of the diverse themes that second-year visual art students at the School of the Arts (SOA) are bringing to contemporary art in the 2005 M.F.A Thesis Exhibition.

The thesis exhibition comprises work by 24 students and covers nearly 25,000 square feet on the fifth floor of Studebaker Hall, where artsfest was held last year. Artsfest is a student-run exhibition that is open to all undergraduate and graduate students, according to Uslip. The exhibition includes works by artists who have been working with the school since 2005.

The exhibition also includes the work of sculptors Ethan Breakfast and Gandollie Gauss-Brekenridge's sculptures challenge contemporary notions of space, perception and the meaning of work. The focus of his thesis is a double-sided endless hallway with a piece of glass in the front, prohibiting entrance. According to Uslip, the work is very psychological and offers no sense of beginning or end.

The centerpeice of Batista's project is a punctured, molded mirror. The walls of his display area are lined with largescale photos of objects that he created and then photographed through the mirror offering unusual perceptions of the scene.

Reflecting on her experiences in the M.F.A. program, Greenerstrom says, "One of the greatest things about the program is the level and diversity of both Adjunct and fulltime artists. This exposure and the relationships the program fosters provide a number of different models of ways to be a contemporary artist. It also plays out in the relationships among the students. We're all really trying to help each other in the midst of what amounts to one of the most competitive environments."

Wilson agrees, "My work process has been shaped by a greater involvement with my peers. I've learned how to process advice and criticism in a way that has enabled me to find what it is that I really want to make and what it is that I want to do."

The 2005 M.F.A. Thesis Exhibition is on display on the fifth floor of Studebaker Hall, 615 W. 131 Street, through May 22.

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Additional details about the exhibition and images of the artists' works are available at www.columbia.edu/arts/visual_arts/thesis_2005.


A New Facility and Leadership in the Field of Cancer Research

C olumbia University Medical Center (CUMC) has long been recognized for its pioneering research in cancer prevention, research, in particular in the field of cancer. With the recent announcement of a new facility as well as fresh leadership, CUMC continues to provide treatment for the surrounding community while researching causes and solutions to the devastating disease.

CUMC recently celebrated the dedication of the Irving Cancer Research Center (ICRC), a new 500,000 square foot facility located at the medical center’s campus in northern Manhattan. Developed through the support of Herbert and Florence Irving, longtime benefactors of the University’s health sciences, the new space doubles Columbia’s laboratory space for cancer research. The building contains nine floors of research facilities, as well as classrooms and the Averouson Foundation Breast Imaging Center for medically underserved women.

The new building was dedicated on May 5 at a ribbon-cutting ceremony and reception hosted by Columbia President Lee C. Bollinger and CUMC Executive Vice President Gerald D. Fischbach, who is also dean of the faculty of medicine at Columbia’s College of Physicians and Surgeons. Andrew von Eschenbach, director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and a cancer survivor, gave the keynote address.

This combination of the greatest scientific minds and world-class research facilities will insure Columbia University’s future as one of the leading cancer research institutions in the country,” said President Bollinger. “Columbia continues to make groundbreaking research advances today that will lead to tomorrow’s advances and care.

Florencce and I have made our top commitment to do whatever we can to help people afflicted with these serious diseases, and to contribute to the research that will ultimately eradicate cancer entirely, said Irving. “This contribution demonstrates not only our commitment to this research, but our confidence in CUMC as the leading institution to conduct it.”

The ICRC is dedicated to investigators conducting disease-specific research of many cancers, including breast, brain, gastric, pancreatic, prostate and lymphoma, and tumor immunology. The ICRC is part of the Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center (HICCC), which encompasses all cancer-related preclinical and clinical research, prevention, treatment and education efforts at CUMC and its affiliate, New YorkPresbyterian Hospital. The HICCC is one of only three National Institutes of Health (NIH)-designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers in New York State and of only 59 nationwide.

Heading up the ICRC is the world’s leading cancer geneticists and lymphoma researchers, Ricardo Dalla-Favera, who has served as a professor of oncology at Columbia since 1986 and has been a member of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and at the NCI as well as principal investigator of several NCI grants.

Columbia University Cancer Research Center at Columbia University, Inc. HICCC Director Riccardo Dalla-Favera, Above: from left, President Lee C. Bollinger, National Institutes of Health Director Andrew von Eschenbach, Florence Irving and Herbert Irving, cutting the ribbon marking the opening of the new center.

Dalla-Favera has been recognized with several national awards, including the Stohlman Award from the Leukemia Society of America and two NIH MERIT awards. In addition, he has been a member of the Board of Scientific Counselors at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and at the NCI as well as principal investigator of several NCI grants.