Oct. 15, 2012

Water theme flows through Sac State exhibit

The nature of water will be explored by four local, internationally known and young emerging artists in “Water: Essence and Potential,” a free exhibit running Nov. 5-Dec. 7 in Sacramento State’s Else Gallery. The show includes a special reception 6-8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 9, featuring music, dance and martial arts.

Koo Kyung Sook, Brenda Louie, Meech Miyagi and Minh Tran will create an exhibit so imposing, they have to remove the gallery’s interior walls, says Professor Pat Chirapravati, the exhibit’s curator.

The display’s theme is part of the University’s One World Initiative, a program that is examining the global issue of water across a number of classes and disciplines, studying water’s political, health, scientific and artistic aspects.

Chirapravati is a professor of Art and Asian Studies, and has blended those two interests in this exhibit, which spotlights Asian artists who have strong ties to Sacramento State.

“The Water United Series I,” by Brenda Louie, was inspired by her recent experience working with a group of international artists in Beijing. Art was the element that brought them together, Louie says, but they also shared concern for the safety of drinking water in many areas of the world. For this exhibit, Louie is creating a large-scale, mixed-media acrylic painting, using layers of visual diagrams and implied images that signify collective efforts to keep water clean for now, and future generations.

Meech Miyagi explores the spiritual, transforming quality of water in his piece. Sticks wrapped with paper convey the concept of transformation and completion of a cycle, while arranging them in the form of a water vortex represents the culmination of the life experience.

Koo Kyung Sook will display her painting “Invisible Torso,” which focuses on the intangible life of the body. “I wanted to suggest how fundamental elements, such as water, lymph and blood, which we do not see or feel, have an essential role in our existence.” The figure was created from the imprints of her body on bubble wrap soaked in developer and placed over a matrix of photographic sheets.
Sook has often collaborated with her husband, Professor Ian Harvey, for exhibits at Sacramento State and in galleries around the world.

Minh Tran was one of Chirapravati’s students and is now a graduate student in Art Studio at Sac State. She has created ceramic representations of fetuses. “When a fetus is conceived, it floats in water, so water is the most essential part of human beings from the very beginning,” Chirapravati says.

The Nov. 9 reception includes music written specially for the exhibit in collaboration with the Sacramento Philharmonic. Student dancer Emily Caruso will perform several times to the music. Martial arts expert Michael Schmidt will demonstrate martial arts poses based on the theme of water.

Chirapravati notes how fortunate the University is to have this kind of a relationship with the exhibit’s artists. “These are very upbeat artists, and this is free on our campus” she says.

Exhibit hours are noon-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. For more information on the display, visit www.al.csus.edu/art or call (916) 278-6166. For media assistance, call Sacramento State’s Public Affairs office at (916) 278-6156.

– Craig Koscho
ckoscho@csus.edu

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