

Regional

Sculpture on Campus program returns for 2015

The annual Sculpture on Campus program is a popular event at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. Vice Chancellor of Administration, Kenneth Neher, along with faculty from the Art & Design department, initiated the event in 1999 to both beautify the campus and provide a venue for student made large-scale pieces.

The program allows students to propose, design and install major sculptural works that remain on view for a full year, said Thad Duhigg, a professor of sculpture at SIUE. Duhigg is a native of Illinois who received his BFA from Southern Illinois University Carbondale and his MFA from Syracuse University. He taught in Wyoming and Texas before coming to SIUE. Duhigg has exhibited his work in numerous venues throughout the United States.

As a testament to the popularity of Sculpture on Campus, between 250 and 300 people from the university and the community participated in last year's event.

The 2015 schedule covers three days, Sept. 23 through Sept. 25, beginning with a public lecture from this year's visiting artist, Patrick Dougherty. Dougherty is a noted sculptor who uses natural materials such as vines and small trees woven together to create fascinating and whimsical pieces. Photographs of Dougherty's work will be displayed because the pieces themselves are too large to transport.

"After the lecture, the remainder of the day will be devoted to student critiques," Duhigg said. "On Thursday, the 12 finalists will be involved in a group critique and in the evening there will be a large dinner with Patrick, student artists and alumni of the program. Friday morning will be taken up with more student critiques and at 4 p.m. the sculpture walk will begin. The walk will stop at each piece of art and each participant will discuss their work and take questions. The walk will finish back at the Art and Design building with some speeches, the award ceremony and, new this year, an opening reception featuring photos of Dougherty's work."

Sculptors at Wagner, an organization of art and design students, is responsible for earning money to support the event.

"The money earned by students through-



SIUE photo

Cow sculpture by Katie Turpenoff, part of last year's program.

out the year is used to hire musicians for the reception, advertise the event, schedule the visiting artist and provide coordination and logistics throughout the three days," said Katie Turpenoff, an SIUE undergraduate majoring in metalsmithing. "Because the walk takes about two and a half hours, golf carts are provided so everyone who would

like to participate can do so." She went on to explain that any student, regardless of major, is welcome to join Sculptors at Wagner. Dues are \$5 per semester. The organization raises funds year-round.

"Students raise between \$2,000 and \$4,000 annually for the walk," Duhigg noted. "There have been several larger donors who

have helped make the program successful, including the Gateway Foundation for about eight years. Student government has been very supportive, as has the university in past years."

Kelsie Ward, a graduate student in ceramics and last year's grand prize winner, said the opportunity to produce and exhibit a

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public work on campus and the \$750 stipend for students to purchase materials were factors in her decision to participate in the program.

"The process starts in April with a detailed proposal for the sculpture, including a letter, resume and artist statement," she said. "Participants are chosen based on their proposals. Many students begin work on their proposed sculpture as soon as they learn they have been accepted for the program. A class, which begins in June, helps students create their professional maquette, a small-scale model of the proposed sculpture. Installation of the final sculpture occurs in August."

Ward and Turpenoff said that they are appreciative of the support they received from others in the class. Classmates helped last year by "holding things in place while securing objects to unwrapping materials to finally helping with the installation," Turpenoff said.

"Sculpture is much more community based than photography or painting, for example, just because of the size of the project," Duhigg said. "The work makes a nice portfolio piece for students looking for jobs or going to graduate school because of the uniqueness of the program."

Sculpture on Campus has been fortunate to get noted jurists, he added, including past jurists Richard Hunt, Amy Hautt, Jesus Morales and Luis Jimenez. Duhigg said that he looks for artists who are successful, with a high profile either as professional artists or educators who have the ability to interact with students. Duhigg said that he knows of no other program like this at any other university.

"I know that there are certain competitions that will invite professionals in, but as far as I know there's nothing else like it," he said. "We're extremely lucky. It's a unique program, and it's a very valuable program."

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