

UNMC helps bring Saving Faces exhibit to Omaha

by Tom O'Connor, UNMC public affairs

Omaha will be the third stop for a North American tour of a unique art exhibition, which provides an in-depth look at the physical and emotional aspects of patients who underwent head and neck surgery subsequent to trauma, disfiguring forms of cancer or other problems. The exhibit will run from Jan. 13 to Feb. 24 at the University of Nebraska at Omaha Art Gallery on the north end of the Weber Fine Arts Building, 60th and Dodge streets.



A five-part lecture series will take place during the exhibition to highlight issues related to healing that are raised by the paintings.

Bringing the art exhibition, "Saving Faces: Art and Medicine," to Omaha has been a cooperative venture between UNO and UNMC.

The exhibition features 42 portraits by Scottish artist Mark Gilbert showing patients at various stages of their treatment. Gilbert's exhibition was spawned by an invitation from Iain Hutchison, M.D., a British maxillofacial surgeon, to come to the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Unit of St. Bartholomew's and Royal London Hospital and see for himself what these patients go through. The paintings he created provide a visual narrative of the healing process.

Some of the exhibition portraits are nearly six-feet tall. They were first displayed at the National Portrait Gallery in London and then toured throughout the British Isles

and Europe. The first two stops in the North American Tour have been in Toronto and at Yale University in New Haven, Conn.

"This is a tremendous honor to have this exhibition in Omaha," said Virginia Aita, Ph.D., associate professor of preventive and societal medicine at UNMC and director of the planning committee for the event. "It has been highly acclaimed and been the source of widespread media coverage."

The portraits depict the patients' appearance before, during and after reconstructive facial surgery, Dr. Aita said, capturing the patients' changing emotions during the healing process and allowing the viewer to experience the transformation the patients go through.

"The exhibition truly combines the best of art, science, hope and healing," said Deborah-Eve Lombard, director of the UNO Art Gallery. "It will provide a moving and powerful experience to all who view it."

The five-part speaker series, which is free and open to the public, will provide a rare opportunity to explore the integration of art and medicine and the nature of healing. The first presentation will be Jan. 13 at 7 p.m. with Dr. Iain Hutchinson, the British surgeon who launched the exhibition. The 7 p.m. presentation will be in the Weber Fine Arts Theater in the Weber Fine Arts Building at UNO.

The opening public exhibition and reception will be from 2 to 4 p.m., Jan. 15, at the UNO Art Gallery. The UNO Art Gallery is closed on Saturdays and Mondays. It is open from noon to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays; from noon to 8 p.m. on Thursdays; and from 2 to 5 p.m. on Sundays.

UNMC receives grant to bring health science education to youths

by Lisa Spellman, UNMC public affairs

Through a five-year, \$1.3 million Science Education Partnership Award (SEPA) from the National Institutes of Health, Maurice Godfrey, Ph.D., will introduce American Indian youths on reservations in Nebraska and South Dakota to the health sciences.

"The long-term goals of this project are to promote student interest in the health sciences, foster a more science literate public and ultimately increase the number of Native Americans entering health careers," said Dr. Godfrey, principal investigator of the grant and associate professor of pediatrics at UNMC.

SEPA grants, which are designed to improve life science literacy, bring together biomedical and behavioral researchers, educators, community groups and other interested organizations in partnerships to create and disseminate programs that give K-12 students and their teachers a better understanding of life sciences.

It will take a year to get the program established, Dr. Godfrey said.

He and co-investigator Roxanna Jokela, director of the Rural Health Education Network at UNMC, will first focus on establishing partnerships with tribal leaders, administrators and teachers from K-8 schools on and off the reservation that serve American Indians in Nebraska. After that is done they will begin working with reservation schools in southern South Dakota.

"It's important to note that this grant is a partnership between UNMC, schools, tribal colleges and the Aberdeen Area Tribal Chairman's Health Board," Dr. Godfrey said.

Teachers will have input in the development of health science education modules to insure that they are age-appropriate and adequate for classroom use, he said.

"Reaching beyond the classroom to parents and communities is critical to the success of this project," Dr. Godfrey said.