

GATEWAY

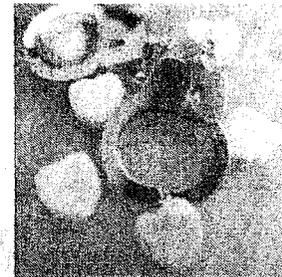
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1913

VOLUME 05

ISSUE 38

TUESDAY

February 14, 2006



Saving Faces: Art that heals



photo by Lucas Munderloh

The UNO Art Gallery is showcasing "Saving Faces," an exhibit depicting facial disfigurements until Feb. 24. On Feb. 16 at 7:00 p.m., artist Mark Gilbert will speak the UNO Art Gallery in the Weber Fine Arts Building.

rsity of
State of
podcast

made



'iken

switch

at one
ith the

UNO Art Gallery exhibit depicts transformation of the disfigured

REVIEW BY AMANDA GOREY
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Most of us are taught from an early age that it's not polite to stare, but when faced with someone disfigured, some keep on looking anyway. Some look away quickly; our mother's voices echoing in our minds.

"Patients often say that when you have a facial disfigurement, people stop looking at you," says Deborah-Eve Lombard, director of the UNO Art Gallery.

"Saving Faces," an exhibit currently running at the UNO Art Gallery, compels viewers to look into those faces, and into their lives.

UNO is the third stop for a North American tour of an unusual art exhibition of 42 oil paintings showing faces distorted by cancer, congenital deformities and trauma. Iain Hutchison, M.D., a British maxillofacial surgeon, invited Scottish artist Mark Gilbert to visit the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Unit of St. Bartholomew's and Royal London Hospital to see for himself what the patients go through.

Gilbert partnered with Hutchison to illustrate the patients during the many stages of their treatment and transformation. Gilbert's paintings depict the physical and emotional aspects of patients who underwent head and neck surgery subsequent to trauma, disfiguring forms of cancer, or other problems.

During the show's opening, Hutchison explained his four main goals for the exhibition. He chose painted portraits rather than photography, as the artist's brush could capture the emotional transformation of the person during the project as well as show their physical imperfections. He



The UNO Art Gallery is showcasing "Saving Faces," an exhibit depicting facial disfigurements. courtesy:

expressed his desire for the paintings to inform the public of what modern facial surgery could accomplish, while maintaining what it could not do.

"You can never make them absolutely, totally normal," he says. "The patient may not even notice the imperfections, but the surgeon always does."

The portrait series captures the patients' changing emotions, character and confidence. They mark their faces as they progress through their surgical

and emotional journey. The results are not simply medical illustrations, but ones of feeling. Aesthetics, compassion and the visual depiction of medical treatment are all part of this moving—and often disturbing—show.

"The exhibition truly combines the best of art, science, hope and healing," Lombard says. "It will provide a moving and powerful experience to all who view it."

The Saving Faces Exhibition was made possible thanks in large part

to a \$3,500 grant from the Nebraska Arts Council, and is a collaborative effort with the University of Nebraska Medical Center. An additional grant of \$6,165 from the Nebraska Humanities Council made the speaker series possible.

A five-part lecture series was planned to complement the exhibition. Each program begins at 7 p.m. at the UNO Art Gallery in the Weber Fine Arts Center, and is free to the public. The lectures are designed to offer an opportunity to explore the integration of art and medicine and the nature of healing, says Dr. Virginia Aita, associate professor of preventive and societal medicine at UNMC and director of the planning committee for the event. Two talks in the lecture series remain, including:

Feb. 9 - "Regarding Transformation: Healing and the Perception of Integrity of Persons," Michael Gillespie, Ph.D., senior lecturer, University of Washington. Bothell and UNO professor emeritus.

Feb. 16 - "Healing and its Relationship to the Depiction of Illness," panel discussion headed by Mark Gilbert, Saving Faces artist, with panelists including Barbara Simcoe, associate professor, UNO Department of Art and Art History (moderator); Al Harris-Fernandez, director of the Sioux City Art Center and Aaron Holz, assistant professor, College of Fine Arts, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The exhibit will run through Feb. 24 at the UNO Art Gallery, which is located on the north end of the Weber Fine Arts Building, 60th and Dodge streets. The UNO Art Gallery is closed on Saturdays and Mondays. It is open from noon to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays; noon to 8 p.m. on Thursdays; and 2 to 5 p.m. on Sundays.