COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECTS

“The community engagement projects are designed as invitations for reflection as students, faculty and staff come together in dialogue.” — Prof. Jill Odegaard

REASSURANCE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As part of an ongoing community engagement initiative, the Art Department hosted hands-on projects to support collaboration through art making. Reassurances Community Engagement Project invited students faculty and staff to make incantation bowls based on personal fears. This project evolved through the support of the Art Department, the History, Literature and Language Department and Cultural Programs.

“The Incantation Bowl making was beyond fantastic. The making of the bowl itself was very meditative, while creating my incantation and creating the image for the center was really interesting. It made my fear feel more tangible, like I could grab a hold of it and gain some kind of control over it. I would easily do it again and would recommend everyone give it a try.”
— Mackenzie Lilly

CEedar Crest College Circle

During the freshman orientation and welcome back festivities, the Cedar Crest College Circle was created.

“By intertwining strips of fabric, the Cedar Crest College Circle symbolizes people coming together as a community. Each and every one of you has a unique link in the overall pattern.” — Jill Odegaard

McKinley Elementary

Art Club members and Senior Studio Seminar students hosted an art project as part of the Community School at McKinley Elementary. The project was titled “Me as an Artist.”

“During this experience with the school children, I have seen the power of art break the barriers of silence.”
— Trish Klein

Mackenzie Lilly
Cedar Crest College Center for Visual Research showcased an exhibition of text, forms and images, created by LouAnn Muhm and Tiffany Besonen. This exhibition was titled “Reassurances: Incantation Bowls, Reimagined” and was on display from Sept. 12 – Oct. 17.

Since 2010, LouAnn Shepard Muhm and Tiffany Besonen have been collaborating to create a collection of incantation bowls, in which Muhm's incantations against fears are inscribed on Besonen's translucent paper bowl forms. In 2010, Muhm and Besonen were educated about the large numbers of ancient Babylonian incantation bowls, 6th-8th Century CE, that have been unearthed in Iraq since the 1990s. Ancient incantation bowls are shallow bisqueware forms with a simplified character painted in the center and an incantation against a particular fear inscribed starting along the rim and spiraling toward the illustration. Each bowl and its incantation were created for a specific family's plea for assurances against particular fears. The bowl was then buried upside down under the threshold of the family's home, for protection. This collaboration between artist Tiffany Besonen and poet LouAnn Muhm has resulted in bowls containing incantations against cancer, violence, poverty, ignorance, and loss of hope, as well as in a series of Besonen's dreamlike doors within doors, echoing the idea of the threshold. The results are powerful and hopeful.

CEDAR CREST COLLEGE IS FEATURING the artwork of Kim Sloane and Marianne Gagnier, titled “Out of Thin Air,” running October 27 through January 3, 2015, in the Center for Visual Research.

Out of Thin Air features Marianne Gagnier and Kim Sloane, two painters that also happen to be married. Kim Sloane has ties to Cedar Crest College, as he was the Director of the College Galleries and an Assistant Professor of Art (1996-2000). An artist with literary leanings, he curated a show at the Lachaise Gallery in 1999 of artists associated with The Dial magazine (1919-1929). Gaston Lachaise was one of the prominent artists of this period and the namesake of the Cedar Crest gallery. Currently, Kim's reading the metaphysical poet John Donne (1572-1631): he's studying the poem Air and Angels (1633) as he paints.

Marianne Gagnier is also a Neo-expressionist painter, and her work arises out of a completely different sensibility. She creates spacious, airy worlds that thwart image or outside reference and defy scale; thus, she untangles the mind and creates pleasure. Marianne paints in acrylic, and uses various mediums to control a given painting's finish. She “always starts with color,” and scores of containers around the studio suggest that she mixes color like a chemist. She blends her colors to a house paint-like consistency, then addresses shape and movement on canvas, painting on the floor or outdoors, and avidly employing gravity. She likes to “generate accidents” but shies away from what she calls “consciously drippy work.” To her, being successful means she keeps up a constant dialogue with the materials and allows herself to be pulled towards a spacious, open-ended, atmospheric endpoint.
NELSON MANISCALSO currently has his work on display at the Da Vinci Science Center as part of the “Be the Dinosaur: Life in the Cretaceous” exhibition, which will be available through January 19, 2015. The show takes kids inside dinosaurs’ prehistoric world and lets them discover these amazing creatures survived, thrived, and enjoyed life in the wild. The high-tech exhibition features video game technologies that let visitors create and control their own digital dinosaurs through a virtual Earth during the Cretaceous period more than 65 million years ago.

WILLI SINGLETON (Cedar Crest College Artist-in-Residence) is one of the international group of ceramic artists included in the publication Wood-fired Ceramics: 100 Contemporary Artists, (2014) a copy of which is held in the Cedar Crest Library. This publication, by Amadeo Salamoni, is one of the very few books (written in English) focusing solely on wood-fired ceramics, a growing field within the ceramic arts community. Singleton’s work was also included in the Washington County Museum of Art (located in Hagerstown, MD) exhibition titled “Pyrotechnic Protagonists: A Generation of Ceramic Artists”, which was up from May 18th to Sept. 14th, 2014. This exhibition presented the work of 22 practitioners of wood-fired ceramics from across the nation.

PAT BADT and Scott Sherk showed their installation “Quaker Harmonizer” with sound and music, at Assembly in Montreal, Canada. Over the past summers Pat and Scott have traveled to various Quaker Meetinghouses around Pennsylvania making audio field recordings and photographs of the spaces. Many of the Meetinghouses are still in use, but they recorded them when they were empty and uninhibited. Later, they condensed each Meetinghouse recording from hour-long recordings to simple tones—the roomtones of the empty space. Additionally, the ambient color of each meetinghouse space was identified as a single color tone. They separated these color tones into their component parts which will remix as the CD is spinning. These visual and aural tones have been re-imagined as color and texture in the accompanying wall paintings. “Quaker Harmonizer” is a work to be played as an instrument within a space.

JILL ODEGAARD “rolled out” her Woven Welcome this past July at the Plains Art Museum in Fargo, ND. This project is a metaphor for infrastructure of community. “The intention of the project is to use the rug, which has a strong traction in the Moorhead area with Scandinavian rug weaving, something very traditional, and put a new perspective to it,” artist Jill Odegaard says. The project actually started in 2011 as a smaller project for the Portland International Airport. Eventually, Jill was contacted by the Nemeth Art Center in Park Rapids, Minn., and asked her to do a bigger rug for the governor’s fishing opener in 2013. The final community project was unfurled at the Plains Art Museum in Fargo, ND, in July of 2014.

Don’t miss Pat’s next show, in the Center for Visual Arts next semester. Opening Reception is March 18, 2015.
We would like to welcome our newest faculty member LAURA ZEISLER ATR-BC, LCSW. Laura is an Assistant Professor of Art Therapy. She is a Registered Art Therapist and Licensed Clinical Social Worker and joins us after 20+ years of creating community based art. Laura has been an Art Therapist-in-Residence for schools, Hospice, The Asheville Art Museum, Asheville, NC, pediatric oncology units and homeless youth shelters. She holds a Master in Art Therapy from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL.

Laura has displayed her photographs and mixed media collages in group gallery shows and presented numerous academic papers at national conferences. Laura states, “One of my favorite elements of teaching is showing the students how theory and research can guide their own artistic process and community practice. I am also inspired when students begin to interconnect the concepts and mature through confidence. My goal is to create an educational environment where learning is fun, collaborative and service based. I am very excited to be at Cedar Crest College. I have found it to be a wonderful environment to implement my teaching philosophy and share my extensive professional experience.” Laura joins us most recently from Asheville, NC and affirms that while she will miss the landscape of Western North Carolina, she was ready to move back North of the Mason Dixon Line. (Feel free to check in with her in February, to see if she is still happy about moving North!)

Ibiyinka Alao Shares New Perspectives with Art Therapy Students

First place winner of the United Nations International Art Competition, and African Art Ambassador, Ibiyinka Alao, visited Cedar Crest College on Saturday, October 25th. He spoke to the undergraduate Art Therapy students on how his life experiences have led him to many remarkable accomplishments.

Alao shared his perspective from a traditional African viewpoint and how it influenced his outlook on happiness. His rare collection of paintings expresses a peaceful view of integration of cultures in our world today through the use of colors.