LIFE

THE BENTON HOLDS SECOND FLORAL ARRANGEMENT

by Sophie Shugrue
CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
SHE/HER/HERS
hdc24004@uconn.edu

The William Benton Museum of Art hosted a container flower arranging class Sunday, the second in its "Blooms and Bows at the Benton" series.

The classes are designed to teach participants how to make specific floral arrangements while leaving them with the skills and confidence to make arrangements from their own gardens.

"I think more than anything, this class will give people permission to explore flower arranging from an artistic perspective and give them the freedom to make mistakes and try things, and find out what they like," said Matthew Marshall, the event's organizer and the Benton's curator of education. "You can learn basic skills but what you choose to do with those skills is what makes someone appreciate the art of arranging flowers."

As curator of education, Marshall designs and leads public and paid programs for community audiences. He was inspired to lead this series because of his time working in a flower shop as a teenager.

"Being around flowers was something I could appreciate from a very early age," he said. "Being able to be a part of a celebration, whether it be a birthday, or a wedding, or an anniversary or even a celebration of life, just knowing that the arrangements you're creating are going to be integral part of that person or that group of people's celebration, is very meaningful."

Attracting a diverse range of participants, Sunday's class focused on arranging fall centerpieces. Marshall instructed and roamed about the sold-out room as attendees organized yellow, orange and burgundy chrysanthemums in foam blocks in hollowed-out pumpkins.

"There's no right or wrong way to do what we're doing today," Marshall said as the class began.

Participants interspersed the chrysanthemums, which were sourced from Tri-County Greenhouse in Mansfield Depot, with plastic ferns and fake autumn leaves. At the end, they adorned their arrangements with a shiny white bow.

Many of the attendees came to the class because they already have gardens and want to learn how to arrange the flowers they have at home.

"I just like gardening and flowers of all sorts," Peter Keefe, an attendee said. "Flower arrangements, too. Usually, I just get flowers from my garden and put them in a vase."

Keefe has attended every class thus far and plans to display his newest arrangement on his kitchen table.

Through it all, Marshall hopes that attendees develop a sense of artistry in different aspects of life.

"Flowers are kind of like a smile because they're so fleeting and have such a short life that when they're with us, you really appreciate them," he said. "I can't emphasize enough taking time throughout our day to kind of just pause and look around you and find the beauty and creativity of the world."



Matthew Marshall speaks on Sunday, Oct. 4. The William Benton Museum of Art hosted a class called Blooms and Bows, where members created flower arrangements.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL JEFFERS, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

This is a lesson that his students have certainly resonated with.

"Flower arranging is definitely an art form," Keefe said. "This is fancier than what I usually do but maybe I'll do a foam flower arrangement in the future."

The next and final class in the "Blooms and Bows" series will be on Nov. 15 and will focus on bow making and wreath decorating, according to the Benton's website.



Participants arrange flowers on Sunday, Oct. 4. The William Benton Museum of Art hosted a class called Blooms and Bows, where members created flower arrangements.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL JEFFERS, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS