Buley Library hosts ceramic art gallery

By Brianna Wallen
Editor-in-Chief

The campus art gallery offered students more than a place to view artwork. The "Buley Art Gallery Ceramics: Selections from the Permanent Collections," gallery provided opportunities to experience different cultures, learn about history and engage with artwork created by members of the university community.

Jason Phan, a university assistant who works with the gallery, said the collection dates to the 1970s.

"A lot of the pieces we have here have to do with certain cultures that we don't remember a lot of history about so that's really important to preserve that," Phan said.

Although the gallery has moved between several locations over the years, its current space continues to preserve artwork and historical pieces for the campus community.

The gallery featured a variety of works, including sculptures, drawings, prints, African artwork, French artwork and historical documents.

Some pieces have been donated, while others have been acquired by the university.

For students studying arts and design, the gallery also provides an opportunity to display their own work.

Graphic design students and as well as students from various art departments can hold exhibitions in the gallery, allowing them to showcase their artistic skills.

Students also have input into how exhibitions featuring their work are presented.

"If they're doing a ceramic show for ceramic students, they can give input on how they want their show to be set up. If it's a show for them, they can have a say in how they want their work displayed," Phan said.

The gallery can also connect students with opportunities outside the classroom.

According to Phan, organizations that work with the gallery may provide information about internships, while students can use exhibitions to promote their work and potentially connect with people interested in commissiong artwork.

"If organizations get in touch, they sometimes offer informational opportunities if they want to reach out for internships," Phan said.

Students do not have to consider themselves artists to benefit from visiting the gallery.

Phan said classes sometimes visit to learn about artwork and its connection to history.

"A bunch of the classes come here to talk about our history, certain works and how things are important for the time and how it connects to history," Phan said.

The collection also includes historical objects that give students an opportunity to see materials that have been preserved for generations.

"This is one of the best historical ones we have it's a religious document that's well preserved and we have a lot of documents like this that are part of a collection," Phan said

The gallery's artwork can also encourage students to question what they know about history.

Phan described a photograph of an early militia from colonies that includes women, raising questions about their roles during that period.

"This is a photograph of an early militia from the colonies, but it displays a lot of women in it, so we weren't really sure about the details and what they were doing at that time we also have a bunch of works that kind of make you question history a little bit," Phan said.

The gallery also preserves artwork connected to the university's own history.

Phan discussed former sculpture professor Olaf Zeidenberg who contributed to the university's community and established a scholarship for students interested in art. His artwork remains part of the gallery's collection.

"He was just a big part of this community, and we wanted to showcase him because he made a lot of contributions to the community," Phan said.

Phan encourages students and staff to learn about the exhibitions and see what is currently displaying.

Students interested in displaying their own work can also contact the gallery curator Cort Sierpinski.



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The "Buley Art Gallery Ceramics: Selections from the Permanent Collections," in the lower level of Buley Library on Monday, Oct. 5.

Phan said students should not be afraid to take the opportunity.

"I always feel like it's worth giving it a shot. You can always contact Cort Sierpinski the curator here if it's a specific work you want or a big display, students can always feel free to reach we do a lot of studio shows," Phan said.

The gallery collection demonstrates that art can serve as more than decoration.

For students, it can provide a connection to history, culture and the university community while creating opportunities for emerging artists to have their work seen.



Teapot labeled "white stoneware, wood soda fired," by Stephen Grimmer.

'Major and Minor Fair' helps students explore

By Kadisha Pierre-Louis
Contributor

For students still exploring their interests, choosing a major or minor can open the door to new academic and career opportunities.

The "Major and Minor Fair" on Thursday, Oct. 1, gave students an opportunity to explore their options, ask questions and connect directly with academic departments before making those decisions.

"My hope is that students have an open mind about their options and get a chance to get questions answered about what they're interested in," Morgan Cottrell, the coordinator of Academic Advising for Major Exploration, said.

The annual fair on Sept. 28, brought multiple academic departments together in one place so students can learn more about what each program offered. Students were able to visit various departments and speak with professors and representatives about any minors and majors they were interested in.

Cottrell said the event is designed to make the process easier and encourage students to begin thinking about their options before meeting with an adviser.

"I think honestly any college experience a student has whether it's their major or minor can have influence on their career choices," Cottrell said. "When you declare a minor it's another thing you're doing to learn more about yourself and your taking another chance to get more opportunities."

The fair also gave students an opportunity to discover programs they may not have considered before.



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Luke Eilderts, associate professor of French, Erin Larkin, director of Interdisciplinary Studies Program and Frank Carrano, former adjunct professor representing the Derpartment of World Languages.

According to the university's "Fast Facts," the institution provides 180 undergraduate minors and majors as of 2024–25 academic year.

This gives students a wide range of academic combinations to explore from various departments like College of Arts and Sciences to School of Business.

Benjamin McNamee, coordinator of first-year advising, said minors can give students the opportunity to study something outside of their major while still working it into their degree requirements.

"It's kind of a way to figure out another thing that you're interested in. People will do things that complement their major, or if they're majoring in something but just have like this burning passion for something else, they could minor in that other thing," McNamee said. "It kind of helps them to scratch two itches in one degree."

McNamee, who majored in history and minored in political science, said his own experience with a minor has shown him how it can provide an additional talking point when applying for jobs.

"In all the interviews I've ever been on, nobody has ever asked me, 'Why did you major in history?'" McNamee said. "But it has come up multiple times, 'Why do you have a minor in political science?'"

Since a minor is optional, McNamee said, it can show employers that a student made a deliberate choice to study another subject.

Cottrell also said declaring a minor can provide students with additional opportunities to and connections that can help them beyond the university.

"When you declare a minor, you get a mentorship from faculty members and you get additional access to courses that can help with internships," Cottrell said.

However, Cottrell emphasized that students do not need a minor to be successful after graduation. The decision should depend on each student's academic and career goals.

"I think the question of whether it's beneficial or not depends on the student," Cottrell said. "The only one situation where I don't recommend if it'll add time onto their degree."

For students who are considering adding a minor, McNamee recommends exploring their options early. McNamee said that most minors require about 18 credits, or six classes, and some introductory courses may already count toward a student's general education requirements.

"Sophomore year is perfect," McNamee said. "I would say as long as you declare it sometime in junior year, you probably could fit it in."

Cottrell recommends that students do their research as an underclassman.

"The message is exploring early. The earlier, the better," Cottrell said. "Sometimes students wait until their junior year and find out about cool things they could have learned about earlier."

Students who are still unsure about what they want to study can use the university's "Explore Southern" website, speak with their academic adviser or visit the Career and Professional Development office.

Cottrell said students should remember that their degree does not necessarily determine the one career they will have after graduation.

"A lot of students think they know what career they want to go into when they leave college, but sometimes that's not the case," Cottrell said.

Whether students attend the fair with a clear plan or simply walk around looking for something that catches their interest, the goal is to encourage them to explore.

"You just never know when you're going to have that insight that will help you clarify your career trajectory," Cottrell said.

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Elliott Horch, Connecticut State Colleges and Universities Professor of Physics and Department Chairperson.