

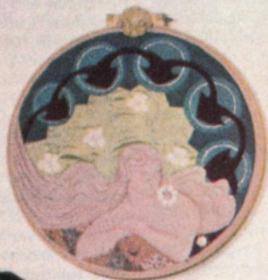
NEW ART DEGREES EXPAND

"Repose"

Cotton, silk, suede, hand and machine stitched
Shirley Lenhardt

"The Playground"

Bronze
Sabra Meyer



STUDENT HORIZONS

By Karen Farrar

"Never Could Say Goodbye"
Serigraph
Greg Schieszer



"Rome Pizzeria"
Oil on Canvas
Victoria Star Varner



MORALE was high in Mizzou's fine arts department in mid-April. Students, openly jubilant and chattering happily, and faculty, more properly demure but also plainly elated, were savoring a long-awaited victory.

They had good reason for elation. After a 12-year campaign by the Columbia Campus, Missouri's Coordinating Board for Higher Education had given approval for the bachelor and master of fine arts degrees. The bachelor of fine arts will be added to present undergraduate offerings, and the master of fine arts degree replaces the master's with an emphasis in art.

"AFTER YEARS OF DASHED HOPES — we were always told, maybe next semester, or next year — we feel like we have finally been rewarded," said teaching assistant Donna Moore, AM '77, who has enrolled in the new MFA program, which begins this fall.

An undergraduate student adds, "Now we can be serious and won't have to mess around with foreign language and things we really don't need." The new curriculum will provide more hours of studio art (60-70 for a BFA and 60 for an MFA) and fewer in foreign language, behavioral science, social science and the humanities. Though there is no doctoral program in the fine arts field, the master's is considered comparable to it. Mizzou does offer a PhD in art education. Doctoral candidate Susan Doerr says that "persons obtaining both the MFA and PhD could pretty well pick and choose where they want to go."

Moore is interested in a teaching career in art. With the former liberal AB and AM degrees, she says it was virtually impossible to find a good job in commercial art or teaching. "Without the BFA prospective employers might not even look at your portfolio," she explains, "and teaching at the college level requires an MFA degree."

Because of this, Mizzou had been losing many of its best art students to other schools. Juniors and seniors, realizing the program was a blind alley, would apply to schools offering the necessary degrees. This year, there are some 250 undergraduate art students, and 23 master's candidates enrolled in the program. "They were reaching the point where they might have to hire permanent T.A.'s," Moore says.

"STUDENTS WOULD HAVE TO TRANSFER either to private schools in the state, where tuition is high, or establish residency in other states, often losing a lot of credit hours in the transfer. And only one school in the state offered the MFA, Washington University, also private."

Sophomore art student Jim Woodfill had applied at the Kansas City Art Institute before the recent go-ahead. "If Mizzou had the BFA available, I never would have applied there," he says. "Tuition there is about \$1,600 a semester, compared to \$300 here. If I do attend there next fall, I would certainly consider coming back here for my MFA."

"Almost everyone applied somewhere else," says Shirley Lenhardt, BS Ed '74. "I stayed only because I'm a permanent Columbia resident."

The approval of the degree program was overdue, according to department chairman Don Bartlett. "It's not only unusual, it's absurd, for a major state university not to offer the degrees." Data he compiled shows that four of the other seven Big Eight schools have the MFA, two have the BFA and only one [Iowa State] has neither. In the Big Ten, all but one offer the MFA.

Actually, 10 years ago Mizzou was well along toward getting the program approved, Bartlett says. "We lost two or three years when the Role and Scope dictum of 'no new degrees' stopped us." The program, which also bogged down after application to the state's Coordinating Board in 1976, was approved by the University's Board of Curators last September.

A petition drive in 1976 — headed largely by art students — collected 5,600 signatures for support of the program. "This drive was certainly instrumental in turning the tide," Bartlett says.

THE FIRST GRADUATE STUDENT art exhibit was held in April at the Fine Arts Gallery. "They did it all on their own: planned the exhibit and selected and hung the art work," says art professor Lawrence McKinnin. "The quality of the work displayed compares with any student exhibit I've seen." Four of the student artists and their works appear on the preceding pages. Some 40 students volunteered their time to prepare a 50-page catalog of the exhibit to be sent to Missouri high schools and colleges.

The faculty wasn't always that enthusiastic about the show. "There was a fear that we might do something that would make the school look bad," says Moore. "Some people were afraid we might try to pull something like dumping a truckload of spaghetti in the middle of the floor."

The revised curriculum is not expected to require additional equipment. "The department has purchased wisely in recent years, adding such teaching aids as technical process cameras and print-making and photography equipment," McKinnin says.

Nor is extra faculty needed. In fact, advanced art classes were too small, often composed of eight or ten students instead of the usual 20 or so. "The teachers are well-qualified and now will finally have a chance to show what they can do," says student Woodfill.

The new degree programs were designed in accordance with specifications of the College Art Association, the professional organization for fine arts education. A curriculum committee has been charged with rewriting the course descriptions and bulletins.

It may take some readjusting by some art students to adapt to the new curriculum, but the impetus is now there. Obviously, the fine arts people are tickled pink! . . . or alizarin crimson . . . or Venetian red . . . or . . . □