

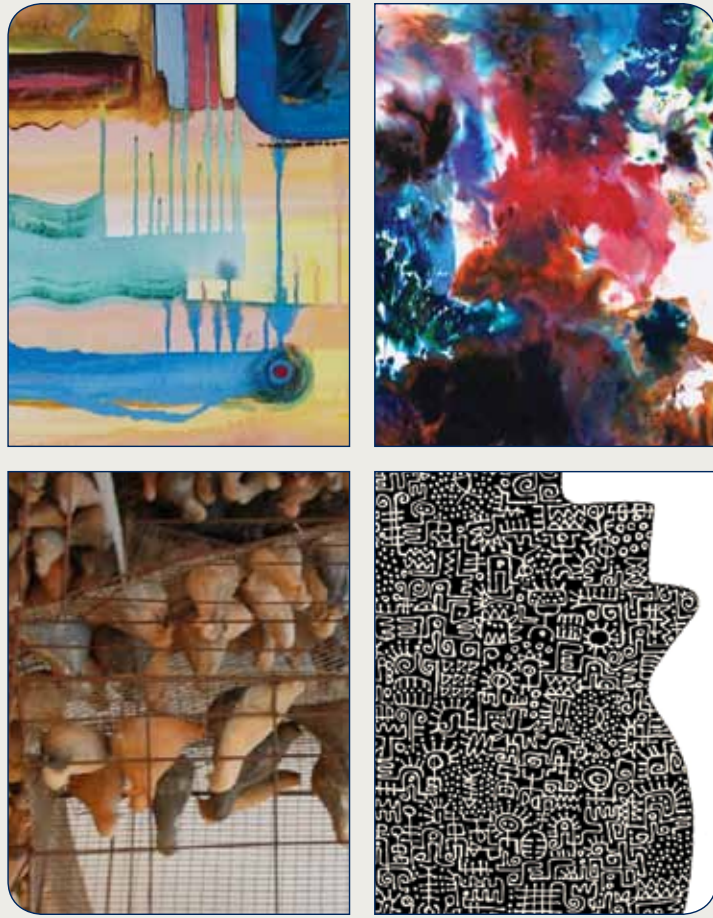
News and perspectives
for friends of the arts

art@umuc

SPRING 2011

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Arts Programs Updates

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the UMUC Arts Program. Visit
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On cover (clockwise from left): 1 Victor Ekpuk, *Head* (detail) 2 Jo Israelson, *Dovecote: 365 Prayers for Peace* (detail) 3 Maya Freelon Asante, *You (Visions)* (detail) 4 Lynn Rybicki, *Illuminance* (detail)

GREETINGS from the President

Dear Friends,

The University of Maryland University College (UMUC) Arts Program has so much in store for the arts community this spring and summer. Already this spring, the program has exhibited the Faculty Art Invitation Exhibition, which closed at the end of May; held an opening reception for Fiori da Rita: Landscapes and Still Life Paintings by Joseph Sheppard to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the opening of The Leroy Merritt Center for the Art of Joseph Sheppard; and opened the Art at the U.S. District Courthouse exhibition, *Beyond Boundaries*: Gary Medovich and Michael Platt.

In addition, I want to recognize the continued success of an exhibition that debuted at UMUC in 2008, *Color in Freedom: Journey Along the Underground Railroad*, which traveled to Geneva, Switzerland, this fall and has continued to be exhibited throughout the United States. It brings me great joy to know that the efforts of UMUC's Arts Program and the artists it supports have been able to touch the lives of so many.

This summer, the Arts Program will host a juried art exhibition that will give us a unique opportunity to sample and recognize the art that is created by those who live our own communities. I am so proud of the program's continued efforts to develop new and exciting ways to promote the exchange of art and ideas. I hope you will join us this spring and summer as we continue to explore art, share ideas, and learn.

Sincerely,

Susan C. Aldridge

Susan C. Aldridge, PhD
President, University of Maryland University College



GREETINGS from the Chair

Dear Friends,

During a recent visit to UMUC's Inn and Conference Center (ICC), I took a walk east to west along the concourse. It was a walk between seasons, from the lush profusion of spring blooms of the Fiori da Rita exhibit that look so real that it was as if I could reach out and touch them to the cool wet blues of Joseph Holston's *Summer Shower*.

It was a walk that took me from The Leroy Merritt Center for the Art of Joseph Sheppard and the yearlong exhibit Fiori da Rita to the inviting seating in the corner by the ICC's west entrance, where visitors are soothed by the Joseph Holston work acquired following the popular Maryland artist's acclaimed 2004 exhibit at UMUC. It was a walk from spring to summer and seasons before and after: I once again explored the permanent galleries and hallways and came upon *Snow on the Pines* by Philip Koch, *Skaters* by Herman Maril, *Winter Garden* by Gladys Goldstein, *Fall Aglow* by David Driskell, and *Fall Turnover* by Peter Gordon.

UMUC's wonderful works of art are part of a large, rich, and diverse collection for all seasons brought together through the years with the unwavering support of the university's leadership, the talents and expertise of the Arts Program staff, the resources and commitment of the Art Advisory Board, and the thoughtful patronage of the friends and supporters of the Arts Program. I invite you to continue to support the Arts Program with your presence at our exhibits and openings, your participation in our programs, and your generous financial contributions. A great university deserves great art.

Sincerely,

Michèle E. Jacobs

Michèle Jacobs
Chair, Art Advisory Board, University of Maryland University College



For Maya Freelon Asante,
TISSUE PAPER BRINGS FREEDOM AND LIGHT

Imagine having the vision and the skill to create an enormous 21-foot sculpture out of tissue paper! Maryland artist Maya Freelon Asante has done just that, creating tissue paper sculptures that magically fuse fragility with strength and structure.

Ubuntu, her 2010 installation for the U.S. embassy in Madagascar, is composed of five-foot sections in which fragments of brilliantly colored “bleeding” tissue paper are pieced together like the patches of a quilt and then attached to a somewhat heavier paper backing. She explains that her sculpture was “inspired by the idea that ‘I Am Because We Are,’ meaning that one tiny scrap may seem insignificant, but when it is combined with many others there is strength and power.” Connectivity is a theme that runs throughout her work. Her intention for this installation was to create a link bridging quilt making and tissue with the textile and fabric work in Madagascar. When she arrived on the site, she worked to find the perfect placement for each of the sections. Versions of the work had been installed previously in Ghana and the United States (in Maine, North Carolina,

New York, Maryland, and California), but at the embassy in Antananarivo they found their final home in this permanent installation. Within the spacious lobby of the embassy, the piece towers over the viewer; the lightweight paper gives the work a kinetic dimension, allowing it to respond to air currents circulating in the room. *Ubuntu* suggests the exuberance, energy, and confidence of the artist herself.

Asante’s great aunt was a quilter, and her influence can be seen in many of the tissue paper sculptures, such as *Ubuntu*, in which the paper is pieced together like a quilt and the seams are exposed.

“The union of the tissue fragments is rooted in my familial quilt-making heritage and the tradition of preservation and resourcefulness,” Asante said. “Since I haven’t discarded a single sheet, each piece speaks to me as a memory of existence and resilience. Independently, a torn piece of paper seems like a scrap of trash, but once unified with others, the force is overwhelming.”

Many writers and artists say that what nourishes them is the excitement of discovery as their work evolves. Asante says that with installations, there are no preconceived ideas about the final outcome. She equates her work to putting together a visual puzzle in which elements such as space and light are factors, as is the layering of colors. She also likens it to improvisation in jazz.

“You know the rules of art and design, yet you allow for chance, so that there is the constant surprise of new discovery,” she said.

Asante comes from a family of distinguished artists, and one could argue that it was her destiny to become an artist. In various ways, she has “collaborated” with members of her family. Her great-grandfather, Allan Randall Freelon Sr., was a painter and educator who supervised art instruction in Philadelphia public schools. He is the subject of one of her tissue ink photo/mono prints. Her mother, Nnenna Freelon, is a Grammy-nominated jazz vocalist who has used Asante’s tissue paper art for the cover of a recording. Her father, architect Philip Goodwin Freelon, designed several of the museums where she has exhibited her work—the Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco, the Stone Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture in Baltimore.

It is no surprise that images of her family are present in her work. She credits them with having nourished her creativity and providing strong encouragement for her to follow her dreams. Her youthful experiments with various media culminated during her time in graduate school at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, where she received an MFA in 2007, and during residencies at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Skowhegan, Maine; and at Brandywine

Workshop in Philadelphia. Her time at each allowed her to explore the potential of the tissue paper medium.

Asante’s grandmother is an especially inspirational figure for the artist. In 2005, Asante discovered a stack of folded, stained tissue paper stored in her grandmother’s basement. What another person might have seen as water-stained and damaged, she was able to envision as a new direction for her art and invented a technique to release the ink in interesting ways. As she exploited the union of paper and water, she realized that there was a strong connection with her grandmother and the past.

“For me, the tissue paper becomes a memory of existence, something that reminds us of something that once was,” Asante said.

In some instances, she used the tissue paper as a brush, painting with dye collected from the tissue. In other cases she has printed from the bleeding tissue directly onto the surface of the paper (tissue ink monoprints, such as *You [Visions]*), layered the tissue fragments together as a collage, or joined the pieces of tissue together to make large-scale sculptures. In addition, her work includes tissue ink mono/photo prints, the culmination of her experimentation with bleeding tissue paper. In these works she combines large-format digital printing of photographs with tissue ink monoprinting. Asante believes that the images of family and historical figures help viewers make connections and allow them to discover themselves within the artwork.

Cute represents another collaboration with family. The tissue ink mono/photo print speaks of connectivity, combining a family photograph—that of her grandmother and her great aunt, the quilt-maker—with the tissue ink monoprinting. Asante has said that she is certain that her grandmother would have been an artist if she had had the opportunity. While the two sisters stand as testimony to barriers of race and gender that existed for their generation, the bursts of color seem to be a perfect visual analog for the vitality of the young women themselves, as though there has been a pulsating transfer of energy from the girls that spreads in time and space. The intensity of the color in the right section of the work stems from the dyes in the tissue papers and the special paper on which Asante prints, which gives a starkness to the white and heightens the vibrancy of the color. The title



of the work comes from the word “cute” that someone wrote across the original photograph. Asante acknowledged her good fortune in having photographs from both sides of her family to incorporate into her artwork.

“For me, tissue paper brings freedom and light, while photography allows for personal connection and unity. The synergistic bond represents a wholeness that we all seek,” she said.

Like many contemporary artists, Asante incorporates elements of her identity in her work, evoking family, race, gender, and memory in ways that are both subtle and unique. *Free Your Mind*, another tissue mono/photo print, fuses a 1911 black-and-white photograph of an elderly Harriet Tubman with an intense overlay of color. She chose the image both for its subject—Tubman was a leader of the Underground Railroad and a resident of Maryland, and the image suggests an archetypal mother figure—and for its formal properties—strong tonal contrasts and enough white so that the color from the tissue comes through. Asante commented that one of the major challenges for her in these works was to find an ideal balance between image and areas of pure color, so that neither dominates. The nonobjective areas should not just be background. In the case of *Free Your Mind*, they complement the image by creating a network of arteries that evokes memories of ancestors and links past to present. For the artist, they suggested the passageway along which Tubman might have led people to freedom, “using the veins and the water flow and the stain to depict that,” according to Asante.

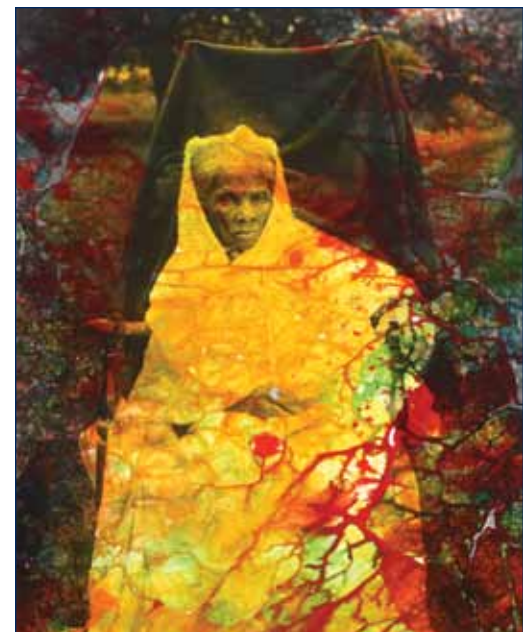
For Asante, being an artist is not just a profession, but is also a way for her to connect with her community. She has worked with children in local schools and arts centers wherever she



Top: *Cute*, 2008, tissue ink mono/photo print, 5 x 11”
 Above: *You [Visions]*, 2008, tissue ink monoprint, 72 x 42”

has lived. Since 2007, Asante has lived in Baltimore. She likes its flourishing arts community and also the support the city gives to the arts. Asante won studio space, the C. Sylvia and Eddie C. Brown Studio in the Bromo Seltzer Arts Tower, in a city-wide competition for emerging artists. In addition to receiving free space for two years, during which she can concentrate on making art, she has also joined a community of fellow artists. Readers can learn more about Asante by visiting her Bromo Seltzer Arts Tower studio in Baltimore, where she participates in open studios on the first Saturday of each month; there, art patrons can witness the unbounded creativity of this young and supremely talented artist. *Material Girls*, a group exhibition at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum in Baltimore includes Asante’s work and opened in February.

■ Harriet E. McNamee, Art Advisory Board Member, University of Maryland University College



Left: *Free Your Mind*, 2008, tissue ink mono/photo print, 29 x 22”/ Right: *Ubuntu*, 2010, tissue paper sculpture, permanent installation at the U.S. embassy in Madagascar

BMRE

Biennial Maryland Regional Juried Art Exhibition
Presented by University of Maryland University College

COMING THIS SUMMER: 1ST BIENNIAL MARYLAND REGIONAL JURIED ART EXHIBITION

UMUC has been showcasing art by renowned and emerging artists for 25 years, but the 1st Biennial Maryland Regional Juried Art Exhibition (BMRE) is the first exhibition of its kind for the Arts Program. The BMRE highlights some of the area's most talented artists and brings their art to the community. The exhibition, which opens

in August, features artwork by artists from throughout the region, including Maryland; Washington, D.C.; and Northern Virginia.

This exhibition has been two years in the making. The Call for Entries was advertised in March and drew 1,010 entries from more than 320 visual

artists. Below is a sampling of those works selected for exhibition. We hope you will join us to view the exhibition in its entirety at the opening reception on Saturday, August 6, 2011, or during regular gallery hours. For details, see the Upcoming Events listing in this newsletter or visit www.umuc.edu/art.



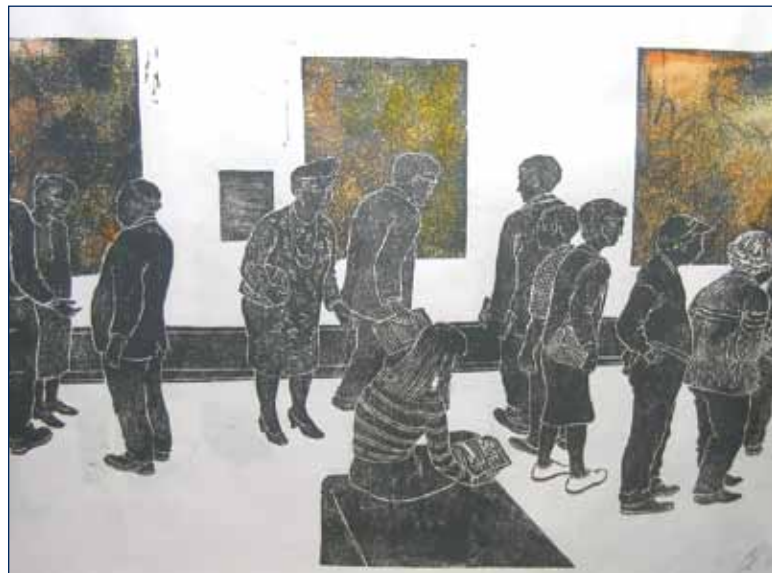
(Clockwise from top left)

Christine Neill
Persephone's Lament, 2010
watercolor and archival inkjet print on paper
23 1/2 x 43 1/2"

Jo Israelson
Dovecote: 365 Prayers for Peace, 2009–2010
ceramics, ash, steel, and sound
48 x 48 x 48"

Andrea Barnes
Tall Woman, Tanzania, 2010
charcoal pencil on Rives BFK paper
44 x 30"

Lila Oliver Asher
Pictures at an Exhibition, 2010
linoleum block print
27 x 69"



Lynn Rybicki *Illuminance*, c. 2007, 40 x 30", acrylic on canvas

WORKS BY LYNN RYBICKI IN THE WEST BUILDING GALLERY

Across the courtyard from the Inn and Conference Center is UMUC's West Building Gallery, a wonderful venue that features exhibitions

of artworks by regional and global artists. This season, the UMUC Arts Program is proud to feature artworks by Lynn Rybicki. Learn more about Rybicki's art by visiting the West Building Gallery and her Web site (www.lynnrybicki.com).

COLOR IN FREEDOM EXHIBITION TRAVELS TO GENEVA

UMUC's groundbreaking exhibition, *Color in Freedom: Journey Along the Underground Railroad*, traveled to Geneva, Switzerland, this fall and has been exhibited throughout the United States over the past three years.

The exhibit's 50 paintings, drawings, and etchings depict renowned artist Joseph Holston's reflections on the Underground Railroad. Holston created the works to capture the essence of the courage and determination required by slaves to escape and to enhance understanding of the condition of slavery and the powerful instinct toward freedom. The exhibition was created in four movements similar to a musical composition, and tracks the flow of events in the lives of those who traveled along the Underground Railroad.



Visitors view works at the *Color in Freedom* exhibition in Geneva.

The *Color in Freedom* exhibition has been an overwhelming success since 2008 in the United States, where it was complemented by an educational symposium and gallery tour at UMUC. A virtual tour of the exhibition is available online at www.umuc.edu/colorinfreedom/virtual_tour.

DID YOU KNOW? LITTLE-KNOWN FACTS ABOUT ARTISTS WITH WORKS ACQUIRED BY OR EXHIBITED AT UMUC

By Linda Derrick

Did you know Victor Ekpuk includes Nsibidi in his art? Nsibidi is an African system of writing that employs graphic signs and codes to convey concepts. Ekpuk's works can be seen at the UMUC Academic Center at Largo.

Did you know Ruth Pettus began working on her series on men in 1984? She was inspired by her travels to London, where she visited the Victoria and Albert Museum and saw Raphael's very sculptural paintings. As she viewed the works, she thought the men would be wearing suits in today's time.

Did you know paintings by **Richard Dempsey** include portraits of Duke Ellington, Joe Louis, and Thurgood Marshall? His artworks were displayed in government buildings and U.S. embassies throughout the world.

Did you know Crisley McCarson was on the board of the Washington Project for the Arts?

Did you know that artworks by **Lynn Rybicki** are featured at UMUC's headquarters in Adelphi, Maryland? You can learn more about this artist at www.lynnrybicki.com.

Did you know Tom Nakashima's father was a second-generation Japanese-American and his mother was a Catholic Canadian-American of German and Irish descent? Some of his family members were interned at a concentration camp while his father served as a surgeon in the Army.



Left: Victor Ekpuk, *Head*, 2006, acrylic on wood, 72 x 45 x 1" / Top, right: Richard Dempsey, *Beeker Street*, c. 1940s, oil on masonite, 27 x 30", Doris Patz Collection of Maryland Artists / Bottom, right: Tom Nakashima, *Sanctuary*, n.d., Ed. 5/17, lithograph, 25 x 30", Gift of Barbara Miller

CELEBRATING ONE YEAR: THE LEROY MERRITT CENTER FOR THE ART OF JOSEPH SHEPPARD

UMUC celebrated the one-year anniversary of the opening of The Leroy Merritt Center for the Art of Joseph Sheppard with a reception on Thursday, April 14, 2011, and showcased Fiori da Rita: Landscapes and Still Life Paintings by Joseph Sheppard.

Sheppard, who is widely known for his narrative paintings of rural and urban life and portraits, attended the reception and met with guests. The exhibition is on display through March 25, 2012, in the Painting Gallery.

BRING ART TO YOUR COMMUNITY— JOIN THE ART ADVISORY BOARD

UMUC is looking for art lovers, artists, and art professionals who are interested in serving on the university's volunteer Art Advisory Board. Board members, who serve an initial term of three years, work closely with the Arts Program director and staff to advise the university president on all aspects of the Arts Program. UMUC's outstanding exhibition program features nationally and internationally known artists as well as established and emerging artists from throughout Maryland. The university's Asian Collection, a particular point of pride for the university, contains one of the most comprehensive collections of Chinese art in the United States—a collection of works that span 10 centuries. If you are interested in joining the board and helping develop one of the Washington, D.C., area's leading arts programs at one of the nation's finest universities, contact Eric Key, arts program director, at 301-985-7937.

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ARTS PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

The Arts Program at University of Maryland University College (UMUC) creates an environment in which its diverse constituents, including members of the university community and the general public, can study and learn about art by directly experiencing it. The Arts Program seeks to promote the university's core values and to provide educational opportunities for lifelong learning. From the research and study of works of art to the teaching applications of each of our exhibitions, the Arts Program will play an increasing role in academic life at the university. With a regional and national focus, the Arts Program is dedicated to the acquisition, preservation, study, exhibition, and interpretation of works of art of the highest quality in a variety of media that represent its constituents and to continuing its historic dedication to Maryland and Asian art.

UPCOMING EVENTS

1ST BIENNIAL MARYLAND REGIONAL JURIED ART EXHIBITION

Monday, August 1–Sunday, October 16, 2011

Opening Reception:
Saturday, August 6, 2011, 3–5 p.m., Arts Program Gallery

The 1st Biennial Maryland Regional Juried Art Exhibition will feature works by new and emerging artists from throughout the region who work in a variety of media. The exhibition provides our community with the opportunity to view the art being produced throughout the region and our communities' artists with a means of showcasing and sharing their works. Jurors for the exhibition include Helen Frederick, professor at George Mason University; Helen Jackson, independent art consultant and curator; and Evangeline J. Montgomery, artist and retired program development officer at the United States Department for the Arts American Program.

TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

Monday, October 31, 2011–Sunday, January 15, 2012

Opening Reception:
Thursday, November 10, 2011, 6–8 p.m., Arts Program Gallery

Take Me To The River is an international collective of artists whose mission is to promote greater understanding among nations and people through cultural projects such as art exhibitions. The collective includes artists from Brazil, Cuba, Egypt, Germany, Pakistan, South Africa, and the United States and has association members from countries such as Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Peru, and Turkey. The organization travels throughout the world and partners with local organizations to curate exhibitions of works by its international group of artists and four to six artists from the host region. The multimedia exhibitions typically include painting, drawing, photography, video, sound, sculpture, and installation and performance art. All the artists are professional working artists with national and international exhibition records. UMUC will host an exhibition, provide promotional materials, including a catalog, host a reception, and coordinate all special educational outreach activities.

INFINITE MIRROR: IMAGES OF AMERICAN IDENTITY

Monday, January 30–Sunday, April 8, 2012

Opening Reception:
Sunday, February 5, 2012, 3–5 p.m., Arts Program Gallery

Infinite Mirror: Images of American Identity is a collection of 70 multimedia works by a culturally diverse group of artists from across the United States. The collection's theme is the use of portraiture and figuration as symbols for emotional and social ideas to depict the current circumstances and experiences of multicultural populations in the United States. Artrain and a group of independent curators selected works of art by established and emerging American artists for inclusion in the exhibition.



BECOME A FRIEND OF THE ARTS AT UMUC

Art enthusiasts in the UMUC community help make the university's visual arts exhibitions, educational lectures, book signings, symposiums, and meet-the-artist receptions possible. Through the Friends of the Arts program, our biggest supporters enjoy a variety of benefits as a thank you for helping UMUC's art program become one of the most recognized in Maryland.

Simply commit to making an annual contribution at one of the following levels and you can join our growing list of friends. Visit www.umuc.edu/art and click on "Join the Friends of the Arts Program," call 240-684-5100, or complete and return the registration form below.

Associate (less than \$35)

Name recognition in the arts newsletter, invitation to exhibit openings

Friend – (\$35–\$99)

Above benefits, plus 10 percent discount on specialty items produced by the Arts Program, 10 percent discount on tickets to nonfundraising events, Arts Program lapel pin

Bronze-Level Friend (\$100–\$249)

Above benefits, plus autographed poster from the collection

Silver-Level Friend (\$250–\$499)

Above benefits, plus name recognition on the donor's wall in the Arts Program Gallery

Gold-Level Friend (\$500–\$999)

Above benefits, plus full-color art catalog from a major UMUC art exhibition

Platinum-Level Friend (\$1,000–\$2,499)

Above benefits, plus VIP invitation to dinner with the guest artist and the university president, 10 percent discount on breakfast or lunch, and 15 percent discount on dinner at the Marriott Garden Restaurant at the UMUC Inn and Conference Center

Citrine-Level Friend (\$2,500–\$4,999)

Above benefits, plus corporate name and logo listing on UMUC Arts Program Web page, name and logo listing on all printed materials for exhibitions and public relations materials for the season

Sapphire-Level Friend (\$5,000 and more)

Above benefits, plus a corporate art exhibition by a local artist coordinated by UMUC (Special requirements apply; see www.umuc.edu/art for details.)

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