

The Art of Being a Student

The exhibits at the Concordia Gallery which change every six weeks, are highlights of the academic year. Though the works of many well-known and accomplished artists have been displayed, the most exciting show of the year features artwork by Concordia's own students. Lori Luethje, class of '02, spoke with art professor, gallery curator and internationally-recognized artist, Serdar Arat, about this year's show.



Study of a Figure On a Chair
by Filadi Kulla

L.L.: Did you see any recurring trends in students' work this year?

S.A.: I encourage students to break away from this notion that art is something precise and photographic. Photography, drawing, painting, writing, music, or whatever, if it's a creative process, you're supposed to find your own way so that a little bit of you seeps into the work. If it does, then it's addictive, as though you are painting your own mind and spirit. That's what I encourage them to do, and I think it happens with most students.

L.L.: Who are Concordia art students? Why do they participate?

S.A.: There are basically two kinds of students. One group comes here with the intent to pursue art while another group has no intention of taking any art at all. If you're an administrator, you have to think creatively. If you're an engineer, you have to think creatively. So, the most profound impact of an art curriculum is to teach people about that creative process, how it's done, how you can personalize it, how you can benefit from it. When students buy into that, it doesn't matter if they wanted to take art or what their major is, they come back and take more.

L.L.: Do you think this experience might impact students later in life?

S.A.: You hope that everything you do in college is going to impact your future. You may never become an artist or incorporate art directly into your job, but hopefully it does something to you as a person. If you take it seriously, it's like holding a mirror to your face. Through your work, you get to see a reflection of yourself.

L.L.: Pick two artists and describe them and their work in the show. Tell us about their evolution as artists.

S.A.: Filadi Kulla, class of '01, has a lot of talent and a lot of skill. When he came here, he was very good at small drawings. In an instant, he could do a very good likeness with excellent detail. Now, he's doing very large-scale works with more psychological and emotional depth. It's not superficial, it's not because there is a teardrop in the eye or because the corners of the mouth are curled down. It's in a brushstroke, the character of a line or the choice of colors. That's the difference between the artist and an illustrator.

Amy Elias, class of '02, has done photography projects for two semesters. She takes different photographs and superimposes them, using two or three different negatives on the same print. That is a very risky, difficult, creative process. She is doing beautifully and has produced some of the most suggestive works in photography.



Group painting of Van Gogh's *Irises* by ART 103 students.