The Local Artists Collection

Many artists featured in the Watson Art Collection are from southeastern North Carolina and their work has been heavily influenced by the landscapes, history and culture of the region. Local artists whose work is represented include Jack Berkman, Samuel Bissette, Ann Conner, Harry Davis, Gladys Faris, Justine Ferreri, Georgesanne Hase, Adelaide Kopotic, Fran Sherman and Virginia Wright-Frierson.

The Children’s Art Collection

The Children's Art Collection includes art by public school children from the U.S. and Japan, and efforts are underway to expand the collection. Current pieces include works by third graders at Walter Bickett Elementary School in Union County, N.C., and works by children at Shiki Elementary School in Osaka, Japan. These works are reflective of the innate creativity of children and the responsibility of educators to encourage that creativity to thrive and grow.

Art and Disabilities Collection

Several of the works in the Watson Art Collection were either created by artists with disabilities or depict subjects with disabilities. One piece in the collection is Love Birds by Harold Crowell, a developmentally disabled artist from Morganton, N.C., whose work has been exhibited and sold worldwide. Three 2002 paintings by Robert Postma, Man Painting, Man Beside Painting and Artist at Work, depict artists with disabilities, and works by these artists are part of the collection. The collection also includes three pieces by Connecticut artist Martha Perske, whose pencil drawings of persons with disabilities have appeared in books, on postage stamps and in magazines.
The Watson School of Education values experiences in the visual and performing arts for its students and faculty. To support and enhance these experiences, the school began a program in 1994 to sponsor a wide range of arts-related activities that provide direct contact with works of art and often with the artists who create them.

The collection began with an initial donation by faculty members Andrew and Hathia Hayes of 32 works by various artists. It has since been enhanced with donations from Samuel Bissette, Harry Davis and Charles Warford as well as additional pieces for the Hayes Collection. Most of the works within the Watson Art Collection are organized into eight separate smaller collections based on the artists who created the works, the donors who provided them to the Watson School or the type of works represented.

One aspect of this program is the Watson Art Collection, a significant permanent collection of many diverse pieces of visual art including oil paintings, watercolor paintings, woodcuts, pencil sketches, ceramics and metal sculpture. These works are displayed throughout the Education Building to be viewed and enjoyed by students, faculty, staff and the general public.

The Hayes Collection
A large number of works in the Watson Art Collection were gifts from faculty members Andrew and Hathia Hayes. As long-time art collectors with eclectic taste, the Haysees have provided the Watson School with works representing numerous artists and many diverse styles. Artists represented in the Hayes Collection include Jack Berkmann, Samuel Bissette, Rose Brinson, Chuang Che, Eugene Clarin, Ann Corner, Preston Doyle, Jill Flink, Edna Hibel, John Howlin, Jansem, Robert Postma, Edna Searles, Steffen Thomas and Virginia Wright-Frierson.

The Davis Collection
Local artist Samuel Bissette, in addition to being included in the Hayes Collection, has donated 35 of his own works to the Watson School. These pieces are depictions (paintings, drawings and electronic reproductions) of interesting and unusual microscopic images of common household items titled Images from the Micro World. The collection also includes nine original paintings that Bissette used as the models for a series of 15 by 17 foot mosaics he installed over the main entrances to Belk department store at Westfield Shoppingtown in Wilmington. These paintings were donated by Belk.

The Art Washes Away from the Soul the Dust of Everyday Life. Pablo Picasso

Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.