SU Art Hits the Road

Curious about the works of French artist Georges Rouault, the photography of 19th-century Japan, or the etchings of James McNeill Whistler? Well, you don't have to visit the University Art Collection (UAC) in Syracuse to view such precious art. Nowadays, you can catch a glimpse of SU's expansive holdings in places like Saginaw, Michigan, and Ashland, Oregon. It's all part of the Traveling Exhibition Program, an initiative the UAC launched in 1992 to provide other academic institutions, galleries, and museums with shows from the collection. "The University really has an encyclopedic collection, so it's great for these exhibitions," says UAC curator David Prince G'83. "It's an endless source of inspiration and a challenge to work with."

The art collection comprises 45,000 objects ranging from paintings, prints, and photographs to sculptures, decorative arts, and textiles. Prince and UAC associate director Domenic Iacono draw on their expertise and interests to produce traveling exhibitions. Iacono, for instance, turned to his long-standing interest in prints to create "Modernist Prints 1900-1955." And Prince called upon his love for telling a story with art to develop "A Tale of Two Cities: Eugene Atget's Paris and Berenice Abbott's New York." In preparing such shows for the road, they can access past offerings, update old exhibitions with new acquisitions, or spin off innumerable themes from, say, just the 19th-century Japanese photography collection. "The nature of the subject can be endless because of the diversity of material and the number of objects," Iacono says. "It's a wonderful capability to have."

At one time, many of these treasures were seldom seen, stored away for safe keeping in UAC headquarters in Sims Hall. Today, however, the UAC's mission reaches beyond serving as a storage facility to encompass programming for both campus and external audiences. "We are excited about making this collection as accessible as we can," Prince says.

Along with its own exhibition space and a new print room, the UAC has a dedicated space in the Lowe Gallery and regular showings at such locales as Lubin House in New York City and Syracuse's Everson Museum. Traveling exhibitions extend this visibility even further. In each of the past two years, more than 50,000 people attended these traveling exhibitions and, in 1999, the UAC will have two running simultaneously for the first time. "We hope the traveling program generates interest with alumni groups," Iacono says. "We want to give alumni the opportunity to have Syracuse get-togethers centered around these exhibitions."

Meanwhile, Iacono, Prince, their staff, and graduate assistants Sean Corcoran and Bridget Carlin from the museum studies program are busy handling the logistics of preparing exhibitions for the road—scheduling, matting and framing, checking object conditions, packaging, and shipping. "The variety of this collection requires us to have a system that works for the different kinds of objects and the other institution's budget, and also allows us to keep the objects safe and secure for the long term," Prince says. "They have to be here for the next generation to see, use, and enjoy."

—Jay Cox

This hand-tinted photograph, Garden at Tokyo, was created by an unknown artist, circa 1880. It is one of 45,000 objects in the University Art Collection.
TRAVELING EXHIBITIONS

JANUARY 4 – FEBRUARY 25
Georges Rouault: Cirque de l'Etoile Filante
The Mitchell Gallery, St. John's College
Annapolis, Maryland

JANUARY 7 – FEBRUARY 13
Art Nouveau Glass and Pottery, and
Impassioned Images: German Expressionist Prints
Schneider Museum of Art
Southern Oregon University
1250 Siskiyou Blvd.
Ashland, Oregon

JANUARY 28 – MARCH 21
A Tale of Two Cities:
Eugene Atget's Paris / Berenice Abbott's New York
Bowdoin College Museum of Art
9400 College Station
Brunswick, Maine

FEBRUARY 6 – APRIL 4
The Etchings and Drypoints of James McNeill Whistler
Saginaw Art Museum
1126 North Michigan Ave.
Saginaw, Michigan

FEBRUARY 15 – MARCH 31
Modernist Prints 1900-1955
Helen Day Art Center
School Street
Stowe, Vermont

MARCH 14 – MAY 16
Impassioned Images: German Expressionist Prints
Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida

APRIL 1 – JUNE 30
A Tale of Two Cities: Eugene Atget’s Paris / Berenice Abbott’s New York
DePaul University Art Gallery
Chicago, Illinois

AUGUST 1 – OCTOBER 31
A Tale of Two Cities:
Eugene Atget’s Paris / Berenice Abbott’s New York
University of Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky

SEPTEMBER 5 – OCTOBER 22
Art Nouveau Glass and Pottery
Kresge Art Museum
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan

Visit the University Art Collection web site at: http://sumweb.syr.edu/suart/