

New Union Art Installation Explores Themes of Identity



Pieces from the Henry-Copeland Permanent Art Collection can be viewed on the third floor of the Union, near the Aquarium Lounge.

As students return to campus, so too do prized pieces of art to the walls of the Carolina Union. Previously placed in storage or otherwise scattered throughout the building, more than 30 works from the Henry-Copeland Permanent Art Collection are now proudly displayed on the third floor of the Union. Begun in 1998, the Union's art collection is now twenty years old and has expanded to include photography, sculpture, and paintings from across the state and the country, featuring many local artists.

Carolina Union Board of Directors member and UNC junior Kierra Pittman said that the theme of the new art collection was identity, something she saw reflected in her favorite pieces in the collection. Jane Filer's 2011 work *Tropical Tea* evoked visits to the Caribbean islands, for example, while Saul Flores' photographs of his 2010 *Walk of the Immigrants* provides an intimate look into Latin American culture and the immigrant journey.

"When we were first presented with the pieces from the collection, we knew we wanted to find pieces that spoke to students," Pittman said.

Pittman said that much of the art had been scattered throughout the Union building, oftentimes hidden or unacknowledged by students. By installing these pieces in one coherent space, Pittman hopes that students will be able to appreciate and enjoy the impressive art the Union has in its collection.

Works by local artists line the walls of this installation, including *When the Saints Go Marching In* by Raleigh artist Eric McRay, and *Midday in the Pit* by Chapel Hill artist Brenda Behr. An untitled work by the Bynum, NC, outsider artist Clyde Jones depicts a few of his famous "critters," animal sculptures made from wood that Jones gave to the Union in 2006.

Another piece, Cornelio Campos' *Realidad Norteña*, depicts Campos' own emotions and experiences relating to his emigration from Mexico to the United States. This piece was previously located in the Campus Y before its display in the Carolina Union. "We thought this piece should be seen," said Pittman, "so we acquired it."

Photographs of student life by former University photographer Dan Sears speak further to the collection's theme of identity, representing Carolina students within the installation.

"The mission of the Carolina Union Board of Directors is to create better places for students," said Pittman. "We wanted to get these pieces out of storage so they could be seen and enjoyed by students."

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