

## Through Manifest Gallery and Drawing Center, UC Faculty, Students, Alumni Make a Difference

Manifest Creative Research Gallery and Drawing Center in Cincinnati's East Walnut Hills neighborhood recently celebrated its sixth anniversary. The organization, founded by UC faculty and students, and operated with cooperation from faculty, students and alumni, is making a difference in the neighborhood and the world.

Manifest Creative Research Gallery and Drawing Center, a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit gallery located in the Cincinnati neighborhood of East Walnut Hills, has a local impact, but an international mission: Encouraging quality in the visual arts.



Street view into Manifest Gallery on Woodburn Avenue.

Exhibits at **Manifest Gallery** have included works by 569 different artists in six seasons of programming. These have often included University of Cincinnati students from UC's College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning (DAAP), UC alumni now living around the world, and numerous international artists and designers.

Because of its ties to UC's DAAP and due to the creative power of art and design, the gallery has not only prospered, it has served as an arts pioneer influencing change in the surrounding neighborhood since it was founded six years ago by two DAAP faculty members and one DAAP student. The founders were **Brigid O'Kane**, associate professor of design, Jason Franz, adjunct assistant professor of design, and DAAP alumna Elizabeth Kauffman. Franz serves as the gallery's executive director, board president and chief curator, while O'Kane is board secretary.



View from the street into Manifest Gallery during a 2010 exhibit.

Recalls Franz, "When we formed the organization and rented the space at 2727 Woodburn, the entire street within a few blocks was either blighted, vacant or clearly decaying. However, we knew that folks were working across the area to turn things around. DeSales Corner was already showing progress. While it was not our *mission* per se to directly impact the progress of the street, it was indeed our *vision* that this would happen due to the power and effect of the visual arts."

When the three founders rented 2727 Woodburn Ave., the Victorian building was vacant and in need of renovation and repair. Now, every unit in the building is rented as apartments, artists' studios or a combination thereof.

Adds Franz, "We don't manage the property. We're only renting space ourselves; however, our presence in 2005 inspired young artists to inquire about

living or working in the building. This resulted in the full house today."



The Mannfest Drawing Center Studio.

Manifest was the first in what has become a mosaic of arts-related organizations to either move into or expand within the neighborhood. Weston Bolling Gallery in O'Bryonville expanded to include a location on Woodburn Avenue. StrebelArt portrait studio opened on the street, as did a shop to include pottery and crafts by local artists. A rug vendor and a local market also opened.

All these recent additions to the street coordinate activities like the Walk on Woodburn, an event where the shops, galleries and restaurants synchronize hours around Manifest's popular exhibit openings.



The Manifest Drawing Room Gallery during the 2005 grand opening.

As with the street, part of Manifest's success is due to its multifaceted nature. It's a gallery space, a drawing center studio to provide a curriculum for teaching artists to offer workshops and classes in drawing, and Manifest Press, which produces two high-end annual international publications featuring contemporary drawing and painting, and which also documents every gallery exhibit in a full color catalog that is then provided to participants and visitors as a means of taking any exhibit home with them. (Manifest has now produced 47 exhibit catalogs.)

States O'Kane, "The Drawing Center Studio is designed to be a continuing education offering in an effort to reach out to students, professors and professionals who generally want more serious study opportunity in drawing."



Tim Parsley instructs students participating in ArtWorks.

The studio, however, is open to all serious-minded individuals wishing to embark on creative study. Manifest's studio has been housed at the Essex Studios complex in Walnut Hills since spring of 2007, and its founding was supported with \$20,000 in grants from the Greater Cincinnati Foundation and the Fine Arts Fund that same year.

An example of the distinctive programming at Manifest is a new concept for an exhibit in the coming season. The new show, TAPPED, will invite student and professor teams to submit works for consideration. The exhibit will be on view January 21 – February 18, 2011.

As a gallery Manifest is unique in that it is one of few professional-level spaces that eagerly accepts submissions by students for inclusion in its highly competitive exhibits (alongside veteran professionals). In addition to TAPPED, the gallery has presented ten student-only exhibits to date – the annual Rites of Passage exhibits for undergrads, and the annual Master Pieces exhibits for graduate students. The 4th annual Master Pieces is currently on view through September 10.

During any given year, Manifest receives responses for open calls for work from artists in nearly every state and scores of different countries, including such remote locations as Australia, Chile, Croatia, Iran, Macedonia, New Zealand, South Africa, and others.

At least thirty-seven people directly associated with UC, whether as alumni, faculty, or students, have had a hand in the formation and ongoing success of Manifest.

Manifest is supported by grants from public and private funders, including the Fine Arts Fund, the Ohio Arts Council, and numerous annual supporting members and donor.

UC faculty or alumni with a past or current role in the gallery include

- Robert Anderson, DAAP MFA graduate, served as a Manifest studio moderator.
- Christy Carr, a UC alumna, provided volunteer design and advising during Manifest's formation.
- **Kristin Cullen**, DAAP associate professor of design, designs Manifest's larger publications.
- Christy Dakin, DAAP interior design alumna, serves on the organization's board.
- Jason Franz, DAAP MFA graduate, current adjunct assistant professor and coordinator of foundation design drawing, co-founder of Manifest, and founding executive director and board president.
- Elizabeth Kauffman, DAAP MFA graduate, co-founder of Manifest and original board member.
- Matthew Litteken, a DAAP MFA graduate, served as an open-critique moderator.
- Constance McClure, DAAP MFA graduate, is a classical drawing instructor at Manifest's Studio.
- Kevin Muenta, DAAP MFA graduate, serves as a volunteer studio moderator at Manifest.
- Daniel O'Connor, a DAAP fine arts grad, is an advanced life-drawing instructor and session moderator.
- Brigid O'Kane, DAAP MFA graduate, current associate professor of design, co-founder of Manifest and current board member.
- Tim Parsley, a DAAP fine arts grad and adjunct instructor of drawing for design, is Manifest's assistant director.
- Jonathan Queen, a fine arts alumnus from DAAP, is instructor of object drawing.
- **Emil Robinson**, DAAP MFA graduate and adjunct instructor of design, leads advanced life-drawing classes at Manifest.
- Andy Schaub, DAAP architecture alumnus, is a past board member of the organization.
- Kim Shifflett, a DAAP MFA graduate, was an open-critique moderator.
- Matt Wizinsky, a DAAP design alumnus, provided volunteer assistance with design for publications.
- **Shane Wolf**, DAAP design alumnus, is a current guest workshop instructor for cast and figure drawing.

Past and current UC students who have interned at Manifest include:

- Karen Brasier
- Lynda Camp
- Michael Englander
- Laura Fisher, current gallery assistant/intern and junior board member
- Max Hackman

- Kate Holterhoff
- Aubrey Kelly
- Christina Kilbane
- Maria Lewis
- Nicole Martinez
- Anna Martinovich
- Brianna McSemek
- Amanda Nurre
- Trevor Ponder
- Elaine Potter
- Jeff Salter
- Aaron Walker
- **Melinda Welch**
- Bruno Zabaglio

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