

Computer arts emerge on campus

Tiffany Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

The idea that the computer is an image-making tool for artists isn't all that farfetched anymore, said Kenneth O'Connell, head of the Fine and Applied Arts Department.

The idea of bringing together what was once perceived as two totally different mindsets, the computer user and the artist, has created a whole new tool for artists.

When computers started appearing in the 1980s, they were basically high-powered calculators. The thought of doing something creative on them was not common in art departments, he said.

"The arts are a creative application," O'Connell said. "Who wants to do something creative with a calculator."

The link between computers and art was forged in the early 1980s with animation.

O'Connell, who has created 12 animated film, looked to the graphics that were seen as tools for science and engineers as something that could enhance animation.

"Animation was a great link for us between film and computers," he said. "One of my areas of teaching was animation and I found my students were going down to Hollywood and getting jobs."

These jobs, he said, involved use of computers. This stirred O'Connell's interest in computers as an artistic tool. He started attending conferences

The international organization SIGGRAPH holds annual conferences that was started as more of a computer graphics hardware show and later a computer graphics software show. The graphics were seen as tools for science and engineers.

"I was one of 50 to 75 people who went with art in mind," O'Connell said.

He is now the Art Gallery chair for the SIGGRAPH conference that will be held in Los Angeles, Calif., in August. He will present a major exhibit of computer art including drawing and painting, interactive installation, digital photography and interactive navigation through animation.

A lot has changed since his interest was piqued in 1979. In 1982 classes in computer graphics and animation were offered. In 1983 the program acquired a computer assisted AVL Loom and were one of three schools in the world to have such a loom. Classes such as Computers in the Darkroom and Computers in Printmaking were introduced.

"In the early '80s we learned to program," O'Connell said. "By 1984 we had actually developed a core" with graphic design, communication, animation and the computer loom.

The Fine and Applied Arts Department at the University now has four faculty members who teach computers in the arts. They have also recently acquired two Silicon Graphics Computers.

The future of the program will be on-line.

University Museum director announces resignation

Amy Columbo
Oregon Daily Emerald

The director of the University Museum of Art announced his resignation Tuesday to accept the same post at Sacramento's prestigious Crocker Art Museum.

Stephen McGough will leave in mid-March after a seven-year tenure as the director of Oregon's campus museum since July, 1988.

Previously, McGough was the associate director of the Elvehjem Museum of Art at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

"This new post offers me many exciting career challenges and the opportunity to head a much larger museum staff," McGough said.

"While I'm sorry to be leaving my colleagues at the University, in Eugene and

throughout the Pacific Northwest, this position is an opportunity I couldn't overlook," he said.

The Crocker Art Museum is the oldest public art museum in the West and is known for its collection of paintings, drawings and sculptures of California's landscape and history.

John Moseley, University provost and vice president for academic affairs, said a replacement has not been named for McGough.

"Under his direction, the museum has built a high-quality team of professional staff and it has attracted a number of significant national and international exhibitions," Moseley said.

Examples include artwork by French sculptor Auguste Rodin.

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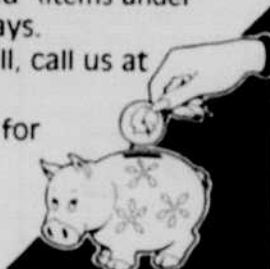
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