

Art: Lopez says he hopes his works provoke thought

Continued from Page 1

pieces to the exhibit, including sketches, graffiti and computer art. Two album covers he created for the Tunnel Ratz and a Hip Hop compilation also will be on display.

"It's a sidewalk high school — you're on your own," Lopez said. "There's no institution for it. You're always a giant eye checking everything out."

Lopez used watercolor markers to draw on the white walls behind two of his pieces. One wall is covered corner to corner with the red writing of a freestyle rap Lopez wrote.

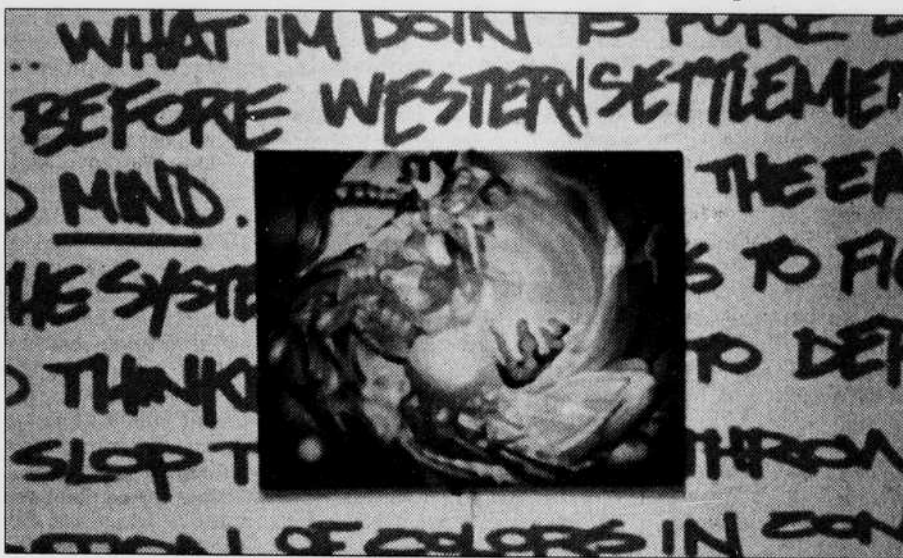
"I wanted a freestyle because I wanted it to be a continuous thought," he said. "It's not the main focus — the artwork is on top, covering up the words, so you can't make out what it says. These are the thoughts that go through my mind when I do the artwork. The issues flow through my mind to the hand."

The other wall depicts green designs and figures surrounding his pieces. The green illustrates the success of money and how it can take away your identity, Lopez said.

When Lopez moved to a middle-class suburb outside of L.A., it affected the way he viewed the world — and it is reflected in his art.

"I saw the ghetto and the middle class and experienced both sides of it," Lopez said.

Political overtones are intertwined with religious and gender issues in several of



LAURA GOSS/Emerald

Steve Lopez painted the center picture with Adobe Photoshop to emulate spray paint. His freestyle prose appears in the background.

Lopez's pieces.

"I want to instigate thought and drop seeds in a person's head," Lopez said. One of his most impressive graffiti pieces spans a whole wall with six custom-made frames, each six feet by eight feet. It uses 36 colors and took a week of 40-hour days of painting with spray cans.

All of his works are untitled because that leaves the artwork's purpose ambiguous, he explained.

"I want them to manifest the work themselves — by giving them the shapes and letting them come up with the ideas," Lopez said. "I want to plant the seed but don't want to tell them how to grow it."

Graf artists use anything they can get their hands on — often sandstone, glass or razors — to create their work, he explained.

Lopez has focused some of his artistic creativity on computer art. Computers offer the capability and tools to use any color,

line or medium in his work.

He began to truly focus on his work three years ago in Eugene. To be recognized as an artist, Lopez knew he would have to be dedicated. Style, guts, smoothness, flair and spray-can control are important emphases for graf artists, he said.

"Once the style is defined, what are you going to do now? Are you in it for fame, political reasons or the spiritualness of the art?" Lopez said graf art originated with the caveman. It is uncontrolled art made for the community, he explained.

"It is art by the people, for the people. Graffiti art is not speaking to an elite group — not technically, not eloquently — but speaking for real."

His background and life experiences show through in his work. It is a natural phenomenon for Lopez to express himself through art, he explained.

"Before my ancestors were kicked out, they were respecting the earth by adorning it with natural art — sand paintings — using the stuff around them."

Graffiti art like his can come under attack as vandalism if created illegally on public property without permission.

"The media use graffiti as a scapegoat," he said. "Graffiti is a symptom."

Lopez hopes his artwork can provoke thought in those that view it.

"Hopefully, they can view it and see that there is a world outside of what you see on television, or when the president talks, or even what you read in the newspaper."

OSPIRG: Honesty Campaign questions group's use of student fees

Continued from Page 1

issues.

This year's activities included the Hunger and Homelessness Cleanup that raised funds for local shelters; streamwalks that clean up Oregon waterways; pesticide research; and a national education campaign about endangered species. Other campaigns sought to educate students about recycling, toxins, banking and ATM fees, renters' rights and voter registration.

"We focus on grassroots activism, trying to empower people to help make change," said Glenda Marshall, chair of OSPIRG's state board of directors, which sets statewide policy for the group.

While OSPIRG claims wide support from students and faculty, Jonathan Collegio, the director of the Honesty Campaign committee, said he believes OSPIRG receives excessive funding from student incidental fees.

He formed the campaign with other students to review "wasteful spending in student government," according to the Honesty Campaign's Web page. The site is linked from gladstone.uoregon.edu/~america.

"It doesn't cost that much to bring awareness to issues like hunger and homelessness, pesticides and streamwalks. All the awareness activities are volunteer," Collegio said. "I think what

they do is all good stuff, but it's not how student fees are supposed to be spent."

OSPIRG's funding is pooled with the three other schools at the statewide PIRG office in Portland. The funding is then allocated to each chapter by the statewide student PIRG board.

The University funds 67 percent of the state budget, according to the group's draft budget submitted to the Programs Finance Committee last year.

Collegio estimates only 10 percent of the University's OSPIRG funding is spent on campus. According to OSPIRG's statewide budget, \$115,000 out of a total of \$218,000 goes to salaried staff positions.

OSPIRG leaders defend using money for staff positions, arguing that it is necessary to have experts trained in research, writing and organization.

"You need to have paid staff [in Portland] that can offer expertise and continuity in order to make changes on a state and national level," Marshall said.

OSPIRG student leaders said pooling the groups' money is the most effective way to fight the deep pockets of powerful corporate interests.

"Students have no money, and people like the pesticide industry do," Marshall said.

OSPIRG has thus far not released a line-item budget detailing how much money in the state pool is spent on campus. Olson said it would be difficult to break down the budget by individual campuses because chapters share costs and work on similar, often statewide projects. This makes an exact accounting unnecessary, he said.

"It's ridiculous to try to micro-manage a statewide organization at the campus level," ASUO President Bill Miner said. "It's just more natural to do it this way."

But critics disagree, arguing that almost all other groups are required to submit a line-item budget.

"They get so much for so little and it's not cost effective," Student Senator Jenna Wasson said. "How can they be in the public interest if they won't ever allow people to know how they foot the bill and where their money goes?"

Currently, ASUO programs funded by ballot measure do not have to provide a line-item budget. Wasson proposed an earlier ballot measure in the Student Senate that would have required every

student group funded by incidental fees including OSPIRG to submit a line-item budget. But her proposal was voted down by a majority last month.

The Honesty Campaign's source of funding has also come under fire by OSPIRG supporters. Miner said in a press release dated April 17

that the Honesty Campaign was being funded by "an influx of special-interest, right-wing money" that amounted to thousands of dollars.

Collegio denied he had received any outside funding. A campaign

expenditures document filed with the ASUO Elections Board showed that Honesty Campaign expenditures totaled \$177.30 and came from five students. According to the filing, the only unaccounted cost was printing, which Collegio said was done by Michael McCoy, who is the father of one of Collegio's friends and has no affiliation with the College Republicans or any knowledge of the OSPIRG issue before the donation.

Robert Wasson, multicultural

"How can they be in the public interest if they won't ever allow people to know how they foot the bill and where their money goes?"

Jenna Wasson
Student Senator

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