

Museum of Art + beer + wine + music = MusEvenings!

■ The University museum is branching out by offering weekly open houses

By Ben Romano
Oregon Daily Emerald

The quiet din of conversation and music echoes through the galleries of the University Museum of Art. Students, faculty and community members gather at the museum to talk about art, enjoy refreshments and take in a lecture, workshop or concert at an event called MusEvenings!

MusEvenings! is the art museum's weekly open house program. The museum stays open until 8 p.m. every Wednesday night and offers appetizers, drinks and entertainment at 6 p.m.

The entertainment varies every week. MusEvenings! organizers try to find a balance between scholarly lectures, workshops and musical performances that enhance temporary exhibits and reflect the museum's Northwest, Asian or European collections, said Lisa Abia-Smith, museum director of education and outreach.

Lecture topics include graphic design, poetry readings and artist and gallery talks. Workshops, some of which require a small fee for materials, teach tai chi, yoga and holiday wreath-making, she said.

The program began three years ago as a way to reach out to community members and create an alternative for students who want to socialize, Abia-Smith said.

"Students want a place where they can socialize that's not a traditional bar scene," Abia-Smith said. "They feel they can come and have continuity. They're here

with people who have similar interests."

Free food and cheap beer and wine are also major draws for many students.

"This is such a great deal here," junior fine arts major Sean McCleary said as he paid for his Deschutes Black Butte Porter. "It's much better than going to a bar, plus you get some culture."

A table hosted by University Catering has fruit, cheese and crackers as well as Oregon micro-brews and wines for \$1. Non-alcoholic beverages such as sparkling apple cider are also available.

"I come and enjoy the food and talk about art" senior dance major Dawn Tuman said. "You know, wine and cheese and art, they all go together."

Some students expressed concern about shortages of refreshments at the event.

"My recommendation would be for [University] Catering to order more beer, food and wine for the masses," said Matthew Rutman, senior environmental studies major. "But really, it's about the art."

Community members enjoy the museum's extended hours and free admission. During normal business hours, the admission is a suggested \$3 donation.

"The after-work hours are really handy," said Max Vollmer, a furniture designer in the Eugene area. Vollmer said his work schedule prevented him from visiting the museum during its normal hours.

For some community members, MusEvenings! is a chance to meet with other art enthusiasts.

"I think it's a really good program in that it has invited more people that weren't coming to the museum very often to come," said



Scott Barnett Emerald

Wednesday evenings at 5:30 p.m., the University Museum of Art offers free snacks and \$1 beer and wine for art appreciators to enjoy.

Greg Edblom, a Eugene native who has been attending MusEvenings! for more than two years.

Attendance at MusEvenings! varies from 75 to 300 people. The program has seen a 70 percent increase in attendance since it began in September of 1996. Overall, museum attendance is up 38 percent from last year.

On lecture nights, the crowd tends to be 60 percent community members and 40 percent students, while the more social atmosphere of music nights draws a crowd of about 70 percent students and 30 percent community members, Abia-Smith said.

In April, the MusEvenings! program was honored by the American Association of Museums as one of the eight most innovative programs for young adults, Abia-Smith said.

"The program is pretty non-traditional. There's a chance to socialize and learn about art," she said.

The cost of MusEvenings! comes directly out of the art museum's general operating budget.

"We don't receive student funds for this at all," Abia-Smith said.

Seed money for the program came from the Oregon Community Foundation, two years ago.

Fall schedule

November 10 Music

November 17 Artist's Talk
Kate Wagley, metalsmith;
Margaret Prentice, printmaker

December 1 Contact 2000: dance project

December 6 Jazz Music Night:
Holiday wreath-making workshop,
\$5 for materials

The museum is currently in search of a new sponsor. Banks and corporate foundations have been approached, she said.

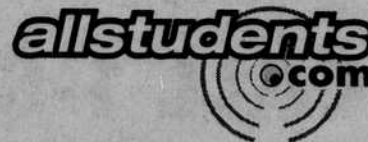
GUESS WHICH ONE IS GETTING PAID?



CORBIS/Dean Conger

TAKE NOTES. GET PAID.

You have to go to class anyway, so why not get paid to do it?
Apply now @ allstudents.com or call 1-888-640-8810. Free online lecture notes, access to campus email, your virtual day planner.



Read Jake Ortman's Computer & Technology column. Only at www.dailyemerald.com