

# Visiting artist ignites emotions and stirs up controversy

by Christi Snavelly  
Opinion Editor

Pauling Gallery is featuring a new show by Portland artist Laurie Balmuth until Feb. 9.

Balmuth is a printmaker and mixed media artist who has received two degrees in art, a BFA in painting and a BFA in printmaking. She is a member of a Co-op gallery in New York City that features work by woman artists who might not get a chance to be seen otherwise.

Last Wednesday, at the show's opening, Balmuth had a reception and slide presentation in which she spoke to an overflowing room about her early work and its evolution to what it is now.

Balmuth's art takes past works in art history and places them on non-traditional objects such as washing machine lids, refrigerator doors and saws.

Balmuth described her choices for pieces for her work. "Artists are reflectors and receptors of the culture that they're in, and the surroundings that they find themselves in. So, we find ourselves in surroundings that are mostly manmade and the barrage of media all the time. Some of us, I know, have more significant relationships with machines in our lives than we do with people. The art is going to reflect that."

During her presentation, Balmuth described her work as a medium to focus on women in

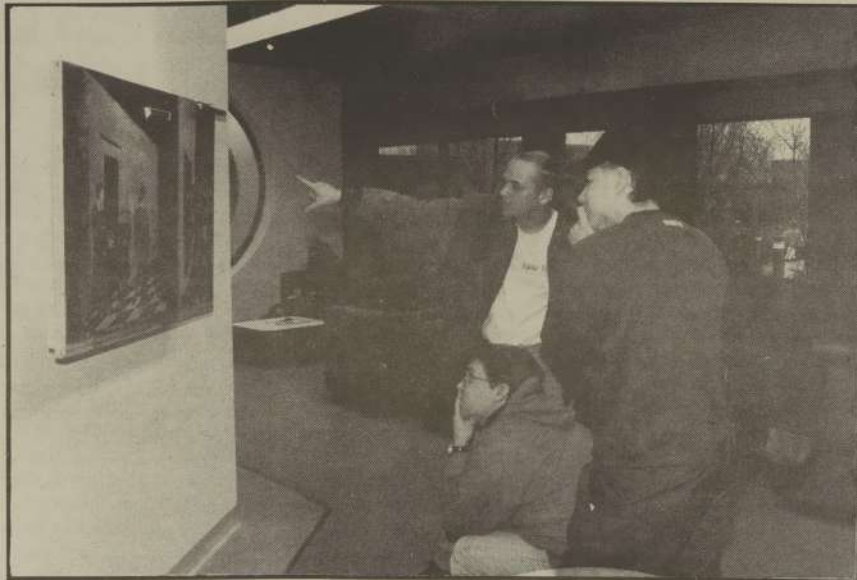


Photo by Christi Snavelly

Students and staff appreciate Laura Balmuth's artwork on display in Pauling Gallery.

much more powerful roles than they were when she was growing up.

"I began to explore the entire package of the perfect woman who had a wasp waist, the torpedo Bra. She was the perfect mother, blond hair, always cheerful and you knew that she was not only an excellent mother and maid, but a hell of a sex machine."

Towards the end of the presentation, a small group of men expressed a certain amount of hostility toward Balmuth's view

of the art. One man asked Balmuth about what seemed to him her "over use of male sexuality" in her pieces.

Her response to his question was also an attempt to clarify what she wants to accomplish through her work. "I'm very interested in the phallogocentric nature of our culture. The way it's imbedded in our art history is very telling, and so this is one of the subjects that I like to use. It's also part of validating the woman's point of view, which is something

I'm very interested in."

Some members of the audience commented on her use of religious art in her work and expressed discomfort with her choices and methods in her pieces. Asked about any criticism about her work, Balmuth said that for the most part she doesn't have opposition. She attributes much of that to the beauty of the art.

She did, however, make an almost foreshadowing comment: "I've had a few problems. People feel that because I call some of the

religious myths as they are depicted in art history into question, that I'm irreligious, and I'm really not; I'm just calling some of those myths into question."

Before the close of the lecture, Clackamas Instructor Gisele Tierney, who brought her Communication Between the Sexes class to the show, made one final comment: "I want you to notice how deeply rooted your beliefs about gender are; where did you get them? That's what's being called into question. I didn't mean you couldn't listen because you didn't hear it; I'm saying, what filters are you listening through?"

"I want you to think about the idea of perception, because this is what she's (Balmuth) been talking about the whole time. Please think about where you're coming from, and what's been tweaked for you. That's a huge part of experiencing art and experiencing gender-awareness."

By igniting the emotions that many of the students expressed, Balmuth accomplished what she wants to do...get people to re-evaluate how they think.

Balmuth's work is gaining commercial popularity; Microsoft Co. has some of her pieces, and although they haven't made any final decisions, she feels confident in her abilities.

# Students find real life challenges in an engineering orientation class

by Christi Snavelly  
Opinion Editor

Imagine walking into your first day of class, being split into a group of three other people you most likely don't know and then being told you have to give a five to seven minute presentation on a topic of the instructor's choice sometime within the quarter.

This is just what students encountered when they began their first year of Engineering Orientation class last quarter.

"They have been giving really outstanding presentations," said Ed Landauer, instructor and department chair of Engineering

Science. "Each week they got better and better."

Each group was given a topic and a week to gather the information. They had the freedom to decide how they wanted to present the information.

Topics ranged from anything that is pertinent to engineering today. Four of the eight speeches were on the light rail, due to the impact on the local community and the easy access to the information on hand.

When each group finished the presentations, they had a class critique. This enabled the students to give each other constructive

criticism.

Landauer, who was once a manager at an engineering firm in Washington, said their office required potential employees to give a 10-minute presentation as part of their interview. Landauer said that a good presentation reflected a better potential employee.

The course covers making presentations, but this is the first time that Landauer has placed so much emphasis on them. "This is real life for an engineer," he said. The speeches were such a success that he believes they will be an addition to his courses forever.

# Seasoned Adults winter program commences

by Donny Kemp  
Staff Writer

The Seasoned Adult Enrichment Program kicks off its winter program on February 1.

The Seasoned Adult Enrichment Program is a program that is designed to entertain and educate older adults. It allows county residents to study a variety of topics from religion, to travel.

The Seasoned Adult Enrichment Program was started in the Spring of 1993 by the Elderhostel-Institute Network, an organization which works to improve the lives of older adults. According to Debbie Baker, who is the link between the college and the program, says that the reaction has been positive. "There has been a real good response to the program."

Part of the program's success may be due to the fact that it is run solely by older adults. "It's for them, by them," Baker said.

Seminar topics for the winter term range from computers, to Shakespeare, to the environment. There are seven seminars in all, each lasting for no more than two hours, except for the last session, which is a combination theatre party and social. A \$15 membership fee will allow you to attend all of the winter term sessions, or you can pay \$3 for each session that you attend. Everyone is welcomed to attend.

For more information about the Seasoned Adult Enrichment Program, contact Debbie Baker at 657-6958, ext. 3212.

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