Da Vinci display in gallery; IBM hosts genius' works

Between 50 and 75 people attended the opening reception of the Leonardo da Vinci exhibition last Saturday in the University Art Gallery.

The exhibition, sponsored by the IBM Corp., features some of da Vinci's noted inventions. Weapons of war, gear-driven odometers and early designs of flying machines are all part of the traveling display, which was begun in 1951 as a stimulus to creative curiosity.

Wallace J. Thomasini, chairman of the school of art at Iowa University, said, "Leonardo was the most mysterious and most complex of individuals.

"There are 32,000 pages of notes and drawings that he left at his death."

The models included in the show were recreated from these drawings and notes. Da Vinci's foresight is seen in the scaling ladder, which is similar to those used by modern fire fighters, and the triple-tiered machine gun and military tank used in contemporary warfare. Da Vinci also had a notion of the parachute, where, in his words, "a man could throw himself down from the great height without suffering any injury."

Thomasini described the many talents of da Vinci, including his skill in engineering. "He could design and invent war implements and all kinds of engineering feats, canals and waterways," he said, "He presents himself as an engineer, scientist and military genius."

Thomasini also said most of da Vinci's inventions went unheeded in his day. "It is not until the 20th century that most of the things that da Vinci predicted or tried to work with have actually come to pass," he said.

The exhibition will run until October 21, with hours from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Mondays through Saturdays and from noon to 4 p.m. on Sundays.