Art gallery featuring 3

"Sensitive to the tradition: Contemporary photographs in the manner of the 19th Century," is the theme of the current show in the University art gallery. The show can be seen Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. through Feb. 27 in the Fine Arts building.

The show features the gravure work of Judy Natal, the platinum-palladium photographs of Tom Shillea and the print-out paper presentations of Jeffrey Wolin.

According to the exhibition's organizer, photography professor, Michael Flecky, S.J., all three of these photographic forms are nearly extinct and that is the reason he asked the photographers to display their work at Creighton.

"I think it is important that people see photographs done in this manner while they are still available," Flecky said. "These forms have some special qualities that today's forms lack."

Flecky said these forms of printing and etching produce deep tonalities and sharp contrasts. "These photographs are costly and time consuming, but they have a special beauty that you hardly ever see anymore," Flecky said.

The rarest of the three methods is gravure. Natal, who was present at the show's Jan. 26 opening, believes herself to be the only photographer in the world, who is actively practicing the method. "A handful of people claim to know how to do it," she said, "but none of them are using it on a daily basis."

The gravure method, according to Natal, consists of transferring a negative to a copper plate. The plate is then etched, inked and printed on paper.

Most of the photographs she takes, however, never make it on to a plate at all. "The copper plates are so expensive that I can only afford to print my best photographs," she said.

Natal, who teaches at Syracuse University in Rochester, N.Y., has been working in gravure for nearly a decade. "I feel better all the time about my work," she said. "I feel that my craft has improved and that my photographs today are much more sophisticated."

Shillea's platinum-palladium method is more widely practiced than Natal's gravure but it is also near extinction. The platinum-palladium method, according to Flecky, consists of exposing a large format negative to a plate coated with a platinum-palladium emulsion. The whole thing is then exposed to sunlight.

"The platinum-palladium method yields deeper tones which give Shillea's photographs the sensual quality he wants," Flecky said.

Wolin's print-out-method is similar to the platinum-palladium method in that it also utilizes large format negatives. "The type of negative is 8x10 as compared with the usual negative size of about 2x2," Flecky said. "The negative is brought in contact with print-out paper and then both are exposed to sunlight."