Steiner combines drawing, painting and biology

by Cristina Flagler

Patrick Steiner, a Fine Arts senior with a biology major in mind and took art courses as a release from biology courses because he enjoyed art, he said. Then, in his sophomore year he decided to become a Fine Arts major although he never put biology aside.

Steiner's drawings and paintings can be categorized as graphic and realistic. "I try to be very realistic in my work — almost photographic," Steiner said.

Steiner's artistic work immediately grabs the attention of the viewer because the subject matter is highly recognizable, he said. Although his art pieces are what they seem to be, there are many other elements contained in them which the viewer can search for.

"I try to get a sculptural quality in my work, by creating a roundness effect on a two-dimensional medium," Steiner said. He has always liked to work with clay and this artistic medium has helped him in the creation of his drawings and paintings.

Roundness effect

Steiner's technique for the "roundness" look is effected by depicting black against white edges or dark edges against light ones. He then works from those edges, breaking into gray tonalities for black and white art work or into different color tonalities for color works.

Steiner uses a lot of photographs for his artistic work. He normally grids out photographs and then transfers the grid into the canvas, he said.

"My next painting will be from a recurring dream, so, I won't be using any kind of photograph, he said. However, Steiner feels it will still have realistic features as my other work and will "hit the viewer right away."

High contrast

Steiner gives his drawings and paintings higher contrast qualities than those of the photographs he uses, thus intensifying the dramatical effects.

Photography has helped Steiner in being more alert when viewing the world that surrounds him, he said. He now pays more attention to high contrast situations and shadows, and has a better look upon intensity and subtleties of color because of color photography.

Composition is another element that photography has helped him with. "I now compose a photograph when I am actually taking it, instead of composing it when using the enlarger," he said.

Steiner admires Leonardo da Vinci's style of drawing, saying his own work shows a lot of da Vinci's anatomical elements.

Loves to study people

Steiner said he loves to observe and study people. He is interested in the functionality of the human body, he said. He looks at how people's anatomical structures carry themselves, he said.

"I have always been interested in the physical and emotional limitations of humans; in how they have to live their lives with what they were given," he said.

Steiner loves art because of the concentration required in the creative process. Also, he feels that within the artistic world he is producing and completing something.

"I never felt like accomplishing anything in the scientific world," he said, "but I can see growth accomplished by gratifying elements in the artistic world."

Talent runs in family

Steiner's artistic talent runs in his family. His father, a chemist who died five years ago, always liked art, Steiner said. His father played the piano and together with Steiner's aunt they made some albums of Hungarian songs. Also, Steiner said that his mother was a singer.

Steiner said his father helped him a lot in viewing the world. He took him all over the United States showing him the beauty of the country and making him appreciate the things that surrounded him.

Sees world better

His father's influence together with art has helped Steiner in seeing the world better and paying more attention to detail.

Steiner is also involved in the musical world. He was one of the members of the local musical group "Finest Hour."

"I started to play the piano when I was five and then I also played the tuba, string bass and electric bass," Steiner said.

Before becoming a member of "Finest Hour" he belonged to a jazz group in Chicago, Ill.