Art Gallery's season opening features Thein painting exhibit

Creighton Fine Arts Gallery opened its doors Sept. 14 with John Thein's painting exhibition. Thein, a member of the Creighton Fine Arts faculty, has been teaching here for eight years.

Thein's paintings are characterized by the use of water-colors, ink and pencil within the same work. The originality of his paintings is emphasized by their collage qualities.

Thein says all of his paintings are figurative oriented. "In all of them the human being is involved," he said. "Some of the pieces present the human figure in a quiet environment where others present it in a violent one."

Reds, oranges and earthy colors are abundant in Thein's paintings. But he also likes the qualities of black. "Black can be elegant or aggressive depending on what other colors or forms I combine it with," he said.

Thein said he cannot choose his favorite painting. "I cannot compare my works and say some are better than others because all of them represent different moods," he said. "If I did that, I would deny parts of myself."

Thein said he believes in freedom of creation. "The artist's creativity shouldn't be stopped by obstacles. He follows a path in which the agility of continuous exploring and new ways of artistic expression is basic," he said.

The environment which surrounds the artist is critical, Thein said.

"The artist constantly picks up fragments of the outer world which have captured his attention. These fragments are stored in his mind and later on, these structures and colors are recalled and shown in his art, he said.

Two elements which have helped Thein in his paintings are photography and sculpture. Thein said that photography especially has helped him in evaluating the form, structure and composition of his paintings.

He said photography helps him see his pieces as an outsider would. This gives him a clear view of the interrelationship of all elements which are involved in his work.

This is the second exhibition Thein has participated in this year. The first one was at the Milwaukee Arts Center last January.

Now, Thein is working on other pieces which will be featured in two other exhibits, one at Concordia College and one at Hastings College in Nebraska.

He also plans on having another exhibit next April in Sioux City, Ia. This exhibit, which will feature Contemporary Symbolism, will be put together by six artists each representing one of the midwestern states.

Thein's work will be on display in the Fine Arts Gallery until Oct. 9.