

by Kathy PUNCHES '96, Director of Public Relations and Marketing

They are a study in contrasts, the pair of full-time faculty members in the Defiance College art department. One has been at his calling for four decades, creating paintings, prints and ceramics inspired by his Midwestern roots. The other, who sees himself as a craftsman and designer of functional pieces, has created nearly all of his art in the new millennium.

But Doug Fiely and Jason Stockman consider themselves a good professional match. Their talents, interests and life experiences, though vastly different, complement each other, all for the benefit of their students. "We have this balance," observes Fiely. "We communicate, bounce ideas off one another. We bring students to each other. We have a real, healthy balance in our differences."

Stockman adds, "That balance is not just in our teaching methods. We respect each other's opinions and thoughts."

They think of their alliance as being much like the Bauhaus, a school in Germany in the 1920s and early 1930s that united art and design into a single creative expression. The style became popular and was a significant influence on modern design.

Fiely the artist claims to suffer from technophobia, while Stockman embraces new ways of incorporating technology into art. This year he will be installing a 3-D printer in the department "so students can take action with their ideas." A 3-D printer creates three-dimensional solid objects from digital designs utilizing an additive process in which objects are built up in layers. They hope to work with the science department to explore mediums other than plastic that might be used, materials that are recyclable or biodegradable.

"Our classes are becoming more updated for what the 21st century student is going to need in the art world," explains Stockman. He says art and technology can co-exist. "Artists need to embrace technology to make something new. I don't know who invented the camera, but I know that Ansel Adams made great photographs. We need to, as artists, adapt and merge our students into the commercial realm. Companies need students to think outside the box. People with money will be controlling the art world, investing in young adults."

"In this department, we don't believe the past and future exist in silos," says Fiely. He teaches the study of anatomy, the

Much Like the Bauhaus

ART:
A Study in Contrasts



Senior Kayla Mengerink in the printmaking lab.

representation of form. “It’s the idea of observing, using line and form that can grow in any direction such as contemporary forms in ceramics.”

Citing senior art major Kayla Mengerink, Fiely says she first learned technique, then was able to push ahead into a graphic, non-subject way in her printmaking. “In Kayla’s work, you can see the connection and then the realization,” says Stockman. “Her work now is very geometric, line-based. She learned to use the line from Doug’s classroom.” Kayla plans to pursue a master of fine arts degree after graduation.

One thing that Fiely and Stockman do have in common, and it is a valuable lesson for students, is that both are practicing artists. “We show and sell a lot – art shows, other universities, other galleries,” says Stockman. “We’re very active in our scholarly field, and we encourage that with our students. We’re

working, and they need to work too.”

Stockman teaches a class in professional marketing for art students, professional practices in art that help prepare students for the outside world.

The department has seen numerous physical improvements over the past year – in addition to the anticipated arrival of a 3-D printer, there are a new printmaking lab and an improved ceramics area.

The future is bright for students entering the art world. From traditional forms to industrial and commercial design and packaging, students will have new and exciting avenues to explore. In the art department at Defiance College, they will reap the benefits of two talented professors whose artistic philosophies and backgrounds meld to create a diverse yet seamless program. ♦

“Working closely with Professors Stockman and Fiely has prepared me for the challenges of graduate school. Their encouragement has given me the confidence to further my education. Working in the new printmaking room this year has allowed me to produce more work and push the boundaries of my ideas within the printmaking process.”

*Kayla Mengerink,
art major*

“I use modern ideas in my work, but not in a technical way. I’m not able to sit at a machine and push buttons effectively. I have no inner desire to learn the process. I’m an observational artist.”

*Doug Fiely,
assistant professor of art*

“We are both contemporary artists. Doug uses older styles that are still valid today, and I’m using cutting-edge technology. It doesn’t make either of our methods less valid, but it gives students more knowledge.”

*Jason Stockman,
assistant professor of art*