

MUSING@THEHELM



When in Rome: front row: **Maggie Prosser, Emily Berg, Michael Jonagan, Julia Krummrich**
back row: **Dan Rozier, Dan Quinn, Tasneem Kaleem, Danny Snider, Susan Mittenzwei, Suzanne Chouteau, Chris Bedel, Eli Bedel, Catherine Stahl, Drew Langton**

This issue features two of our alumnae who have found art's healing powers as vocation and avocation. Dr. Kelly Cahill Roberts (B.A. 2000) has woven literally and figuratively a complex blanket of art practice, education and research that has led her from the studio to a M.A. in Art Therapy to a Ph.D. in Counselor Education, all channeling her creative gifts as artist/counselor to bring solace and perspective to persons in difficult circumstances.

Our other featured alum, Susan Wood Schaefer (B.A. 1967) after being diagnosed with *Retinitis Pigmentosa* in 1971, thought she might never make art again due to this degenerative eye disease. But after talking with her former art professor, Sr. Rosine, at her 15th college reunion, the ever-optimistic and positive nun persuaded her that she still could and should make art. This affirmation sent Susan back into the studio and she tells us her tale of determination, inspiration and success that is not just hers but is shared with others coping with disabilities. (As an aside, Susan recently donated three of her paintings to Xavier's Art Auction for Rwanda—all three paintings earned important dollars for orphaned Rwandan youth.)

What strikes me most about these two great

women and their stories is the gift they both find and share in their love of art. Sure it seems simple in concept, but in practice we all know that it is much more complex and demanding to sustain the level of creativity and commitment to art that their journeys have thus far required. This summer our 5th Art in Rome class was offered in Italy and once again I had the enormous pleasure to work with eleven exceptional young people, both art and non-art majors. Like Kelly and Susan, these students experienced the beauty and sustenance that art can give them both as viewers and makers. An added bonus this year was that my husband and son joined us in the latter part of the program and thus became two more students who contributed to the energy and vitality of the group. I know I join my very fine colleagues in the Department of Art when I say that we are indeed honored to teach students about art and our respective art disciplines—it is a gift we love to share and in turn, the reward of watching students take our teaching and grow it into their own is priceless.

Keep on the good red path and share art with those you love!

Peace and joy!

— Suzanne Michele Chouteau



It's a BOY!

Jonathan Gibson, assistant professor in graphic design/ photography, and his wife Monica welcomed baby Grant on March 22. He was welcomed home by his big brother, Pratt.

Art Award

Senior **Lily K. Jensen** was awarded the University Art Award during the April 18, 2009 All-Honors Day Program. Congratulations Lily!

Scholarship Reminder

Alumni, friends and prospective students are reminded that candidates for the **McAuley Scholarship** must apply and be accepted for Early Action. The Early Action deadline is December 1. Call (513) 745-3811 or check out our website at www.xavier.edu/art for scholarship details.

Passages + Personals

Rafael Alvarez, BA, 1997: Started his own business in West Chester, OH, Casa Bella Home Interiors, offering custom window treatments, furniture, accessories, rugs, staging, etc.

Amy Backert Gonshak, BA, 1995: Received a master's in counseling and is currently a third year doctoral student in Counseling Psychology.

Britany Baker, AB, 1991: Runs the art department at LEO Weekly, Louisville's version of Cincinnati's City Beat.

Jeanine Boutiere, BFA, 2005 & M.Ed., 2007: Is a full-time art teacher at her alma mater, Ursuline Academy.

Ai-ling Chang, BFA, 2006: Received an MFA in Photography from SCAD this March. She is running a non-profit arts organization in Atlanta.

Scott de Fassel, BAU, 2003: Began a web design and print design business with his father. He recently had an Ohio hospital purchase some of his photography.

Mary Elfers, BA, 2002: is teaching art at an elementary school in Georgia.

Jackie Glaser, BA, 1999: married in July and moved to Italy!

Jeff Hampel, BFA, 1995: is using the minor in German he received while at XU. Jeff is a German speaking flight attendant for Delta airlines.

Lauren Jarrold, BA, 2006: after doing a lot of traveling, Lauren is working for AmeriCorps in Montana.

Ricky Lewis, BAU, 2001: Received an MFA in Animation from SCAD and is currently the Lead Animation & Graphic Artist for a production company in Burbank, CA.

Monica Mitchell Namyar, BA, 1992: is teaching art at Beechwood High School in Northern Kentucky.

Maria McCafferty Petrusis, BA, 2003: welcomed a beautiful daughter into her family in June. Maria teaches high school art in Cleveland.

Chris Meeks, BA, 2004: Working as lead web designer for Gallup, Inc.

Erin Murphy, BFA, 2007: is the Art Director for The Food Group in Chicago, IL.

Katie Pfierman, BFA, 2008: is working at Cincinnati Parent Magazine doing advertising and editorial layout.

Terri Scheid, BFA, 1992: Currently teaches art at five different elementary schools in California.

Xavier University Gallery News

October 2 – November 7, 2009

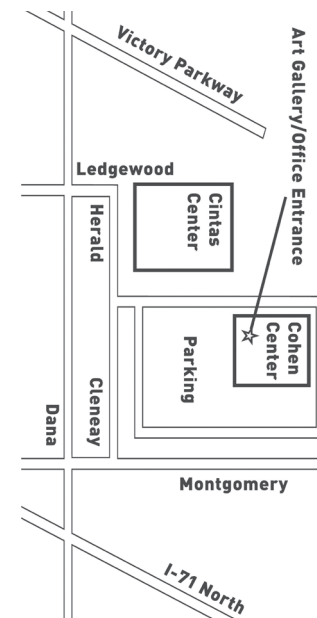
Art at the X – Celebrating Women
40th Anniversary of Women at XU
Artists' Reception – Friday, Oct. 2, 6-8 p.m.
Art at the X Panel Discussion –
Wednesday, Oct. 21, 1:30-3 p.m.
Reunion Weekend — November 7, Noon-2 p.m.

November 12 – December 18, 2009

Rome Experience
Photographs by Thomas Condon (through Dec. 4)
Artists' Reception — Thursday, Nov. 12, 4-7:30 p.m.

December 11 – 18, 2009

Sara Middleton – Graphic Design
Artist Reception, Friday, Dec. 11, 6-8 p.m.



KEEP IN TOUCH

Address comments, suggestions, information and inquiries to:
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www.xavier.edu/art

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Fall 2009
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Susan Schaefer

Artifacts

Newsletter of the Xavier University Department of Art

HEALING THROUGH ART



Dr. Kelly Eileen Cahill Roberts
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B.A. – Xavier University, 2000

M.A. – University of Louisville, 2003

Ph.D. – Ohio University, 2009

Dr. Kelly Roberts began her undergraduate career at Xavier University in 1996. After experiencing the core art curriculum, she became interested in fibers and weaving. While studying at Xavier, Kelly worked in a hospital because of her desire to help people. After graduating in 2000 with her B.A. from Xavier, she continued her education at the University of Louisville in Kentucky, pursuing a degree in art therapy – a degree that combined her desire to heal with her creation of art. Kelly earned her M.A. in Art Therapy in 2003 and Ph.D. in Counseling in 2009.

What did you do after you graduated from XU with an undergraduate degree in Art/Fibers?

During the year after graduation I got married, worked as a framer in northern Kentucky to establish Kentucky residency, and attended Northern Kentucky University taking Psychology courses in preparation for the Art Therapy program at University of Louisville which I began in the fall of 2001.

What influenced you to pursue a degree in art therapy?

That goes back to my Dad, John J. Cahill, XU, 1973, and his influence. My Dad is a Physician Assistant and worked at a hospital that is now a part of the Cleveland Clinic. When I was a young child, my Dad would take me to the hospital with him. I always admired my Dad and learned much about healing people through watching him interact with people. In some ways, he treated their medical illnesses more with his spirit than he did with medicine and surgery. As I observed, I learned that the best medicine was witnessing pain, validating experiences and providing perspective that might in some small way improve someone's outlook. Improving others'

Healing Through Art, continues on the inside

Healing Through Art, continued from front

experiences may not necessarily begin through words, but through actions, like getting them a warm blanket... so naturally, I pursued medicine. Shortly after my 18th birthday, I began working as a member of support services at the hospital I had been visiting with my Dad since I was a young child. I started as a Transporter, transporting patients to and from appointments within the hospital. To this day, being a Transporter has been my favorite job in the medical hospital.

When I moved to Cincinnati to start school at Xavier, I planned to major in Biology so I could be prepared for professional training as a Physician Assistant. Both of my parents encouraged my interest and strength in creating art, and suggested and supported the addition of an Art major. Back in high school, my Mom made sure I took art as a freshman. Seniors had priority in order to get their art credit in, so it was difficult for freshmen to get into art class. I didn't think much of it, just figured I take art when a slot opened up. But my Mom was emphatic that I get into art classes immediately. She called the school almost every day during the summer to make sure I got into Art class my Freshman year. And it worked! Because of her, I was able to take art class every year in high school and loved it! Dad always said "follow your passion" ...Biology and Art were my passions, so they became my majors.

During my freshman year at XU, I took only courses for my majors, so I was in labs and studios entirely and loved it! The summer after my sophomore year I moved permanently to Cincinnati, and gained employment at one of the local medical hospitals as a Transporter, which later led to a promotion to Medical Equipment. That new position mixed with my complete disinterest in Organic Chemistry led to a change in career path for me. So I dropped my Biology major and focused on a Natural Sciences minor and a major in Art.

When I was working on my thesis exhibition of Fibers in the fall of 1999, my Dad reminded me about a woman he met at the hospital who provided services for the Rehab Unit. His reminder about this woman's work with the patients led to my search for information about art therapy – what it was, who does it help, how do you do it and where do you learn how to do it?

I gathered information from just about every Art Therapy program in the Eastern part of the U.S. Pratt Institute in New York City held an Art Therapy Expo in the Spring of 2000 that was a week long and was meant to introduce potential students to the profession through educational and experiential workshops. I attended and began to learn the therapeutic benefit of creating art. Shortly after my return from New York, I attended a day-long Art Therapy Forum held at the University of Louisville also meant to help educate potential students about the profession. It was there that a woman, an Art Therapist, spoke about her involvement at the University and her clinical work. She described working at the local hospital, in the psychiatric unit, providing art therapy experiences to those admitted for treatment. I was hooked!

I followed steps to complete pre-requisites and gain residency in Kentucky, and in January of 2001 I applied for the Art Therapy program and was admitted that August! My favorite experience as an Art Therapy student was my internship at the psychiatric hospital for adults in Louisville. I worked with many different people and led group and individual sessions with my supervisors and fellow interns. I helped develop and implement art therapy programs on the geriatric and forensic units of the hospital, which previously did not have art therapy programs. I spent two years earning my degree and graduated in 2003. After returning to Ohio, I discovered that a degree in Art Therapy does not easily lead to employment or professional recognition in this state. I searched for employment and after many months, was offered a position at our local domestic

violence shelter. I had not worked with this population in the past and was eager to expand my experience and utilize my training as an art therapist.

At the same time, I learned that the reason my education was not recognized was not because I did not have the appropriate training or coursework, but because the word "counseling" was not included in the title of my degree. It simply read "Art Therapy." I needed a degree that had the word "Counseling" in the title, reflected on the transcript, in order to become a licensed clinician in Ohio. I had always intended to earn a Ph.D., so I began looking into Psychology and Counseling doctoral programs.

I encountered women at the shelter who clearly had problems with their mental health, and though I knew how to help them, legally I was prohibited from doing so. My efforts to find help for them were unsuccessful because I was not taken seriously due to my lack of license to practice in Ohio. I was also involved in helping to develop and implement a prevention program to be offered to high school students to prevent teen dating violence and domestic violence. I was incredibly interested in learning whether or not the program was beneficial and analyzing data to determine its worth. I had not had formal training in statistical analysis and research design and longed to learn how to best determine the program's efficacy. All of this combined caused me to apply to the doctoral program in Counselor Education at Ohio University to begin the fall of 2006.

Why a PhD? That's the easy answer. I wanted a heavy emphasis in research design and statistical analysis. I chose Counseling based on the recommendations of professors of Psychology since I did want to practice too. My Counseling program at Ohio University did emphasize research, but not as heavily as I wanted, so I took more than the required share of research and statistics courses to create the program that was right for me. That was the beauty of OU's program. The faculty were very supportive of each student's strengths and interests and allowed flexibility in electives to "customize" educational tracks to support students seeking expertise in a specific area.

What are you doing now – career, research, volunteering?

That's the great part – the sky is the limit right now, and I seem to be in demand, which is a great blessing in this economy. Clinically, my internship began right at the start as employment, so I am maintaining my position as a clinician at two of our offices. I work mainly with adults with severe mental illness in individual sessions, and conduct psychological testing for other clinicians' evaluations. I will sit for licensure as a Professional Counselor by the end of the summer, and will officially be a licensed practitioner in the state of Ohio! It's been a long road, and I am already learning the reasons why my path has been a rather winding road.

As a researcher, I have been successful in demonstrating benefit to teens from the teen dating violence prevention program I helped develop in 2005 and am working on manuscripts to send for publication soon. I want to continue to work with the domestic violence shelter in promoting the program and offering it in more schools in our area and beyond. I would also like to engage in research to test the benefits of art therapy in an empirical way. I hope to always be conducting research!

As a consultant, I have aided other doctoral students in planning the research design and statistical analysis for dissertation and plan to continue to do this.

As an instructor I plan to take advantages of opportunities at local colleges to teach one or two courses as needed and advertised. Ohio University's program has a heavy emphasis in training future faculty, so this would be a natural part of my future.

As a volunteer, I plan to continue to work with the

women and children seeking shelter at the domestic violence shelter in any way that would be helpful to them. In 2005/2006 when I was employed at the shelter, I lead art therapy groups for the women that were reportedly very welcome and beneficial, so I would like to continue to provide that service.

Do you have time for your art?

More so now than when I was in school – I took a few weeks over winter break of my second year at OU to reorganize and improve my studio space at home, so now I do have a nice place to be to create my work. My favorite is still weaving blankets. I have thought more about why since these interview questions have crossed my path, and I wonder if it has anything to do with the hospital, and my comment about helping improve patients' experiences in some small way, even if it is just in providing a warm blanket. When I was 17, I broke my ankle running cross-country and when I got to the hospital (the same one my Dad worked at, the one I would work at when I turned 18), I was given a warm white blanket. I still have it. It still makes me feel comforted and safe. Maybe that's why I like to weave blankets and give them away to those I love, and those who have helped improve my life experience.

My latest weaving project was for my advisor, Dr. Tom Davis, for graduation. I designed a blanket just for him and was pleased that it seemed to be the most perfect blanket I have created to date. It was made to represent my three years in the program, this year of my graduation, 2009, Ohio University's signature color – grayish green, and Dr. Davis' color – green, for learning.

I have continued to be involved in my local art association and will be able to work with them more often now that the pressure of finishing school has dissipated. I am a sucker for working in galleries and will help anyone who wants help hanging shows! That is the result of working with my XU advisor, Kitty Uetz, on many gallery exhibitions.

Right now, my art is mostly for myself and gifts for others. I do sell some of my art at our local art association's gallery. I am inspired by fellow XU grads who have made a living of their artwork, Danielle DiBenedetto designs "tea-shirts," Pamela Mattei, who works in set and costume design on Broadway, my classmate Christy Reinshagen-Wallace who has opened her own shop on Ludlow Ave, my "little sister" Karen Fuell Light who owns her own gallery in Chicago and creates art on a daily basis to raise awareness of many wrongs in this world, and inspires others to find their authentic selves.

I am also inspired by women older than me who continue to create and have begun to gain increased recognition for their work: Kitty Uetz, who continues to create amazing tapestries and fiber art and has shown her

work in a number of cities; Mary Helen Fernandez Stewart, a multi media and fiber artist who recently showed her life's work in a series of intricate quilts embellished by found objects that has also been recognized in local and international media; and my mother, Janice M. Cahill, who only began taking classes in watercolor painting a few short years ago and is now a rather accomplished painter and has shown her work in a number of shows in our local communities.

So I know I have time to create and share my work, and I look forward to my second career as an artist! I would love to go back to school in my early 50s and earn an MFA... I guess I just can't stay away from school!

Do you have a long-term goal?

To spend as much time as possible enjoying life, soaking in positive experiences, and changing my perspective on what I may initially think are negative experiences.

What role did your Xavier University experience play in your life/decisions?

Because of XU, I have:

- been alive! My parents met at XU. My Dad was a freshman there and my Mom was a senior at McAuley High School. There were "mixers" held at the XU Armory and they met there!
- married an amazingly wonderful, supportive and encouraging husband who loves me more than I know, but I catch glimpses of it everyday!
- gained life-long support, encouragement and optimism from my "surrogate parents," Kitty and George Uetz."
- made great friends in the art department
- learned to weave – my favorite thing to do!
- learned many methods of printmaking which was lots of fun, and if I could have a printmaking studio too, I would!
- learned about running a gallery, hanging gallery exhibitions, and had opportunities to work with well-known artists
- found my path to the University of Louisville to study Art Therapy
- found (through challenge and adversity) greater faith in God and the Catholic Church

Interviewer's note:

In the future, Kelly would like to return to a hospital environment where she can draw upon all her education, expand her experience, continue her research, and help to heal people. Dr. Kelly Roberts lives in Newark, Ohio with her husband, Dr. J. Andrew Roberts, their dog Maggie, and cat JC.

Susan Wood Schaefer Edgecliff Class of 1967

My visual impairment caused me to decide to give up art. After all, what could a blind artist hope to accomplish? This was my challenge. That changed in 1982 during a class reunion celebrating the 15th anniversary of my graduation from Edgecliff College. I was walking behind Emery Hall talking with Sister Rosine, my husband, Ralph, guiding me. We talked about changes in my life. I was diagnosed with an eye disease called Retinitis Pigmentosa in 1971. It is a deterioration of the retina cells and may cause blindness. Sr. Rosine reassured me I really could be an artist if I wanted to be. Now I believe that even if I do go blind, I can still pursue Art through clay.

When I spoke to Sr. Rosine I had not been introduced to The Center for Individuals with Physical Challenges, formerly the Center for the Physically Limited in Tulsa. The Center is a unique place where people who are physically challenged can be challenged through the arts and other activities. It serves people recovering and learning to live with a variety of physical disabilities such as a stroke, Cerebral Palsy, Multiple Sclerosis, victims of accidents, the blind and many others with some form of physical disability. I discovered the Center in 1986 and found a place I could continue to experience art. At this time, I am involved in painting and charcoal drawing. With no peripheral vision left and only 8 degrees in the center of my eye to depend on, I rely on contrast to develop my ideas. I've made hand-built clay slab pieces, painted on ceramic bisque and explored water painting. I've written poetry, short stories and attended numerous workshops.

We have a wonderfully educated instructor, Janice Bawden, who is experienced and wise in helping those who are rebuilding their self-confidence, something lost because of their disability. She pointed out to me that seeing through distorted eyes can be a benefit. After all, didn't the Impressionist artist squint their eyes to try to see light and dark contrasts? Janice brings an art experience to help everyone. She obtained her fine arts degree at the University of California and graduate studies in Ceramic Art from the University of Tulsa. One important thing that Janice does for all the Center artists and other members is to display our work. The long halls of the building are covered with artwork and changed out with new work each month. I've sold pieces throughout the years.

One gratifying experience showed others that what we lack in ourselves maybe supplied sometimes by another. My friend, Pami Spoon, paints china, paired up with me to add detail to my clay pieces. Pami is paralyzed on her left side but sees perfectly. I can manage with my two hands so a partnership was made. For five years we've donated pieces to the Alzheimer Association in Tulsa. Each year the pieces were sold at auction. One year we were very pleased when our free-standing clock was sold for \$500! We've shown our work at Rogers University in Claremont, OK. I was asked to share ideas for art projects to help mainstream a second-grade student who is blind. This opportunity will pose a long distance challenge since I will be communicating with his teacher who is in Michigan and I am in Oklahoma. I have experience with blind children, having worked with a sixth-grade student who was blinded due to a brain tumor.

As you can see my Visual Arts Degree has not been wasted. What I have learned through the years of coping is to watch how God provides people, places, and things to continually challenge me.

In 2009 I have experienced some changes in my eyesight. My field vision is less than six percent and very grainy, like a bad old photograph. I am still working in charcoal and some pastels. With change comes new challenges. I have tried to express my feelings in the enclosed poem. With the support of my husband, I am not afraid of the future that lies ahead of us.



Perception

I lean close
to the vanity mirror
to examine my face
veiled in mist
an out of focus
photograph.

A sketch
not made with charcoal
but flesh.

Broad strokes
where once each hair
blended into cropped waves.

I hold
a camel haired brush
feel soft bristles
on high cheek bones
adding rose blush
to pale skin.

Trace the fullness of my mouth
touch with crimson finger
oil to arched lips.

Failing vision
obscures lashes
outlining dark pupils
in hazel rings
crows feet and
laugh lines.

Eyes appear as undefined pat
es
of gray and brown
beneath faint brows.

The essence
of who I am
has not changed,
only how
I perceive myself as
an unfinished sketch.

