



# THE FRIAR FILES

News and Views from Fenwick High School

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## Preaching Through Artistic Creation

***Father Mike looks back at how the Fine Arts program got its start at Fenwick nine years ago – and how art plays an integral role in a well-rounded education.***

By Fr. Michael Winkels, O.P.

A valuable part of an educated person's life should include an interest in and appreciation of art. That is certainly true of a Fenwick education. Besides Science, Mathematics, English, Foreign Languages and History, an understanding and appreciation for Fine Arts helps to complete a well-rounded student in the Dominican tradition. The Dominican motto is *Veritas* or "Truth." The search for truth encompasses all aspects of human experience. In a Dominican school, art is one component that is essential in the formation of our students as they seek *veritas*.

After my ordination in 1976, a Sinsinawa sister encouraged me to explore my interest in art. In 1979, at the encouragement of the Order, priests who have been ordained three years were encouraged to begin studying something complimentary to theology. I enrolled at the University of New Mexico, where three years later I received a B.F.A. degree in Studio Art.



*Senior Victoria Brzostowski solders a stained-glass window.*

At the invitation of Fr. Richard LaPata, I joined the Fenwick community in 2000, working in the area of Technology. I continued working in my art studio whenever I could find the time. In the Fall of 2010 I was asked to develop a Studio Art program. With the support of the school and several generous financial donations of one of our families, we gradually purchased the necessary equipment and supplies.

The program started out modestly with seven students the first semester. From the beginning it was our intention to not just study about art but to introduce students to a variety of ways of helping them make art. The “Survey of Studio Art” class was the first class offered. It has remained the backbone of the Studio program. In this class, students are introduced to 11 media: drawing (pencil, conté crayon, charcoal), water color, acrylic painting, ceramics, wire

sculpture, screen and block printing, digital photography and batik. They gain a wide range of experience in both two- and three-dimensional art as they learn about the theory of color, understanding of shading and value, negative and positive space, composition, form, texture and perspective. At the end of the semester they choose one media that they particularly liked and do a more detailed project as a final. As I remind the students even today, you will not be good at or enjoy every media we do, but I guarantee that they will like something in the Survey class. And that has proven to be true.

After students complete the Survey of Studio Art class, they can sign up for a 2-Dimensional and/or a 3-Dimensional Studio Art class. Each of these classes can be taken at four different levels. Students continue to learn and develop in their favorite media as well as improving their artistic and creative skills. At each level of these advanced classes,



*Sophomore Aldo Scudiero experiments with the screen-printing process.*

students learn additional art media, e.g., etching, aquatint, lithography, stained glass, ceramic wheel work and making of mobiles.

## Showing Off



*Students checking out the Fenwick Art Show this past January.*

Each semester, the classes end with an Art Exhibit of all student work. Invitations are sent out to family and friends inviting them to come to school to enjoy the fruit of a very busy and productive semester. It is a joy to see the smiles of confidence on students faces as they hear family and strangers comment on their talents and hard work. Many students are surprised at what they have been able to accomplish and are gratified for the opportunity to expand their educational opportunities.

It has been a real pleasure to develop this program. Three years ago, because of the large numbers of students taking Studio classes, Mrs. Tracy Carey joined the Studio Art faculty. Together we currently have the opportunity to work with

more than 100 students per semester.



*Fr. Mike takes his classes on an annual field trip to the Art Institute downtown.*

In addition to Studio classes, I have had the privilege of teaching the advanced-placement (AP) Art History class, helping students to understand the history of art, its place in society and the context in which art has been created through the centuries. It has been an exciting and very fulfilling opportunity. We are lucky at Fenwick to have great resources available to us in the Chicago area. Field trips to the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago, the Field Museum of Natural History, the Chicago Art Institute and the local work of Frank Lloyd Wright greatly enhance a student's understanding and appreciation of art as they prepare for the AP Art History Exam.

The Dominican Order has been blessed with a rich history of artists, from the frescos of Fra Angelico in Florence to the original prints of Albert Carpentier, O.P., a Dominican working in Japan on the walls outside the Faculty Cafeteria, to



the stained glass and metal work of Angelo Zarlenga, O.P. in our chapel and throughout the building. Dominicans have appreciated and used art to express the truths of our faith and of human life. The search for truth and beauty continues in the lives of our Fenwick students. When they learn to appreciate art and their own creative talents, they learn how to bring joy, love and beauty into the lives of their family, friends and the world. Artists in the Dominican Order preach through their wonderful works of art, and students at Fenwick High School preach in the same way as they participate and carry on a valuable tradition in expressing the beauty and glory of God's creation.

### **About the Author**



*Father Michael Winkels, O.P. is assistant director of technology services and also has taught classes in studio art and art history since 2010. Prior to coming to Fenwick, Fr. Mike was director of the Dominican Conference Center in River Forest, IL, and also served as a financial officer for the Province of St. Albert the Great (Dominican Order of Preachers) in Chicago; as a computer specialist for investment firm Lighthouse Partners at the Chicago Board of Trade; and as business manager of St. Thomas Aquinas Priory, River Forest. His early ministry took him from St. Paul, MN, to Denver, CO, and Albuquerque, NM.*

*Fr. Mike graduated cum laude from the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota, where he majored in philosophy, then received a master's degree in Theology and Divinity from the Aquinas Institute, Dubuque, IA. He also earned a BFA degree in studio art from the University of New Mexico in 1983. In 2013, he completed a master's in teaching from Dominican University, River Forest.*

**# 2-DIMENSIONAL STUDIO ART, 3-DIMENSIONAL STUDIO ART, ALBERT CARPENTIER, ANGELO ZARLENGA, AQUINAS INSTITUTE, ART HISTORY, ART INSTITUTE, CHICAGO, CHICAGO BOARD OF TRADE, COLORADO, DENVER, DOMINICAN CONFERENCE CENTER, DOMINICAN FATHERS, DOMINICAN ORDER, DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY, DOMINICANS, DUBUQUE, FATHER MICHAEL WINKELS, FENWICK, FENWICK HIGH SCHOOL, FIELD MUSUEM, FINE ARTS, FR. LAPATA, FR. MIKE WINKELS, FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, IOWA, LIGHTHOUSE PARTNERS, MINNESOTA, MRS. CAREY, ORIENTAL INSTITUTE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, RIVER FOREST, ROSARY COLLEGE, SINSINAWA SISTERS, ST. PAUL, ST. THOMAS AQUINAS PRIORY, STUDIO ART, SURVEY OF STUDIO ART, TRACY CAREY, UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO, UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS, VERITAS**