

Preview: The Shogren-Meyer Collection

Anh Tran
Staff Writer

Gustavus' Hillstrom Museum of Art will present *Industry, Work, Society, and Travails in the Depression Era: American Paintings and Photographs from the Shogren-Meyer Collection* beginning Monday, September 9.

The exhibition features paintings and photographs by around sixty different artists, mostly dating back to "the turbulent thirties, which were an era of particular interest to the collectors and one that is also heavily reflected in the Hillstrom Museum of Art's own collection," Donald Myers, Director of the Hillstrom Museum of Art, said.

Collector Daniel Shogren was a fellow art enthusiast to the Museum namesake—Richard L. Hillstrom—who often-times collected figurative and realist works of art from the first half of the twentieth century.

The collection is not only in line with Hillstrom's aesthetics, but also timely in more than one way, as Director Donald Myers noted in the exhibition catalogue.

"First, it coincides with the nintieth anniversary of "Black Tuesday," the October 29, 1929 crash of the U.S. stock market that contributed to the Great Depression of the 1930s. And there are a number of works in the exhibit that relate to the Dust Bowl of that decade finding context with today's concerns about climate change and thereby connecting with Gustavus Adolphus College's Nobel Conference 55, "Climate Changed: Facing Our Future," held September 24-25, 2019," Myers said.

Shogren emphasizes the collection's focus: "art begins at home."

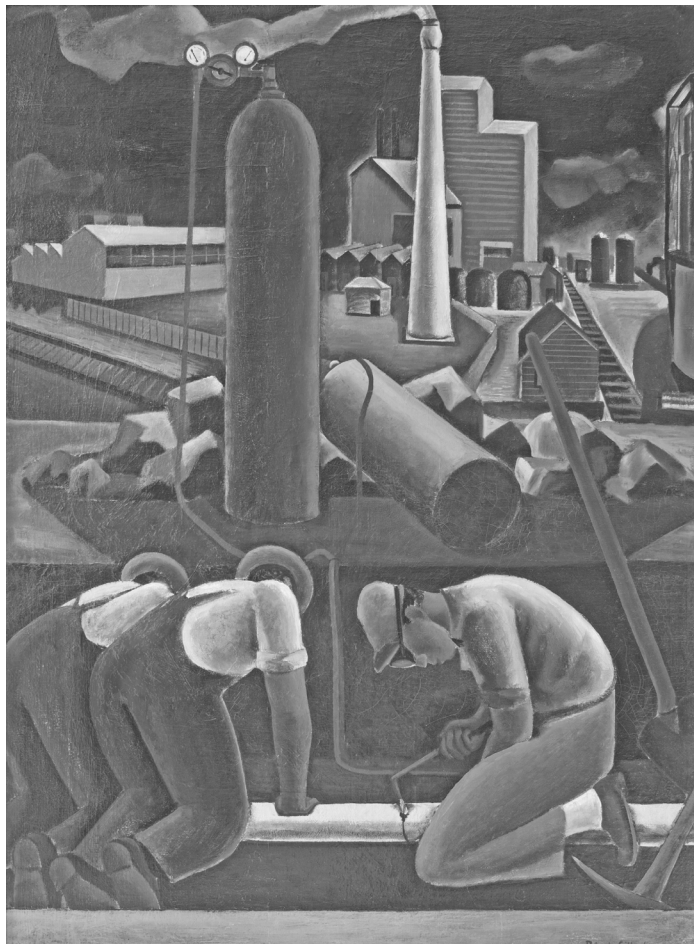
Nearly one hundred paintings and photographs to be on display portray working Americans, who experienced and implemented radical changes in the United States during the 1900s.

"A number of pieces in our collection record the integrity of work and the hardships people experienced. The social realism of the time portrayed less positive subjects through paintings and photographs. The art of the 1930s was generally quite political and very often made a social statement," Shogren said.

Both history majors during their college careers, Shogren and his wife and fellow collect, Susan Meyer, share a fascination with the 1930s, which is reflected in their art collection.

"In my working career, I have traveled the Midwest and worked in factories where I've witnessed today's working men and women. I can't help but compare today, where we have full employment and a booming stock market, to the America of the 1920s and 1930s," Shogren said.

Shogren draws and combines his interests in history and



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Shogren's fascination with working life in the 1930s is a common focal point of his work.

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art into his collection, which, he believes, records, reflects, and predicts history.

Soliciting art's ability to capture the phenomenal changes of history, Shogren poses questions to viewers of his collection.

"Are we seeing warning signals, such as climate change and income disparity, that portend a future Depression and new Dust Bowl? If so, are we prepared, and have we learned anything from our history? As they say, "history repeats itself." Will we listen to history and avoid another time like the 1930s?" Shogren noted in his catalogue statement.

Remarkable among the works displayed is Koppers Coke Plant (c.1940), earlier owned by Hillstrom, who acquired it directly from his friend, the artist Eloy Wedin (1901-1983).

"Koppers Coke Plant, believed to date from around 1940, is similar in subject matter to the PWAP works done for the University, although its style is more faceted and fragmented than those works, reflecting Wedin's particular and ongoing interest in the proto-Cubist approach of French artist Paul Cézanne (1839-1906). The industrial coke plant depicted

in Wedin's image was located on Hamline Avenue not far from the University. It was in operation from 1917 to 1979 and produced "coke," a solid fuel derived from coal and used in making steel. The site was acquired for reuse and is now occupied by office and light industrial buildings but is monitored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as a "Superfund Site" because of hazardous chemicals from the plant's waste disposal having contaminated the soil and groundwater," Myers wrote.

The photographs featured in the exhibit captured the realistic

looks the people, working or not, the factories, and the shops of nineteenth century America. The black-and-whites accentuate the vintage and somber tones in depicting a rough time period in American history.

On the same note, the paintings utilize high contrasts and blown up shadows to reflect the gloomy economic and social struggles at the time.

The Museum's regular hours are weekdays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and weekends, 1 to 5 p.m. All exhibitions of the Museum are free and open to the public.

GUSTIES *of* Taylor Kmiech

Monali Bhakta
Staff Writer

As Gustavus enters the beginning of the upcoming school year, there are plenty of students that have settled back into life on the hill.

One of these individuals is Taylor Kmiech, a senior English major and dance minor who comes from Duluth, Minnesota.

"Taylor is not only the definition of what it means to be a Gustie. She's a living example of what it means to be a good person. From the moment she wakes up, she always shows a positive attitude and spreads the most contagious smile that you can't help but smile with her. She's professional and intelligent, but is also someone to have fun with after a long day," Senior Lucio Gonzalez said.

In high school, Kmiech was a member of the competitive dance team and theatre program. She chose Gustavus when she toured it with her brother when he was a student. It instantly felt like home. Dr. David Obermiller was actually a family friend, so she connected with him on campus as well.

"Gustavus prides itself as being a community...you run into people and they know you by name right away. It felt like a community in the first couple of days," Kmiech said.

One of the best encounters during her first year was with her Collegiate Fellow (CF), Taylor Claeks, a welcoming individual. It was this relationship that encouraged her to break out of her comfort zone to

join new student organizations, including the Residential Life Collegiate Fellow Program.

"Being a CF has helped me understand where people come from. It's really cool to see the residents during my first-year become juniors now, and seeing how far they've come and grown on campus makes me proud," Kmiech said.

In general, she believes the entire CF staff is a tight-knit family that wants people to feel like they belong. Being a CF has also led her to meet some of her best friends because they all aim to be kind, compassionate, and empathetic people.

While there are challenges to being a CF, Kmiech loves looking at the positive side by seeing how students have grown with life-changing experiences and helping them with their beginning struggles. She feels privileged and thankful to be a part of that.

Kmiech is also a member of the Gustavus Dance Company, where she uses her talents as a form of therapy and creative expression.

"Coming to a two hour dance class makes me feel free... we might all have our bad and stressful days, but just being able to appreciate what dance is makes you feel good coming out of class," Kmiech said.

She uses the less formally structured class time to let her internalized feelings control how she does her movement. She believes it is a much-needed contrast from sitting in class all day to be able to let that out with bursts of energy.

After graduation, she hopes to pursue a job in higher education such as Student Affairs or Residential Life. She gives credit to the English Department Professors like Sean Cobb, So Young Park, and Becky Fremo for helping her to become a clever thinker and artistic writer who excels in the major. She utilizes this creative talent to write for The Fourth Crown, the online satirical newspaper.

"It's a very interesting way to tackle conversations in the Gustavus community that are coming up like political issues or campus events where it gets people talking about it in a light-hearted way," she said.

When it comes to first-year advice, Kmiech recommends being open to new endeavors so people can discover who they want to be. She believes that the clubs she did not originally get involved in have ended up being the ones she loves the most.

"Taylor is the embodiment of Gustie spirit. She is incredibly intelligent and kind. The way that she interacts with others reflects the generosity and courage that she has inside herself. She encouraged me to make my journey my own and to never settle for less than what I am worth. As her former resident, she helped me feel more at home here and welcomed me to the Gustavus family with arms literally open wide. I cannot express the amount of gratitude and admiration I have for Taylor," Sophomore Kennedy Chapman said.



Nathan Habben

Kmiech plans on pursuing a career in higher education.



Kmiech was inspired by her first Collegiate Fellow, Taylor Claeks.

Nathan Habben

Do you have a suggestion for a Gustavus student, professor, or staff member who could be a future Gustie of the Week?

If so, send their name, position on campus, and a short description of why you think they should be recognized to
weekly@gustavus.edu
for a chance to be featured!

A representative from the Gustavian Weekly will be in contact with you via email if your suggestion is chosen to be featured in an issue of the paper.

the WEEK

& Dean Willaert

Elsa Beise
Staff Writer

Our next Gustie of the Week for this academic year is Dean Willaert, who has worked at Gustavus for almost nineteen years.

Willaert goes by many titles including Lead Groundsperson, Project Coordinator and Heavy Equipment Operator.

Willaert loves to work with his fellow team members and student employees, making him a well-liked faculty member on the Gustavus campus.

"My favorite part of my role is maintaining the grounds and keeping up the appearance of the campus with the rest of the grounds crew that I work with. As well as training, teaching, and working with the students that work with us in the summers," Willaert said.

Willaert's daughter, junior Gracie Willaert, admires her father's organized and dedicated work ethic while simultaneously keeping an approachable and personable demeanor.

"My dad is a great Gustie of the week because he works really hard to keep this campus looking as nice as it does. He puts 100 percent effort into his work each and every day while also managing to be a friendly face to everyone he interacts with," Gracie Willaert said.

This work ethic is a quality that is noted and appreciated by anyone that knows Willaert and is something that helps make

Gustavus the best it can be for its students.

"My dad is the hardest working person I know. I've never ever seen him quit anything, even when it might be hard. I really look up to my dad for that. My dad is also really good at talking to people. With his positive attitude, he always has a smile on his face and will probably make you laugh if you

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-Junior Gracie Willaert

get a chance to talk to him," Gracie Willaert said.

Willaert enjoys working at Gustavus and is appreciative of the connectedness and community he feels part of.

"Gustavus is special to me because it's a good work environment, and being part of the Gustavus staff in general is a good feeling," Willaert said.

He also enjoys that his work on the hill benefits the students.

"[I enjoy] being part of the team that's here to be part of students' lives, and helping them out," Willaert said.

Willaert especially enjoys the back to school season.

"Fall time is my favorite on campus because everyone is coming back to school, so there's more activity going on, and you can't beat fall weather," Willaert said.

Willaert's job is one that is key to helping the Gustavus campus run smoothly and creates a significant impact.

"I think my dad's job is important because he helps keep this campus running smoothly. Whether he is helping with a landscaping project, plowing, putting lights up for Christmas, or changing a garbage can, he is always working on a task that will keep this campus an enjoyable place to be for staff and students," Gracie Willaert said.

Willaert has a family connection to Gustavus as well and enjoys having a few family members in the Gustavus family, including his daughter.

"My favorite part of having my daughter and nieces attend Gustavus is that I get to see family around everyday. My oldest daughter and son in law are both Gustie grads, my sister also works up here, and I got to work alongside my brother up here as well until he passed away. A lot of people don't get the opportunity to work somewhere where they're around family a lot," Willaert said.

Gracie Willaert loves being able to have her father on campus and getting to show off all of her father's hard work to her fellow Gusties.

"I like going to school where



Katie Mattinen

Willaert enjoys spending time outdoors in his free time.

my dad works because it's always nice to have a piece of home, even when I'm not far from it. Whenever I'm having a hard day, getting to say hi to my dad when he is out and about always makes my day better. It's also really fun to see the projects he did around campus, and to be able to tell my friends 'Hey, my dad did that!'," Gracie Willaert said.

In Willaert's free time, he enjoys being around others and appreciating the outdoors.

"When I am not working I like spending time with family, going out with friends, grilling during the summer, and cutting wood in the fall," Willaert said.

Willaert is a strong, hard-working, and friendly presence around the Gustavus community that is dedicated to serving others and following through on his commitments. He is a light on the hill.



Katie Mattinen

Willaert is known for his admirable work ethic and personable attitude.

“ID” the Staff of the Gustavian Weekly!

