

# The Observer

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THE OBERLIN COLLEGE FACULTY AND STAFF NEWSPAPER



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN SEYFRIED

**Julie Taymor talks about her life and work, including *The Lion King*, with Roger Copeland and a room full of admirers.**

## Julie Taymor, Working without Limits

What Julie Taymor '74 has been telling reporters everywhere, she also told two attentive Oberlin audiences Monday: Disney, producers of *The Lion King*; "put no limits" on her direction of the smash Broadway hit.

Taymor, on campus for a day, met with a group of 50 or so at 1:30 in Warner Center, where Roger Copeland, professor of theater, led a question-and-answer session with Taymor about her life and work. At 4:30 she spoke in King 306 to a line-the-walls crowd and showed videotape clips of some of her productions, including *The Lion King*. What the audiences saw and heard were evidence of a mind at work beyond the boundaries of conventional American theater.

Taymor, a 1991 MacArthur "genius" award winner, traces her strongest influences to the four years she spent—one as a Watson fellow—in Indonesia and Japan in the middle and late 1970s. The experience contrasted strongly with some of what she learned from former professor of the arts and director of Oberlin's one-time Inter-Arts Program Herbert Blau. Blau's work—replete with private associations—was highly intellectual and verbal, Taymor said, while she was drawn to the more visual and public aspects of theater. These she found in abundance in the east. And although she had been introduced to the power of the mask at Lecoq's mime school in Paris even before entering Oberlin, Taymor found her interest in masks reinforced in Asia, where she also became drawn to puppetry as a high art form.

Masks and puppetry may be the characteristic visual elements of Taymor's work to this day, but the infusion of her personal experience and vision into folklore and myth is what drives her theater making, she said. And

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## 6 Fall Grants-in-Aid Fund Travel, Research, and Student Assistants for Faculty

The General Faculty Research and Development Committee has funded six of the 10 requests it received for fall-semester grants-in-aid. The grants range from \$560 to \$5000 and total \$10,616.

Grants went to Yolanda Cruz, associate professor of biology; Joanne Erwin, assistant professor of music education; Sonia Kruks, Danforth Professor of Politics; Patricia Mathews, associate professor of art; John Pearson, Young-Hunter Professor of Studio Art; and Albert Porterfield, associate professor of psychology.

Yolanda Cruz will apply molecular-biology techniques to test pregnant opossums for the presence of the Early Pregnancy Factor (EPF). EPF has long been known as a protein that appears in the bloodstream of pregnant placental mammals within hours of fertilization. Previous work by Cruz and her colleagues found evidence that biochemical communication occurs between fetus and mother in marsupials at a stage in pregnancy when there is no physical fetomaternal contact. EPF is thus a likely candidate for the initial biochemical signal that tells the mother that she is pregnant. EPF, however, has not yet been studied in any marsupials. If Cruz can find it in opossums, EPF will more likely be defined as the earliest biochemical signal portending pregnancy because it will then be considered the molecular signature of the common ancestor of marsupial and placental mammals.

Joanne Erwin will evaluate, with their permission, students in the Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra on their playing of a piece that Erwin will teach them. The students will perform their part alone and with the orchestra on a specially equipped instrument that feeds the sound directly into a tape recorder. Erwin will then compare the tapes. Students in large ensembles are now evaluated on their playing individually although many

perform at a different level with the group. Erwin's will be the first research into a comparison, facilitated by the new technology to record an individual within a group.

For her grant-in-aid project Sonia Kruks will employ a student assistant with good French-language skills to help check translations and references for a book manuscript she is writing for Cornell University Press. The manuscript, on contemporary feminist theory, draws on the work of the French phenomenologists as it pertains to current debates on feminism. Kruks's book project is to formulate an account of what it is to be a woman that recognizes, with the poststructuralists, the significance of forms of social and discourse construction but also acknowledges the role of the body in gender identity and conceives the self as an active and volitional agent.

Patricia Mathews will employ a student during spring semester to help with a book manuscript she is writing. "Feminisms and Art Historical Meanings" will be published by Twayne Publishers, a division of MacMillan, in the series *The Impact of Feminism on the Arts and Sciences*. The four-chapter book will investigate the cultural discourses of the nude and of primitivism and race, the role of class, and contemporary body politics embedded in specific works of modern art—one in each chapter. It will compare specific feminist and other methodologies used to interpret the discourses in the art-historical literature. The student will research issues and methods relevant to the works as well as images that correspond to, contradict, or parallel the issues.

John Pearson will be in Japan March 21 through August 30, 1998. His grant-in-aid will support his travel while in the country. He will go to Hokaido, the northernmost island of Japan; Niko, 150 miles north of Tokyo;

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## New Policy Manual Addresses Business Conduct at the College

"This will be a handy guide."

That's what Vice President for Finance Andy Evans says about a new booklet soon to be distributed to all regular Oberlin College employees. The booklet, *Business Conduct Policy Manual*, will "give people support and comfort," says Evans, concerning questions of conflict of interest, confidentiality, and other business practices.

"In conducting the business of the College we should avoid any practice that remotely suggests any impropriety. . . . Appropriate business behavior is one important way we can ensure that Oberlin is held in the highest regard by alumni, students, and all who do business with us," write Evans and President Nancy Dye in a preface to the pamphlet. The president and vice pres-

ident see the policy manual as the "start of a dialogue," Evans says.

Personnel in several campus units had a hand in creating the policy manual over the past ten months—including the Investment Office and the offices of Finance, Purchasing and Auxiliary Services, the Controller, Human Resources, and College Relations.

Business methods covered include

purchasing practices and vendor relations, gifts and entertainment, trademarks and copyrights, and political contributions. Several pages of the booklet are devoted to examples in question-and-answer format.

The new booklet is the first known Oberlin policy manual for business practices, says Evans. Distribution will begin in the next week or so.

## Letter

### Where Is the Web-Based Virtual Art by Oberlin Women?

In "It May Be on the Web but Is It Art?," (*Observer*, November 21) Richard Povall points out an absence of web-based virtual art by Oberlin women.

This discovery surprised me. During my undergraduate experience at Oberlin I was introduced to digital media by Kristine Burns, former visiting assistant professor in the TIMARA Program, and Lynn Lukkas, assistant professor of art. Burns maintains *Wow'em* (<http://music.dartmouth.edu/~wowem/>), a site dedicated to high school- and college-aged women interested in

technology and the arts. Lukkas's classes contain a number of women working in digital video and interactive media, though not necessarily for the web.

Plowing through well over a hundred sites by female students on Oberlin Online, I came across a wealth of ideas, creativity, and content. However, I found only one site that focused on artistic expression rather than on information delivery. A subtle, spacious site, senior Jennifer Liu's piece untitled, (<http://www.oberlin.edu/~jliu/>) explores the relationships between voice, space,

and time. My own piece, *simplify*, can be found at <http://www.oberlin.edu/~snelson.simplify> is intended to be an antidote to the web's frenetic pace.

Although there are few virtual art pieces by women on Oberlin Online, many Oberlin women, both current students and alumnae, work in new media—including web design and CD-ROM production.

**Sarah Nelson**  
Educational Technology Intern,  
OCTET

## Julie Taymor . . .

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Oberlin shares some of the credit: The accent on incorporating personal material is part of what she willingly absorbed from working with Blau, while myth and folklore were the topics of her independent major.

Taymor seems to be enjoying the professional success of *The Lion King*, but she also seems to be riding high on the experience of the play itself. She said Monday that she likes how the audience can "watch the mechanics" of the play as it is performed. And she was excited about how the play can be enjoyed on many levels, from the visual to the intellectual—even for the sounds, not only of music but of language. The "most gratifying" aspect of *Lion King*, she said, has been the responses of African-American audiences.

Whenever Taymor would wonder aloud to her Disney producers about whether she should take the production in a certain direction, Taymor said, the producers encouraged her to follow her own artistic inclinations—to "do what I do." Such encouragement was a smart financial move on Disney's part. While satisfying the personal side of Taymor, *The Lion King*—with some of the highest advance-ticket sales in the history of Broadway—seems to have struck a universal chord with the public.

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## Faculty and Staff Notes



An article co-authored by **Warren Darcy**, professor of music theory, and **James Hepokoski**, former Oberlin professor of music history, "The Medial Caesura and Its Role in the Eighteenth-Century Sonata Exposition," was published in the latest issue of *J4*. The article sets forth a genre-based sonata theory that the authors are developing, according to which moment-to-moment compositional choices in

sonata-form works are understood as elements of an ongoing dialogue with reasonably ascertainable, flexible norms. Another article by Darcy, "Bruckner's Sonata Deformations," appears in the book *Bruckner Studies*, published this year by Cambridge University Press; the article explores the ways in which composer Anton Bruckner deforms the sonata paradigm in the first and fourth movements of his symphonies. In October Darcy chaired a session, Forms Revisited, at the Joint Annual Meeting of the Society for Music Theory and the American Musicological Society, held

in Phoenix. Darcy has completed a second year on the Society for Music Theory's Special Awards Committee, which entailed evaluating 14 articles and 10 books. He recently completed a review of Thomas S. Grey's book *Wagner's Musical Prose* for *Notes* and has been asked to write an article on Wagner for *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia*. • In early January **Ross Peacock**, director of institutional research, will give a presentation on the role of institutional research in outcomes assessment at the winter meeting of the Higher Education Data

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## Transitions

### New Employees

**Paul Polivnick** (Juilliard School of Music B.M. 1969) is the music director of the Oberlin Orchestra and the Oberlin Chamber Orchestra. He has been the music director of the New Hampshire Music Festival and a visiting lecturer at the University of California at Santa Barbara. With over 1000 performances and recordings as an orchestra and opera-company conductor to his credit, he is



**Polivnick**

considered one of the most in-demand guest conductors. Polivnick has received an honorary doctorate from the University of Montevallo and a Leonard Bernstein Conducting Fellowship to the Berkshire Music Center. He is married to Marsha Hooks Polivnick and enjoys cooking, reading, physical fitness, traveling, philosophy, pets, and hiking. He says he looks forward to "having the chance to work with talented younger musicians." **Rachel Tansey** (College of Wooster B.A. 1994) is a reunion-giving coordinator for the Office of Major Gifts. She has worked for the College as an acting office manager in the physical plant, a temporary secretary for the English



**Tansey**

Department, and a summer employee for Conference Services. Tansey taught Spanish in an Arkansas high school in 1995-96 as part of the Teach for America program and was a network coordinator for the Ohio Literacy Network in 1994-95. She enjoys art and athletics, especially pottery, stained glass, quilting, painting, running, rollerblading, and skiing. **Darla Warren** is an administrative assistant in the Office of College Relations. Taking classes at Lorain

County Community College, she looks forward to transferring to a liberal arts program in 1998. She enjoys music, poetry, gardening, going to a great ball game, off-the-wall comedies, traveling, experiencing different cultures, and watching her 12-year-old daughter, Melissa, "transform into a headstrong, independent teen," she says. She has worked for the Amtraco Corporation and the Ohio Turnpike Commission. She is a former co-owner and manager of Rockside International Travel. Warren says she looks forward to "gaining new insights, challenging old perceptions, and extending myself to accomplish what I never thought possible."

## College Supports Scholars' Research

Paul Bellamy suspects that insurance companies do not equitably insure homes in urban, especially African-American, neighborhoods. Realizing that he would need to be armed with more than anecdotal information to persuade insurance companies to adopt policies he considers fair, Bellamy recently applied for and received affiliate-scholar status at Oberlin. As an affiliate scholar he can study the issue with College resources and use his College title to add credibility to his grant requests.

He plans to build a program that will recruit students as interns for research, outreach, and administration in his attempt to understand the insurance industry and influence them directly or through state legislation to support prospective urban homeowners. He is raising funds to support the endeavor.

Affiliate scholars are nonfaculty members of the Oberlin community who conduct scholarly research. The title connotes that they may use Col-

lege resources and stationary to pursue publishing their work and obtaining grants. Two past affiliate scholars had their three-year terms renewed this year.

- Roger Binkley, an emeritus professor of chemistry at Cleveland State University, has been working on a manuscript about the photochemistry of carbohydrates for the past two years. Having published several papers on the topic, he plans to publish more papers and a book on radical reactions of carbohydrates in the next three years.
- Richard Reinoehl writes about the relationship of humans and information systems, such as computers. He is the associate editor of *Computers in Human Services* and plans to write more papers in the field.

Thirteen people are in their second or third years of affiliate-scholar appointments (see the *Observer's* December 7, 1995, issue for details on the program and current scholars).

Similar to affiliate scholars in their connection to the College, research associates receive one-year appointments to use College resources. Each research associate works with a specific department and is expected to be available to students.

This year's only research associate, Harry Spencer, works in the chemistry department. He has taught for the College since 1985, and the chemistry department honored him with the title distinguished visiting professor of chemistry in 1995. Spencer tutors students in Chemistry 101 and 102, coordinates a Bridge to Chemistry 102 Winter Term project, and studies photographic science. He also continues to analyze the relationships between mathematical SAT scores and student grades in beginning biology and chemistry courses with Yolanda Cruz and his daughter, Marsha Bollinger, who teaches at Winthrop University (see "Math Matters for Chemistry" in the April 11, 1997, *Observer*.)

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## Spotlight

# The Center for Service and Learning: It's Not Just a Volunteer-Placement Office

By Mark Graham

In 1994 Daniel Gardner '90 became the first director of the Center for Service and Learning (CSL). Though Gardner is pleased with the support the CSL has received over the past three years, one common assumption about the office bothers him.

"We're not just a volunteer-placement office," Gardner says. "We are serious about the learning part of our name." To fulfill their total mission, the CSL staff creates educational volunteering opportunities and educational opportunities that involve community service.

Drawing on established connections with community organizations that have produced over 300 volunteering leads (see them online at <http://www.oberlin.edu/~csl>), the CSL is trying to find more creative and productive ways for students to volunteer, Gardner says. To bring this about, he discusses students' skills with community groups and sponsors service programs.

One program, the Community Action Fellowship, teaches students about local issues and community organizing. Eight student fellows—each dealing with a separate issue area: the African-American community, education, the environment, fine and performing arts, grassroots leadership, health, hunger and homelessness, and women's issues—divide the summer weeks between studying an issue, learning leadership skills, and using their skills in a community organization. During the school year they continue working part time for the organization and help develop projects for other students.

Community Services Coordinator Hilary Greer '96, who works with the fellows, also helps develop programs like this fall's Day of Awareness and leadership workshops for students

called the Student Organizing Initiative. Greer says she enjoys working in the CSL because she can "design projects that I would have liked to have done as a student."

Greer also counsels students about how to get the most out of their volunteering time. "I let people know their options and talk it through with people to find out what is really interesting to them," she says.

Administrative Assistant Kathleen Dudzik says her favorite part of her job is meeting the students. "It is inspiring to come to work and see the students volunteer their time when they're so busy," she says. She has worked in the office since its opening. Her contributions include finding transportation for students and "answering a phone that doesn't stop ringing."

The newest staff member, Mark Blackman '89, returned to Oberlin this summer to be the director of the Bonner Scholar program. "Though these students are first generation and low income," Blackman says, "they are some of the most dynamic, interesting, savvy, and resourceful individuals you'll ever run across." Each year since its start in 1992, the Bonner Scholar program selects up to 20 first-year students who are the first in their family to attend college and/or who are from low-income families. The program allows them to earn work-study money for working in the community.

Blackman says that along with performing community service Bonner students must acclimate themselves to the college environment to be successful students. He coordinates staff-led skills workshops and helps students attend national leadership conferences. Blackman believes that, beyond the events, "the key to the pro-



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN SEYFRIED

**"Though it's busy, [the Center for Service and Learning] is a great office to work in. It's a lot of fun," says Kathy Dudzik, front. Behind her in the Lewis House stairway are colleagues Mark Blackman, Hilary Greer, and Daniel Gardner.**

gram is that these kids find support from each other."

Blackman relates easily to the Bonner Scholars. He was a first-generation student who helped found the Business Initiatives Program and helped his classmates by writing 20-30 résumés a week. "I wish the program had been around when I was a student," Blackman says.

The staff also offers help to students who are not in a CSL program. For interested students, the staff helps find faculty members willing to give private-reading courses in topics involving their community service projects. Also, this year Greer, Gardner, and Blackman together are sponsoring more than 40 Winter Term projects.

In addition to the private readings and programs, the staff helps faculty members teach academically-based

community-service courses. The CSL has information on pedagogy for interested professors. New courses such as the Chemistry Department's Practicum in Science Teaching and the community music minor in the music-education department mix service and learning.

Part of the CSL's mission extends beyond volunteer placement to organizing ways for students to "process their community service experience," says Gardner. "It needs to be contextualized, decontextualized, prodded, poked, and challenged.

"I very much believe that there's a place in a liberal-arts curriculum where you match your academic learning with the realities of the outside world," Gardner says. "In a variety of ways, we're helping students make the connection."

## Faculty Meeting

# College Faculty Gets a Glimpse of Science Facilities to Come

Presentations about the new science facilities were the main focus of the December 2 College Faculty meeting. Danforth Professor of Biology David Benzing, convenor of the Science Advisory Committee, gave a brief modern history of science facilities at the College and followed with a description of some factors that influenced the College's recent decision to upgrade the facilities. His handout covered the history and the decision factors, and described the organization of the planning process, identifying planning teams and their memberships. The handout is a link from the electronic version of this issue.

Robert Schaeffner, an architect with Payette Associates, the firm that is designing the new and renovated facilities, gave a slide presentation that showed the proposed buildings in relation to the rest of the campus. His schematic drawings and photographs of models revealed the rela-

tionship of the new science complex to Wilder Bowl, and showed how the fortress-like quality of Kettering would be softened with open space and a commons area. Landscaping, Schaeffner said, would visually integrate the two sides of West Lorain Street and "control" the crossing point.

Topics of faculty questions and responses to them included developing the campus's east-west axis to balance the north-south axis that the new facilities will emphasize; possibly relocating Routes 58 and 511 around the campus; and funding.

Preceding the presentations Clayton Koppes, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, announced College Faculty discussion groups that would begin meeting during Winter Term, and Associate Dean Bruce Richards reminded faculty about the dean's office's offer to sponsor faculty reading groups.

Seven members of the Student Honor Committee gave a brief presentation of the committee's interests and goals for the year. Ensuing faculty discussion covered the topic of plagiarism, and one of the committee's members announced that the committee intends to create a web page on the subject. Faculty also brought up the necessity to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate collaboration, especially as pedagogical styles that emphasize collaboration are on the rise.

Associate Professor of History Stephen Volk, chair of the College Faculty Council, reported in general terms on the activities of the council since September. Actions included assigning leave replacements, granting promotions, and making appointments and position allocations. The council is gearing up to interview many tenure-track applicants during February and March, he said.

## Grants-in-Aid . . .

*Continued from page 1*

Kyoto; and other sites in and around Tokyo as well as to the west coast of Japan to Tsuroka and Nigata. The purpose of his travel is to experience and document Shinto and Zen garden shrines and temples and their physical surroundings—the landscape. Pearson will apply his research to his paintings and relief sculpture that seek to evoke the sense of silence.

Although random departures from perfect bilateral symmetry in animals' bodies are traditionally thought to result from imprecise expression of genetic designs during an animal's development, recent research with humans suggests that subtle facial asymmetries may be associated with psychological distress. Albert Porterfield will use physiological measures to determine whether such facial asymmetries are related to nervous system instability and hyper-responsiveness when individuals are presented with emotion-evoking stimuli. He will use his grant to pay student research assistants and to upgrade laboratory computer hardware.

# NEA Grant Will Make Eva Hesse Archives Accessible

By Carol Ganzel

About 300 drawings—including finished works, studies, and irregularly shaped penciled scraps—and 900 written notes, journals, letters, and newspaper clippings comprise the Eva Hesse archives in the Allen Memorial Art Museum. Last winter the National Endowment for the Arts awarded the museum \$25,000 in matching funds to survey and rehouse the 1200 items in the archives.

Acquired in 1982, the archives are a valuable resource for scholars of 20th-century sculpture, says Marjorie "Betsy" Wieseman, acting director of the museum. But without a detailed survey it has been impossible to tell potential users just what is there, and without proper housing to protect items from damage that fingers and light may inflict, the museum has had to limit access.

With the grant, the museum has begun to make the archives accessible. Single written sheets are going into mylar sleeves and bound sheets into acid-free boxes, says museum registrar Lucille Stiger. Clippings on deteriorating newsprint are being photocopied while they can still be read. Over the summer Ryan Hodgins '97 rehoused many of the written items and matted many of the drawings.

Moyna Stanton, paper conservator in the Intermuseum Conservation Association, is examining each

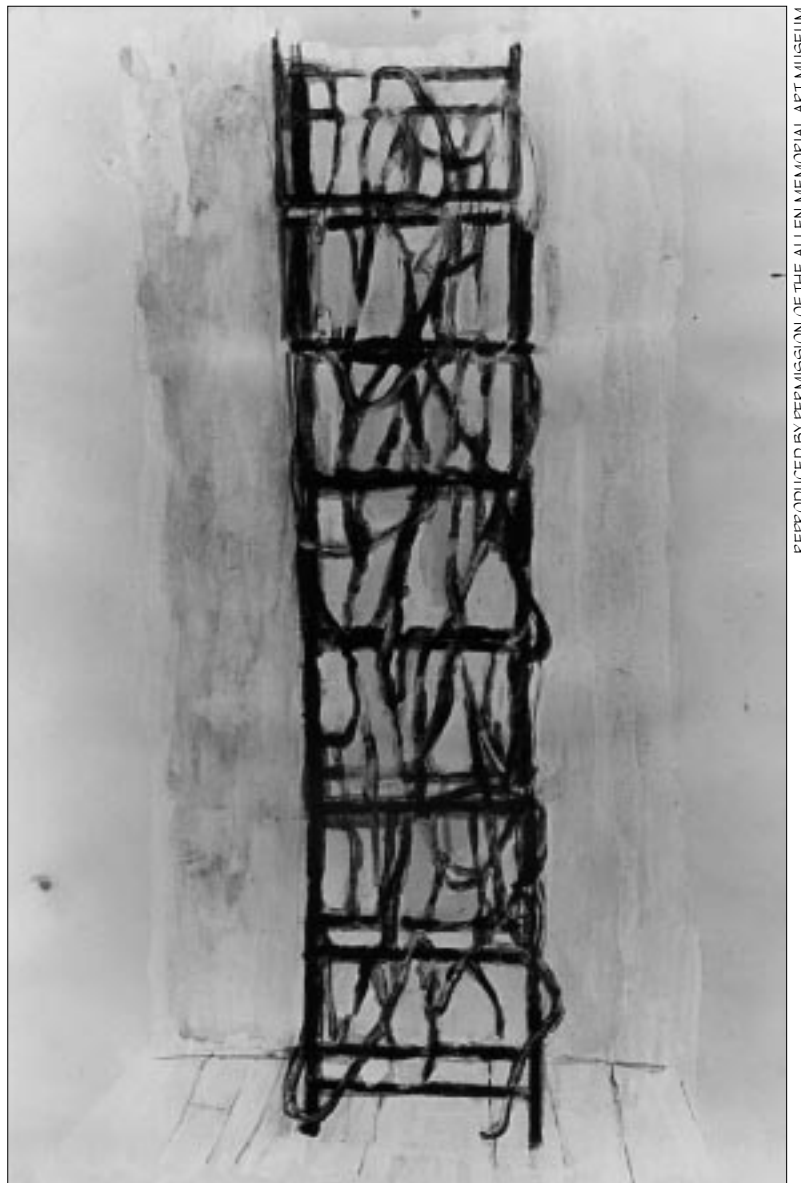
drawing to determine whether it is done in pencil, ballpoint pen, crayon, some other medium, or—as she frequently finds—a combination of media. Hesse had "so many drawing materials at her disposal" that identifying which one she used to draw every line on a particular piece of paper is not always easy, Stanton says, especially when one piece is covered with many different materials. Likewise, it may be hard to tell whether two or more drawings are related—different attempts to work out one idea, perhaps—but after studying many of them, "you start to get a feel" for the relation of each piece to the body of Hesse's work. A few of the small, irregularly shaped drawings fit like jigsaw-puzzle pieces onto a larger drawing, and from glue stains and other evidence Stanton may deduce that these were parts of collages.

For each drawing she examines Stanton writes a report identifying its media, describing its paper, indicating its present condition, and recommending appropriate treatment—including reattaching collage pieces. Hesse often used unstable materials in her working drawings—they were tools for herself not necessarily meant to last, Wieseman notes—and some deteriorating works need immediate attention. The grant is for surveying rather than repairing, but Stanton's report indicates treatment priority.

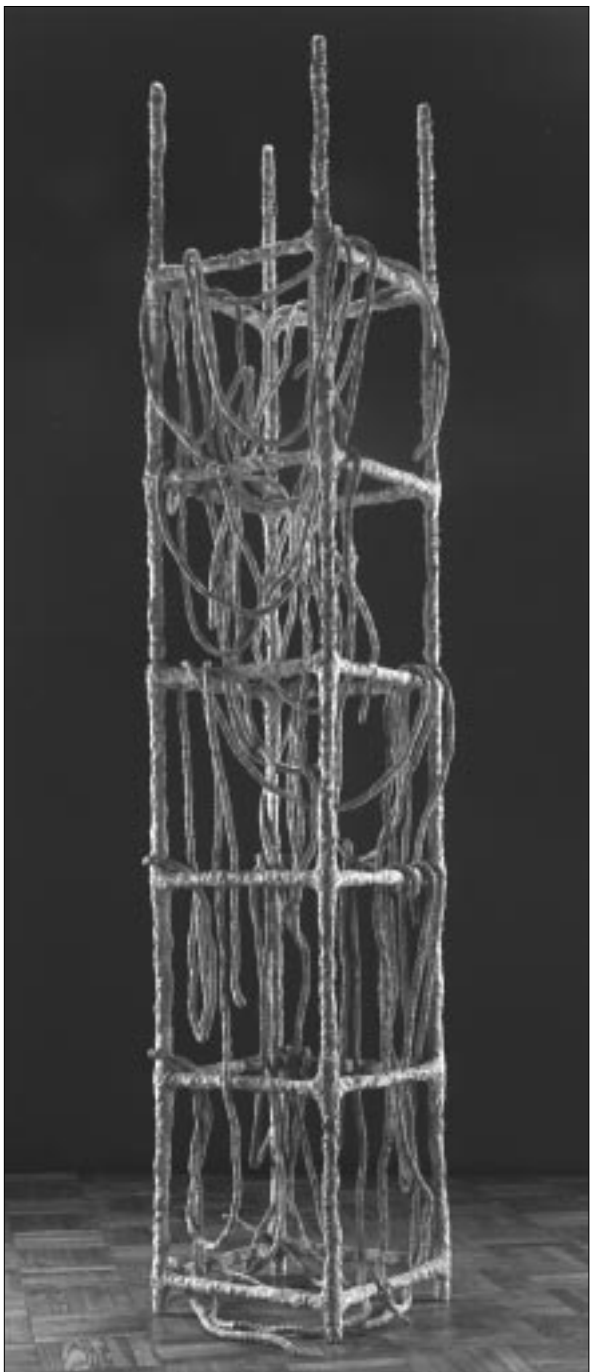
The artist Eva Hesse lived only 34 years (1936 to 1970). While she exhibited both drawings and paintings, she is known primarily for her sculpture. One indication of her importance is that she was one of the five artists—the others were Pablo Picasso, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and Frank Stella—whose works were part of the recent Christie's auction that, the *New York Times* said (November 6, 1997), "may well be one of the most important auctions of 20th-century fine art in history." The auctioned works were collected by the late Victor and Sally Ganz of New York City. Until recently the Oberlin museum displayed one item from their collection, Hesse's *Connections*, which was here on extended loan.

To Curator of Modern/Contemporary Art Amy Kurlander, "Hesse is one of the great sculptors of the postwar period" whose influence on other artists continued after her death. While most of the items in the archives are not "finished" pieces of art, organizing and preserving them is well worth the trouble (and money). "Having a huge corpus of her work as a draftsman is very illuminating," Kurlander says. Likewise, Wieseman says, "You can trace Hesse's thought processes and see a progression in her imagery. Some of the drawings express in two dimensions the same thing going on in her three-dimensional sculpture."

Kurlander says that Hesse's sculpture, often constructed from rope, string, and other linear materials, "takes shape as line, not volume." The Hesse



Hesse drew *Untitled, after Laocoön* two years after completing the *Laocoön* sculpture. The work, in gouache and pencil on paper, is in the AMAM's permanent collection.



Hesse created the AMAM's *Laocoön* in 1966 of acrylic paint, cloth-covered cord, wire, and papier-mâché over plastic plumber's pipe.

## Faculty and Staff . . .

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Sharing consortium in Clearwater, Florida. His talk will detail the major goals of institutional research and successful modes of information deliv-



ery, with emphasis on the web as an effective medium. • **Richard Spear**, Mildred Jay Professor of Art History, on leave this year, is the Harn Eminent Scholar at the University of Florida. Richard recently lectured on Caravaggio, La Tour, and nocturnes at the Louvre

Museum in Paris on the occasion of the exhibition of Georges de La Tour's work at the Grand Palais. Earlier this fall he lectured on Guido Reni at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and at the Ringling School of Art in Sarasota, and gave a talk, "What Is an Original?," for the Harn Museum in Gainesville. His most recent book, *The "Divine" Guido: Religion, Sex, Money and Art in the World of*

*Guido Reni*, has just been published by Yale University Press. The book was singled out recently by the *London Daily Telegraph* as one of the "top five art books of the year" and as "the most original." At the end of January Richard will give a lecture, "Caravaggio: Life and Art," at the Cleveland Museum of Art in celebration of the museum's forthcoming exhibition of treasures from the Vatican.