

The Observer

Volume 19, Number 7 November 21, 1997

THE OBERLIN COLLEGE FACULTY AND STAFF NEWSPAPER

Grant Engages College in Comprehensive Diversity Project

By Mark Graham

With a \$105,000 grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the College will undertake next school year a three-year initiative to nurture the sense of campus community and improve dialogue about multicultural issues. Called Common Ground: Education for Democracy, the new project will teach and reinforce cooperation and communication skills through integrated curricular and cocurricular activities including community-service projects, new approaches to pedagogy, panel discussions, Experimental College (ExCo) courses, and faculty and staff diversity workshops.

Common Ground to Begin with Deans' Reports

The initiative will begin with Clayton Koppes and Karen Wolff, deans of the college and conservatory respectively, meeting with department chairs to discuss areas of conflict and distrust in the classroom as well as successful approaches to building common ground. The deans will use the information to produce a report for future educational planning. A pedagogical specialist will use the reports to form a faculty training program.

Beginning in June, 20 faculty members each summer will attend a three-day workshop featuring two days of pedagogical training by the specialist. Attention will focus on syllabi, assignments, and teaching models to engage all

campus constituencies in class participation. On the final day, the faculty and the Multicultural Resource Center (MRC) staff will discuss campus diversity.

Department chairs and faculty-council members will have priority placement in the workshops so they can offer the training in the future without an external specialist.

New faculty members will attend one-day pedagogy workshops as a part of faculty orientation.

The staff will participate in similar, one-and-a-half-day workshops led by the MRC staff. The seminars will include discussions on diversity, an examination of pluralism at Oberlin, and an introduction to skills and strategies for facilitating productive communication. Following the workshop, staff members will meet regularly in smaller groups to discuss strategies for defusing multicultural conflict. The MRC staff will help establish a peer-training program and one-day sessions for new staff.

Panel Discussions to Feature Experts

Beginning in fall 1998 each semester for six semesters a panel discussion featuring three experts will explore complex issues such as affirmative action, immigration, and welfare reform. The sessions will be facilitated to bring about not agreement, but rather a tolerant, constructive dialogue of differing

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New Wilder Programs Aim to Appeal to Entire Community

By Mark Graham

Following a strategic plan they produced this summer, the student-union staff is experimenting with projects and programs to attract more faculty and staff to Wilder Hall.

"I'm afraid that faculty and staff think this is just a student place, where they're not welcome," says Associate Dean of Students Bill Stackman, who is responsible for the student union. "Our goal is to meet the needs of the students, faculty, staff, and community members," Stackman says. "We want to bring people together."

Stackman thinks that students and faculty spending time together fosters a sense of community, creates valuable mentoring relationships, and keeps

students connected to the College. During last year's long-range planning process, many students and faculty requested more faculty-student activities, he says.

To help bring people together, the student union has become more physically inviting. New couches and chairs have made the interior and the porch more comfortable as "hang out space," says Stackman. New lamps, plants, and artwork brighten the hallways. The first-floor lobby will soon become a student art gallery.

One new student-union program aimed at a wide audience is the Children's Movie Matinee, to be held tomorrow. In the Wilder Main Lounge

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Megan Mitchell, reference librarian, and Kathleen Abromeit, public services librarian in the conservatory, coach Daniel Merrill, professor of philosophy, in last year's information-technology workshop.

Info Lit II: Library and OCTET to Offer Faculty Hands-on Winter Term Workshop

"Excellent presentation! Amazing organization!"

"Everybody was so helpful and the whole thing was so well organized. I thought it was just splendid."

"This was a wonderful idea. . . . It showed your consummate organizational skills, knowledge, and wonderful approach and style."

With raves like this for last year's Winter Term workshop, it's no wonder the library—paired this year with the Oberlin Center for Technologically Enhanced Teaching (OCTET)—plans to teach faculty about educational technology again this Winter Term.

"We considered last year's program highly successful for the 50 or so faculty members who attended," says head of reference Cynthia Comer, who helped plan and conduct the earlier workshop. The classes also drew interest from librarians outside Oberlin, including those of the Five Colleges of Ohio and members of the American Library Association, who heard Oberlin library staff give presentations about the workshop.

Designed by members of the library reference staff and the OCTET staff, the new five-session workshop is called Using Educational Technology to Teach Information Literacy.

The first session, January 7, will help faculty find out what information is available through electronic means as well as explore why Oberlin students need to become more information literate and learn to use educational technology. Instructors Ray English, Root Director of Libraries; Gary Kornblith, director of OCTET; and Sarah Nelson, assistant to

the director of OCTET, will also talk about how information dissemination has changed in the last five years. In the next class, January 9, Kornblith and Nelson will help participants create a World Wide Web-based syllabus. The library reference staff will lead the third session, January 12, which will expand on the theme of the first session.

Kornblith and Nelson will explain and demonstrate electronic conferencing, electronic submission of assignments and papers, mail lists, and on-line-examination options in the fourth session, January 14. They'll also talk about what lies ahead for the pedagogical options that Kornblith calls "Oberlin's educational-technology toolkit."

Teaching strategies for information literacy will focus the final class, January 16. Reference librarians will talk about what kinds of assignments work well with educational technology, and will also cover standards for citing electronic sources.

After the five sessions are over, the library and OCTET staffs will be available by appointment to follow up on workshop topics, do one-on-one tutorials, discuss the pedagogical implications of the new technology, and help faculty members explore discipline-specific resources and build web pages for their spring courses.

Faculty must register in advance for the workshop. Details are forthcoming in a memo Kornblith and Comer plan to mail next week.

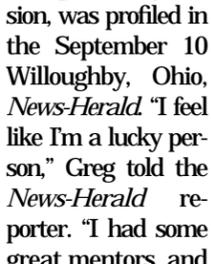
"To some extent, we see this Winter Term workshop as a follow-up to last year's event, sponsored by the library staff and the General Faculty Library

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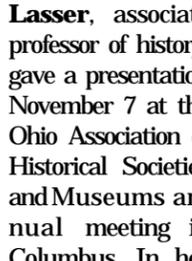
Faculty and Staff Notes

Ann Cooper Albright, associate professor of dance, and her book, *Choreographing Difference: The Body and Identity in Contemporary Dance* (University Press of New England, 1997), were the focus of a champagne reception in Montreal last month. Tangente, a nonprofit organization supporting the development of dance and related forms of contemporary art in Québec, and the International Festival of New Dance sponsored the event. Ann presented a performative reading from her book at the Co-op Bookstore November 15. At the November conference of the Congress on Research in Dance she gave a workshop titled Staging Identity: Representation, Experience and the Body. A course she is teaching this semester, *Queer Acts*, was mentioned in a recent *New York Post* article about the rise of new curricula in colleges across the country. Next semester Ann will be on leave in order to teach an interdisciplinary faculty workshop on contemporary discourses of the body at Bryn Mawr, Swarthmore, and Haverford colleges. She looks forward to engaging in more activities that explore the interactions between dancing bodies and written texts while in the East. •

Greg Bandy, teacher of jazz percussion, was profiled in the September 10 Willoughby, Ohio, *News-Herald*. "I feel like I'm a lucky person," Greg told the *News-Herald* reporter. "I had some great mentors, and I want to give something back. Nowadays, people do not offer the kids enough. Kids wouldn't be in so much trouble if they had something worthwhile to do. I was on the streets, but my (high school) band director and my teachers helped me. That's the cycle of life. You grow. And if you've had the chance to do some recognizable things,



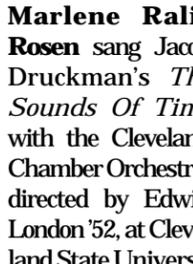
you should be willing to inspire some more young kids." • **Michael Hyde**, who joined Oberlin in 1983 as director of the annual fund, has been appointed vice president for university relations at Alfred University. Mike left Oberlin as a senior development officer in 1988 for Allegheny College, where he was vice president for development and alumni affairs until moving to Alfred in September. • **Carol Lasser**, associate professor of history, gave a presentation November 7 at the Ohio Association of Historical Societies and Museums annual meeting in Columbus. In her talk, "Doing Local History on the Web: The Electronic Oberlin Group," Carol's aim was to help people think about partnerships that bring local history into new formats. She spoke about the partnership between the Electronic Oberlin Group (EOG) and the Oberlin public schools, and about Oberlin History as American History, the EOG's National Endowment for the Humanities-funded project. (See "Looking at the Past with Hi-Tech Tools: College Collaborates with City Schools on NEH-Funded Project" in the *Observer* of October 24.) • **Jim McMillan**, director of stewardship, has earned Heavy Hitter status for a presentation he gave for the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). His "Effective



Donor Relations and Stewardship" was part of CASE's second annual Conference on Effective Stewardship and Donor Relations. The November issue of *CASE Currents* magazine carried the news. As cochair of the conference Jim also recruited the faculty (10 other development professionals from academic settings) and planned and organized the curriculum. He oversaw the track called Strategic and Operational Planning for Stewardship and Donor Relations Programs, which covered assessing existing programs and operations; crafting a vision for the institution and winning support from key individuals; charting a course for implementation; and evaluating, refining, and adjusting plans. "One of the things I'm most pleased about," says Jim, "is that 10 of the 12 conference leaders received the Heavy Hitter rating." The conference was June 25 to 27 in Bethesda, and was attended by nearly 200 people from the U.S. and Canada. Jim and some colleagues may write a book for CASE on the topic of effective donor relations and stewardship. •

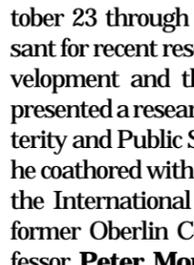


Marlene Ralis Rosen sang Jacob Druckman's *The Sounds Of Time* with the Cleveland Chamber Orchestra, directed by Edwin London '52, at Cleveland State University October 13, and gave a repeat performance at Bowling Green State



University October 16. • **Stephen Sheppard**, associate professor of economics, participated in the Northeast Universities Development Consortium Conference, held in Williamstown, Massachusetts, October 23 through 25. He was a discussant for recent research on economic development and the environment, and presented a research paper, "Fiscal Austerity and Public Servant Quality," that he coauthored with Nadeem Ul-Haque of the International Monetary Fund and former Oberlin College economics professor **Peter Montiel**. Steve also presented the opening paper for a conference, Land Prices, Land Markets, Land Information Systems, and the Market for Land Information, at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy Studies in Cambridge, Massachusetts, November 13 through 16. He coauthored the paper, "Finding Uses for the Various Prices of Land," with Paul Cheshire of the London School of Economics. • Five of the 71 artists with pieces in the 18th annual Members Holiday Show of the Firelands Association for the Visual Arts (FAVA) are current or former College employees: **Paul Arnold**, emeritus professor of art; **Palli Davis**, former acting coordinator of educational programs at the Allen Memorial Art Museum (AMAM); **Britt Friedman**, retired psychologist in the Counseling Center; **Linda Grashoff**, editor of the *Observer*; and **Leslie Miller**, assistant to the director of the AMAM. The show runs through December 20.

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important lessons about diversity and community, and Lorain County will become a teaching laboratory in which the skills and strategies for finding common ground can be applied and shared with others." The Campus Coalition Fund will provide coalitions of two or more student groups up to \$1000 to fund unity projects, campus events that emphasize common areas of interest. Cooperative events should "provide a meaningful, productive forum for engaging distinct communities that at best may be uninformed about or indifferent to one another, or, at worst, openly suspicious and antagonistic," the grant proposal stipulates.

Common Ground. . .

Continued from page 1
opinions. The panel session will be the backbone of student orientation and a multicultural ExCo course.

The MRC will develop the course, to be called the First-Year Initiative (FYI), for the 1998-99 academic year. It and subsequent courses, led by student-orientation leaders, will emphasize constructive communication, problem-solving, and conflict-management skills as the classes study diversity issues using a variety of academic disciplines. Faculty members and MRC staff will help the orientation leaders organize the courses.

In the 1999-2000 school year students, faculty, and staff will teach a similar course for sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Both courses will be strongly recommended, but not required.

New Funds to Support Coalition Building

The Common Ground initiative includes

Student Union . . .

Continued from page 1
town children, parents, and students will be able to enjoy *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* and *Black Beauty* while eating freshly popped popcorn. Union staff will solicit suggestions for new movies and other events after the show.

Speakers, concerts, plays, and musicals already draw eclectic groups to the building. But Stackman believes that Oberlin also needs opportunities for

occurricular student projects to supplement the ExCo offering. Two funds, the Community Education Fund and the Campus Coalition Fund, support coalition-building.

The Community Education Fund will provide grants up to \$1500 for student coalitions of two or more groups to address diversity issues in the schools or nonprofit sector of Lorain County. "Students can reach genuine understanding more easily when working together toward a shared goal than when merely discussing multiculturalism," says Koppes.

The projects will strengthen the connection between an Oberlin education and the real world. The cocurricular model will allow students to practice their skills and bring back new ideas from community service to their academic and social lives.

"By coming together as a campus to help local schools and nongovernmental organizations improve their effectiveness," says President Nancy Dye, "Oberlin students, faculty, and staff will learn im-

more casual fun and relaxation. Opening the 'Sco for *X-Files* viewers and creating a television lounge on the second floor this semester make Wilder a more recreational space, says Stackman.

Stackman is also carrying his staff's mission outside Wilder. His office has recruited 20 faculty and staff members to serve students breakfast in Dascomb dining hall December 14 from midnight until 2 A.M. Assistant directors of the student union Chris Baymiller and Tina Zwegat are planning new student trips—such as ex-

portant lessons about diversity and community, and Lorain County will become a teaching laboratory in which the skills and strategies for finding common ground can be applied and shared with others." The Campus Coalition Fund will provide coalitions of two or more student groups up to \$1000 to fund unity projects, campus events that emphasize common areas of interest. Cooperative events should "provide a meaningful, productive forum for engaging distinct communities that at best may be uninformed about or indifferent to one another, or, at worst, openly suspicious and antagonistic," the grant proposal stipulates.

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Program Evaluation

The college's Educational Plans and Policies Committee and the conservatory's Educational Policy Committee will evaluate the effectiveness of the new pedagogical approaches in various courses and disciplines.

Common Ground will be administered by the MRC. *Continued on page 3*

cursions to Cleveland, a holiday-shopping trip, and a February ski trip—and concerts, including a spring concert on the football field.

More than students already use some student-union resources. Although College members use the bowling lanes—this year the chemistry department staffs two faculty-student bowling teams—town residents make up about 60 percent of the people who use the lanes at the student-union facility in Hales Gym, says bowling lanes manager Tom Reid.

The Observer (ISSN 0193-368X), the faculty and staff newspaper of Oberlin College, published 17 times a year, is delivered to employees and made available to students on campus. Copies are mailed to retired employees, certain alumni and friends of the College, and paid subscribers. The editor welcomes off-campus readers but does not always provide background information for them: news that has already been reported in the *Review* (the student newspaper) or announced elsewhere may not be reported fully or prominently in the *Observer*.

Editor: Linda Grashoff. Editorial assistant: Mark Graham.

Published by the Oberlin College Office of College Relations, Alan Moran, vice president. Address: Office of College Relations, 153 W. Lorain St., Oberlin, OH 44074-1023. E-mail: observer@oberlin.edu. Issued bi-weekly August 29 to December 5, 1997, and January 30 to May 22, 1998. Periodicals postage paid at Oberlin, Ohio, and at additional mailing offices. Yearly subscriptions are \$16.

Letters to the editor directly related to campus events are welcome; those from employees and students take precedence over those from other correspondents. All letters are subject to editing; if time permits, the editor will consult with the correspondent about changes.

All Oberlin College Office of College Relations publications include a minimum of 10 percent postconsumer waste. Discarded *Observers* may be recycled with office paper.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Observer*, Oberlin College Development Resources, Bosworth Hall 4, 50 W. Lorain St., Oberlin, OH 44074-1089.

New Grounds Manager Digs in at Oberlin

"Everybody is a gardener," says grounds manager Dennis Greive (rhymes with ivy), who joined Oberlin in May. "[Gardening] is the most popular hobby in the world."

Greive has been appealing to green-thumb instincts this fall to involve staff and students in recreating the College landscape. People like to "get outside and get dirty," he says. "It seems refreshing to them." On Labor Day staff and students planted three theme gardens for Greive's part of the Dig In at Oberlin project. At Langston (North Hall) a native-plants garden went in with bulbs, inkberry, service berry, purple cone flower, witch hazel, and winter-berry holly; at Dascomb an herb garden with witch hazel, barberry, artemesia, juniper, thyme, and purple cone flower; and at Harvey, on the South Bowl, a butterfly garden with lilac, milkweed, sedum, asters, and cardinal flowers.

By exchanging T-shirts for evaluation forms, Greive was able to find out, when the gardens were completed, what people liked and didn't like about the experience. Greive counts the project a big success, and is especially pleased that eight of the 10 grounds workers volunteered to work with students and other volunteer staff in the gardens on a day the College considers an official holiday.

While he has already made changes in the College landscape (Dig In number two was a medicinal herb garden at the Underground Railroad monument that drew 65 participants October 10) Greive says that in other ways he is trying to "just observe" during his first



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN SEYFRIED

Dennis Greive enjoys one of the gardens planted by Ed Thompson, his predecessor once removed.

year. ("People don't like change," he says.) He wants to let the people who work for him "show me how I could help them." Although he'll maintain a desk and telephone in the Service Building, Greive recently moved his office from the Service Building to the Grounds Shop, near the athletic fields, where the grounds staff is based.

"Oberlin's basic landscape system is in place," says Greive. "It's ready to be fine-tuned." One of the ways he will fine-tune it is to time—as much as nature can be timed—the flowering of

spring bulbs to coincide with commencement this year. And with overwintering pansies he's trying to extend natural color further into Oberlin's winter. He expects the pansies—some of which are growing at the site of the Historic Elm—to keep blooming into December, as they do at Kingwood Center in Mansfield. They'll flower again in late May, he says.

Greive's experimentation extends to what can't be seen, too. To try to prevent compaction that happens especially during commencement under the big tent,

he has mixed recycled rubber pellets into the 25 truckloads of new soil added recently to Wilder Bowl. He hopes to add biostimulants—beneficial bacteria and fungus—to the soil on Tappan Square, where oak trees have been having a hard time. Injecting the microbes into the soil depends on a high-pressure spray rig, something he has requested as a capital purchase this year. And he's looking for ways to recycle the organic waste his staff produces during tree trimming and leaf removal. "We would like to make our own compost," he says.

Greive says he'll be taking a team approach to developing the landscape. "I want my team members to be participants in planning, so it's not a 'Dennis Program.' I want them to have a feeling of ownership. That means more meetings and phone work for them, but also a feeling of being more in control of their work day."

He already has some ideas to add to the pot for the conservatory area. Perhaps, rather than water, his crew will fill the conservatory pond, now empty, with gravel for a similar effect, he says. Perhaps a nearby small fountain could add the sound of water. Another thought he has up his sleeve for campus-wide execution is Weed Day—during which everyone on campus pulls weeds in his or her area for one hour.

Greive has completed five-year plans for capital equipment, goals, and his operating budget. As he adds such foresight to his labor base—"I've got a really good group working back there; they really care"—can Oberlin in Eden be far behind?

Transitions

New Employee

Stephan Jost (Hampshire College B.A. 1991, University of Texas at Austin M.A. 1997) is a curatorial research assistant at the Allen Memorial Art Museum. Interested in the history of photography—especially landscape photography and the history of museums and museum display—he is working on the North American landscape project (see the November 7, 1997, issue of the *Observer*



Stephan Jost

for more about the project) and doing editorial research for the museum's CD-ROM. He wants to help other parts of the College use the museum in innovative ways. Having worked in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, University of Texas at Austin's Huntington Art Gallery, and Sotheby's

marketing department, he has curated exhibitions at the Huntington Art Gallery, the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst's University Gallery, and the Mead Art Museum at Amherst College. This year Jost coauthored an exhibition catalog, *Re-Collecting: Photographs from the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center*. He likes mountain biking, architecture, Quakerism, and visiting interesting landscapes. He says he looks forward to "working in a museum that has a long tradition and commitment to collecting quality art objects."

Changes in Appointment

Gretchen Tolson was promoted October 3 from Departmental Assistant IV to Secretary V in the dean's office of the Conservatory of Music. Former custodian **Kevin Griffith** transferred October 17 to the mechanical maintenance area.

formation resources (both traditional and newer) into the curriculum.

The third goal of this year's workshop—help faculty get their syllabi on the web with appropriate links to information resources—builds on the theme of last year's final session.

Some repetition of content from last year's workshop should be expected, says Kornblith, but, as before, those who sign up for the workshop need not attend all the sessions to benefit from any one of them.

Info Lit II. . .

Continued from page 1

Committee," says Comer. "But we encourage all faculty to attend this year's sessions whether or not they attended last year's."

Two of the goals of the two workshops are similar:

- raise the faculty's comfort level with information technology, and
- work with faculty to develop strategies for integrating the teaching of in-

Faculty Meeting

New Minor, Revised Major in the Conservatory

The Conservatory Faculty meeting of November 11 began where the previous month's meeting left off: with discussion of the conservatory's clocks and parking. New clock software has been purchased, said Associate Dean John Jacobson, and many of the clocks are now fixed, though not synchronized. Jacobson reported taking the faculty's parking concerns to the College's Parking Committee. The faculty responded with a low-pitched "oooooooooooo" when Jacobson said the Denver Boot may be used to discourage illegal parking in the conservatory lot.

Dean Karen Wolff reported on some scholarship-endowment donations in the pipeline, and commented on two goals for the conservatory's part of the upcoming capital campaign.

Associate Dean Kathryn Stuart reported on recent Conservatory Faculty Council activities and introduced Catherine Jarjisian, professor of music education, and Richard Povall, associate professor of computer music and new media. Jarjisian described a proposed minor in community music, to be

part of the Division of Music Education. The new minor will use existing course offerings. Noncourse requirements include participation in an Oberlin ensemble and at least one semester's work in a community-based setting, such as Oberlin Choristers, Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra, or a church music program.

Povall described a proposed revision of the TIMARA major, the first since 1987, when the major was established and incoming students were less technologically advanced. The revision will allow less time to be spent reviewing technological basics and more time to be spent on aesthetics and performance, Povall said. With the new arrangement, TIMARA students will be able to follow a more interdisciplinary program if they choose. The TIMARA faculty designed three new courses for the revised major. Both proposals passed unanimously.

Several proposals for new conservatory courses, including those for the TIMARA major, were left on the table and so passed.

Common Ground. . .

Continued from page 2

tered by a new committee, the Hewlett Committee. The committee will attempt to integrate the curriculum, MRC initiatives, and student life; study the impact of the FYI courses

es on integration and student retention; assess the effectiveness of the funded student-coalition projects; and compare the quality of discourse and stridency of conflict before and after the initiative. The committee's findings will help decide what new steps to take in 2001.

Observations

It May Be on the Web, But Is It Art?

By Richard Povall

Editor's Note:

Sit down at your computer and hop onto the World Wide Web before you read any more of this article. Then hold on to your hat. Richard Povall is about to take you on a whirlwind tour of some web sites that will help you understand what virtual art is. Toward the end of the article he makes some observations on the nature of virtual art that may leave you wondering about the nature of reality.

No one really knows what virtual art really is. It is not, however, digital representations of pre-existing work, simply posted on the web; it is not Photo-shop-tortured pictures called digital art, thrown up without any contextual thought; it is not snippets of music or snippets of moving images placed on someone's website--amounting to no more than free advertising (click here...).

If I were to hazard a definition of the term virtual art, I might suggest that it must be interactive art--the web, our virtual gallery space in this instance, is after all an interactive space. For art truly to belong there, perhaps it needs to offer a degree of interaction between author and reader (whatever those terms now mean). Certainly the work must display at least some awareness that it resides in an interactive space.



Top: Thomas Donovan, screenshot of work in progress (excerpt), 1997
 Left: Colin Wilkinson, excerpt from website, 1997
 Bottom: Richard Povall, screenshot from mouthplace website (excerpt), 1996

Picked from what is becoming a significant body of work here at Oberlin, let me highlight three examples of work by students I'm currently working with (but be warned that some of these sites contain language or subject matter you may choose to avoid):

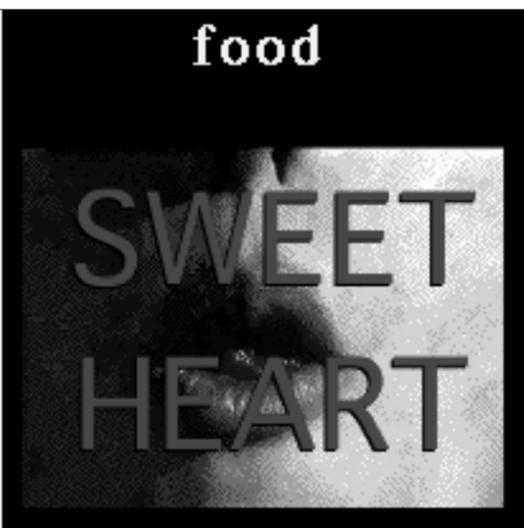
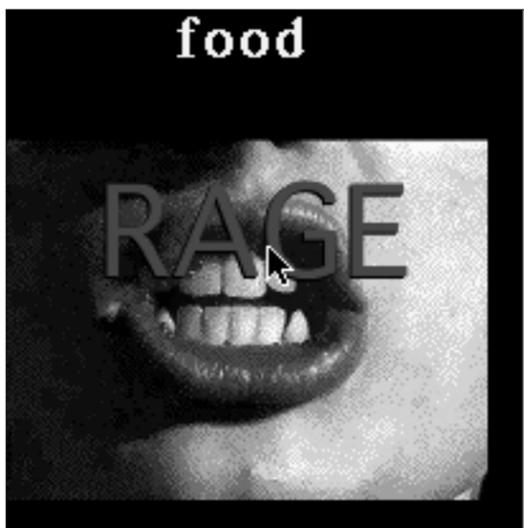
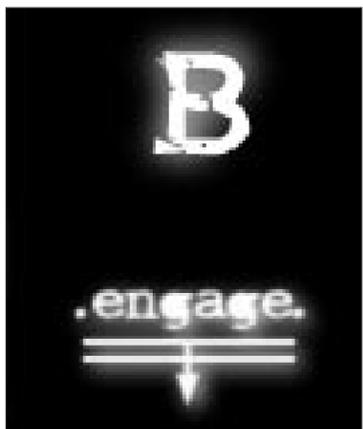
Senior David Hartman's *Panta Rei* (www.oberlin.edu/~dhartman/pantarei) is not, in a strict sense, interactive, and yet it is an artwork that sits well as an Internet piece. It uses a virtual screen space, forcing the reader to scroll to find her way into the material. It is, of course, self-referential, true to postmodern demands. It is a piece on the Internet that talks about the Internet. Beautiful, stark design, worth a visit.

Sophomore Colin Wilkinson is a busy net artist, involved in a number of interactive artworks. He could be accused of blatant self-promotion, but the wonderful feel of his work somehow overcomes this. His work has a strong visual signature, and you can see it at <http://www.oberlin.edu/~cwilkins/>.

Junior Thom Donovan's site is a thoughtful attempt to deal with language and visual constructs arising from language, within an interactive environment. It's gorgeous. It's a work in progress, but go there: <http://www.oberlin.edu/~tdonovan/>.

You can also go to <http://timara.con.oberlin.edu/~rpovall/mouthplace/front.html> to see some of my own work in this area. There is perhaps an irony that my work, which is very concerned with the physical, exists here only within the virtual.

The web is fostering the emergence of a postfeminist aesthetic a body of exciting, sometimes brilliant, work. For some examples, visit <http://www.geegirl.com.au/>, <http://www.nrrdgrl.com/grrrowl/>, <http://www.edita.fi/kustanus/bitch/>, and <http://www.femira.com/>. But I had no success finding artwork by Oberlin women students to highlight in this article. What is happening here? Am I missing something? (Please let me know how badly I failed simply to find it.)



Significant rhetoric these days surrounds the notion that the body is redundant, that we are entering a postbiological existence in which all of our ideas and experience will be virtual. I have real problems with this notion—my work, at least, is firmly rooted in the physical. I build physical interactive environments that go far beyond the usual author-reader and composer-performer paradigms. It is work that is absolutely centered in the body.

Work that is rooted in the physical, within an interactive, real-time environment, could well exist in a virtual space—one in which individuals become part of that —part of, perhaps, a virtual performance team. When that happens, where does the work actually exist? Not in a physical performance space, that's for sure. Perhaps it exists only within the virtual realm in which it is being created, for the moment the interaction stops, the work ceases to exist.

Richard Povall, associate professor of computer music and new media, chairs the TIMARA department.