

APPLICATION FOR SABBATICAL LEAVE

Date: March 18, 2003

To: Jennifer Ackil, Chairperson, Faculty Development Committee

From: Bruce McClain

Re: Request for an academic leave for January - Spring Semester 2005

2. For scholarly and artistic activities, a project description

a. preparation leading up to the sabbatical

January-Spring 1997 was the year of my last sabbatical. This time away from the classroom afforded me an opportunity to concentrate on my own creative work in the studio. Using Photoshop software on the computer became my alternative to a conventional paper sketchbook. The computer permitted me to sketch multiple variations on the subject of artist's studio interiors. After experimenting with these trial images the work was translated into paintings on canvas. The paintings became composites based on actual studios such as Piet Mondrian's New York studio with a guest of Georgia O'Keeffe even though these two important artists never met under such circumstances. During the leave I took the opportunity to travel to London and Paris in search of possible subjects. One such subject became a painting from my observations of the reconstructed Constantine Brancusi sculpture studio at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. Another of the paintings, "Delaunay's Guest" was purchased through funds from the Minnesota Percent for the Arts as permanent acquisition of the Minnesota Department of Transportation headquarters.

b. description of proposed projects or activities

A new sabbatical in 2005 would be a very welcome opportunity to pursue my art with a greater degree of concentration than is possible while teaching. The subject of interior working spaces continues to fascinate me. I have already begun some studies of the interior of the Gustavus heating plant with its complex of color coded pipes and huge boilers. The places where people work are not always recognized as beautiful spaces, but intrigue me for their honest functionality and possibilities as paintings. Garages, kitchens, warehouses, boat factories, hardware stores, pet shops, greenhouses, aircraft hangers all are potential subjects. I want to work with these spaces but somehow bring forth unexpected relationships between them and the people that work there.

c. relationship of projects to work by applicant or others

The Belgium surrealist Rene Magritte presented marvelously unexpected juxtapositions of interiors with walls as blue sky with drifting clouds. Claes Oldenburg filled a gallery

with oversized burgers and fries. Ed Kienholz recreated a Los Angeles redneck bar called "Barney's Beanery". Ann Hamilton covered the floor of a gallery with pennies in honey and the walls with Post-It-Notes. These examples of reconfigured architectural spaces represent how I wish to paint familiar or ordinary places into a new visual experience.

d. expected outcomes and future activities related to the leave

The results of this proposed leave would produce a series of works that represent a variation on my previous art, leading me directions I may not anticipate. From past experience I am confident this challenge will in-turn be a threshold to still another body of work.

e. value of projects to individual's professional development and to academic community

I gain confidence in my teaching in the Art and Art History Department when I am able to continue to work as a producing artist. Setting an example for students is very important as well as sharing the creative experience with colleagues.

Being granted a block of time without teaching responsibilities would allow me to concentrate on my studio production. The body of work begun during the leave could provide a basis for other work to follow after returning to teaching.

I would hope the inertia gained in this work would enhance my ability to assist students in their creative pursuits by presenting a role model as artist / teacher.

f. plan for publication, or presentation, or performance of professional work

I hope to seek out venues for exhibiting the work through competitive juried exhibitions, gallery one-person or group shows, and the images of the work will be placed on my personal web page.

4. Supporting documentation

a. letter from department chair endorsing plan

Letter attached.

BRUCE McCLAIN

Professor of Art

Art and Art History Department

Gustavus Adolphus College (1965-66 to present)

Period of leave requested: January -spring semester 2005

Last compensated leave: January -spring semester 1997

