Student art exhibit to begin

The art show features more than 100 student entries.

By Suzanne Mackey
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Artwork selected from more than 250 submissions by OU art students goes on display tonight at the 83rd Student Annual Exhibition.

The art show kicks off with an opening reception from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art.

Awards for outstanding pieces are scheduled to be presented at 8 p.m.

Museum director Tom Toperzer said the show features ceramics, photography and video.

“The show is a cooperative effort between the museum and the school of art. It’s a very popular show,” Toperzer said. “It’s the cheapest date in town.”

Art students may submit for consideration any work completed during the 1996-1997 school year under the supervision of an instructor, Toperzer said.

Exhibitors are eligible for cash awards ranging from $50 to $500. One $1,000 purchase award and up to three $400 purchase awards will also be presented.

A purchase award indicates that the piece will be added to the museum’s permanent collection, Toperzer said.

“The nice thing about purchase awards is that they allow the museum to add the best student work to the collection, giving us an ongoing historical record of student work,” Toperzer said.

Sunny Mercer, director of the Oklahoma Visual Artist Coalition and an OU graduate, selected the 162 pieces on display from 276 entrants.

“Personal preferences do play a part, but there are elements in the work that can persuade a juror to set aside their likes and dislikes,” Mercer said. “Every artist who submitted work should be commended. This body of work was not only a challenge but a pleasure to jury.”

Mercer was herself rejected from this very show twice as an undergraduate.

“It was so much more traumatic then than it would be now. The thing to remember is every single exhibition that we are involved in as artists is relative,” Mercer said. “It can only make or break our career if we let it.”

The exhibition can be viewed at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art through May 4.