Artistic Passion

Two exhibits open this weekend at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art

Pressing Passion — "Tool & Die" by Edward Ruscha is one of the pieces on display in Collaboration/Transformation.

Painting Passion — "Diantha Atwood Gordon" by A. Ellis is one of the pieces that will be on display at the Fred Jones Jr. museum.

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The Oklahoma Daily

Money a little tight right now? Looking for a cheap, yet cool thing to do to impress your valentine?

Look no further than the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art.

Located right here on campus, at the corner of Boyd and Elm, the museum is opening two new exhibitions this Friday. As always, there is no charge for admission.

A Passion for the Past: The Collection of Bertram K. and Nina Fletcher Little at Cogswell's Grant and Collaboration/Transformation: Lithographs From the Hamilton Press have their official opening at 7 p.m. Friday, Valentine's Day, the museum will be open from noon to 4:30 p.m.

A Passion for the Past, organized by The American Federation of the Arts and Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, is an exhibition of 18th- and 19th-century American folk art and furniture collected by the Littles at their New England home.

The Littles were also well-known researchers into the lives and art of early New Englanders.

The oldest piece in the collection is a late-17th-century loom used to weave fabric edgings.

Some of the other furniture pieces include a chest with painted floral designs and a maple high chest painted as burl walnut.

Redware pottery is displayed as well as sample gravestones.

Gail Kana Anderson, assistant director of the museum and curator of collections, said these new exhibits show off a beautifully installed museum and have something for everyone.

"I think seeing history, America's past, is important to people," Anderson said. "It's not hard to understand, you don't have to figure anything out. The word 'passion' really sums up this exhibit, you can see it when you walk in."

Portraits, landscapes, seascapes, decoys and weather vanes are also a part of this more than 80-piece collection that was also funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts and Sotheby's.

Also on the bill is the more contemporary exhibition, Collaboration/Transformation: Lithographs from the Hamilton Press.

It is an exhibition of lithographs and case study prints that follow the process of transforming an artist's idea into a lithograph.

The works featured are from the Hamilton Press, a non-commercial press that produces lithographs by invited artists.

Six of the artists with exhibited works have ties to Oklahoma.

"This exhibition is interesting because the case studies demonstrate how artists' ideals, expressed in a variety of media, become lithographic prints," Anderson said. "Because all of these works are by contemporary artists, they contrast nicely with the more traditional folk art exhibition."

The process of lithography, invented 200 years ago, involves the artist drawing on a smooth limestone slab with a special type of crayon that attracts ink.

Blank areas of the limestone are worked to repel the ink. Paper is then placed on the stone and run through a lithopress, and because oil and water repel each other, the ink sticks to the crayon, which transfers the image to paper.

Color lithographs require a different plate or stone for each color.

The process to make a lithograph is a collaboration between the artist and the printmaker.

Master Printer Ed Hamilton, founder of the Hamilton Press, will give a talk about the artistic collaboration that resulted in the prints on exhibit at 6 p.m. Friday at the museum.

Hamilton has had extensive experience as a master printer and founded Hamilton Press in 1990 with artist Edward Ruscha to encourage fine art printing in Los Angeles.

The Press is not commercial in intent which means that artists are invited for the quality of their work, not the marketability of their prints.

Artists invited to work with the Hamilton Press are given the opportunity to produce one limited-edition print with half of the resulting edition going to the artist, the other half being retained by the Press.

The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art is open from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday; 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday; and noon to 4:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.