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Departmental Highlights- Applied Art

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STUDENTS and faculty of Iowa State College are, indirectly, members of an art appreciation class which never meets. Through an art committee, headed by Miss Mabel Fisher, associate professor in charge of crafts work, the college now owns over 500 paintings in color which hang in the classrooms, main halls and offices in each of the buildings. Dr. R. M. Hughes, President Emeritus of Iowa State College, has given as a gift to the college many of the first pictures in this collection. A small fund is set aside by the college each year to buy from time to time prints of beauty and educational value for use in the college buildings. The selection of the prints used in the Home Economics Building has been in charge of Miss Joanne M. Hansen, former head of the Applied Art Department.

Visitors to the campus always see the Memorial Union fountain group of four Indian women representing the primitive cultivation of corn, done by Christian Peterson, member of the applied art staff and assistant professor in sculptural design. His fountain group in the court of Dairy Industry Building was reproduced in National Geographic's 1939 Iowa number. Mr. Peterson, widely known as an outstanding American sculptor, has done many small relief and bust portraiture of important national figures and prominent Iowa State College faculty members.

The present success of the Iowa Art movement owes much to the encouragement given by Mrs. Zenobia B. Ness, instructor in applied art, to young artists of the state. She is superintendent of the Iowa Art Salon of the Iowa State Fair, which is on display at Iowa State College for about five weeks in the fall following the Fair. Mrs. Ness has served as chairman of the Art Division for both the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs and the General Federation of Women's Clubs. She is now state chairman of radio in the former.

A new air brush is available to advanced art students to give them experience in this widely utilized commercial technique. The brush is employed extensively in advanced art work to obtain subtle shadings and delicate effects.

Nine exhibit cases in the Home Economics Building have become miniature museums. The Home Economics Committee on Exhibits, headed by Miss Edna O'Brien, associate professor in applied art, arranges the displays which are private collections of faculty members and students. Last year the focus of the exhibits centered on contributions by Miss Genevieve Fisher, dean of the Home Economics Division, and heads of departments. This year the Western Hemisphere is being featured, and faculty members and students who have unusual articles are being solicited. Glassware, china, jewelry, pottery, wood carvings and Indian lore will be favorite subjects.

Plants and flowers frequently considered valueless have been used by the art appreciation class in a study of flower arrangements and appropriate containers. These students keep the Home Economics Division staff supplied with office decorations. Common materials used are pine cones, evergreens, gourds, rose haws, barberry, locust pods and butterball weed seed pods.

Four members of the applied art staff are authors of books. Miss Alice Waugh, instructor, is author of the book, “Planning the Little House,” widely used as a textbook in house planning classes. Miss Mabel Russell, assistant professor, is co-author of a text for related art teachers, “Art Training Through Home Problems.” Mrs. Zenobia B. Ness compiled a handbook of art for club study for the General Federation of Women's Clubs. She is co-author of “Iowa Artists of the First Hundred Years.” Miss Joanne M. Hansen, professor of applied art and former head, is author of the art articles for the “Books of Rural Life.”

The new head of the department is Miss Janet K. Smith, Wellesley College, Ph. B., University of Chicago, 1929; M. A., 1930; Columbia University, 1941.

In connection with the Midwestern College Art Conference which was held in the Art Institute of Chicago in November, an exhibition of paintings and sculpture by faculty members of the colleges represented in the conference was held in Blackstone Hall. Miss Joanne M. Hansen exhibited a water color, “Goose Hollow,” a painting made from earlier sketches of an old pioneer town.

Of the six women on the Iowa State Home Economics faculty who are listed in American Women, the standard biographical dictionary of notable women, two are in the Department of Applied Art: Miss Joanne M. Hansen and Mrs. Zenobia B. Ness.