



Karen Kunc, a printmaking professor, pauses between prints in her studio just outside of Avoca. This and 35 other prints of her "Script of a Song Cycle" are being produced in conjunction with her recent visit to Bradley University as a guest artist. Kunc recently returned from France, where she won second place out of 500 artists at an exhibition.

KRIS KOLDEN/DH

An art department's

UNL professor of art receives high award in French print exhibition

By TESSA JEFFERS
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Geographically speaking, art has no borders.

Karen Kunc, a world-renowned artist, proves this theory.

Kunc, a professor of printmaking at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, recently won second place in a print exhibition in Chamalières, France.

The small format print exhibition consisted of 500 artists from 100 countries. With each artist submitting five prints, the total amount

of works was 2,500.

"My work is really distinctive and unusual," Kunc said.

She describes her work as nature-based abstraction. She includes forms, patterns and colors that suggest natural phenomenon, such as plants, landscape, skies, water or atmosphere.

After Kunc started making prints in high school and college, she said she found it was her "language."

Printing made the drawing marks from her hands look unique, strongly graphic and more visually interesting and powerful.

"That is why I think that printed marks are stronger and richer," she said.

Prints are more deliberately considered and physically impressed into paper, Kunc said.

Wendy Katz, assistant professor of art history at UNL, said Kunc's prints had an organic feel.

"As I understand it, she uses forms from

the Nebraska landscape — forms from nature — as the basis for her art, so her art is often abstract," Katz said.

Kunc has a very distinctive style, Katz said.

"You can tell it's her work, but it's always changing, evolving."

For the exhibition in France, each artist selected five prints, made from the traditional printing methods of etching, lithography, woodcut and screen-printing. The size limitation was 8-by-11 inches.

Kunc said she intrigued the jurors by making pieces that challenged the small print format.

"My prints were not rectangles, but were made with a shaped contour edge that moved within the space limits, so this accentuated the format and the interplay between the implied space limit and the new shapes I created within that," she said.

The prints Kunc submitted, called "Edge

see KUNC on 8

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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PAGE 7

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NOVEMBER 17, 2003

KUNC:

continued from page 7

Series," were woodcut prints.

The works are layers of color and pattern, she said, in which organic elements interweave, with a bold slash of red on the edge that fades into empty space that is the white of the paper.

The result is called a bleed print, Kunc said.

As part of her second place fin-

ish, Kunc will be featured in a solo exhibition in France within the next three years.

Not only did Kunc participate as an artist, but she also was selected as an American representative for the exhibition.

Kunc was in charge of choosing artists from the United States to submit their prints to the exhibition.

She chose eight of the 16 American artists who submitted work to the exhibit.

Fifteen UNL students, both graduates and undergraduates,

presented their works in this international exhibition through auxiliary shows. These shows were separate from the competition, Kunc said, but gave students an opportunity to showcase their work internationally.

"It was important to be part of such a broad cross-cultural endeavor, and to elevate the quality of work that represents the U.S. through the selections I made, as well as with my own work," Kunc said.

"It really brought these far-flung artists all together."