

Kicking Off the Year of The Arts

The color prints by the late William Hogarth, now on display in Scales, mark the long-awaited commencement of the Year of the Arts with an exhibit on satire and morality

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CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Through the eyes and satirical style of printmaker William Hogarth (1697-1764), a visual interpretation of 18th century England is currently on display in the Scales Fine Arts Center Gallery.

The prints Hogarth so intricately engraved provide a window to the times of such evils as gin, prostitution, and idleness and such celebrations as beer, beauty and being English.

The impressive collection of prints in the upstairs gallery is representative of Hogarth's career as the eminent printmaker

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Three series of prints in the show can be read as narrative morality tales. *A Harlot's Progress* chronicles the downfall of a country girl turned city prostitute who dies of syphilis, leaving behind a young child with her self-interested acquaintances.

As the story progresses plate by plate, Hogarth incorporates other popular motifs such as the hypocrisy of the clergy, as also shown in the print *A Sleeping Congregation*. The series *Marriage-a-la-Mode* is a charming yet tragic story of the effects of arranged marriage as an economic agreement rather than a pact of love. Both *A Harlot's Progress* and *Marriage-a-la-Mode* existed initially as paintings targeted toward aristocratic art patrons and then were engraved and published to be appreciated by the broader audience of the lower middle class.

The grand, 12-plate cycle of *Industry and Idleness* illustrates the successes of an industrious apprentice and the consequences of an idle one. Idleness was considered to be the root of all evils as illustrated by Hogarth, and therefore was a popular topic of essays and discussions of the time.

The impact of *Industry and Idleness* is

not unlike current narratives in the mainstream media warning against the desperate lifestyle rooted in drug use.

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offer an equal variety of Hogarth's wit and commentary as expressed in the series. Two prints in particular, *John Wilkes* and *The Bruiser*, are directed against the politicians John Wilkes and Charles Churchill. Wilkes published slander against both Hogarth and the king in his pamphlet *The North Briton* and thus Hogarth portrayed him in the print as a cock-eyed, cuckolded fool. Churchill also published an epistle against Hogarth which appears in the print underneath a dog relieving himself.

Metaphorically, Churchill is the central figure as a drunk bear in a clergyman's collar placed in contrast to the pugnacious dog suggesting Hogarth's personality.

The Bruiser initially sparked the collector's interest in prints by Hogarth. Dr. Herbert M. Schiller, '64 was given this first print by Harold Tedford, professor of theatre, and has since been collecting, through various means, the works on display in the gallery.

Schiller continues to remain in touch with print shops in London that specialize in the works of Hogarth as well as art auctions.

A recent and very significant acquisition to Schiller's collection is the book written by Hogarth explaining his theory on aesthetics, *The Analysis of Beauty*. Included in the front and back covers of the book are prints which fold out to illustrate points he explains in his treatise on aesthetic form, such as the serpentine line of beauty composed of two curves contrasted.

This work is showcased at the bottom of the stairs as an introduction to Hogarth's style and intent, which is evident in the works upstairs.

The small print in the case, *Columbus Breaking an Egg*, is one of several subscription tickets in the show that, although they were intended as invitations for

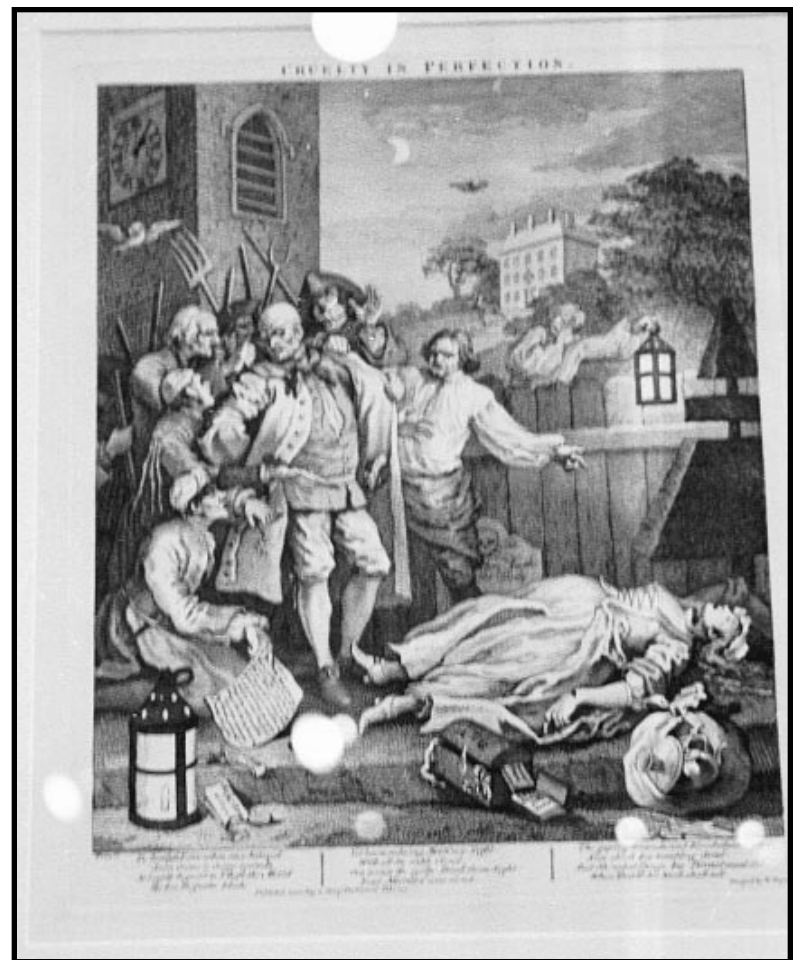
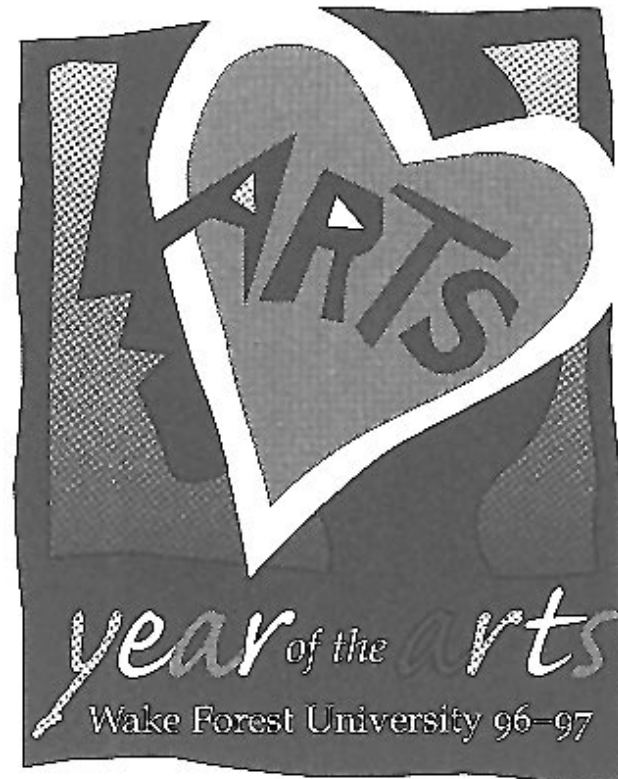
purchasing certain prints, maintain the high quality of engraving and full composition Hogarth sought in each of his works.

The insight and appreciation to be gained from this show is immediately evident in two very popular prints. *Beer Street* and *Gin Lane* are quintessential Hogarth, not only in their engraved precision but also in their commentary on the evils of gin consumption, the promotion of drinking beer, and the pride and beauty of being English.

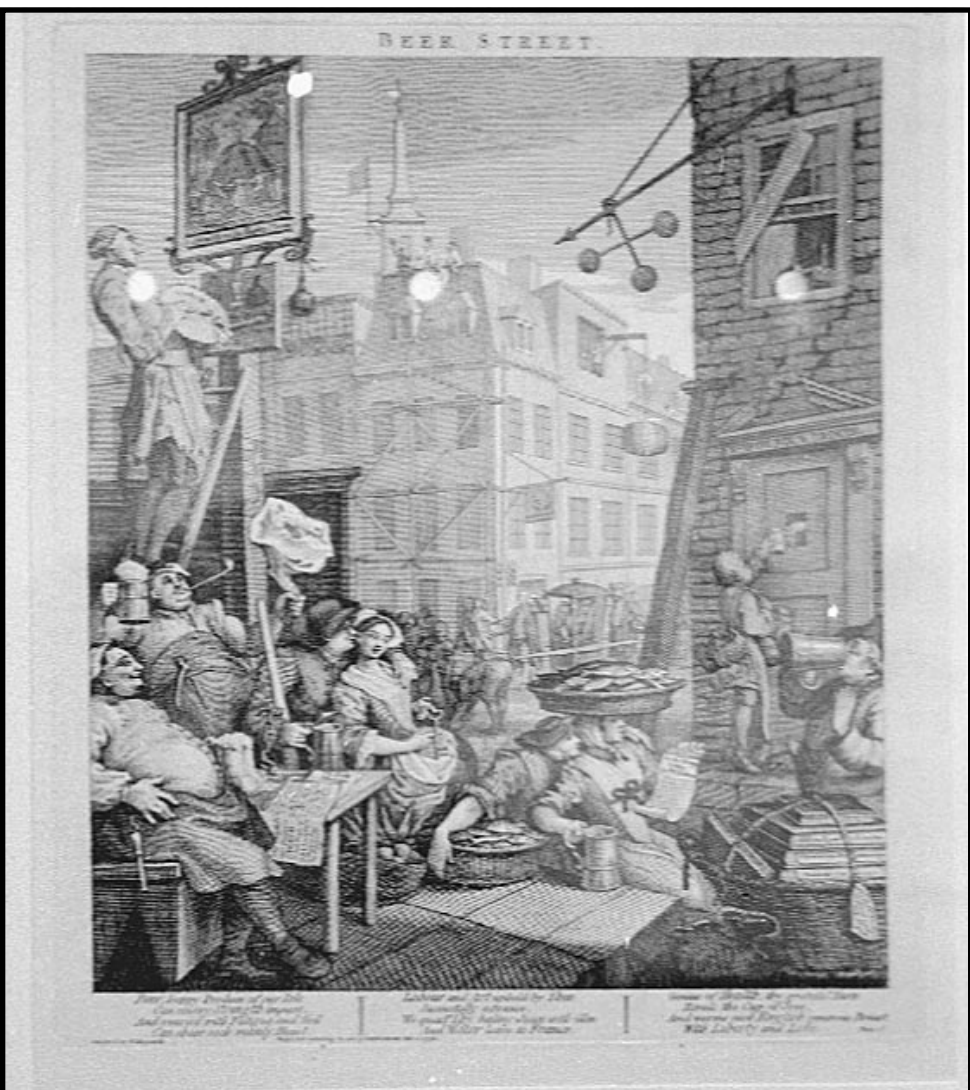
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be on display through Oct. 25, and whether they are viewed for their technical engraved mastery or for their intriguing subject matter, it is a unique exhibit on campus.



William Hogarth prints are now on display in the Scales Fine Arts Center Gallery; Clockwise from above: *Cruelty in Perfection*, *John Wilkes Esq.*, *Second Stage of Cruelty*, *Beer Street*, *First Stage of Cruelty*, and *Marriage A-La-Mode*. These prints and several others will be available for viewing through Oct. 25.



All photos by LeeAnn Hodges