

Philippe Giraud's Art Taught to Davidson Community

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HE/HIM
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On Tuesday, October 15th, students and professors from the Davidson College French and Francophone Studies and Arab Studies departments came together at Studio Elie. Just a ten minute bike ride from Davidson's campus, Studio Elie is run by Elie Bou Zeidan, a local Lebanese artist. One can find Elie in the studio teaching community members how to make rich oil and acrylic paintings or making his own art, which he describes as "a mix [of]" Realistic and Impressionist art.

That Tuesday evening also included a unique event: a special collaboration across the Arab Studies Department, French and Francophone Studies Department, Studio Elie, Giraud Signature, Horse Education Group, and Lydia Ferguson's North Academy of World Language (NAWL). The Davidson Arts Across the Curriculum Enrichment Fund (DACE) sponsored the event to bring French Artist Philippe Giraud's work to Studio Elie and have students produce works inspired by Giraud's pieces.



Students at the workshop. Photo by Judah Silverman '27

Based in the beautiful region of Provence in Southern France, Giraud's work depicts the relationship between humanity and the natural resources of this area, self-describing himself as Post-Impressionist. However, his work goes beyond the canvas, as he makes "small little inventions here and there, as well as tables and objects in the house. I built my home with my own two hands and [the] help of my sons."

Chair and Professor of Arab Studies Dr. Rebecca Joubin spearheaded the event, making it possible for Giraud's work to come to Studio Elie. "[I] visited Philippe Giraud's studio in France during the summer of 2023 when I was in transit and was very impressed by all the original artwork capturing the beauty of Provence, [a Southern region of France]," she explained when recounting her first meeting with Giraud.

Impressed with Giraud's work and his deep humility, she connected with Giraud's son, Oliver Giraud, Director of Giraud Signature, to organize a workshop. Dr. Joubin envisioned this workshop as something that could nurture the cultural understandings of aspiring Francophone and Arabic speakers by being "inspired by Giraud's work," as Zeidan puts it.

Dr. Joubin saw potential in the cross-cultural exchanges by exposing the community of Davidson to Giraud's work through Zeidan. On the eve of the workshop, students and professors from the French and Francophone Studies and Arab Studies departments came together to engage with Giraud's art under Zeidan's guidance. Later in the week, students from NAWL's after-school French Club also got to create with Zeidan thanks to the coordination efforts of Dr. Joubin and Studio Elie.

For many students, the event broadened their perspectives in a constructive manner. "I think events like these push people out of their comfort zones - not only academically but also in an extracurricular sense. It's easy to ignore aspects of learning that are typically associated with art when you're a college student focused on good grades in generally objective classes," Kiera Sanders '28, a student taking Elementary Arabic I, described.

For Giraud and Zeidan, the workshop accomplished their goals of exploring new perspectives. "I hope students [...] learn to open their eyes, work very hard, [and] use their art to make themselves [...] [and] others happy," Giraud stated. "The human connection is very important in art."

Zeidan finds beauty in how he and Giraud have similar lifestyles and work and yet produce very different art. He found a sense of accomplishment in the workshop's success, and he hopes for "all the world to be inspired by art, whether [it be] from the USA or wherever."



Students at the workshop. Photo by Judah Silverman '27

The workshop culminated in an exhibition hosted at Studio Elie on the evening of Friday the 18th. Zeidan's, Giraud's, and students' art were all put on display. For students, it was a special moment. Elie Jerjees '28 had his work displayed and was amazed after "seeing my art being exhibited alongside professional artists."

The constructive and enriching environment produced by this workshop fostered a phenomenal place to create. "Although I have never painted before, I was treated like I was an artist within the community," Jerjees explained.

This workshop connected artists, cultures, and students across schools, languages, departments, and oceans. The works produced at this event stand as a testament to the power cross-cultural collaboration holds.

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Students Shine at HART Fundraiser

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Are college students too old to be putting on talent shows? With its annual HART fundraiser, Warner Hall Eating House answers this question with a decisive "NO!" On Tuesday, October 15th, the outside of Nummit transformed into a cordoned off stage, complete with twinkling lights and an audience packed onto picnic tables and blankets despite the cold weather. There was a \$7 entrance fee, the proceeds of which benefitted RAIN Carolina and Mwandu Mission Hospital.

Annalee Stuardi-Drumm '27, one of three Warner Hall service chairs, explained the significance of HART. "We put it on in order to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS, which is Warner's service focus," she said. "HART itself stands for 'HIV AIDS Relief Talent show.'"



The crowd at HART. Photo from Madeline O'Leary '27.

Despite the laid-back nature of the event, Hart required months of planning in order to be successful. Stuardi-Drumm mentioned that the key to their success was Madeline O'Leary '27. "We could not have done any of the plan-

ning without [her] help, she was the chair for the [HART] committee. The service chairs reached out to her all the way back in August to get the ball rolling in terms of what HART is and where we wanted to have HART, just getting the logistics ironed out."

O'Leary herself felt that the event was a success: "I personally had a really good time [...] A lot of the Warner seniors came up to me and said they had a really good time. And we also raised a lot of money, which counts as making it the most successful, in my opinion."

As for the venue, the HART Planning Committee wanted to shake things up after holding the event in the 900 Room the year before. "We decided to do it at Nummit; we collaborated with Brigid [McCarthy] '25 at Nummit, who is [...] in charge of events and outreach at Nummit for this year," Stuardi-Drumm explained.

Despite chilly temperatures, the committee's gamble paid off. "It was a super successful event. We had a huge turnout, over \$2000 [was raised], [we] sold all of our t-shirts, and sold over two hundred tickets."

O'Leary was in charge of reaching out to students who might have been interested in performing. One of them was Jayson Rivera '27, known for being part of the band Fool's Errand on campus. "I performed an acoustic set with some friends from my band and some friends outside of [it]. Madeline reached out to us, [and] at first she was looking to get Fool's Errand to play, but the tech and the vibe didn't really work for a show like that," he explained. "The atmosphere was different from what our band usually brings, it was more low-key but still super fun." Rivera truly felt that everyone was there because they really cared about the event and "what it was rallying around."

Rivera wasn't the only musical group to perform for the large crowd. Both The Nuances and Davidson Delilahs, two separate a cappella groups on campus, performed short sets. William Lowance '27, a member of The Nuances, enjoyed getting to take part in the event. "It was the first time we officially performed as a group this year with new members and everything, so it was a really cool and

new experience [...] everyone in the crowd was super supportive and into it [...] I didn't know anything about HART before, but it ended up being a great time," he commented. Their group sang two songs: Wings by Birdie and Castle on the Hill by Ed Sheeran, both of which were received with excited applause from the audience. Later on in the event, the Delilahs had the crowd singing along to Set Fire to the Rain by Adele and Good Luck Babe! by Chappell Roan.



Band performing at HART. Photo by Annalee Stuardi-Drumm '27.

In addition to singing, students showed off other talents throughout the night. Oops! improv comedy performed a mime sketch that ended with five of the members getting pied in the face. Gianna Crawford '25 and Mike Hodgson '25 had a surprise performance that consisted of an elaborate dance complete with costumes. At one point, Crawford was even flipped upside down.

One standout performance was an Irish dance duet, performed by Brendan Amann '27 and Phoebe Olszowka '25. Halfway through, each of them donned a pair of sunglasses and switched the music from classical Irish dance to Timber by Pitbull.

Amann explained what led to the performance. "I recently started [dancing] at a new school called the Stacie Greiner-Reid Irish Dance School [...] in Cornelius, so that helped me get the courage to do it on stage. And

Madeleine asked me if I wanted to do HART and that there would be another dancer, [who] ended up being Phoebe." He added that HART was "a lot of fun [...] It was raining a little bit so Phoebe and I were kind of worried about slipping, but everyone there was so supportive and it was really fun." When asked whether he'd be willing to perform an Irish dance again for the Davidson community, Amann merely responded with a raised eyebrow.

The final act was a performance by members of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity to Pretty Boy Swag by Soulja Boy. Halfway through, the music was paused so that they could ask any girls in the audience to take part in the last performance. The audience embraced the possibility of an up close and personal dance from the fraternity brothers. The dance moves were more family-friendly, but the performers ensured that each lucky participant received special attention.

The night closed with a final thank you from those who organized the event. In addition to raising money for a good cause, the occasion was also a fun (and sometimes silly) way for Davidson students to show off their talents. And if you missed it, don't worry! HART will be back next year, with hopefully even more Irish dancing.

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