

# Installation works on the rise

by Alexandra Mack

You can't walk around inside of a painting and you can't surround yourself with a sculpture. Traditional art forms are static. They are objects for observation. Sensory elements were always missing, that is until installation art came into the picture. The trend in the contemporary art world towards installation art has steadily leaked its way into the Oberlin arts community and shows no signs of fading.

Installation art has been springing up everywhere and seems to be the most attractive art form of the day. Nanette Macias is currently teaching a Problems in Installation course which was also offered last year. However, because the guidelines of installation art are so loose and the possibilities so numerous, the trend has found its way into a variety of other classes, such as TIMARA and Time-Based Media.

Installation art encompasses an entire space, and thus is more of a visceral experience. As senior art major Fereshteh Toosi explains, "It's more holistic. It's a complete experience. It doesn't divorce your body from the art." Toosi's most

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- Fereshteh Toosi  
Senior art major

recent installation, "Womb Life," has been open to the public all week in Crane Pool.

Walking through the piece, the sheer scale is enough to put one in awe. For Toosi, the scale is crucial to the impact. "I like to work with a mass quantity of things. Filling the space with objects gives the objects a powerful presence." What one doesn't witness, however, is the process of installation, which often requires a lot of money and manpower.

Macias' installation class in the Art department has had a large effect on artists, but students have also been greatly influenced by other students doing installation art. David Hartman, senior Multi-Media Arts major, said,



**Engaged:** A student rolls a water balloon down to the deep end as a part of Fereshteh Toosi's "Womb Life," an installation at Crane Pool which was open throughout the week and closes today at 7 pm. (photo by John Matney)

"I think the installation class has been a big factor. People see other students' work and they get excited."

Professor of TIMARA Richard Povall has seen an increase in installations as a result of support from both the TIMARA and Art departments. Povall said that he also encourages his students to express themselves through installations.

Both departments have also placed an emphasis on buying equipment to support performance or installations, and the A/V department has been really supportive in helping this happen. "I think there's a lot of work now that stands halfway between performance and

installation, or is some kind of hybrid form," said Povall.

Benjamin Greenberg, a Network Engineer for Ironlight Digital in San Francisco and a recent Oberlin graduate, produced a number of installations during his time at Oberlin including part of Greg Little's "Time Based Media: Real Communities, Virtual Worlds." He believes that installation projects are a trend. "New media installations are trendy, especially at Oberlin. You have to be naive not to consider the fact that many students are drawn toward producing installations simply because the cool kids are doing it," he said.

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