

Community art project takes shape at gallery

By Kiki Koroshetz
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Students and staff members place some of the 6,000+ shapes into their proper locations in the exhibition. (Photo by Andy Daddio)

At Wednesday's opening reception of *Shapes for Hamilton*, the collaborative project led by visiting artist Allan McCollum, students stood on scaffolds in Clifford Gallery, filling empty plastic slips on the walls with white pieces of paper on which black images were printed.

McCollum quietly walked around the room and took photographs of town of Hamilton residents and Colgate students, faculty, and staff who were examining the thousands of shapes lining the walls, hunting for *their* distinctive shapes.

Members of the Hamilton and Colgate communities could see their shapes for the first time on a computer in the gallery, record the section of the gallery in which it was located, and then go find it.

"That's my shape!" 7-year-old Walter Clauss said as his father, Karl, lifted him up to get a closer look.

"I like mine," Walter said. "I like the fishhook on the bottom."

It was not just the children who were excited about the shapes, which are each personally signed by McCollum.

"Oh, that's my shape," said associate professor of art and art history Lynette Stephenson, looking up at another black image on the same wall. "I'm gorgeous," she laughed. "Look at me."

Although difficult to locate at first, once you found your shape it became rather easy to distinguish it from every shape around it.

"You'd think the shapes would be anonymous," said Monika Burczyk, university studies lecturer. "But you really can recognize them."

DeWitt Godfrey, the associate professor of art and art history who is organizing the project with McCollum, said that Wednesday's event was as much a workshop as it was a reception, as a team of students and staff members — the Shapes Staff — worked for hours to add all the shapes to the exhibition and then assist community members in exploring it.

Lisa Oristian, of Hubbardsville, said she found the exhibition fascinating because it allows everyone to take part.

"Every person has his or her own shape and everyone can come see the shapes and be a part of the project," she said.

The shapes will be distributed to every member of the community who wishes to participate on April 3, 4, 10, and 11 at various locations including Hamilton Central School, the Palace Theater, and the Poolville Community Center. Times and additional locations will be announced soon.

What will people do with their shapes?

"I'm going to hang mine in my school locker," said Walter Clauss.

In the meantime, though, Walter and everyone else in the community can admire the shapes at Clifford Gallery through March 31.



Visitors to the Shapes for Hamilton exhibition at Clifford Gallery at Colgate University look for their unique shape on one of the gallery walls. (Photo by Andy Daddio)



A visitor looks up her shape on the exhibition database to see it and to get the coordinates for where it is located in the gallery. (Photo by Andy Daddio)



Members of the Shapes Staff spent hours placing the shapes in specific locations on the gallery walls. Each of the shapes' exact positions is catalogued for reference. (Photo by Andy Daddio)



Visiting artist Allan McCollum stands in front of one of the walls of his exhibition. (Photo by Andy Daddio)



Students and staff members used scaffolding at one point to get the 6,000 shapes in their proper spots in the exhibition. (Photo by Andy Daddio)



Every shape is distinctive and each one is signed by artist Allan McCollum. There are 6,000 shapes for every member of the town of Hamilton who wants to participate. (Photo by Andy Daddio)