

Ragouzeos evokes strong feelings in audience

By KAREN PLOTT
Advertising Manager

Works on Paper: Black Drawings and Paintings is a collection of mainly ink drawings by artist and professor, Leonard Ragouzeos, which is now located in the Morrison Gallery. Ragouzeos teaches full time in the Fine Arts Department at Millersville University.

Like many modern artists, Ragouzeos loves to create spontaneously. This is clearly visible in his wild but structured strokes, scratches and even drips. The style of Pollock is evident in his work, however, Ragouzeos's seemingly random strokes form images instead of an abstract quality. It is this that gives Ragouzeos's style an ingenious nature, a style that is based on his own philosophy of art.

"I believe that a painting or drawing is often the product of a non-linear series of assertive acts followed by accidents, errors and corrections. You engage this process with risk, bravado, doubt and hope," Ragouzeos said.

Many works in Ragouzeos's collection contain images of people. These images have a special human quality to them, because of the pure emotion pouring out of their expressions and postures. The element especially captivating is the eyes. They seem to stare right at the viewer, they tell a sad story.

"Making a picture look like something is not too difficult, but making a picture feel like something is more challenging and a truer measure of its worth," said Rogouzeos in his Artist Statement.

Making a picture feel like something is exactly what he does. *Head #2* is a poignant image of a man lying on his back as if in immense pain. It is almost like the viewer can empathize as the figure takes his last breath of life. The head is tilted back, his eyes are clenched tight and his mouth is slightly open as if he is choking.

Head #4 (The Fall) is also a drawing of a figure lying on the ground, but he is face-down as if he were resting on a bed. The emotion of the piece is also dark, but this time, it is of peace and resolution. The eyes say it all. He is tired, peaceful, candid and close to death.

These dark images come from Rogouzeos's own personal experiences and thoughts on the world.

"The 'dark' nature of this work is a response to personal and world events which sadden and frighten me, as well as to what I've come to realize to be the grotesque indifference in the normality of life."

The drips of the ink resemble blood; blood that has perhaps been spilled in war. The magic of the black and white nature of the pieces heightens the emotion as



photo by Karen Plott

Ragouzeos's "Head #2" is a poignant image of a man lying on his back in immense pain. Ragouzeos's display in the Morrison Gallery mainly features ink drawings.

well as emanates the classic feel of history.

The piece, *Refugees*, is a frightening portrayal of a woman and child hidden in the shadows in fear. Again, their eyes say it all. Their lives are in danger by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

Not all of Rogouzeos's pieces in the collection are dark. Some pieces are compositions of dramatized food in the same loose strokes as the figures. These pieces include, *Goya's Garlic*, and *Lemons #5*. The messy strokes and scratches that make up these works produce a fascinating quality of contrast.

There are many other captivating pieces in Ragouzeos's collection in the Morrison Gallery, including his Signature Series, which consist of books written in Japanese with the inked pages folded in different decorative ways. The collection will be exhibited in Morrison until March 5.

Penn State Harrisburg

Student Leadership Workshop

Saturday, February 7, 2004 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Capital Village Community Center

BUILDING TEAMS FOR TODAY'S CHALLENGES

- * Learn Teamwork Techniques
- * Meet Area Employers/Employees
- * Work with Annette Cremo, Facilitator

FREE!! Open to all students!! Breakfast, Lunch and Door Prizes.

To register, contact the Student Activities Office, 948-6701 or email nll1@psu.edu by Wednesday, February 4