

arts & entertainment



Guests view photography by Jason Francisco. Photos courtesy of Emory University



Julia Fenton and Dr. William Eley with sculpture by Kerry Moore.

Art exhibit designed to provoke medical students' thoughts

Stimulating observation skills another benefit

By Gale Horton Gay

When is an art exhibit more than just an art exhibit? When doctors, professors and artists come together for an exhibition that is visually stimulating but also serves as a learning experience for medical students.

The art exhibit currently on display at the new Emory School of Medicine building is designed to foster interaction between students and teachers about the framework, structure and composition of the work and raise questions about interpretation and what was in the mind of the creator.

"It's really started conversations," said **William Eley**, M.D., executive associate dean for medical education and student affairs, and a member of the executive committee of the Emory University Creativity & Arts Initiative.

The 11 artists who created the 45 paintings, drawings, mixed-media works, prints and photographic compositions are members of Emory's visual arts faculty. They are: **Lisa Alembik, Linda Arm-**



Medical intern and friend view sculpture by Kerry Moore.

strong, William Brown, Ruth Dusseault, Sarah Emerson, Jason Francisco, Angus Galloway, Diane Kempler, Julia Kjelgaard, Katherine Mitchell and Kerry Moore.

"Art is the greatest expression of what it is to be human... who we are in a very deep sense," said Eley.

He explained there's been some evidence that art can help to

improve the observation skills that doctors rely on when interacting with patients. He noted that some medical schools are incorporating art and the observation of it into their curriculum. At Emory, medical students are encouraged to observe the work and attend lunchtime chats with the artists, which will be held in January and February. The program is voluntary.

"These artists really are trying to capture the human condition," said Eley. "It really is about what it means to be human. It also stimulates the students and has them thinking about the human condition. One of the goals is for them to be connected with the whole human, not just the physical."

From a strictly aesthetic standpoint, the artwork has enhanced the building, according to Eley. "It's amazing how it warmed up the building and made it more interesting," he said.

In a printed program highlighting the artists and their works, the introduction states, "The artists' statements regarding their work are filled with reference to emotion, memory, visceral reaction, religion, culture, sensation, dying, inter-relationship. The exhibit is a perfect partner of the study of medicine."

Incorporating the visual arts in the medical building will be an ongoing effort. A new art exhibit featuring the works of faculty, staff and students will open at the Emory School of Medicine in April.