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May 13, 1997

Contact: Justin Taylor, 309/556-3182

Artist Wayne Potratz
**Recent Cast Metal Sculptures
Come to Illinois Wesleyan**

*Locals
central ill.
chicago*

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--Sculptures by artist Wayne Potratz of the University of Minnesota are on display through May 28 at Illinois Wesleyan University's Merwin Gallery in the Art Building, 302 E. Graham, Bloomington.

The exhibition featuring Potratz's work is open to the public, free of charge, Monday through Friday 12-4 p.m., Tuesday 7-9 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday 1-4 p.m.

Potratz uses iron and bronze casting to create intricate, detailed pieces of sculpture. He works to reveal the harmony of hand and mind, process and aesthetics, form and content through the casting of metal, according to University of Minnesota's art department.

Potratz received a master's degree in sculpture from the University of California at Berkeley and teaches in the art department at the University of Minnesota.

Focusing on the processes to create his sculptures has led Potratz to research and study ancient processes of metal working. He incorporates modern techniques with ancient ones to create complicated pieces of art.

Potratz explains, "I investigate how each subtle step of the fiery process combines with the metaphysics of the spirit to make sculpture that seeks to be completely authentic."

Illinois Wesleyan junior and art major Lisa Hillmer said, "The great level of difficulty and Potratz's ability to create cohesion with all his different works is truly remarkable."

Native American and Eastern religious themes are apparent throughout the exhibition. Potratz uses canoes, mythological turtles, domes and spheres. Potratz describes this as "paddling quietly through the backwaters of tradition."

Ethan Schleeter, an IWU junior art major and student organizer of the
(more)

exhibit, says Potratz's, "pieces make you want to get up close and look inside, lift up lids, and see how everything is connected."

The 22-piece exhibit is running in conjunction with a show of Joan Soppe's work in Wakeley Gallery which is attached to Merwin Gallery.

Soppe is an "up and coming" artist who works in a new medium of art known as Artist's Books. In this technique, the artist binds "pages" of material together to create the piece. "These works are very idiosyncratic. Each piece is very personal to the artist and generally holds important meanings in the artist's life," according to Schleeter.

"Soppe's work is no different," added Schleeter. "Her pieces are complicated and very tactile, almost begging one to touch them. Many of them are characterized as 'works in progress,' and some continue to undergo changes for years."

Both shows will run through May 28, at the Merwin and Wakeley Galleries. On Tuesday, May 28, Wayne Potratz will be at the gallery to discuss his work at 7 p.m. with a reception to follow. This event is open to the public, free of charge.