The LeGrand Collection:

A Regional Reflection
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_The LeGrand Collection: A Regional Reflection_,
organized by the Sioux City Art Center, Sioux City, Iowa.

Todd Behrens, Curator

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Larry Lightbody
*Boulders*, 2005
steel
variable dimensions
The Sioux City Art Center exists to enrich the lives of the people of Sioux City and its surrounding region. In turn, the Art Center could not accomplish its mission without the support of the community. The most direct way in which the Art Center and the community work together is through the growth of the permanent collection. All of the artworks that are in the Art Center’s permanent collection, amassed for the long-term benefit of the community, have come either through the direct donation of those artworks or through gifts of funds that have allowed for occasional purchases.

The artworks illustrated in this catalog represent a promised gift from Ritch and Kathy LeGrand. The gift is important in many ways, not the least of which is that it includes the largest number of artworks in a single donation in the history of the Sioux City Art Center. Totaling more than forty artworks, the paintings, drawings, prints, photographs, and sculptures in the LeGrand Collection expand the Art Center’s already robust collection of work by local and regional artists.

It is with utmost gratitude to Ritch and Kathy that we present these artworks. They have supported the Art Center in many ways for many years. This catalog, the exhibition of the work, and, most important, the promised donation of the artworks takes their commitment to the cultural well-being of the community to new heights. On behalf of the Art Center Association of Sioux City and the Sioux City Art Center, I offer my most heartfelt thanks to Ritch and Kathy LeGrand for their unprecedented gift of art to the community.
My life-long interest in art began as a student at the University of Colorado. A friend of my roommate’s would regularly visit our fraternity house for nine months to work on a portrait of Albert Einstein that he painted on our bedroom wall. Of course, the real reason he visited so often was to drink free beer and listen to music in addition to his painting. This was my first introduction to the mind of an artist, and I liked it. I also became fascinated by watching his composition come to life and by his application of paint and elegant brushstrokes. This set in motion my desire to collect and, subsequently, I purchased my first piece of original art from him, a commission painting for which I paid the grand total of $500.

After college, I often visited another college roommate who lived in Los Angeles. He came from a family of very prominent Los Angeles collectors and was starting his own collection of world class contemporary art. I was fortunate to follow him on tours of several museum exhibitions, the highlight of which was shaking hands with Andy Warhol at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

At this point, I set out looking and learning in as many places as I could, so whenever I traveled I always tried to carve out extra time to visit the major art museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim and the Whitney in New York City, the National Gallery of Art and the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, DC, the Art Institute in Chicago,
the Kimball in Ft. Worth, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Norton Simon Museum in Los Angeles.

With increased knowledge gained during these many visits to galleries and museums, I realized that I not only wanted to see great art in museums, but I also wanted to live with great art. As I began my collection, the natural first stop was the Sioux City Art Center, where I quickly learned that original and important art was being made in Sioux City and throughout the Upper Midwest. While Kathy and I have enjoyed collecting contemporary art on our international travels (several examples are included in this catalog for reference), the building blocks of our collecting have always been local and regional artists.

The real challenge of my early collecting was budget, so my initial purchases were prints and lithographs. As I became more serious, it was my desire to acquire contemporary art that demonstrated great diversity and different media including paintings, drawings, sculptures, watercolors, photographs, lithographs, serigraphs, ceramics and pottery.

Diversity has always been at the center of our collecting philosophy, but I did not want to simply collect a wide variety of art from what was available, I wanted to focus on the best of what was available.
With this goal in mind, I turned to the expertise of the Sioux City Art Center staff and their chosen jurists to serve as my “volunteer curators” while making my collecting decisions. This is why the majority of pieces in our collection today have been acquired from exhibitions and juried shows. Over the years, this strategy also enabled us to meet most of the artists, several became friends, and I have enjoyed the added benefit of acquiring original artworks directly from their personal studios.

A second, but no less important, part of my donation revolves around art history. At the same time I was learning about contemporary art, I developed an interest in fine art books. Over time I was able to build a library of over 200 coffee table size books documenting the work of the world’s most famous and interesting artists that I hope will serve as an often used reference for others. Many of these books are art objects themselves, and feature a combination of scholarship and imagery that can enable students to experience the art world’s masters in great detail.

This exhibition and catalog are the result of a tremendous dedication of time, energy and resources. Kathy and I offer special thanks to Al Harris-Fernandez, Todd Behrens, Shannon Sargent and Lyle Listamann of the Sioux City Art Center, without whose perseverance and attention to detail neither endeavor would have become a reality. This exhibition and catalog have also
been supported by the Collections Committee and the Board of Directors of the Art Center Association of Sioux City. We are grateful for their early and enthusiastic support of this undertaking.

Finally, it is well known that an active and vibrant arts community is essential to the quality of life in a city. In this regard, Sioux City is blessed. I have always been an avid supporter of the arts in Sioux City, first with my donation of the Orpheum Theatre building to the Orpheum Theatre Restoration Project, Ltd. in advance of its magnificent restoration, and now with the donation of 50 contemporary artworks and 200 fine art books to the Sioux City Art Center. Although our collection is known within artist circles, it is not familiar to the general public. Kathy and I are therefore grateful for the opportunity to share it with the Siouxland community for years to come. It is our hope that these works of art will touch the lives of others as much as they have touched our own.

Bruce Pizzichillo and Dari Gordon
(Oakland, CA)
*Mosaic Bowl, ca. 2003*
blown glass
10.5” x 17.5” diam

Sigridur Hjaltadottir (Iceland)
*Lilies #2, 2006*
mezzotint, 12/25
8.75” x 11.75”
A Regional Reflection
Todd Behrens, Curator

When Ritch LeGrand bought his first work of art, he had a strong sense that it would not be his last. But the LeGrand collection was amassed one work at a time. Each artwork added to the collection has had its own special reason for catching Ritch’s eye. Today, the collection includes more than 70 works acquired from Sioux City artists and from artists across the globe.

Decades after the collection started, it now contains three dozen artists who represent Sioux City and the region supported by the Sioux City Art Center. While the entire LeGrand collection includes works from Africa, Asia, Europe, and areas of the United States beyond the Midwest, the Sioux City Art Center has selected artworks that connect directly with its mission of exhibiting artists from Sioux City and the Upper Midwest. In fact, all of these artworks have come either from artists who live and work in or near Sioux City or from artists who were exhibiting their work at the Art Center. That is what makes the collection amassed by Ritch and his wife Kathy so important for the Sioux City Art Center: it’s a homecoming, a celebration of what the Art Center has been doing throughout its history.

Among the first artworks to which Ritch responded were those by local artist Jan Hyden. When he purchased Hyden’s untitled canvas, his intent was to display it in his office. When it didn’t fit, it came home. Ritch recognized not only that the painting was a visually stimulating addition to his house, but that the artist who made the painting represented the creativity of Sioux City.

Once Ritch began collecting in earnest, he began visiting group exhibitions of local and regional artists at the Art Center with his eyes
open to potential additions to his collection. In 1990, he attended the Art Center’s first Salon Soirée, a one-night fund raising event in which regional artists installed their works salon style. Ritch purchased Dissertation on 6 “F” Words by Jeff Freeman, a professor at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, and Iowa Sculptor Succumbs to Public Opinion by Mac Hornecker, a professor at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake.

Two years later, the Art Center held another Salon Soirée, and Ritch returned to add to his growing collection. He purchased 7:30 A.M. by Tom Becker, Bridging by Rick Johns, Many Buddhas, Two Cats by Ron Johns, and Iron John by Frank Polizzi. One black-and-white photograph, one hand-colored photograph, one mixed media painting, and one sculpture. Figurative, still life, abstracted, and non-representational artworks. As Ritch was building the collection, rather than trying to assemble a group of works similar in medium, style, or theme, he focused on satisfying the most important criterion any collector should have: the collector’s taste.

Over the course of the next 15 years, Ritch would continue to visit Art Center exhibitions, always open to the possibility that a new artwork would catch his attention. He purchased works by Sioux City artists such as Jeff Baldus, Karen Chesterman, Gary Ford, Larry Lightbody, Terri Parish McGaffin, Sheila Webb, and Jan Zelfer-Redmond. Ritch added work by artists in the tri-state area and the broader Upper Midwest through recurring exhibitions like Local Perspectives and The Juried Exhibition. As the Art Center presented new work to the community through these exhibitions, Ritch grew comfortable using the experienced eyes of the Art Center staff and outside jurors as co-curators of his collection.
Ritch’s relationship with the Art Center took a new turn in 2000 when he joined the Board of Directors of the Art Center Association of Sioux City. He remained on the Board for three years, spending his final year as Board President. Even with the increase in his activities at the Art Center, he was as active as ever in visiting exhibitions and adding to his collection. Among the artworks Ritch purchased during this time were those by Katherine Paape Gibbs, Larry Lightbody, Terri Parish McGaffin, Sharon Murphy, Swanee, Ryan Thayer, Judith Visker, and Steve Wilson.

The collection continued to grow, but at a slower pace, over the next several years after Ritch left the Association board. Still, some of the largest works in the collection were acquired during the years 2003-2006. Boulders, a massive outdoor sculpture by Larry Lightbody, was commissioned in 2005 and placed on the steep bank of the LeGrands’ front lawn. Writings on the Wall, a massive, atmospheric painting by Larry Roots, was among the final works added to the collection, following its inclusion in the Art Center’s exhibition, Family Tree: Art.Now.Here in November 2006.

As installed in the LeGrand’s tasteful, contemporary home, these artworks, along with many others that the LeGrands collected during their travels, say a lot about their owners. Love of beauty, an embrace of diversity, and support for the community and its surrounding region. Installed for this exhibition at the Sioux City Art Center, the LeGrand collection is a sophisticated sampler of the work of artists in our area, as well as a review of many of the great exhibitions of the Art Center’s recent past. It is a reflection of our region’s cultural production.
While the Art Center celebrates the LeGrands for their support of art and artists for so many years, what makes this collection so very special is that the LeGrands have promised to donate these artworks to the Art Center in the future. Donations of this scale and quality are uncommon. The collection will be among the largest and most important additions to the Sioux City Art Center’s permanent collection in its history. The ultimate beneficiary of the LeGrands’ generosity will be the people of Sioux City, for whom the Art Center maintains its art collection.
Jeff Baldus  
Tom Becker  
Karen Chesterman  
Paula Day  
Gary Ford  
Anne Francey  
John Fraser  
Jeff Freeman  
Julia Jardon Gee  
Katherine Paape Gibbs  
Robert Gillespie  
Jim Guest  
Mac Hornecker  
Jan Hyden  
Marc Jacobson  
Rick Johns  
Ron Johns  
Kathy LeGrand  
Larry Lightbody  
Terri McGaffin  
Cathleen McNeill  
Armin Mühsam  
Kenneth Munger  
Sharon Murphy  
Frank Polizzi  
Larry Roots  
Swanee (Tom Swanson)  
Ryan Thayer  
Toby Vandenack  
Judith Visker  
Cheryl Wall  
Sheila Webb  
Daniel Weiss  
Steve Wilson  
William Wold  
Jan Zelfer-Redmond
Jeff Baldus
Vase, 2004
ceramic
29" x 11.5" diam
Tom Becker
7:30 A. M., 1992
photograph
6" x 8.5"
Karen Chesterman
*Retreat from Politics*, 1997
oil on canvas
70” x 50”
Paula Day
*Square Trees, Great Britain*, 1995
C-print
14" x 18"
Gary Ford
Untitled (carved head), undated
painted wood
10" x 5" x 3.5"
Anne Francey
Untitled, 1997
chalk, pencil, and watercolor
49" x 34.5"
John Fraser
*Form with Gray Content*, 1995
paper and string
36.75” x 27”
Jeff Freeman
*Dissertation on 6 F Words*, 1989
mixed media
61" x 41" x 8.5"
Jeff Freeman

Icarus Takes a Hit, 1987

watercolor

21” x 7.75”
Jeff Freeman
Rococo Storm und Drang, 1987
mixed media
41.75” x 23” x 4”
Julia Jardon Gee
Untitled, 1999
ink on paper
2" x 2" each
Katherine Paape Gibbs

*Hillside and Beyond #2, 2000*

acrylic on paper

9" x 9"
Robert Gillespie
*Lone Tree*, 1997
gelatin silver print
7” x 18.5”
Jim Guest

*Song to the Silence*, 1996

graphite/wax pencil on alkyd on Masonite

38" x 80"
Mac Hornecker

Iowa Sculptor Succumbs to Public Opinion, 1990

graphite on paper

29" x 21"

30
Mac Hornecker
Untitled, undated
steel
31” x 20” x 19”
Jan Hyden
Untitled, circa 1985
acrylic and mixed media on canvas
47" x 47"
Jan Hyden
Untitled, circa 1985
mixed media on paper
43.5" x 30.5"
Marc Jacobson
*River Port,* 1996
oil on panel
5" x 18 1/8"
Rick Johns

*Bridging*, 1992
mixed media on canvas
40” x 36”
Rick Johns

*Dials*, 1996

mixed media on panel

42.75" x 40" x 3.5"
Ron Johns
Many Buddhas, Two Cats, 1992
gelatin silver print
8” x 12”
Kathy LeGrand

*Katrina*, 2006
mixed media
30.5” x 38.5”
Larry Lightbody
Untitled, 1991
painted metal with pedestal
63.5” x 42.5” x 30”
Larry Lightbody
Zig Zag #3, 2001
steel
45" x 12" x 12"
Terri McGaffin
Still Life with a Red Bowl, 2000
oil on canvas
26” x 67”
Cathleen McNeill
*Oak Carone, Suite 1 & 2*, undated
lithographs
30” x 22” each
Armin Mühsam
Unterführung, 2004
acrylic on board
12” x 18”
Kenneth Munger

*Elevators*, 1998

oil, pencil, collage, china marker on canvas

56” x 49”
Kenneth Munger

I-29 North, 1999
oil on canvas
55” x 65.5”
Sharon Murphy
*Series II, No. 31*, undated
mixed media on clay-based paper
32” x 33.5”
Sharon Murphy

Series II, No. 38, undated

mixed media on clay-based paper

32" x 33.5"
Frank Polizzi

*Iron John, circa 1992*

steel with paint on stone

47.75” x 22” x 9”; base, 4” x 14.5” x 13.5”
Larry Roots

*Writings on the Wall*, 2006

oil, encaustic & pencil on canvas

48" x 96"
Swanee (Tom Swanson)

*Hrrumph!, 2000*

woodcut

73” x 39”
Ryan Thayer
*Self Portrait*, 2000
acrylic on Masonite
50" x 30"
Toby Vandenack

*Arc de Triomphe, Paris, 1995/printed 1997*

gelatin silver print

10” x 13.5”
Judith Visker  
*Tacked Energy*, 1999  
acrylic and mixed media on canvas  
12" x 12" x 4"
Cheryl Wall
*Canto: No. 10, 1987*
watercolor
31" x 22"
Sheila Webb
*Flowers in Vase*, undated
photograph
8.5” x 12”
Daniel Weiss

*Nebraska 2 (Poet Painting)*, 2005

wood, paint, nails

25.25” x 25.25” x 1.5”
Steve Wilson

*What if...?*, 1999
oil on canvas
75.5” x 68”
William Wold
Untitled Pair, 1991
ceramic
32” x 11” x 8”; 34.25” x 9.75” x 8.5”
Jan Zelfer-Redmond
Untitled (Brown and Gray), 1997
oil on canvas
47" x 52"
A sample of the more than 200 books on fine art that are included in the promised gift of Ritch and Kathy LeGrand.