ART APPRECIATION
A Hands-On Field Trip

Interested in art? A little, a lot, very much, love it? Then come join University League's fun and novel interest group Art Appreciation. We meet the third Wednesday of every month at 10:00 a.m. You might see a new exhibition at the University's Chazen Museum of Art, (usually presented by the actual Curator of the exhibit), or the downtown Madison Museum of Contemporary Art (MMOCA) with time for a stop in their award-winning gift shop; or hear speakers such as art critic Jake Stockinger.

This year we have visited the new Art Lofts -- art studios and workshops of the UW-Madison Art Department. We'll see "The Collector," a fascinating documentary about New York City art gallery owner Allen Stone. We'll tour Epic Systems in Verona and their corporate art collection, then go once again to the Kohler Art Library to see "books as art."

Perhaps the most adventuresome activity is the Spring field trip. One year we went to Dr. Evermore's outdoor metal sculpture fantasy world near Baraboo. Last year twelve of us journeyed to Blue Mounds and the art print studio of Larry Welo. Co-chairs Jean-Pierre Golay and Margaret Strass spent considerable time arranging this event. Ten of us car-pooled to one of the loveliest parts of Wisconsin. Larry greeted us, handed out 4x4" pieces of "virgin" copper, and then we jumped in. First step was to paint a tar-like covering over the copper (above).

Next, with a special metal stylus, we drew a design, the stylus removing the black coating. Then the plates were soaked in acid for at least an hour, giving time for the acid to "bite" where the stylus had removed the protective coating.

This was a natural picnic lunch moment. After lunch we returned to the studio to rub off the remaining coating with newspaper. We then covered the plate with a very thick ink and carefully wiped off the excess with cheesecloth. Ready for printing. First, the inked plate was placed face up on the press; then slightly damp quality paper was placed on top of the plate and finally a soft felt blanket on top of the damp paper, to protect and hold everything in place.
Ready to roll! Turning the wheel of the press made us feel very special. Here, co-Chair Margaret Strass is "at the helm"; Jim Krikelas observes.

The greatest moment is lifting the felt blankets, then the paper to see the image we had created. (co-Chair Jean-Pierre Golay right.) Making our own etchings from start to finish gave us greater understanding and appreciation for this art form.

What's in store for us this year? How about "Play in the Clay", a visit to Higher Fire Ceramics studio, where we can have another, literal "hands-on" experience in a different medium?

--Janice Golay, Art Appreciation Interest Group