

Senior students showcase art in new exhibition

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Two senior art students are showcasing a collection of their college work in the “Survive or Die Trying” art exhibition at the Bradbury Art Museum.

“This is the senior’s capstone exhibit, sort of their thesis project. The main idea is to use the exhibition as the culmination of all of their work as art students at A-State,” said Madeleine McMahan, assistant director of the Bradbury Art Museum.

One artist, Aaron Conger, a senior studio art major from Batesville, Arkansas, said this exhibit culminates a lifelong passion.

“It goes back to my childhood, I’ve always had this love for dinosaurs. It kind of evolved more when I saw ‘Godzilla’ and it really became a passion for my entire life, this desire to look at these enormous animals that are no longer here and sort of marvel at what these creatures are and what they were like,” Conger said.

Conger said he decided to pursue art seriously in college shortly after transferring to A-State from the University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville in 2021.

“As long as I can remember, this is what I wanted to do, but it became more clear that I wanted to pursue it when I transferred to A-State. I definitely want to establish a career in art and keep pursuing it when I graduate,” Conger said.

Conger said he used a variety of mediums for his exhibition, “Creation Through Destruction.”

“Creation has always been an integral part of science.

Using ink drawings, ceramic sculpture and felting, I explored various subjects like Godzilla, dinosaurs and the atomic bomb. My work is centered on the concepts of life and death, as creatures on this planet, including us, fight to stay alive because we value life so highly and fear death so much,” Conger said.

Senior studio art major Elizabeth Vansandt said art has been her interest from an early age.

“Ever since I was young.



“Chorus” by Aaron Conger

Photo by Will Livingston | Staff Writer

I’ve always been interested in painting and drawing more than I was playing with toys when I was younger,” Vansandt said.

Vansandt’s collection, “Southern Decay,” features various mediums, from crochet to photography to garments.

“Southern Decay’ is a collection of wearable fiber arts that aptly captures the essence of the great outdoors of Southeast Arkansas,” Vansandt said. “The collection

is a tribute to the natural and cultivated landscapes that I grew up around.”

Nature plays a role in most of Vansandt’s work.

“I like looking at nature a lot,” Vansandt said. “I’m pulling from my own memories of nature growing up because I spend a lot of time outside.”

The free exhibition will be on display until May 1 at the Bradbury Art Museum.



“Nana’s Corner” by L. Elizabeth Vandersandt

Photo by Will Livingston | Staff Writer

THIS WEEK’S POP PICK

JACK DOUGLAS | STAFF WRITER

“FALLOUT”



PHOTO COURTESY OF IMDB

In a film and television landscape that has recently been rife with video game adaptations, Amazon Prime’s “Fallout” series manages to be something special.

Based on the Bethesda Softworks game series of the same name, “Fallout” follows three lead characters as they trek across the irradiated wasteland searching for a severed head that contains the key to rebuilding civilization.

The post-apocalyptic wasteland of “Fallout” is crawling with mutants, monsters, psychopaths and strangers of all types. Whether it’s a snake oil salesman or a jarred brain attached to a robotic vacuum cleaner, the wasteland’s inhabitants all feel vibrant and unique.

As a video game series, “Fallout” has always been known for its contrast of zany, over-the-top comedy with the suffering caused by war and greed, and this tone is translated incredibly well to the television adaptation.

“Fallout’s” greatest achievement is how well the look and feel of the games translate onto the screen. Every detail of the show is carefully crafted to be as close to the games as possible, and the use of practical effects for almost all of the visuals makes everything feel incredibly lifelike.

As fans of the games know, interactions with the non-player characters (NPCs) who populate the wasteland can often be strange or uncanny. This aspect is, astonishingly, included in the show.

Occasionally, characters in the show will deliver lines in a flat, almost robotic cadence meant to mimic the experience of interacting with an NPC in one of the games. While it may be jarring for newcomers to the series, veteran “Fallout” players and fans will already be in on the joke.

The show caters well to established “Fallout” fans, but viewers without prior knowledge of the series might feel disoriented by its more unorthodox elements. By trying to adapt hundreds of hours worth of background information and worldbuilding into an eight-episode television series, important information is sometimes glossed over, leaving unfamiliar viewers confused as to what’s going on.

The best example is in the show’s second episode when The Enclave is mentioned without any context. In the games, The Enclave is a morally dubious organization made up of the remnants of America’s government, military, and corporate powers, who survived the nuclear apocalypse.

This is an incredibly important faction in the “Fallout” series, but it is not clearly explained in the show. It may be explored further in the show’s second season, but for those unfamiliar with the source material, it could be a sticking point for confusion.

Overall, the “Fallout” show is a nuclear blast for established fans, though it might struggle to convey its nuance to newcomers. The show manages to almost perfectly adapt the feel and visual style of its source material while telling an intriguing story at the same time. The series is a worthwhile watch for fans of zany science fiction, retrofuturistic aesthetics, post-apocalypse stories, or just bloody, gun-slinging adventure stories.

Official Score: 8/10

“The Tortured Poets Department” is heartbreakingly dazzling

COLUMN BY
CAROLINE AVERITT

LIFE EDITOR

We hereby conduct this review of Taylor Swift’s 11th studio album, “The Tortured Poets Department.” This album includes 31 tortured and poetic songs, unlike anything Swift has done before.

Listening to this album feels like reading someone’s diary. It’s honest, gut-wrenching, humorous and messy. It’s not a perfectly polished album, instead, it is raw and genuine.

The record was released at midnight EST April 19 with 16 songs. Two hours later, “The Tortured Poets Department: The Anthology” came out with 15 additional songs.

Fans were expecting a devastating album as Swift publicly broke up with her boyfriend of six years, Joe Alwyn. While many songs seem to be about him, fans were surprised that most are about Matty Healy of The 1975, with whom Swift had a fling following the breakup.

Swift’s dating life is constantly under scrutiny, but since these relationships were so public, it is impossible not to talk about the exes who inspired this work.

Swift and Alwyn were constantly surrounded by rumors that they got married, engaged, or were having a baby. This album contains many references to marriage or the lack thereof, squashing those rumors while alluding to her heartbreak from not

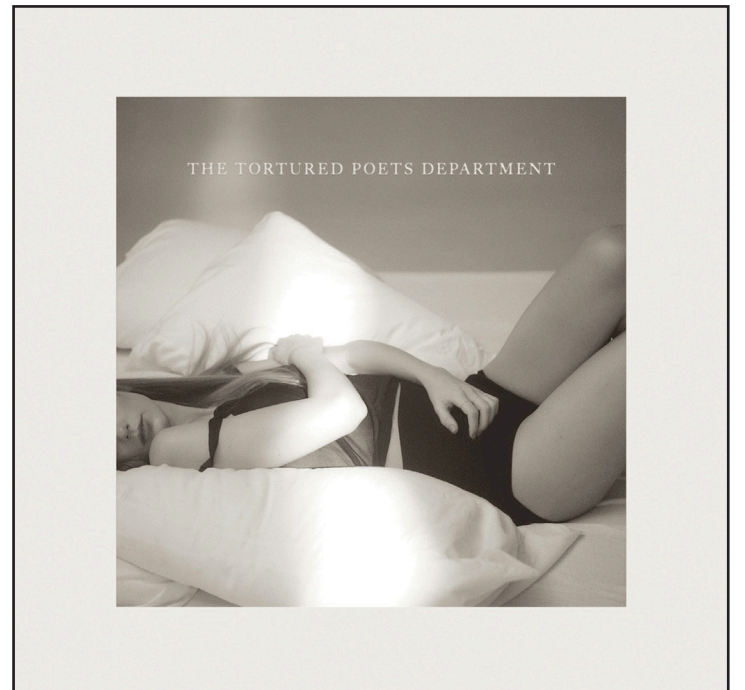


PHOTO COURTESY OF GENIUS

Album cover for “The Tortured Poets Department”

achieving those milestones. But she also nods to her relationship with Healy with song titles that look eerily like songs by The 1975, such as “I Can Fix Him (No Really I Can)” and “imgonnagetyouback.”

She also has a couple of songs that seem to reference her current relationship with Kansas City Chiefs player Travis Kelce, “The Alchemy” and “So High School,” both of which have plenty of nods to football.

Many of the songs allude to her discomfort with her constant time in the spotlight. Notably, “I Can Do It With a Broken Heart” talks about her time performing at The Eras Tour during her painful breakup.

Sonically, much of the first half feels like part two of her previous project, “Midnights,” because many songs on

the album were produced by long-time collaborator and friend of Swift, Jack Antonoff, the primary producer of “Midnights.”

Antonoff added some incredible touches to the album, such as the sound of in-ear monitors in “I Can Do It With a Broken Heart.”

I enjoyed Antonoff’s influence, but this album would have been nothing without producer Aaron Dessner. His influence shines in the second installment of the album, bringing songs reminiscent of fan-favorite albums “folklore” and “evermore.”

“The Tortured Poets Department” will not resonate with everyone, but its maturity, honesty and unique sound make it Swift’s greatest project.

Official Score: 10/10

INSIDE THE CLOCK TOWER

RACHEL RUDD

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Grabbing students' eyes the moment they step foot on campus, the clock tower rings out its tunes and lights up the sky with different colors.

Part of the Dean B. Ellis Library, the tower was built as part of former university president Eugene Smith's idea to create a focal point for the campus.

"That was part of his vision as kind of a centerpiece of campus and a visual image that, as it turns out, has been used a lot in the media, not only to identify Arkansas State University but Jonesboro," said Jeff Bailey, library director.

Funding for the clock tower came from the College Savings Bond Act, an act allowing colleges to fund projects approved by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

The bell tower originally opened with four bells, but that number has increased to 24.

"There's a keyboard, where manually if someone really wanted to, although it's very difficult, you can play the bells live," Bailey said. "They program and record certain things that are then played back on schedules and whatnot."

The tunes are programmed to play whenever students are changing classes. The music choices change with the seasons, as tunes are programmed for different times

and synced with a calendar.

The tunes played have been coordinated by various professors within the Music Department for over 15 years. It is currently overseen by Timothy Crist, Ph.D., a professor of theory of composition.

Bailey asked Crist to direct the bell tower in Fall 2023. He said while he hasn't arranged any music for it yet, he intends to do so in the future and plans to involve student compositions.

"I have one group of students that are very much into video game soundtracks and writing video game music," Crist said. "We all play a lot of video games these days, so it'd be nice to hear a little 'Zelda' or 'Mario' coming from the clock tower every once in a while just for fun."

Calem Sykes, a first-year music education and composition double major from Jonesboro, is one of the students composing music for the tower. He said while the music he is working on isn't finished yet, he aims to finish it sometime next year.

One of the pieces Sykes is working on is a rendition of "Dire Dire Docks" from "Super Mario 64."

"It sounds like it would fit on a clock tower," Sykes said. "If you listen to the original it's similar to an electric piano sound. Timbrely speaking, they're very similar, piano and clock tower bells, at least in my ear."



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

The clock tower of the Dean B. Ellis Library

The library has continued to update its technology, with funding primarily coming from donations. The keyboard console has been upgraded to be programmable and play and store audio files.

When the tower was first built, Facilities Management would manually place different colored filters on the floodlights. However, the tower now uses programmable LED lights.

"Someone would have to get upon the roof and put a red filter

for the football team winning the game," Bailey said. "Now it's much more automated. It's really cool because there's so many different colors."

The tower is lit for game victories, holidays, commencements and various awareness causes. Colors are approved and coordinated through University Communications.

Bailey added the wind can cause the hands on the clock face to read incorrect times.

"The power and speed of the wind, that at that height, which is about 170 feet above the ground, will either push the minute hand forward or hold it back," Bailey said.

To combat this, a few times a year, Facilities Management will set the hands to the correct time.

Crist said composing for the bells not only gives his students great satisfaction but also improves the university experience overall.

"We are all creative-minded individuals and it's always nice to find any challenge ahead to kind of drive our interests and create enough complexity in our lives, so that we have a variety of things to choose from in order to create art," Crist said. "The bell tower is just another thing that we can add to all of our experience. It's something that we all experience during the day. All of our university community enjoys the bell tower's music all day long."

Meet Miss Northeast Arkansas 2024

MACKENZIE WHITE

SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

An Arkansas State student spent a semester working at Disney World and earned multiple Arkansas pageant titles, including Miss Arkansas State University, while promoting mental health education for students.

Riley Strube, a junior communication disorders student, currently holds the title of Miss Northeast Arkansas 2024 and previously held the title of Miss Arkansas State University 2023.

Strube's aunt, Daley Gamblin, was a part of the Miss Arkansas Organization. Strube got to be her princess in the pageant at just four years old, however, she did not get involved in pageants until she was 11-years-old.

Strube's pageant philanthropy, Time 2 Talk, advocates for mental health education for Arkansas students. Strube said she struggled with her own mental health, and despite being open about it, she said she was not sure if it was what she

wanted her platform to be.

That changed when one of her pageant sisters died by suicide, and she decided she needed Time 2 Talk so she could help others in her position.

"It's all about getting them more comfortable talking about their mental health so that way we can see a decrease in the amount of suicides that students are currently facing in Arkansas," Strube said.

Strube held the titles of Miss Central Arkansas, Miss Conway and Miss White River in the Miss Arkansas Teen Organization. She moved up to the Miss Arkansas Organization, where she was previously Miss Arkansas State University 2023 and is now Miss Northeast Arkansas 2024.

"Riley is authentically herself. In every phase of life, she never strays away from being exactly who she is. She is energetic, outgoing and real," Erica Parker, Strube's pageant friend, said.

Strube has been dancing since she was 2 years old. Strube's mom owns a dance studio, so she grew up learning from her mom and older girls. Strube does a tap dance



PHOTO COURTESY OF RILEY STRUBE

Riley Strube

for her talent in pageants and said she eventually wants to teach other girls to dance. Her goal is to cheer for the NFL and she recently attended the Tennessee Titan NFL cheer

clinic. She said she never wants to stop performing and NFL cheer would allow her to get in front of a crowd to continue doing what she loves.

In addition, Strube spent Jan.

to June of 2022 in the Disney College Program. Strube said it was a fun and rewarding experience. She made friends from Canada to Puerto Rico, who she still talks to today.

Strube mostly worked in food service, but her favorite job has been bartending. She said one of the coolest experiences was serving a margarita to Jimmy Buffet. She was 18 when she attended the program, which is the legal age to serve in Florida.

In Arkansas, a person must be at least 21 to serve alcohol. During Strube's first year of college, she studied pre-medical biology but realized mid-semester that path was not for her. Strube's family were huge Disney fans and went to the parks often, so once her cousin went through the Disney College Program, she realized there might be a way to gain extra time to figure out her future.

Rather than continuing to spend money on education with no end goal, she decided to take a semester at the Disney College Program, giving her time to not only figure out her plan but also

earn extra money for schooling.

"When I came back, I was ready and more set on what I wanted to do. I got to focus on school that would help me in my career, rather than just being in school to be in school," Strube said.

Students can apply for the Disney college program online through their website as long as they meet the eligibility requirements.

Strube now studies communication disorders in hopes of becoming a speech and language pathologist. Strube's mother, Andrea Strube, and aunt, Daley Gamblin, both have careers as speech pathologists. Strube describes herself as their "guinea pig" growing up, as they would practice their exercises with her.

"When Riley was in middle school and high school, she came and shadowed me several times at work," Gamblin said. "She interacted so well with all of my patients and I think it really made an impact on her. She cares for others and their wellbeing and always tries her best in everything she does."