Art of being unfinished

By JUSTUS FLAIR
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When attending an art festival, one expects to see the most sophisticated and aesthetically pleasing art. The festival, taking place on Saturday at various locations, features artists of nearly all media presenting unfinished works.

"I see this as a way of making, creating, and sharing the process," said 2010 and 2012 festival artist Karen Kester.

"The basic idea is that we share not just our work or what is in progress," said Richard Wacker, a cofounder of the festival. "We’re also really interested in what goes on before the finished work, because we want to understand the artist to understand our process. We really want artists to think about projects across different media.

"Representing every art form requires a lot of work. More than 50 local Iowa City artists will present their work during the festival, in addition to other professionals.

"The thing that I think is really, really important about it is that it should replace the difference between the artist and the audience," Wacker said. "In addition to local artists, we brought in very few distinguished guests. They engage in conversations with local artists in addition to sharing their own work."

Each year the featured artists change, bringing their own special input to the festival. This year the festival will feature Chip Lord, a digital-media artist, and Kenneth Goldsmith, a poet. Organizers of the festival are very excited for both to show off their current projects.

"Goldsmith is going to be presenting a work in progress that he’s been working on for eight years, which he feels may never be finished," Wacker said. "We’re excited to share their projects, guest artists will also have one-on-one feedback and conversation with attendees."

"It’s an interactive festival," Wacker said. "It’s a situation where audiences can actually have ideas about how to finish projects. It’s important that we’re collaborating with other artists and departments. We have aspiring undergraduates working alongside graduate and professional writers. Etc. Even community artists can work alongside professionals."

What’s most valuable is that the audience is invited to respond with their ideas about the work presented," said Chelsea Cox, a participant and graduate student of the University of Iowa’s Nonfiction Writing Program. "The excitement and enthusiasm about the work presented is palpable, because what the project could be is yet to be determined." The afternoon panels included in the festival will also contain a mixture of professional and amateur artists.

"The panels are made up of four artists," said Wacker. "We aim to present what they’re working on in a different medium, and then we give them each 15 minutes to present, and then we open it up to audience questions. It allows people to present what they’re working on and then participate with the audience.

"The Works-in-Progress Festival is unique because of this interactive element and inclusion of all media as well as its display of in-progress work."

"I founded the festival with my colleague Andrew Ritchey," Wacker said. After attending a typical film festival, the two said they were struck by the frustration surrounding typical film festivals.

"We thought about what we could do to make it a bit more interactive," Wacker said. "It creates a vulnerability in the artist to be on display in this way. Iowa City will have this different type of art festival that suggests the audience is invited to respond with their ideas about the work presented.

"The festival will attract students, professors, and the public. The faculty and students of the University of Iowa will be as excited as Iowa City residents to present their work to others," Wacker said.

Pragmatic Activity 4: UbuWeb

UbuWeb is back in all its fourth-edited splendor in time for Halloween. A mother and son go missing after a mysterious double murder occurs. Five years later, the son and her mother set out to experience strange happenings wherever her nearby neighbors live. And now a 9-year-old killer moves into Iowa City.

MOST RECENT ARTS EVENTS

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19

**Spine Tingler**

Delcortless/pseudoalcoholic Alex Cross (Gary Conlon, his friend, James and Edward), and Delcortless Monica de la Cruz (to tell) work together at the Art of Police Blue. Cross takes a hit from the tail of a serial killer and is marked by the name of the Protector. The festival is unique because of this interactive element and inclusion of all media as well as its display of in-progress work.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26

**Gasper**

Fiction of life, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Bijou Theater. The Stellification, Gallery Series, 8 p.m., Theater Building B.

HIGHLIGHTS

**UbuWeb**

When: 7:30 p.m., Renée Theatre, 213 N. Gilbert

**Lady M. Matlock Series**, 8 p.m., Theater Building B.

**The Stellification, Gallery Series, 8 p.m., Theater Building B.**