

UI to honor life and art of printmaker Mauricio Lasansky

By John Kenyon

Gazette staff writer

IOWA CITY — Perhaps it is a testament to the impact printmaker Mauricio Lasansky has had on the University of Iowa that a Sunday celebration of his life and art requires three separate functions.

Lasansky, 85, retired from the UI in 1985, founded the university's printmaking program in 1945. Last month, U.S. News & World Report named it the top graduate printmaking program in the country.

The printmaker, who continues to work in his downtown Iowa City studio, was taking the accolades in stride. He said his "ego is at the same level," but admitted the celebration will be nice recognition.

"It is nice to know, when you worked half of your life in one place, that they liked it," he said.

Lasansky will be recognized Sunday, first with a 1 p.m. program at the UI's Levitt Center honoring his work followed by the first public viewing of a documentary video about his most well-known work, "The Nazi Drawings."

That will be followed at 2 p.m. at the Museum of Art by a concert of original music inspired by the drawings and a 3 p.m. reception at the museum hosted by UI President Mary Sue Coleman.

The reception and film showing are just the most recent recognition for Lasansky.

In October, Gov. Tom Vil-

Lasansky's "Nazi Drawings," which depict the atrocities carried out in Nazi Germany, have been shown all over the world.

sack gave him the Iowa Award the highest award granted to Iowans. Lasansky is the 14th recipient since the award's beginning in 1948.

Lasansky's "Nazi Drawings," a collection of 30 individual pieces and one triptych that depict the atrocities carried out in Nazi Germany, were completed between 1961 and 1966. They have been shown all over the world, but can usually be found in the Lasansky Room at the UI Museum of Art.

The drawings are the subject of "The Nazi Drawings," a 25-minute documentary video by local videographer Lane Wyrick. UI professors David Gompper and Eric Forsythe, respectively, provided the video's music and narration.

The documentary won four top awards at the Showcase Iowa 2000 Movie Awards on April 1 in Des Moines. It won best documentary, while Gompper and Forsythe won top prizes for their work. It also won best short-form entertainment program.

Included is footage of Lasansky talking about the drawings, as well as an interview with historian Edwin Honig, who wrote an essay about the

drawings for the exhibition catalog, and Richard Levitt, who owns the drawings.

"I videotaped Mauricio at his studio, trying to capture an honest quality, a dialogue between the artist and me," Wyrick said. He knew he had something special when he did not get the typical response at a private screening.

"I was waiting for the typical congratulatory clapping, but it was just silent," he said.

"It was a stunned response. It was a really heavy weight. At that point I realized the impact of that documentary."

Wyrick said his goal was to expand the sphere of "Nazi Drawings."

"It puts the point across," Lasansky said. "It will help people understand 'The Nazi Drawings.'"



Eric Forsythe
Narrated
'The Nazi Drawings'



David Gompper
Composed
music for film



Lane Wyrick
Produced
Lasansky
documentary



Gazette photo by Buzz Orr

Artist Mauricio Lasansky stands Wednesday with his wife, Emilia, in front of one of his "Nazi Drawings" being displayed at the University of Iowa Museum of Art. A celebration of Lasansky's life and work will be held Sunday at the museum and the Levitt Center.