



Press-Citizen / Danny Wilcox Frazier

Mauricio Lasansky stands Wednesday in front of one of the works in *The Nazi Drawings*, now on display at the University of Iowa Museum of Art. A video documentary based on the acclaimed printmaker's work will have a public screening this weekend at the Levitt Center.

## 1<sup>st</sup> screening

Award-winning documentary inspired by Mauricio Lasansky's 'Nazi Drawings' will be shown this weekend

By Stacey R. Harrison  
Iowa City Press-Citizen

The relevancy even today of printmaker Mauricio Lasansky's *The Nazi Drawings*, which were completed in the 1960s, resonates loudly with one potent image: an oblivious pope and a bishop at his side walking on the bodies of Holocaust victims. Within the pope's robe, imprints of dollars and saints are clearly visible.

Lasansky — who founded the University of Iowa's printmaking program in 1945, perennially rated as the nation's best — is unapologetic about casting the pontiff in such an unfavorable light, but speaks surprisingly pleasantly on the subject in the wake of recent events.

"At least things are starting to change. At least he seems to be trying to make it right," said Lasansky, speaking of Pope John Paul II's apology last month for sins by the Catholic Church

### Video premiere

■ **The Nazi Drawings** will be screened at 1 p.m. Sunday at the Levitt Center for University Advancement; it's free and open to the public.

■ **The 25-minute** video production will be followed at 2 p.m. by a presentation of original music inspired by Mauricio Lasansky's work by faculty and students of the Center for New Music.

■ **For more information**, visit [www.NaziDrawings.com](http://www.NaziDrawings.com).

toward others. Included in the pope's plea for forgiveness were Holocaust victims, who widely believe the church could have done more during that time.

This drawing is one of 30,

along with one triptych, that constitute *The Nazi Drawings* — Lasansky's reaction to the horrors of the World War II Holocaust atrocities he viewed in U.S. military films — which have been made the subject of a new production that was awarded Best Documentary at last weekend's Iowa Motion Picture Awards.

*The Nazi Drawings* is scheduled to be screened at 1 p.m. Sunday at the Levitt Center for University Advancement and is free and open to the public. The 25-minute video production will be followed at 2 p.m. by a presentation by faculty and students of the Center for New Music of original music inspired by Lasansky's work.

Lasansky and his oldest son, Phillip, decided a few years ago that *The Nazi Drawings* should be the focus of a documentary. In 1967, the exhibit caused long lines in major galleries around the country and was given mention in national



Press-Citizen / Danny Wilcox Frazier

Lane Wyrick's documentary, *The Nazi Drawings*, was named best documentary at the Iowa Motion Picture Awards last weekend. The video won three other awards as well.

publications like *Time* and *Look*.

The family enlisted local producer Lane Wyrick, proprietor of Xap Interactive, to shoot the project and make sure it would provide a fitting representation. Wyrick and Phillip Lasansky collaborated on the script, and the feature was shot using digital video over the following year.

After viewing the first

cut, however, Wyrick decided there needed to be music along with the images, as well as a binding narration. He went to resources at UI and brought aboard music professor David Gompper and theater arts professor Eric Forsythe, who were also awarded in their respective categories at

See LASANSKY, 9B

# Lasansky

From 7B

last weekend's ceremony.

It was a decision provoked in part by Wyrick's relative unfamiliarity with Lasansky's work before starting the project. He wanted to ensure that the film would be of service both to those who know *The Nazi Drawings* and newcomers like himself.

"What I hoped this would be was a real artistic exploration of this monumental work," said Wyrick, who reported being profoundly moved when he first encountered the drawings.

"Nothing will ever replace seeing the drawings in person, but, with the images we've put together, hopefully people can get an idea of their power and importance."

Wyrick said screening audiences thus far have provided vindication with their uncomfortable silence once the lights go up. They make it clear they have been moved by what they have seen, which includes actual Holocaust footage, the same footage that inspired Lasansky.

In approaching the music, Gompper didn't stray from the source. He used the numbers 5-6-0-2-7-1-5, included in one drawing as a victim's identification, and corresponded them to notes to form a melody.

The result also is influenced heavily, Gompper said, by French composer Olivier Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*, which was inspired by Messiaen's time in a concentration camp.

All told, it has been a stellar year for Lasansky, who at 85 still works everyday in his downtown studio. In October, Gov. Tom Vilsack presented him with the Iowa Award, the highest award given to Iowans. And the award-winning documentary about him meets his satisfaction.

"It's good, it's simple, you know, and it gets the point across," Lasansky said.

Lasansky came to America in 1943 after fleeing an oppressive regime in his native Argentina. He was recruited by then-UI President Virgil M. Hancher primarily to establish the school's printmaking program.

A recipient of five Guggenheim Fellowships and literally hundreds of other honors, Lasansky's work can be seen in 140 museums around the world.