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## Drawing Away Nazi Horror

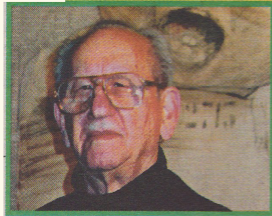
by Naomi Pfefferman

Arts & Entertainment Editor

ARTIST MAURICIO LASANSKY was infuriated after viewing Alain Resnais' graphic 1955 Holocaust documentary, "Night and Fog."

"I felt full of hatred [for the Nazis]," says Lasansky, founder of the University of Iowa's esteemed printmaking program. The Argentinean-born artist felt compelled to express his profound disgust through art.

It took him until 1966 to complete "The Nazi Drawings," the subject of Lane Wyrick's 1999 award-winning



A documentary based on artist Mauricio Lasansky's "The Nazi Drawings" will be shown Oct. 14.

short documentary by the same name, which will be shown at the Directors Guild Theatre on Oct. 14. The 30 raw, life-sized pieces include images of skull-faced soldiers, crucified women, suffering children and oblivious bishops. Lasansky signed his name upside down in the last drawing — his self-portrait — "to force viewers to bow in reverence to the victims," the Iowa native told The Journal.

Unlike Holocaust artists such as Samuel Bak and Felix Nussbaum, Lasansky, 86, is neither a Holocaust survivor nor victim. Though the printmaker's father was born in Vilna, he is deliberately vague about his Lithuanian Jewish background and insists "The Nazi Drawings" is a humanist, rather than a Jewish, work.

Yet, the Shoah so haunted Lasansky that he worked virtually around the clock to complete the series, suffering intense headaches and angst. "He would come back from his studio, madder than hell," recalls the artist's 46-year-old son, Phillip, who was a child at the time.

Lasansky's powerful series was selected as an inaugural exhibit at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York in 1967.

Today, it's mostly relegated to storage at the University of Iowa Museum of Art — one reason Lasansky was keen to publicize his "Drawings" through the documentary. "I dream someday about a little simple building ... where people can come in and see [the work]," he says.