From the Director

The Ulrich Museum of Art welcomed two incredible community members to the Advisory Board this fall. In the process of bringing the board guidelines up to date, we increased the number of board members to expand our network in Wichita. It is with great delight that I share the news of Robert Allison and Sonia Greteman’s involvement with WSU and the Ulrich Museum as new Advisory Board members. Already, they have added much to board deliberations and planning. The Ulrich Museum Alliance also brought Trish Higgins, Bonnie Bing Honeyman, Nadine Jacobs, Barbara Mifflie, and Nancy Schwan on board as new members this fall. Higgins and Schwan swung into high gear immediately and orchestrated the superb September opening party.

Prepare thyself for the coming of the Millipede! As the newsletter goes to press, the museum will be laying the concrete base for the monumental bronze sculpture by Wichita-native Tom Otterness in the center of the rotary in front of the Ulrich. The playful Millipede will measure 26 feet in length, and we are working with the artist for a summer installation. A group of Wichitans traveled to New York this fall and paid a visit to Otterness at his studio. They returned with stories of the artist’s intelligence, warmth, and wit. To a person, each detailed their encounter with Otterness with glee. The group also explored Battery Park where Otterness has a major sculpture installation as well as the Manhattan subway that is now peopled with clever Otterness characters through a large public art commission with the New York Metropolitan Transit Authority. Watch for updated news on the completion of this addition to the Martin H. Bush Outdoor Sculpture Collection.

Finally, at the January 2007 opening, I had the pleasure of meeting WSU student Mande Braden. She interviewed me as the new Ulrich director for the campus newspaper, and we talked about many things beyond the museum. She revealed that an exhibition at the Ulrich had changed her life. While I loved the compliment, I wasn’t surprised. It happens more often than you might imagine, and such impact on people’s lives is a large part of the purpose for and reward in working in art museums. We invited Mande to tell her story in her own words and hope you enjoy this glimpse at the learning that takes place every day at the Ulrich.

What richness for the mind and eye we’ve organized for the winter. Come look, learn, and enjoy.

—Dr. Patricia McDonnell, Director
Michelle Grabner: Remain in Light
January 12–April 27, 2008 in the Amsden Gallery, Ulrich Museum

Sculptor Josephine Durkin repurposes all variety of commonplace objects in her interactive and kinetic installations.

“Paring down intimate human activity by way of animating materials invites the viewer to focus on their own memories, communicative behavior, and sensual ability,” noted the artist. The Ulrich presents a growing and significant new mode of artmaking—multimedia and viewer-activated work—by presenting this important emerging artist in Wichita.

For the Ulrich Project Series, Durkin is creating three new sculpture/installation pieces. Each uniquely combines found objects and time-based multimedia elements. For example, Boom (I knew I loved you when...) serves as a social laboratory where two people sit together in an environment with a reconstructed settee, suitcases, and umbrellas. The figures activate an electro-mechanical system to evoke a quasi-romantic undercurrent.

Cover: Josephine Durkin, Boom (I knew I loved you when...) 2007, altered loveseat, resin, paint, fabric, yarn, each at opposing ends of the weaving. (Photo by the artist.)

Michelle Grabner: Remain in Light is organized by the University Galleries, Illinois State University, Normal.