

# Museum Studies program wins honors from Illinois Association of Museums

October 12, 2009

NIU's Interdisciplinary Certificate of Graduate Study in Museum Studies continues to receive external honors.

The good news came at the annual conference of the Illinois Association of Museums (IAM) held Friday, Oct. 2, in Bloomington-Normal, when the organization announced the winners of its 2009 awards for the state's cultural institution.

An IAM Award of Excellence in the Exhibits Category went to the NIU Art Museum for "Moonlight Cocktails are the Thing." The exhibition was the third in an ongoing annual collaborative effort between the NIU Art Museum, the NIU Museum Studies Program and Peter Van Ael's ART 656 Museum Exhibitions and Interpretation class.



Winners of the Award of Excellence present work of excellent quality that uses available resources well, is creative and meets professional standards. The awards committee indicated it was duly impressed with the beauty of the exhibit design, and noted the display of the 12 copper plates as an attention-grabber. Committee members also were pleased with the attention given to exhibition evaluation.

NIU's Art Museum also received an IAM Award of Merit in the Exhibits Category for "Belief Made Tangible." IAM defines the Award of Merit as recognizing a project that makes a significant contribution in its category and meets professional standards.

This exhibition is a collaborative effort between the NIU Art Museum and the NIU Center for Burma Studies. The exhibition was curated by Catherine Raymond, director of the NIU Center for Burma Studies and member of the NIU Museum Studies committee and faculty. The exhibition design and installation afforded several museum studies students valuable hands-on experience.

Meanwhile, the Biermann-Schuetz Farmhouse Museum in Elk Grove Village received an IAM Superior Achievement Award in the Exhibits Category for "Parties, Pleasure, and Postcards: The Bachelorhood of Henry Schuetz Jr."

Sandy Denninger, who is the museum's director and the exhibition's curator, is a current student in the NIU Interdisciplinary Certificate of Graduate Study in Museum Studies.

Denninger also was a member of the ART 656 class that worked on "Examining Audubon," which won the 2008 IAM Superior Achievement Award in the Exhibits Category – recognition of achievement that is a model for the profession and reaches a greater audience than is normally reached by the institution.

"Clearly," Van Ael said, "these awards are the fruit of hard labor and a history of support for the NIU Museum Studies Program by many individuals who have worked tirelessly for years to make our program strong and recognized by the museum profession in the state of Illinois."

IAM is the independent, non-profit, statewide organization of museums and historical societies. Through its awards, the association celebrates and draws attention to the highest accomplishments within the museum profession in the state of Illinois.

