OSU MUSEUM OF ART UNVEILS DIGITAL ARTWORK IN STUDENT UNION

(STILLWATER, Okla., Sept. 12, 2014) — A collaboration between the Oklahoma State University Museum of Art, the Student Union, and OSU alumni Carl and Marilynn Thoma has resulted in the installation of two dynamic digital art pieces on campus.

Both works, displayed on large Student Union monitors, use a real time internet connection and current events to create engaging, ever-changing, contemporary art that is seen by thousands of students each day. The pieces are on loan from the Collection of Carl and Marilynn Thoma (Chicago, Ill.), both 1971 graduates of OSU, who said they believe that students can empathize with this context, and likely share the experience of growing up alongside high technology. Therefore, they state that the students are primed to experience and understand digital art.

One of the works, Rainbow Aggregator, by Jason Salavon, is a continuous, real-time representation of “trending topics” sourced from popular internet sites such as Twitter and Google. Based on current online keyword searches, tags, and posts, Salavon created a software process that translates this stream of data into a pixelated rainbow of constantly shifting words and images. About 30 trends are shown on the screen at a given time, all of which are updated every few minutes as the piece undergoes transitions.

“These are not static artworks that were simply created in the studio and then hung on a wall,” said Jason Foumberg, curator of the Thoma Foundation. “The artworks rely entirely on the invisible labor of the internet, from browsers to bloggers.”

The short and repetitive visual cycle that progresses from a quiet color field to dense data provides commentary on the way information and trends move in and out of our daily consciousness. It depicts a collective state of mind - the instant nature of Internet culture that has become familiar to so many. Rainbow Aggregator can currently be viewed on a 55-inch monitor near the Student Union food court. The Thomas’ said they like the idea of the Student Union being a high-traffic area, because in the same way, these are ‘high-traffic artworks’ that depend on continuous internet traffic to be functional.

The second art piece, Daily Times, by Siebren Versteeg, is a real-time digital program which downloads the front page of The New York Times each morning and throughout the day produces strokes of color.
across the page that respond to the particularities of that specific day’s layout. Simplified, it is a live, digital painting performed by a computer. The result is an abstract image that eventually covers the entire front page of the newspaper. That image is then discarded, and a new painting begins the next morning, representing the artist’s response to the 24-hour news cycle. The artist’s algorithmic program begins to take action each morning and digital paint builds up and drips down the page as the day passes by. At some point in the day, this effect interferes with the viewers’ ability to read the newspaper – transforming the experience from an average glance in the morning to an aesthetic experience in the evening.

“Although digital culture is pervasive, digital art is not,” Foumberg said about the importance of so many OSU students having the opportunity to view this artwork.

While the Thomas’ – themselves collectors of traditional and contemporary painting – do not seek to ignore or discredit other forms of art, they do seek to expose more viewers to the important art of our time, stating that they aren’t many opportunities to see digital art outside of New York City or Europe.

“We feel everyone could benefit from experiencing this type of artwork, no matter where they live, work, and study,” Foumberg said.

*Daily Times* is currently on view on a 70” monitor on the Student Union’s second floor near the Campus Life desk.

**About the OSU Museum of Art**
For more information about the OSU Museum of Art, visit [http://www.museum.okstate.edu](http://www.museum.okstate.edu) or call 405-744-2780. The Postal Plaza Gallery is located at 720 S. Husband Street in downtown Stillwater. All exhibitions and programs are free. Hours are Monday – Saturday, 11 am to 5 pm; open until 8 on Thursdays; closed Sundays and OSU holidays.

*Oklahoma State University is a modern land-grant university that prepares students for success. OSU is America’s Brightest Orange. Through leadership and service, OSU is preparing students for a bright future and building a brighter world for all. As Oklahoma’s only university with a statewide presence, OSU improves the lives of people in Oklahoma, the nation, and the world through integrated, high-quality teaching, research, and outreach. As America’s Healthiest Campus, OSU is committed to the health and well-being of its students, employees and the community. OSU has more than 36,000 students across its five-campus system and more than 25,000 on its combined Stillwater and Tulsa campuses, with students from all 50 states and around 120 nations. Established in 1890, OSU has graduated around 255,000 students to serve the state of Oklahoma, the nation and the world.*