

museumbeat

... what's happening at the MAC



Since November, DCI Engineers Inc. has rented art through the museum's Art@Work program for its downtown Spokane offices. The Henry Stinson painting shown here hangs outside Mark Aden's office as he meets with a colleague inside.

Art on the move

Ask an interior designer what the most important element in a well-designed room is, and the answer often is original art. Yet, choosing art for your home or business can be an intimidating—not to mention expensive—task.

The Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture has a solution for the commitment phobes and starving art lovers among us: Rent a painting or sculpture instead of buying.

Through its Art@Work program, the MAC rents original artwork to homeowners and businesspeople for three-month periods. If a renter falls in love with a

piece and can't bear to relinquish it, he can purchase it at a reduced rate.

"It's a nice way for somebody to test the waters and see if this is really a piece they want to have forever," says Art@Work manager Ryan Hardesty.

Often, though, renters are happy to return artwork because it means the start of another rental period and the arrival of something new for their home or office.

"They enjoy the idea of having an art collection that's always in flux," he says.

Hardesty has noticed that people who might have conservative taste if they were to buy a piece outright select riskier art from the rental program. The lower commitment level "lets people be freer with their art choices," he says.

Depending on the full price of a piece, the museum rents art for \$45 to \$180 for a three-month period. If renters wish to buy

the piece at the end of that time, they are given credit for 60 percent of the rental fee. Pieces in the Art@Work program's collection range from \$100 to \$5,000.

Since the program began 15 years ago, it has developed some faithful clients, with some business clients rent up to 40 pieces of art at a time.

Because selecting art can be an overwhelming task, Hardesty often visits homes and businesses to understand renters' tastes and needs better. He then shows renters an edited selection of pieces so they don't leave the museum dizzy by the array of choices.

Hardesty says the program helps the museum connect with and support regional artists.

"Not only are you getting this great art, but you're supporting the local art community," he says. □

For more information, visit www.northwestmuseum.org, call (509) 363-5318, or see the art available at the MAC at 2316 W. First.