The Emily Davis Gallery is a part of a history of success that spans back more than a century. From the basement of Old Buchtel Hall to the present location in Folk Hall at the Mary Schiller Myers School of Art, the gallery’s significant vision has brought major milestones to the students, staff and exhibiting artists who have been a part of the gallery’s 40 years of excellence. The gallery is a proud public face to the rest of the University as well as to the public. As former School Director Del Rey Loven puts it, “The Davis Gallery is vital to the school. It is the ultimate teaching tool, and it serves as fresh nutrients to the aesthetic diet.”

The gallery has brought in the work of remarkable contemporary artists and lecturers, but more importantly, the gallery brings the work of the students and staff of the Myers School of Art into a format that inspires the many visitors who enjoy it.
In 1870, the newly founded University of Akron offered art courses through Buchtel College. The 1872 catalog lists courses in “ornamental branches”, painting, and drawing. The first classes were taken in the basement of Old Buchtel Hall. In his 1872 augural address, President of the University Sullivan H. McCollester declared, “We should strive not simply for the outward, or that which will afford us material rewards, but for the truly beautiful and useful. The ear, mower, and the sewing machine must embody skill and forte.” In 1890, class offerings increased to include painting on satin, velvet or plush, plus evening courses were offered for the first time.

In 1919, the first Department of Art, offering education and liberal arts degrees, was founded. In 1929, the University of Akron Art Club poses in the Women's League Rooms in the basement of Old Kolbe Hall.

Pictured are (front row): Eleanor Heintz, Celia Schwartz, unidentified, Lucetta Randall (Mrs. Zenas Hartman), Doris Strooxman, Leona Knabe; Anne Cardarelli, Alma Reiter, Elizabeth Russell, Doris Baughman, and Cleo Funk; (second row): Mildred Hoffman (Bordner), Evelyn Hortung, Jeanne Pickton (Hickle), Helen Young, Dorothy Rians, Mrs. Jane Barnhardt, Elizabeth Mahoney, Virginia Stedman, Virginia Conner, Rosalind Schultz (Mrs. Adrian French), Elizabeth Hoffman, and Peg Snyder (Mrs. Preston Bergin): Ronald Sweitzer, John B. Lewis, and Fred Brock.
This photo of Jane S Barnhardt, Professor of Art at the university, was in the March 1932 issue of Medina County School News. Professor Barnhardt received multiple degrees in art and became Head of the Department. She gave 25 years of service to the school before stepping down. Professors such as Ms. Barnhardt taught in many areas of art including ceramics, photography, painting, and art history.

In 1945, Emily Davis became chair of the art department. Davis was the only full-time faculty, however Rena Nancy Cable and former Head of Department Jane Barnhart also taught part time.

At this point, the art department was housed in Phillips Hall, an Italianate home, built in 1881. The building became Phillips Hall in 1930. Before that time, it was the president’s house, first occupied by Dr. S. H. McCollester. It was named in honor of Miss Harriet Phillips who after Jane Barnhardt went to New York and won complete confidence of Miss Phillips, presented the University with an art collection and art library plus $18,000 for care and maintenance. In 1927, the art department moved in.
When Phillips Hall was torn down to make room for a new engineering building, the department moved to a temporary home off campus. This temporary home was a Quonset hut left over from the war. In the spring of 1950, Emily Davis moved the art department to a new home located on the top floor of the Old Bierce Library annex. This move was seen as “an end of 35 years of wandering” for the department. There was a new ceramic studio with a kiln, a spray booth, damp boxes and an air-brush complete with a ventilating fan. For the first time the department had adequate space for displaying finished art works.

“In the best artistic tradition the walls of the department are done in pastel colors, aqua in the offices, yellow for the halls and closets and green or gray for the classrooms. The woodwork is blond and so are the modern style tables and chairs.”

—*The Plain Dealer* (Cleveland, Ohio) 25 February 1950

Artwork was not limited to the classrooms in Bierce. In 1958, the graduate class commissioned Doctor Davis and Malcolm Daschiell, the school’s sculpture professor, to create a glass mosaic that was installed in the stairway of the Gardner Student Center, and still stands today in what is now the Student Union.
The late sixties saw great growth for the school. On July 1, 1967, The University of Akron officially became one of Ohio’s 13 state universities, and the Department of Art expanded rapidly as part of a new College of Fine and Applied Arts. Many faculty members that were hired by Emily Davis would become the core of the department for 30 years. At that time, the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree program was established offering an emphasis in painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, metalsmithing, printmaking, graphic design and photography.

This “rapid expansion” led to the need for a larger space. Schrank Hall South became the first home of the expanded school of art with studios dedicated to specific media areas, along with overflow into South (Van Devere) Hall and Service Building No. 1. The maze of rectangles that wraps around the north side of Shrank originated in the mid-60s in the imagination of architect Rudy Tichy, who was looking to give interest to the otherwise stark façade. Tichy’s design, composed of concrete panels, is now known as the “Mayan Wall.”
1970, Emily Davis hired seven new faculty members. Tom Webb, a recent graduate from the University of Michigan, was hired to teach sculpture when Malcolm Dashiell died. Dr. Davis continued to teach ceramics and weaving until fall of 1970 when Larry Calhoun (MA University of Iowa, 1961) was hired to teach ceramics.

This photo came with an invitation to “Two Years Later: An Exhibition of Work by Craftsmen at the University of Akron”, which celebrated the first graduates of the B.F.A. programs in Crafts and Ceramics. It reads in part, “In offering the opportunity to try various techniques, and to explore an infinite number of possible conceptual attitudes, the University environment is designed to prepare students according to their needs. It is built on a demand for both competence and imagination; mastery and initiative; thought and action. The work should be judged by these standards.”

It was around this time that current Head of the Ceramics Department, then a student, got the chance to experience a class taught by the head of the Department. This is how she remembers her time as Emily Davis’s student:

“In 1970, I took an independent study class from Dr. Davis. I wrote a paper on Marcel Duchamp. Doctor Davis criticized the paper for not being creative enough. It was so interesting for a young hippie graduate student to receive that kind of encouragement from a tough, chain-smoking, administrator who was completely at ease being the boss of her growing and mostly male faculty. At the end of the day, Dr. Davis would often be seen checking the classrooms and studios, especially ceramics to make sure they were all secure. If you wanted to compare Dr. Davis to some kind of animal, it would have to be a bulldog; she was pugnacious and determined. She was also appealing and loyal.”
This is a reproduction of the invitation was to the last senior exhibition of the University’s art students before the opening of the Emily Davis Gallery. “Synergy” instead took place at the Packard Gallery on West Exchange Street.

In 1973, Emily Davis stepped down, and Steve Bayliss became head of the Art Department. Newly hired Don Harvey was appointed faculty advisor of the Art Student League. The students were upset about the lack of gallery, because works were displayed in hallways and the students feared potential damage or theft. The demands were for a safe place for student work and for students to see work by other artists. One idea the Art Student League had was to sit in the president’s office until the University established a gallery. Though Don Harvey thought that was a good idea, he as the authority had to direct them to try other things first. Instead, he directed students to meet with the provost and president.

On Exchange Street, just west of Schrank Hall South, an entire row of businesses had been torn down for a parking lot except for a single storefront, a former 1830s saddle shop turned barbershop. The University agreed to put funds into making it a gallery space. Students nominated that the gallery be named after Emily Davis, as she had a pivotal role in the founding of the department. Don Harvey was appointed to be the Gallery Director because of his experience with the Akron Art Museum.

As the program developed, the gallery started a program in which they would put on a faculty show and a student show annually, as well as other shows that were exhibitions brought in for elsewhere. Many of these exhibitions were made possible by the Ohio Art Council. As Don Harvey puts it, “During the 70s, there were not a lot of venues outside of Chicago and New York that showed contemporary art and photos.” The New Gallery, which later become MOCA, was one of the few places in Ohio besides
Cincinnati Art Center, the Akron Art Museum and Ohio State. Don had connections with the New Gallery and Akron Art Museum and so could make the necessary introductions, borrow work, etc.

For the first exhibition, Don Harvey and Larry Calhoun, who ran the ceramics department, put on an invitational ceramics show, entitled “Ceramics Invitational: Ceramic Sculpture, Functional Ceramics and Production Pottery” by seven Ceramicists from the Northeastern United States: Jack Earl, Ed Eberle, Val Cushing, Jacqueline Rice, John Roloff, Robert Turner and Paula Winokur. With its small budget, the gallery even published a tiny catalogue entitled “Ceramics Invitational”. The artists had to have been within driving range because the gallery staff had to drive to pick up the work. Later, Larry Calhoun wrote about this time: “Energy, Optimism, Great Work Ethic, Ambition, High Expectations: That is what I remember about the students we had at Akron U in the 70’s.”

In 1975, the Davis Gallery exhibited and catalogued the work of Karen Shaw’s show “Market Research”. The artist designated a numeral equivalent to each letter of the alphabet according to its position, i.e. A = 1, B=2, C=3, and so on. She called this process “summantics”, and through this view, every number would become an encoded message.
1977 brought with it two exhibitions: “Abstract Painting From Southern California” and “Prints, Books, and Photographs”. The Davis Gallery created catalogues for both.

“Abstract Painting From Southern California” brought in the work of many contemporary artists, including this painting to the left “Contrary” by Lee Johnson, whose “work centers around the idea of opposites and contradictions and their eventual reconciliation and integration”.

The show “Prints, Books, and Photographs” included works from sixteen prominent artists such as Pat Steir, Jacki Apple, Ray De Palma, and Bart Thrall. Here is an etching entitled “INTRODUCTION: THE BURIAL MOUND SERIES” by Pat Stier. Also included was this photo by Mac Adams entitled “TOOTS”.
At this point, the Art School was overflowing in five different buildings. Painting classes took place under Schrank Hall in the display room of an old dealership. Ceramics was taught on the first floor of Schrank Hall South. Clay was prepared down a floor and across into South Hall. There were often little trails of clay and footprints in the hallway between the ceramic studio and the elevator. Graphic Design classes were also held in South Hall. Other classes were held in what is now the Polymer building. It would not be until 1985 that the school of art came together in one place.

In 1978, Gallery Director Don Harvey and museum executive and former Artforum editor John Coplans founded the art magazine Dialogue, which was published in Akron, and later in Columbus, Ohio. It covered the arts of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, western Pennsylvania, Kentucky and northern Illinois.

In one of the first issues of the magazine, Don Harvey reviewed an exhibition in the Emily Davis Gallery of ceramicists Ken Little and Jack Earl, which ran from October 9 to the 27th. “Jack Earl and Ken Little share a whimsical, good-humored, sometimes absurd approach to their art that carries each into the realm of fantasy. While each works primarily in clay (Ken Little also paints), their art is best understood not within the context of a medium but within the general tendency of much contemporary art to strive for the personal, the anecdotal, the ironic, and the fantastic”.

In September 1978, the University Gallery held an exhibition for the artist William King. From Dialogue: “He has become well-known as the creator of a family of
sculptural figures that provide a comic, sometimes caustic, often touching reflection of the social attitudes and gestures of the humans whose space they share."

In the beginning of 1979, William T. Wiley had a show at the Davis Gallery. As Don Harvey wrote in an issue of Dialogue, “When many younger artists were seeking a way around the systems of Minimalism and the big, blatant, public images of Pop Art, California artist William Wiley became something of a folk hero. He was making art loaded with dumb humor, verbal games, and images often drawn by free association from the clutter of his backyard or his studio floor. … He helped provide a release from the super-seriousness of ‘high art’ by renewing the viability of working at an angle to the ‘mainstream’.” Wiley explained of his work, “I saw a lot of important work being done and thought, That’s good; I don’t have to do important things. It’s like all that has been taken care of.”
Around this time, Don Harvey began to plan student trips to New York City, which is a tradition that is still continued to this day. Don would organize, and Professor Mark Soppelaned would drive.

For another exhibition from 1978, the Emily Davis Gallery put on a retrospective of figurative painter Joan Brown’s work from 1973 to 1976. As Dorothy Goldeen wrote in the University-funded brochure, “The period of this exhibition manifests Brown’s growth through the development of the figure which evolves from a structural, compositional tool to an instrument conveying intense psychological impact. It illustrates her conscious and intuitive struggle with paint and with herself as a person.”

Penny Rakoff’s Photography II and Advanced Photography students were given as assignment “to shoot with the understanding that two adjacent frames on the film would be printed together. No particular way of solving this visual problem was emphasized, although a number of questions were asked: Is one frame an extension of another, an echo or mirror of the other, or a separate entity that relates in some other way?” Many of these photographs were turned into an exhibition entitled “Double Vision: Photographic Juxtapositions” and were displayed in the lower level of the Davis Gallery in the spring of that year, such as this example by Mark McMahan.

In 1979, The Department of Art received accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Art and Design.
In 1980, Pat Kelly followed Don Harvey in the role of Gallery director. In 1981, Earl Ertman became Head of the Art Department. Mark Soppeland, a University professor since 1976, recalls one show that took place at the Emily Davis Gallery during its time on Exchange Street. Michael Horvath, a student in the late 70s, took to one of the walls and created one million marks with a pencil. It took the student four days to complete, and the end result was what Professor Soppeland called, “an amazing visual representation”.

The Davis Gallery also exhibited the lead workings of Israeli-born Micha Laury.

That year, the Davis Gallery also showed the Scholarship Student Exhibition.

In 1984, the school brought on new Gallery Director Janet Miller. At the same time of her hiring, Ms. Miller was diagnosed with cancer. She passed away from the illness the same year.

In 1985, the Department of Art moved to the current 67,000 square-foot building that was formally a Cadillac dealership. For years the building was simply known as “The New Art Building” or NAB until it was named for patrons Harold and Catherine Folk, whose charitable donations made the school’s transition to the building possible. The ceramic studio was formerly the car wash and oil change for the Cadillac dealership.
The gallery director at this time was Perry Nesbit, who was hired during the transition, and worked with architects of the new gallery. Perry was an eccentric woman who is remembered by current Director Robert Huff as driving a 20 year-old hearse.

Michael Jones accepted the position of Director of University Galleries affective July 1, 1985. It was also at this time that friend of the School of Art, Mitchell Kahan, became the director of the Akron Art Museum.

In 1986, under the leadership of Department Head Earl Ertman, the Department of Art became the School of Art and the chief administrator’s title became School Director. The same year, Professor Scott Wallace curated an exhibition entitled “Akron Area Artists: Art for Interior Spaces”. Sixteen artists including faculty and students from the University of Akron participated.

In the summer, Donna Webb was given a faculty summer research grant to create a new series of vessels. The result of the grant was an exhibition at the Emily Davis gallery the following November, “Integration of Form, Surface and Meaning in
Ceremonial Vessels”. In September Kirk Mangus had an exhibition at the Emily Davis Gallery.

In July of 1987, Dr. Wallace Williams began as Dean of the College of Fine and Applied Arts. Also in October The symposium, “Craft as Content”, along with an accompanying exhibition was held at the Myers School of Art. Organized and curated by metalsmith Christina De Paul, the event was the first of its kind to address the issue of craft and its meaning. Symposium speaker Bruce Metcalf spoke for the possibility that careful craftsmanship can be part of the meaning of the work. Hiroko Piganowski spoke about the meaning of craft in Japanese art as a discipline akin to meditation. Karl Bungerz described his work as a model maker for industry and how those standards and processes inform his work. Carol Kumata told us that her work allows the act of building the piece and the revelation of the ideas to be coincident. Michael Dunas described the possibility of working solely to express craft with no contamination from individual expression.

Later that year, Creative Schizophrenia, made possible by funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, was a lecture series in the Art Department at the University of Akron. Each speaker discussed the benefits, influences, conflicts and compromises involved in juggling two parallel activities to survive as an artist. Artists included: Mitchell Arisman, Len Jenshel, Jenny Holzer, Buster Simpson, Benny Adrews, Patti Warshina, and Albert Paley.

In 1988, Catherine Campbell was a student in Introduction to Ceramics. Catherine later funded a lecture series for Art History that became the Catherine Campbell Lecture Series.

That same year, Harold Kitener presented his figurative paintings, including *Figure with Dog*.

In 1989, “In Clay: Life and Times”, a national ceramics invitational of more than 20
contemporary narrative works by 10 leading artists, was exhibited in the Emily Davis Gallery. Don Ehrlichman, associate professor of art at Bowling Green State University, organized “In Clay”. The artists were Robert Arneson, Jack Earl, Bill Farrell, Christine Federighi, Michael Lucero, Kirk Mangus, Berry Matthews, Judy Moonelis, John H. Stephenson, Susanne G. Stephenson and Patti Warashina. In her review of the exhibition Dorothy Shinn said, “What links them is the notion that clay can do anything any other art medium can do and then some—become a vehicle for telling a story, comment on the current scene, take a stand on issues… Painting, sculpture, move aside. Clay is on your doorstep.”

On April 10, 1990 this memo came from Dean Wallace Williams:

“It is with sincere regret that I have accepted the resignation of Professor Earl Ertman who has given dedication and vision in building a very strong school of art. Mr. Ertman has given over twenty years of professional service to the university and through his efforts and that of the faculty; we have one of the best art facilities in the state.”

August 27, 1990 Associate Professor Andrew Borowiec was appointed Acting Director of the School of Art by recommendation of Dean Wallace Williams to Interim Provost Ruebel. In September, the Speakers Committee combined $4000 from the Myers Fund with grants from the Ohio Arts Council and the National Endowment to fund The Main Street Project. This was a project in which artists made an initial visit to Akron to look at our Main Street. Each returned to give a lecture and a proposal for use or transformation of that downtown space. The included artists were Dennis Adams, Kate Ericson, Mel Ziegler, Houston Conwell and Alfredo Jar. On October 15, the work was
installed in the gallery we now call the Projects Gallery for a critique with visiting artists in conjunction with Shaanzi-Ohio Exhibition in the Emily Davis Gallery, Dang Ronghua, vice Director of the Shaanxi Cultural Bureau, Tchai Tsinghu Deputy Head of the Baoji Municipal Cultural Center, Peng Li, faculty of the Xian Art School and Wang Jin interpreter.


Newsweek’s January 1994 issue read, “The art scene can’t support all the MFAs the system produces.” The art departments of the MAC-10 schools: Bowling Green University, Ball State, Western Michigan, Eastern Michigan University, Central Michigan University, University of Toledo and the University of Akron held a conference to discuss the role of the 3-D programs. We held a joint exhibition and discussed the issues common to those doing work in three dimensions. There was agreement that we had much in common. In the school of art at the University of Akron Bob Huff, Christina DePaul and Donna Webb presented a joint project on the idea of containment for the advanced classes.

The School of Art underwent its bid for reaccreditation by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design. A school wide exhibition of student work was the focus of a Panel on Excellence put together by the Speakers Committee chaired by Donna Webb. The Keynote speaker was Mitchell Kahan, Director of the Akron Art Museum and four School of Art faculty, Pat Bishop, Dennis Kleidon, Christina DePaul and Don Harvey, known for their high standards for student work. Each presented a way of approaching quality. The Speakers Committee also put together an Alumni Lecture Series with the goals of seeing how our most successful alums were doing and to give current students a chance to interact with them. Finally the Speakers Committee sponsored a History of Craft lecture series.

In the fall, the Speakers Committee discussed beginning the distinguished alumni series by inviting Mary Myers to be their first speaker. Christina DePaul described her as an ”art advocate, collector, past president of the Akron Art Museum, on the board of the Whitney and a panelist for the NEA”.

In addition, the committee discussed inviting alumni who had recently competed graduate school to talk about their work. Suggested alumni included Jim Klein, Dave
Reid, Ptah, Fred Nelson and Kira Louscher. The committee agreed to provide $250 for Ron Desmitt to speak to students as part of his exhibition at the Davis Gallery in October. Finally a lecture series on the History of Crafts for spring semester was discussed. One possibility was for a craft historian to visit for a week, give evening lecturers and critique student work in the afternoon. Suggested speakers were Bruce Metcalf, Michael and Sarah Bodine and Bill Hunt. Christopher Hoot suggested that the history of type had parallels with the crafts and might be included in the lecture series.

The same year guest curator Christina DePaul put together “Metals Invitational”. The exhibition benefited from her technical knowledge of the field and her insight concerning contemporary critical issues in metalsmithing. The organization was attributed to two graduate Arts Administration students, Thea Tjepkema and Christine Laba.

In 1995, Donna Webb received a Faculty Summer Fellowship to complete a tile mural for the front of the ceramics building. The Fellowship was for $5500.00. Joe worked with Donna to design and make the tiles. Student, Mikiko Tanaka was hired to help make glazes, fire and install tiles. The wall depicts the story of the history of ceramics. A professor-lead discussion of the wall provides students with an introduction to the history, techniques and forms of ceramics.

In 1996, Speakers Committee members Rod Bengston, Chris Hoot and Tyrone Geter as well as Chair Donna Webb planned the lecture series, “Speaking of Black Art”. In April, six black artists and arts professionals shared their expertise with our students. The Mary Myers’ Lecture Series funded three of the artists, Barry Gaither, Robert Collescott and Fred Wilson. Barry Gaither, Curator/Director of the Museum for the Historical overview for the lecture series as well as a discussion of Black Art: Historical and contemporary at the Emily Davis Gallery. Robert Colscott lectured on his long painting career and met with students. Charlyne Haynes, director of Public Relations
at the Museum of Modern Art New York, lectured about African American Artists in the Mainstream. Willies “Bing” Davis Department Head/Artist at Central State University, Wilberforce, Ohio, lectured on African American Crafts. He curated an exhibition, “On the Shoulders of Our Ancestors” at the University of Akron, Black Culture Center. Fred Wilson, an artist stationed in New York City lectured on “How the Museum Culture Sees Black Art”. One of the artists Carrie Mae Weems came in conjunction with the Akron Art Museum. Bing Davis installed exhibitions, “Treasures of Black Art” at the Emily Davis Gallery. Bill Lewis, director of the Black Cultural Center was instrumental in organized the event.

In 1997, The School of Art was named for Mary Schiller Myers, an alumna who was well known and highly regarded throughout the art world as an advocate and patron of the arts. Dr. Myers earned her BA degree at The University of Akron and a master's degree in art history from Kent State University. She was awarded an honorary doctorate for her lifetime of improving the culture of our region. Mrs. Myers, who died in 2008, served on the boards and committees of many arts organizations, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Whitney Art Museum in New York City, and the Cleveland Museum of Art. Both Mr. and Mrs. Myers were longtime and generous supporters of students and programs at the School of Art. More than 125 faculty, students, alumni and friends gathered Nov 14 at Folk Hall to dedicate the Mary Schiller Myers School of Art.

The School of Art received funds for the first time for the Mary Schiller Myers Lecture Series. The purpose of the lecture series was to create special educational opportunities for students of the college of Fine and Applied Arts at the
University of Akron. The funds for the lectures, which were at the level of $5000, were distributed on a rotating basis each semester. The rotation began in fall of 1996 with the School of Music, spring 1997, Theatre Arts, fall 1997 Dance, spring 1998 Communication and fall 1998 was the first semester the School of Art received the funds.

In 1998, the Malcolm Dashiell Memorial Travel Scholarship Fund was established in the Myers School of Art in memory of the former sculpture faculty. The funding came from the estate of his widow, Janet Dashiell Gardner.

That same year, Donna Webb and Janice Troutman were awarded a Myers Grant for $5,000 and a Faculty Summer Research Grant for $8000.00 to attend the 8th International Ceramic Symposium in Amsterdam. Donna traveled to Amsterdam and Lisbon to look at ceramic tiles. The research on tiles led Donna and Janice to research and make the tile bench, “More Beyond” located in the Myers School of Art and another bench built by Jim Williams and tiled by Donna and Janice located in the ticket office lobby of E.J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall.

Nicholas Wood did an exhibition of his ceramic paintings at the Emily Davis Gallery, opened on November 17.

In April, the Emily Davis Gallery showed “Private Figures: The Logic and Passion of Collecting Figurative Art”. Curated by Mark Soppeland, this is the show he is most proud of. While trying to think of how to create a massive event, Soppeland was faced with how he could “make a destination place and create excitement” while on a very tight budget. He took an entire year to talk to major private collectors from all over the country. At the end of this year, Soppeland had received 460 loans of works from artists that ranged from the likes of Picasso, Cezanne, Andy Warhol, Alex Katz, David Hockney, and more. “The show explored the use of the human image in art. It was organized into various themes including religion, portraits, propaganda, graphic design and romance.” Rod Bengston spent all of spring break installing the show. The opening was a massive event. Mark Soppeland overheard a major collector from Cleveland say,
Wow, I didn’t know this existed!” He had successfully given the gallery and the school recognition.

In spring, School Director, Christina DePaul left the Myers School of Art. Richman Haire became the Director of the Myers School of Art that fall.

In September, Jim Klein and Dave Reid were the featured alumni artists in the Emily Davis Gallery exhibition “Ten Year Retrospective.” This exhibition opened the school year. Jim and Dave lectured on their work that week. Several students had critiques with them.

In 2005, Professor Mark Soppeland curated the exhibition “Man and Beast”, which included over four hundred works on display that were on loan from more than forty regional collections. “Some of the issues that were explored included the varied and changing cultural attitudes toward animals in the contexts of religion, mythology, and sport: pets, commercial symbols, animals as food and clothing, animal rights, genetic engineering, and extinction. The exhibition presented a historically and culturally diverse range of attitudes in the depictions of animals in fine art, crafts, and a wide range of the applied arts, including advertising, photojournalism, fashion, and furniture design.”

In 2006 Del Rey Loven became Director of School. Akron celebrated Mitchell Kahan's twentieth year as director of AAM in 2006 while watching the beautiful new Akron Art Museum being built. The museum was the first public building in the United States designed by the internationally celebrated architecture firm, COOP HIMMELB(L)AU.

In the fall of 2007, Art History Professor Kevin Concannon brought in the Yoko Ono Show “Imagine Peace”. Designed by Graphic Design professor Brittyn DeWerth, the gallery published a catalogue as well as distributed small boxes that included different objects that
As Dr. Concannon wrote in the catalogue, “A simple message, delivered on billboards, posters, postcards, badges, Tshirts and rubber stamps, Imagine Peace exists as a seed, activated individually and collectively in the minds and actions of those who encounter it. Like much of Yoko Ono’s artwork over the past forty years, Imagine Peace is a work that is dependent upon a collective realization on the part of her audience. As she declared in her 1972 single, Now Or Never, ‘A dream you dream alone is only a dream, but a dream we dream together is reality.’ As is often the case with her work, this germinating idea is manifested in multiple variations.”
Over 100 students and Alumni participated in the exhibition “All the Difference: Works in Clay”. A semester long series of lectures and events culminated in a luncheon and symposia in December.

In 2008, two senior graphic design students, Nate and Kirk Mueller, invited Norwegian-born generative artist Marius Watz to come to Akron as the visiting artist. Watz even projected an abstract art show onto the wall of E.J. Thomas Hall. This sparked an introduction of interest in the area of New Media. This lead to the Collider shows at the Davis gallery, which exhibits New Media artists such as Jer Thorp.

The first of these exhibitions was in 2009 and was curated by Professor Tony Samangy and Rod Bengston. “The Collider Exhibition Series examines the impact, implications and inspiration of the phenomenon generally categorized under the umbrella term New Media within the design practice and fine arts.

Collider: Interactivity and New Media is an initial exploration into this realm. The exhibition seeks to provoke an awareness of the pervasive nature of New Media as it is
applied in every function of our society and immerses as a forum for the highest expressions of our contemporary culture. It explores the results of collisions between humans and machines, biology and computations, art and technology, thought and process. What is New Media? And what are the implications to artists and designers when worlds, cultures and even identities collapse, build and collide.” There have been six of these exhibitions that have explored such topics as data, transformations, and participation of the audience.

In 2009, Mark Soppeland curated his third show at the Davis Gallery along with Professor Penny Rakoff and Gallery Director Rod Bengston and Akron Art Museum’s Director of Public Programs Dr. Barbara Tannenbaum, which was titled “Seen in China: An Exhibition of Photographs”. The exhibition presented historical images and work by some of the most interesting photographers working in China at the time who addressed the profound social, political and environmental charges that had accelerated for the twenty years prior. “Works by Chinese artists in this exhibition are organized in cooperation with FotoFest and FotoFest2008 China and its curators, Wendy Watriss and Frederick Baldwin. FotoFest is providing a special display of Chinese photographers Zhuang Xueben, Sha Fei, Wang Shilong, Weng Naiqiang, and Xiao Zhuang whose work from the 1930’s through 1970’s formed the historical section of Photography from China, 1934 – 2008, curated for Fotofest2008 China in Houston, Texas”.

In 2011, the Myers School of Art, along with UA’s School of Music and School of Dance, Theatre and Arts Administration, joins the Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences as the Division of Fine Arts. Bob Huff become School Director.

In 2012, the Gallery exhibited the 77th annual Student Show, which was curated by the Emily Davis Gallery’s first Gallery Director Don Hardy.

In 2013, the Gallery hosted the exhibition “Papercuts” which wowed students and staff as well as visitors alike. As curator Reni Gower summarizes, “Using all manner of tools and paper, an international roster of artists (Jaq Belcher, Béatrice Coron, Michelle Forsyth, Reni Gower, Lenka Konopasek, Lauren Scanlon, and Daniella Woolf) create works that range from narrative commentaries to complex structural abstractions. Their works are bold contemporary statements that celebrate the subtle nuance of the artist's hand through a process that traces its origins to 6th century China. Light, shadow, and
color play key roles, transforming this ancient technique into dynamic installations filled with delicate illusions. “

Today, The Myers School of Art's galleries provide an environment of encouragement and inspiration for students, faculty and the community. The gallery facilities are extensive. They include the internationally known Emily Davis Gallery and the Projects and Atrium galleries in Folk Hall. Students also regularly display work in spaces throughout campus and the 'Northeast Ohio community.

The University Galleries director manages the Emily Davis Gallery with assistance from graduate students in the MA program in Arts Administration. The gallery mounts approximately eight exhibitions per year, all of which are free and open to the community. Receptions with artists and lectures series are also open at no cost to the public. Tours of the gallery space are encouraged and have, in the past, included multi-lingual educational outreach programs for all ages.

The gallery staff offers internships and independent studies to students interested in the fields of museology, art history, gallery maintenance, and art preservation. Federal work-study positions are also available.

The Emily Davis Gallery is a part of a history of success that spans back more than a century. From the basement of Old Buchtel Hall to the present location in Folk Hall at the Myers School of Art, the gallery’s significant vision has brought major
milestones to the students, staff and exhibiting artists who have been a part of the gallery’s 40 years of excellence. The gallery has brought in the work of remarkable contemporary artists and lecturers, but more importantly, the gallery brings the work of the students and staff of the Myers School of Art into a format that inspires the many visitors who enjoy it.