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Late Bowling Green artist's works live on at gallery

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The artwork of local artist Ivan Schieferdecker, who passed away on Mar hangs on display at Ellis Walker Gallery on Scottsville Road in Bowling G art. The exhibit will run from now until June 11. (Grace Ramey/photo@bg Grace Ramey

Bowling Green artist and retired Western Kentucky University art professor Ivan Schieferdecker had been planning to show some of his works at an exhibit in a local gallery this month.

He passed away March 26 at age 86, but before his death he was able to complete his pieces for the exhibit at Ellis Walker Gallery in Thoroughbred Square.

“Ivan Schieferdecker is one of the most recognized artists from a regional standpoint. He has had so many exhibits in so many places,” said Harvey Johnston, owner of the gallery, which houses art from local artists and artists who have a connection to WKU.



Johnston said Schieferdecker’s wife, Laurin Notheisen, wanted to continue with the show, so the exhibit’s opening night May 6 also served as a celebration of the artist’s life.

Notheisen, who is also an artist and professor at WKU, said she and her husband chose the works for the exhibit, which contains 35 pieces. Some of his older pieces, many

from a 2019 Downing Museum Show, were being shown in a second space next to the gallery.

She said several of his pieces sold during the opening night and the pieces in the extra space were given a one-night only special discount the night of the celebration.

“We probably had about 100 people come through the gallery for the exhibition,” Johnston said. “People from ages 10 to 93 came to pay their respects, and there were also several family members from out of town. It was nostalgic for a lot of the art community.”

Schieferdecker taught printmaking, design, drawing, art appreciation and art survey at WKU for 35 years until his retirement in 2000.

Johnston said many local and regional artists were once his students.



His art has been accepted in several national and regional exhibitions, including shows sponsored by the Speed Art Museum, Owensboro Museum of Art, the Kentucky Arts Commission, the ADI Gallery in San Francisco, the Fay Gold Gallery in Atlanta and the Van Straaten Gallery in Chicago.

Schieferdecker's work can also be found in collections at Austin Peay University, Churchill Downs, Ohio University, the Brown Forman Co., the Louisville Courier-Journal and the Springfield (Mo.) Art Museum.

Notheisen said she and her husband had been working on four collaborative pieces together that she still needed to finish.

She added that his work would often shift between geometric and organic, and that he worked at a faster pace than her.

"He would do hundreds of pieces to my one or two," she said.

Scheiferdecker was still painting shortly before his death, "which is incredible," Johnston said.

Notheisen said that even though he didn't have any other shows scheduled, he probably would have done more.

"It was something he always looked forward to and he loved to set them up. He would work every day of his life, even when he didn't feel like it," she said. "He lived the

work and loved it.”

Schieferdecker’s art will be on display at the Ellis Walker Gallery until June 11.

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