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Title: Saint Anselm College highlights art collection, makes plans for expansion  
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GOFFSTOWN -- Saint Anselm College, which recently announced it has been named in a \$1 million anonymous bequest, is putting a selection of its permanent art collection on display for the first time in 10 years at the Alva deMars Megan Chapel Art Center on campus.

An opening reception, free and open to the public, will be held at the gallery Thursday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The exhibition will run Friday through March 5.

The director of the Chapel Art Center, the Rev. Iain McLellan, said he recently added pieces to the college's collection through purchases made from endowment funds and private donations. The college now is considering how it will expand the collection once it receives the \$1 million bequest, pledged as part of a fundraising campaign that ended Dec. 31 after raising \$55 million.

"We're actively strategizing how acquisitions will come in a steadier and more accessible way," McLellan said. "The college can really think about how to build its own collection."

The exhibit includes several new pieces that have never been shown as part of St. Anselm College's permanent collection. They include two prints of etchings and engravings of saints by French artist Jacques Callot, dating back to 1631.

"We certainly had nothing in terms of prints that was that old, that was French, that was religious in nature, that was from that kind of etching," McLellan said.

The new acquisitions also include 20th-century work such as an oil portrait by local painter Anna C. Tomlinson of her daughter and an oil painting by Elizabeth Grandin, considered part of the Ash Can School.

The permanent collection already had comprised oil paintings, drawings, prints and sculpture dating from the Renaissance to contemporary times.

McLellan, who came to St. Anselm College as assistant director of the Chapel Art Center in 1997 and became director in 2001, said he first began looking into buying art while still in graduate school in New York City a decade ago.

"That has been a very conscious goal of mine from the start, to bring very well known, world-class art to the region, because that speaks to everyone," he said. "We become not only a source of education and learning to the community, but ... stewards in a way that has global meaning."

McLellan said expanding the art collection coincides nicely with other changes taking place at St. Anselm, namely efforts to make the private school a more active participant in its community and a source of learning not only to students but also its neighbors.

"It's my job to establish a vision and to articulate that vision with the general image of the college," he said.

McLellan said he has made inquiries, browsing among high-end dealers with an eye on the future.

"I've been looking at things that are way out of our reach," McLellan said. "The advantage of that is art dealers are some of the most wonderful people you will meet."

Those connections and familiarity put him in a position to act when a piece of art arises that is within the college's price range, McLellan said.

The college has so far been conservative in making any purchases. In expanding the permanent collection, he said the college is seeking artwork that could fall under the description of "Catholic, Benedictine, liberal, broad, inviting but distinguished as well.

"I think we want that figurative element to be central, because we (as a college) are focusing on the humanities, human greatness," McLellan said. "Art has a teaching role. If someone simply enjoys the beauty of looking at art, that is teaching."

The Chapel Art Center is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Thursday night until 9 p.m.

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