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# In Brief: A View from Art & Design

by *Dellas Henke*



**A**s a graduate student I once asked my master the question, “why live in Iowa City when you could live anywhere you wanted in the world?” He said, “When you are alone in your studio it matters little where the studio is.”

Of course there are and have always been artists who collaborate with others. In those cases it may be very much like the scientist interacting with others in the field or, for that matter, like jazz musicians improvising together. But most artists work alone. They may fill their cup with others, family, friends, in the deep woods or in their gardens but ultimately the best work usually comes only with uninterrupted, sustained concentration. The best efforts are only fulfilled, however, if the work moves out of the studio and back into “the world.” In this way the gift exchange moves full circle. . . . I do not mean this in the way that the artist is “gifted,” but that it may be that the artist moves the gift from garden, woods, etc. back to others.

**Dellas Henke is a painter and print-maker in the Department of Art & Design. He has been at GVSU since 1985.**

One reason that working in isolation may work so well for visual artists is that a brush stroke, pencil line etc. has an immediate result. . . . We respond to that, and then that response asks for another response. The Inuit say, “The kayak uses me.” Young art students still think that **THEY** make a charcoal line, that **THEY** choose a certain color. They learn, finally, after many thousands of hours laying down lines, after fighting the materials and tools and losing, that it is, after all, the charcoal using them. We simply interact or fail. In this way it seems we are not so alone in our studios. ❖