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## Bruner's Massive Bas-Relief

At first glimpse, Dean knew design was utterly perfect for science hall

By SARA GIBONEY Hub Staff Writer | Posted: Friday, August 14, 2009 1:15 pm |

KEARNEY - The artist says it will become an icon on campus.

"On the Shoulders of Giants," a 31-foot by 14-foot brick mural, is being installed on the west side of the Bruner Hall of Science at the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

Jay Tschetter and Tom Meyers from Images in Brick in Denton designed and constructed the brick mural. They are installing the 2,650 bricks on the exterior of Bruner Hall.

Meyers of Lincoln said the art deco-style piece is made up of four quadrants with each of the sciences - physics, chemistry, biology and the health- represented.

A shell at the center anchors the sciences and initiates the clockwise flow of the images. Various ethnic groups are also represented, he said.

"It's the first really big one Jay has allowed me to design, and I really took it seriously and I took a lot of time with it," Meyers said.

"I'm really overjoyed to be working with an inspiring, developing artist like Tom," Tschetter said.

The art selection committee of UNK staff and representatives from the Nebraska Arts Council and the Museum of Nebraska Art selected the site and artist.

Robert Rycek, dean of the College of Natural and Social Sciences and chair of the selection committee, said the committee received 126 applications from artists across the country. After telephone interviews with eight semifinalists, three artists were invited to submit proposals.

"They came out, they talked to students, they talked to faculty, they talked to staff, they walked around the Bruner Hall of Science and other areas, the library, to get a good feeling about the campus to find out what would best fit this particular location in terms of representing the sciences," Rycek said.

The committee urged the artists to represent all the sciences in the artwork.

A month after visiting campus, the three finalists returned to campus to present their final proposals.

"It was really clear, almost at the moment we saw what they presented, that this was it," Rycek said of the proposal from Tschetter and Meyers. "Basically, I would have to say they hit a home run on this in terms of capturing the sciences."

Tschetter said once the design was chosen, the bricks were made by Yankee Hill Brick and Tile in Lincoln according to the artist's specifications. Clay shims were put in between each brick. Those were later taken out and replaced with mortar.

The bricks were then placed on an easel and kept moist while the artists carved the design. The bricks were then taken down row by row, labeled, put on drying racks and then put into 600 degree dryers and fired in a kiln.

After the bricks were dry, the artwork was reassembled, then taken down and shipped to Kearney.

Tschetter said the process took eight weeks, and installation of the 35,000 pound mural will take two weeks.

The bas-relief work is being financed by the 1 percent of construction costs that must be dedicated to artwork on state building projects.

Construction at Bruner Hall was part of a \$14.5 million project that included renovating about half of the 87,500 square-foot building to state-of-the-art classrooms, laboratories and research space and building a 26,000-square-foot addition with new laboratories, classrooms, a herbarium and a new planetarium.

"This represents actually the largest commission ever awarded to a Nebraska artist under the 1 percent program," Rycek said. "We are particularly proud of that."

One of Tschetter's most notable works in Nebraska is "Iron Horse Legacy" in the Haymarket in Lincoln. He also designed and constructed "20th Century Veterans War Memorial" in North Platte, "Tribute to the Dream" in St. Louis, Mo., "Memphis Firefighters Memorial" in Memphis, Tenn., and "Hispanic Heritage" in Kansas City, Mo.

Tschetter said he has created about 150 brick murals during his career, and about 12 are the size of the Bruner Hall piece.

"This will become an icon for the natural sciences and the building for many years to come," Rycek said.

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Watch a live Webcast of the artists and masons constructing the 31-foot by 14-foot brick mural at the Bruner Hall of Science:

[unk.edu](http://unk.edu)

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