



**Need a recipe?**  
Visit our new "Great Dining" Web site for chefs' recipes, most-requested recipes and a daily online-only recipe. Go to [www.courier-journal.com/dining](http://www.courier-journal.com/dining).

► Emily Schmidt, University of Louisville



▼ Zeng Xiao Li, Zhaoqing University



Lin Ling Ling, Zhaoqing University

## SELF/SOUL

**What:** An exhibit of 50 self-portraits by art students at the University of Louisville and Zhaoqing University in southern China.

**Where:** Rouge Noir University of Louisville Student Art League Gallery, 333 E. Market St., Louisville.

**When:** Through December. Gallery is open Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Information:** Call the

department of fine arts, U of L, (502) 852-6794.

## ON THE WEB

► For a link to see the 50 portraits in the exhibit, see this story at [www.courier-journal.com/features](http://www.courier-journal.com/features).

► For information about the department of fine arts at Zhaoqing University, [www.zqu.edu.cn/dept/msx](http://www.zqu.edu.cn/dept/msx)

► For information about the department of fine arts at the University of Louisville, [art.louisville.edu](http://art.louisville.edu)

# Digital self-portraits

U of L art students, peers at Chinese university use technology to look inside

By Larry Muhammad  
[lmuhammad@courier-journal.com](mailto:lmuhammad@courier-journal.com)  
The Courier-Journal

They are dreamy, naturalistic, abstract, kaleidoscopic new media images — 50 self-portraits of student artists from vastly different cultures, all using digital technology.

The results of this unusual collaboration between students at the University of Louisville and Zhaoqing University in southern China, called the Self/Soul Project, are on display at the Rouge Noir University of Louisville Student Art League Gallery through December.

A similar exhibit runs concurrently at the student gallery at Zhaoqing University.

Ying Kit Chan, a Chinese-American professor of art who has taught at U of L since 1984, said in an e-mail that he directed his students to create a high-resolution 11-by-14-inch digital image.

"This is a project that is much beyond self-portrait," he said. "It is important for young students who are living a busy modern life to reflect on and contemplate their life."

Tom Chambers, an American artist and visiting lecturer in digital/new media art at Zhaoqing who invited Chan to participate in the joint exercise, conceived of the self-portraiture project last year and partnered Zhaoqing with the Maine College of Art in Portland.

His students have also collaborated with the Beijing Film Academy and the Art Institute of Boston.

A Nocona, Texas, native in his second academic year at Zhaoqing University, Chambers said in an e-mail, "During my search of the Internet, I noticed that one of the professors at the University of Louisville was of Chinese origin, Professor Chan, and teaching the same



Tristan Clinger, University of Louisville



Chan



Chambers

disciplines that I'm teaching, so I thought this would be a good combination. It's an interesting turnabout — a Chinese professor teaching American students and an American professor teaching Chinese students."

After e-mail exchanges, the two professors titled the project Self/Soul, and for two weeks in the fall semester, 20 students at U of L and 30 at Zhaoqing University explored the inner human dynamic using digital imaging technology.

Chan had his students photograph themselves, then, using graphics software, incorporate scenes and objects scanned from their lives. They had to present the finished piece with an oral state-

See ART, E5, col. 3



## ART | Digital self-portraits

Continued from E1

ment by Nov. 27, and hang it in time to open the exhibit at the Rouge Noir gallery on Dec. 1.

But at the beginning of the exercise, Chan had encouraged them to consider the concept of free will and gender identity and read some Aristotle, Spinoza, Sartre, Ayn Rand and other philosophers.

The resulting portraits are a creative cornucopia, including Emily Schmidt's, shaped by jigsaw contours of pendant necklaces, and Madalyn Stubblefield in a halo of butterfly wings, both from U of L; and the black silhouette of Zhaoqing University student Qi Yuan Yi, casting a shadow at the threshold of a stone door.

"This is important for students and for us professors," Chambers said, "because in terms of art, the self-portrait gives the artist the greatest freedom from external constraints. It's an examination of one's inner drive."

Reporter Larry Muhammad can be reached at (502) 582-7091.