MEGHAN SKIRVING, '05

There is something compelling and curious about the new artworks currently on display at the Law School. Perhaps this is because they are colorful, even playful, pieces in the midst of the otherwise subdued haven of academia.

Students disagree about whether or not they like the individual works—"De gustibus non est disputandum," said Hunter Ferguson, '07—but most agree that they improve and somehow broaden the experience of studying and learning. Mark Mulhern’s *Suicide, Sexual, Preference* hangs in the south hallway, demanding our attention as we walk out of seminar. Three Frederick James Brown oil paintings bemuse us as we linger outside the lecture rooms before class—the unsettling, androgynous subjects deflect our attention, at least temporarily, from federal jurisdiction or torts.

Many students praise the imposing Carl Palazzolo piece, *Sicilian Lives, Texas Idols*, mounted above the reception desk in the clinic. Its pulsating colors and tactile quality welcome students, professors, and clients. "The paintings are a particularly nice addition to the clinic," said Professor Douglas Baird. "The art and the architecture together create an environment with a high level of professionalism, one that says the Law School takes its clinical programs very seriously."

The art is on loan to the Law School by Art Enterprises, Ltd., a corporation principally owned for the benefit of the Kanters family. The collection was inspired by Burton Kanters, '52, who passed away in 2001, and his wife, Naomi. They began collecting in the mid-1950s when Naomi and Burton, a newly-minted Chicago lawyer, scraped together money to purchase their first piece. From these humble beginnings, Art Enterprises was formed, the collection grew, and now contains over 800 works. Thomas McCormick, a gallery owner and the Kanters’ son-in-law, says that Art Enterprises didn’t approach collecting from an investor’s point of view. The Kanters directed the purchase of work they loved, rather...
than seeking out works from the “right” artists, and they had a genuine commitment to supporting local Chicago artists.

Art Enterprises’ eclectic collection is far too large—both in terms of the number of pieces and the actual size of many of the individual works—to display in private homes or corporate settings. The Kanters’ son, Josh Kanter, ‘87, happened to mention the collection to Dean Saul Levmore just as the Dean was musing about his ongoing efforts to make the Law School’s environment friendlier. The Law School offers an abundance of wall space that is very appropriate for large-scale works, and given that the collection was informed—even if indirectly—by a Chicago sensibility, the fit was a natural one.

McCormick, working with Art Enterprises’ curator, Jessica Moss, assembled a list of pieces that they thought would be appropriate for this environment. The final selections were made by a faculty committee, which included Dean Levmore and Professor William Landes.

It would surely bring Burton Kanter great joy to know the art he loved is enriching the Law School experience. As an alumnus, he would understand our tendency to pursue intellectual objectives at the expense of nearly everything else. Just as Burton recognized and sought beauty and mystery in the work he helped Art Enterprises collect, perhaps those same works will inspire the rest of us to view our intellectual pursuits here with a little more depth and a lot more color.
Robin Price Burke, ’07, Hunter Ferguson, ’07, and Brad Robertson, ’07, with Frederick James Brown’s Days at Sea

Adam Snyder, ’07, and Traci Schaefer, ’07, with Mark Mulhern’s Suicide, Sexual, Preference