

Dr. David Deane and Regina Coupar recently collaborated on a successful grant application to the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion (located at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana, and funded by Lilly Endowment Inc.). The grant, which provides funding to explore the value and relevance of visual art as a pedagogical tool for teaching and learning theology in an academic setting, runs throughout the winter term, culminating in a symposium that will include invited scholars from the budding discipline of Arts and Theology. The agreement allows for a temporary artist in residence (Regina Coupar), and a campus art studio. Documentation from the study will be prepared for publication.

The study will involve student volunteers from Dr. Deane's winter semester courses. A background in the arts is not presupposed; all that is required is significant interest and curiosity about art and creativity as it is related to theology. Participating students will be required to spend a set amount of time creating artworks, in addition to attending regular classroom sessions as set out in the course syllabus. They attend weekly hour-long lectures/demonstrations at the campus art studio, followed by two hours of hands-on creativity exercises and artmaking under the supervision of the resident artist. It should be noted that the arts component of Dr. Deane's course is not extra-curricular; it replaces a significant portion of the written requirements for successful completion of the academic course.

The weekly hour-long lectures/demonstrations are also open to all interested students, staff and faculty. Visiting artists will demonstrate basic art techniques and/or provide information about art theory, colour, symbolism, creativity,

etc. On alternating weeks, our resident artist will suggest integrative tools for connecting the arts component from the previous week with the theological content of specific coursework. The artworks created by the students and the resident artist in relation to this study will be exhibited in the AST Gallery at the end of the term. The artworks created during this study—and associated copyrights—will belong to those who produce them (just as with any written document submitted for evaluation in an academic program).

In addition to working specifically with students in relation to the Wabash research project, Regina will work at the campus studio during the week, available for general discussion during her scheduled "office hour." The study is expected to benefit AST (especially in relation to its arts and theology initiative), as well as the communities it serves, and the greater academic community.

New Ways of Doing Theology

Developing a Visual Arts Methodology for Teaching and Learning

A Wabash Center Grant



Students at work in the AST Art Studio: Chris Hughes, background; David Campbell, foreground