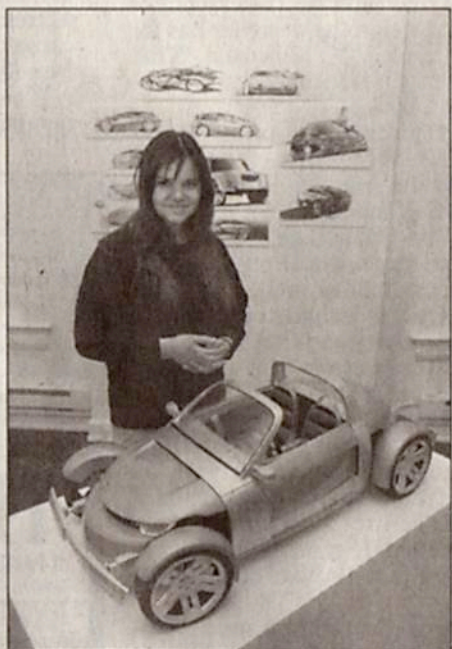


Brigid O'Kane, with examples of automotive design art in various stages. "Transportation Design" runs through Dec. 9 at Manifest Gallery.



TERRY DUENNES/The Post

Viewing the car as fine art

By Jerry Stein
Post staff reporter

It's sculpture on four wheels now at the Manifest Creative Research Gallery and Drawing Center.

"Transportation Design," curated by Brigid O'Kane, is a fascinating and informative process show up through Dec. 9.

It reminds us that those shiny obsessions in metal that encase us for so much of our lives start off as drawings, renderings and models. Dreams on paper.

"Part of Manifest's vision is to incorporate design. We have that on our mission statement," said O'Kane, who also is co-founder

Driven to design: The art of the auto

- **Exhibition:** "Transportation Design." Dec. 9.
- **Gallery:** Manifest Creative Research Gallery and Drawing Center, 2727 Woodburn Ave., East Walnut Hills.
- **Contents:** A show describing the process of designing the automobile through drawings, renderings, computer art and modeling.
- **Exhibition dates:** Now through
- **Additional show:** "Trans," 13 works from students and professional designers using transportation as a theme.
- **Hours:** 2-7 p.m. Tuesdays-Fridays, noon-5 p.m. Saturdays. Closed Sundays and Mondays and Nov. 24.
- **Admission:** Free.
- **Information:** (513) 861-3638.

and co-director of the East Walnut Hills gallery.

O'Kane, who designed cars for General Motors for 10 years, came to Cincinnati five years ago to teach transportation design at the University of Cincinnati's

School of Design.

"Transportation Design" is just a start for Manifest. The gallery intends to feature more design shows.

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Art: 4-wheel dreams start on paper

From 1C

"It's important to us because there are a lot of overlaps between art and design," O'Kane said.

She points to a gleaming lime-green model of a sports car.

"Vehicles are like sculpture. It's an incredibly involved process. Designers don't work alone. There is usually a team of sculptors and engineers in the studio. They work collaboratively to create a three-dimensional product."

For the show at Manifest, O'Kane has combined design work from contributors at DaimlerChrysler and General Motors in Detroit as well as students of transportation design at UC and elsewhere.

Designing a car is costly. "It's incredibly expensive — \$2 to \$4 million," O'Kane said.

Automobiles start out as minimalist sketches. There are several illustrations of the basic drawings that begin the show. O'Kane has divided the small but informative exhibition into stages to

illustrate the ongoing process of an automobile's design.

The show is an amalgam of different designs of concepts for cars, including the Corvette.

"I took samples from different projects and collected them on the wall," O'Kane said. "They're all conceptual. This is Acura. I think this is GMC. It's a mix."

"Right at the beginning there is a lot of brainstorming and research to solidify the vision and the direction," O'Kane said.

The initial sketches are what the industry calls "ideation."

"It's basically sketching. Very fast," O'Kane said.

One example shown is a highly economical drawing of just the basics of a sports car form. It suggests a flow that seems to sweep easily around the wheelbase.

"The reason why these are quick is so they can crank out as many ideas as possible," O'Kane said.

In the next group of renderings artists use colored markers and colored pencils to draw cars that are now taking on more de-

tail to define form and mass.

Another sports car rendering in this collection has a sensuously curved design.

"Our students are taught how to render shiny surfaces," O'Kane said. "There's a technique to make the work shiny. Eventually, these sketches will be handed off to a sculptor to sculpt the vehicle."

The designing then moves to the computer for a digital rendering. This includes what is called a package drawing. The package drawings present profile views of the auto design — top, side, rear and front-end views. The package design in this exhibition is for a Corvette.

These schematics look much like blueprints but only for cars instead of living rooms and kitchens.

"It tells you basically where things are in the vehicle," O'Kane said. "In industry, you will see these four sides and layers and layers of where the hinges go, where the engine is. It's going to be quite involved."

Along with the package de-

sign is a rendering of the entire exterior of the car.

"Usually, a rendering is chosen that captures the essence of what vision the designer has for the vehicle," O'Kane said. "That essence is translated into a package drawing."

"This is where you start to integrate the essence of the design into the practical, functioning parts of the car."

The final stage constructs a three-dimensional physical rendering of the car in the computer where the designer can turn the car this way and that to see various perspectives of it and make modifications.

The student-designed physical model in the gallery is a shiny lime-green sports car with its roof removed. It is constructed of high-density foam but the more traditional modeling process is to sculpt the auto in clay O'Kane said.

The size of the model approaches one of those toy cars a toddler might ride but not quite. Eventually, a full-size model is built.