Art animates professor

New faculty member at Northern State enjoys working with moving images

By Angela Mettler
American News Writer

When people think of art, paintings and sculptures often come to mind.

When Keum-Taek Jung thinks of art, computers come to mind.

Jung, or "Tek" for short, is an assistant professor of multimedia graphic design at Northern State University. He teaches classes such as animation, video and Web site design for freshmen through seniors.

Since 2002, Jung has participated in film festivals all over the world, entering his animated multimedia projects. He has received honorable mentions, finalist awards and placed at many festivals.

He uses a combination of computer software and film to create projects with squiggly, pulsating lines, transparent clouds of vibrant color and thousands of bubble-like circles that float and fly as if alive.

A 3- to 5-minute piece can take anywhere from two months to a year to finish, he said, depending on whether it's two- or three-dimensional.

Jung, 34, grew up in Seoul, South Korea, where he worked as a graphic designer before moving to the United States to further his education.

"I decided to study more about the basic foundation (of art)," he said. Eight years ago, he moved to Ames, Iowa, and attended Iowa State University.

Focus changed

He started out in the areas of drawing and illustration, but "one day I decided I liked the moving image, so my focus changed to film and animation," he said.

He worked as a free-lance graphic designer and graduated with a bachelor of fine arts degree in visual communication in 2001.

He then attended the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, N.Y. He worked as a teaching assistant while earning his master's of fine arts degree in computer animation in 2005.

"I love to teach," he said.

He began teaching at NSU in the fall. Depending on the class, he teaches 18 to 20 freshmen and 10 to 15 seniors.

Weather similar

This is his first job since graduating from RIT, and Aberdeen is the smallest city he has ever lived in. Despite that, he has found similarities to his home country.

"Here there is more snow and more cold, but the weather is similar to South Korea's," he said.

He's not sure if he will ever move back to South Korea, but he has definite plans to visit this summer - for the first time since he moved to the United States.

His parents have visited four times since he moved, but he hasn't seen his older sister since.

While Jung lived in Iowa, his younger brother lived in Phoenix.

"We saw each other one or two times a year," he said. His brother now lives in New Jersey, near New York City.

Hopes to expand

Jung has enjoyed traveling in the United States, naming the Grand Canyon and Las Vegas as some of his favorite places to see.

In the future, he plans to work on more multimedia projects and hopes to add classes to the multimedia graphic design curriculum at NSU.

"I want to build my program," he said, "and make a proposal for some special part of multimedia."