



Wayne Thiebaud, an internationally recognized artist who taught at UC Davis for 30 years (left), and his wife, Betty Jean. (Courtesy photo)

## New art lecture series named for Thiebauds

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The University of California, Davis, is honoring Betty Jean and Wayne Thiebaud by naming a new lecture series for them. The first lecture will be delivered by artist Rackstraw Downes, a MacArthur Foundation fellow, in May.

Thiebaud, an internationally recognized artist, taught at UC Davis for 30 years starting in 1960. Betty Jean, his wife and partner for over 50 years, has assisted him in his career, is a filmmaker and teacher, and served as the model for many of his paintings. They live in Sacramento.

The series, called the Betty Jean and Wayne Thiebaud Endowed Lecture, is funded by \$150,000 allocated by the Office of the Chancellor. Plans are underway to raise private funds to add to the endowment.

"Over the course of his career as an artist, Wayne Thiebaud has helped define art in California, and our arts program at UC Davis owes much of its prominence to his decades as a faculty member," said UC Davis Chancellor Linda P.B. Katehi. "Wayne and Betty Jean stand as eminent advocates of the arts at UC Davis, and this lecture honors their tremendous legacy and service to our university."

Art Professor Gina Werfel has been the driving force behind creating the series and working with the Thiebauds.

"Betty Jean and Wayne have been very supportive of the visiting art program here and this is a way to honor them," Werfel said. "It also gives us an opportunity to bring to campus remarkable artists who have had international success and continue a dialogue between the east and west coasts."

Downes, known for his meticulously detailed landscape and cityscape paintings, will give the first talk May 6 at 4:30 p.m. in the Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts. It is free and open to the public.

A native of Great Britain, Downes has lived in the United States since the early 1960s. His work is in the collections of The Art Institute of Chicago, The Museum of Modern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and other major museums. In 2009, he received a MacArthur "genius grant" fellowship.

"Having visiting artists and scholars is a crucial tool for graduate student teaching, recruitment and retention, and for building the reputation of the department," Werfel said.

Thiebaud is best known for his lush renderings of the everyday — cakes, pies, cosmetics — and San Francisco cityscapes and Sacramento Valley landscapes. His art is in the collections of most major museums around the country. He was awarded the National Medal of Arts in 1994. He was one of the artist/professors, along with Robert Arneson and William Wiley, who gave the UC Davis art department a reputation for experimentation and excellence.

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