

Design museum set to open doors

By CHLOE WITTRY

The Rocky Mountain Collegian

The Avenir Museum of Design and Merchandising is celebrating its grand opening in the University Center of the Arts tonight, showcasing about 12,000 global artifacts and artwork that have been shelved in the Gifford Building for the last 20 years.

The opening exhibit, "Window to the World," will paint the picture of Asian and African culture through the display of Chinese, Japanese, African, Indian and Central Asian textiles — shoes, bags and clothing are to remain permanently in the museum.

"Most things are irreplaceable," said Linda Carlson, a design and merchandising instructor and director of the museum production, adding that there will be contemporary shoes, hats and three dresses from the 1980s.

All of the artifacts on display are donated by faculty that have traveled internationally and from alumni living around the globe who have shipped their exotic travel treasures back to their alma mater. Graduate students and teachers collaborated with Carlson for a year to design an exhibition with collected pieces that are most representative of a myriad of countries.

"We are always looking to fill things in where we feel we don't have a good representation of a country or culture," Carlson said, noting that while the exhibit is permanent, pieces will be traded out as the university receives more pieces.

The Department of Design and Merchandising received a \$1.25 million donation from The Avenir Foundation, a private foundation in Lakewood that often gives funding to universities for the ad-



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Ashley Carpenter, left, a senior history major, and Jack Townes prepare the Design and Merchandising museum, which will have its grand opening today in the University Center of the Arts.

vancement of student learning, to fund educational programming for the exhibition. Moving the objects safely from the Gifford was funded by a \$96,000 grant the team received from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

While tonight's display contains the work of global artists and artisans, Carlson said the museum was developed as a resource for students of all majors.

"We have students from the art, history, theater and anthropology departments access our collections for different purposes," Carlson said of the academic value the museum represents.

"Anyone who looks at what has been done and created in the past will be interested in what we do."

She added that the museum

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venue will attract people to the 225,550-square-foot state-of-the-art facility, which celebrated its grand opening on Oct. 16.

"What's unique about the museum is that it's part of a complex that's community and student-oriented," Carlson said. "It will attract a broad spectrum of people."

The museum is located on 1400 Remington St. As of April 9 it will be free and open to the public Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Thursday from 11

a.m. to 8 p.m.

Staff writer Chloe Wittry can be reached at news@collégian.com.

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