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The Scene

Bemis sells art with heart

By **Julia Parker**
Scene Reporter

Whoever said money can't buy love may have to eat his words. This weekend, the artists at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts will sell their hearts to the highest bidder.

On Feb. 11, the Bemis Center, located at 724 S. 12th St., will host "Objects of Desire: Heart Auction and Fantasy Affair." The silent auction is part of an annual fundraiser for the center's community outreach program. This year it has a special Valentine's Day twist.

"We gave 130 20-by-20 aluminum hearts to community and national artists and asked them to transform them into works of art," said **Jeremy Stern**, assistant director of the Bemis Center.

And the hearts certainly were transformed. Each project became a unique and creative piece of art. Some hearts became tables while others were molded into sculptures. A few were dressed up with photos and others with paint. However different, all of them will be on sale at the upcoming auction for prices ranging from \$50 to \$500.

In addition to heart art, this Saturday's auction will include bidding on romantic dinners, jewelry and other Valentine-themed surprises, all of which were donated to the Bemis Center by local businesses. A special fantasy bar also will serve exotic cocktails and snacks in honor of the year's most romantic day.

"All of the sales will go to benefit our educational program, which is an outreach program for community children," Stern said.

The Bemis Center, which is celebrating its 25th



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anniversary this year, works with area children on a variety of artistic projects, including an enormous banner for Qwest Center Omaha. Currently, the center is teaming up with libraries in both Omaha and Council Bluffs to help children at local schools create artwork to decorate the libraries, Stern said.

In its third year, the annual art auction has become one of the Bemis Center's largest fundraising efforts to support its outreach program. Though it usually raises between \$15,000 and \$20,000, Stern hopes this year the auction will raise even more.

"It's a great opportunity for people to get familiar with artists in their community, get some unique art at low prices, and help support our education program," he said.

"Objects of Desire" will be held at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts on Saturday from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. There is a \$30 door fee for all non-member attendees, and it will go directly to the outreach program.

Although you still might not be able to put a price on love, you can at least buy hearts for a good cause this weekend.