

## **AU student heads for national competition in theatrical make up design**

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As a student in Alfred University's School of Art & Design, junior Betsy VanDeusen has been encouraged to "work with a lot of different media ceramics, printmaking, photography." But she's gained regional acclaim with a new medium: faces. Her make-up designs for the AU production of "The Inspector General" gained her the Mehron Award as the first-place winner in the Region II Kennedy Center/American College Theater Festival earlier this month. She competed against students from colleges and universities throughout New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and portions of West Virginia and Ohio, including such traditionally strong theater schools as New York University. VanDeusen is one of eight regional winners in the country who will be competing for the top national award at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, in April. She is the second AU student in the past two years to advance to national competition in make-up design. Josh First, who graduated from AU in May 2003 with a BA in performing arts, took not only the regional award, but also the national award, in April 2002. Steve Crosby, professor of theatre and chairman of the Performing Arts Division, thinks VanDeusen has a good chance of taking national honors, just as First did. "The judges were very impressed with Betsy's work," said Crosby. "One of them even told her that she could go to Los Angeles right now and get a job in make-up design within a week's time." Former AU faculty member Michael Dempsey, who is now national design chair for the Kennedy Center/American College Theater Festival, was also very complementary of VanDeusen's work, noted Crosby. "I've always loved make-up," said VanDeusen, and she always knew she wanted to major in art in college, but doing theatrical make-up design was not something she'd considered. "I talked to Josh (First), and he really encouraged me to try theatrical make-up design for one of the shows," said VanDeusen. She decided to try her hand at it with AU's production of "The Inspector General," directed by Dr. Becky Prophet, professor of theatre and staged in November 2003. "The Inspector General," written by Russian playwright Nicolai Gogol in 1936, was originally set in 19th century Russia. Prophet, however, adapted the play to represent three different time periods: the mid-19th century, the Great Depression and the early 21st century. Prophet's adaptation is a spoof, based on very stereotypical characters. "I wanted the characters to be very readable, so the audience would know what they were all about," said VanDeusen, so she used icons or stereotypical images to convey each character's attributes. For example, she said, the mayor's wife, portrayed by Hannah Patterson of Ware, NH, in the AU production, is unfaithful, so VanDeusen used bright red lipstick to represent her infidelity. The requirements for entering the regional competition were "very loose. They just say that you have to submit a book and a display" showing the designs, said VanDeusen. The three-inch-thick notebook she submitted included notes on all research, her sketches showing preliminary and final designs, and photos of the cast members before, during and after make-up was applied, as well as supporting materials explaining VanDeusen's choices. A graduate of Brockport High School, VanDeusen said she's "always been into art, and always knew I wanted to go to art school. My mom is an artist, and my father does art, too. I chose Alfred University because its School of Art & Design is good, and it was close to home. I didn't know what facet of art I wanted to pursue, but this whole LA thing is pretty interesting."