Oh, Caroline Durieux could be crotchety, all right, and she didn't mince words if she didn't like you. And she didn't like Camille Bercier's husband, Mark. Bercier had lost track of the time one night while visiting with the artist. Durieux lived in a small house on West Chimes Street, just off the LSU campus. There was a time when the house stood alone in its small lot. There also was a time when it stood in the middle of a drug hub. But LSU has managed to grow around it, and Bercier has since bought the house where her husband came looking for her that night. That was the same night Durieux told him to go away. "She said, 'You just need to go on and leave her alone,'" Bercier said, laughing. "She told him, 'All you're going to do is get her pregnant, and then she'll never be an artist.'"

Bercier has to stop talking now. Laughter has overcome her. Durieux was right. The Berciers did have a child, a girl that Camille Bercier named for Durieux. But Durieux also was wrong. Bercier did become an artist and eventually started her own bookbinding and restoration business. And she founded that business inside the house she used to visit.

Bercier was required to bring samples of her work on each visit to Durieux's home. Durieux expected her to continuously create.

Caroline Durieux: A Radioactive Wit

WHAT: A retrospective exhibit celebrating artist Caroline Durieux's prolific career.

WHEN: Through Nov. 7. Hours are 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday; 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Thursday; and 1-5 p.m. Sunday.

WHERE: LSU Museum of Art in the Shaw Center for the Arts, 100 Lafayette St.

ADMISSION: $8, adults; $6 seniors age 65 and older and LSU faculty, staff and students with an ID; and $4, children ages 5-17. Children younger than 5 are admitted free. Admission is $2 per child for school programs. Group discounts also are available.

INFORMATION: Call (225) 389-7200 or visit http://www.lsumoa.com.

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Caroline Durieux's print 'Bipeds Dancing' is among more than 90 of her works featured in the exhibit Caroline Durieux: A Radioactive Wit at the LSU Museum of Art in the Shaw Center for the Arts. Durieux was known for her satirical depictions of American and Mexican bourgeoisie.
Because Duieux expected no less of herself. She created well into the latter years of her life, work that finally culminated in a solo exhibit at the LSU Museum of Art: "Caroline Duieux: Radioactive Wit." The show served as a fitting look at Duieux’s career with work spanning from the 1920s to the 1980s.

"She was known for her paradoxes," said Mark Bercier, an art professor who is Duieux’s equipment in the LSU Museum of Art’s current exhibit. "She had small windows in her studio, yet she’d suffer five strokes in two weeks’ time, therefore losing control of her hands.

"She said, ‘I was going to lose my arm, and I was afraid to tell her,’" Bercier said. "She didn’t want to lose any part of her body, but she didn’t care if it was a whole arm. She even gave away her dish..."

Duieux was known for her lighthouses depicting New Orleans. A collection, known as the Maalik Group series, eventually appeared in a book. Side projects from that series included in the museum’s show.

"We exhibit only a few of those, because she showed the whole series a year and a half ago, when she died," said Bercier.

Back to Duieux’s timeline, her works were featured in one-woman-artist shows around the United States. She became involved in the Visual Arts Council, which directed the arts and Crafts Club in Missouri. She taught during the WPA’s Federal Art Project in New Orleans. She was also teaching at Newcomb College, where she had her first solo exhibition.

"She never talked about her husband, and I never asked her," Bercier said. "Her mother did."

"Bercier had a small office in the studio, and the studio was the biggest thing for me," said Bercier. "I thought her house should be surrounded by what’s in the room. She didn’t want me to touch the student art. That might have been more important for her, but I thought it was an essential step in her career.

Duieux gave her provenance.

"We’ve divided the show into five sections, and we’re changing the lights around to what she was doing with the radioactive prints at LSU. She was known as the ‘Crazy Art Professor in the Science Department.’"

Wrapping up the exhibition are Duieux’s colored cliche erreurs prints, which essentially are prints made from glass negatives.

The museum’s best sum up what she showed in the publication "Art Talk," when it encourages artists working in all areas of design.

Events set to coincide with exhibit

The LSU Museum of Art has scheduled an array of events in conjunction with its exhibit "Caroline Duieux: Radioactive Wit.

-Why?
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