

Council for the Arts in Jacksonville, NC

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Work by Mollie Pittman

three years we have been impressed by the creative and unique talents of the entries. Many of the students have their work se-

lected each year, so we are able to follow their development and, often, our young artists continue their studies through college and go on to successful careers in art. How do we know? They stop in to thank us for providing the early recognition that encouraged them to pursue their dream.

Last year's winner was Mollie Pittman from KCE Art School.

This show received support from the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Department of Cultural Resources.

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Council at 910/455-9840 or visit (<http://www.jaxarts.com/>).

Acme Art Studios in Wilmington, NC, Features Works by Elizabeth Darrow, Michelle Connolly and Fritzi Huber

Acme Art Studios in Wilmington, NC, will present the exhibit, *Les Trois Amis*, featuring works by Wilmington artists Michelle Connolly, Elizabeth Darrow, and Fritzi Huber, on view from Mar. 23 through Apr. 17, 2012. A reception will be held on Mar. 23, from 6-9pm.

All three artists have earned a degree of notoriety not only in Wilmington, but well beyond as well. All three artists work with re-purposed materials. Connolly enjoys assembling her "characters" with found objects - bits of metal, wood, cloth etc. in combination with paint. Darrow creates her collages with layered scraps of paper, many of them recycled from her previous collages. Huber conjures images inspired by dreams and personal history through the process of hand papermaking.



Work by Elizabeth Darrow

In spite of very different outcomes to their creative process, these three women share a common approach to making art in that they allow the process to carry them along, feeding off unexpected developments along the way. Their work moves toward a resolution that is not premeditated, but rather presents itself, almost magically, to the watchful eye. Humor exists side by side with mystery and angst, offering up a complex and ultimately satisfying visual experience.

This openness to "what dreams may come" may just be what these three have in common, and we might assume, why they are friends.

Becoming engaged in, and carried along by the process, is what making art is all about for Elizabeth Darrow. Her paintings and collages emerge from the process

itself, rather than from any preconceived plan. Her only 'plan' is to create an initial chaos, then to impose order on that. The process moves itself along, taking unexpected turns as various shapes and colors are added to the equation. Out of a succession of layers an image emerges.



Work by Michelle Connolly

Darrow works within the tradition of Abstract Expressionism where discovery comes through the process itself. She states, "I love playing with scraps of paper, experimenting with various combinations, layering colors, textures and shapes, looking for a balanced, cohesive outcome. When I'm satisfied visually, then I look to the piece to identify itself; thus the title".

Michelle Connolly responds to finding images in random marks on the paper, or within the picture's surface area. She often sees faces in the work as is reflected in her recent series "Characters". Here she pushes the mixed media elements of the work in a new direction that has a more sculptural, bas-relief, and sensibility. Faces are assembled from scraps of

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metal, wire, rivets, fasteners, reclaimed materials, as well as other more traditional means of expression, to draw us to the core of her personal expression: an affinity for outsider/visionary art, its bold straightforward approach.



Work by Fritzi Huber

"I go to work with a constant stream of ideas and creative energy. My process is playful and inventive; I enjoy the challenge of using reclaimed materials to create an image," says Connolly. "The subject is irrelevant. Whether an animal, a bird, a person or a landscape - I bring my interpretation to the work, the subject being simply a point of departure - a starting

point for the experiment to begin!"

Fritzi Huber's current work, "Home Sweet Home", addresses not only her personal history of a life growing up on the road as part of a circus family, but as an observer of what circus now has in common with much of the outside world: the trailer. What once was a romantic look at these homes on wheels has recently become a viable housing/living option for a segment of our population in a troubled economy. All of the works are on and of paper.

Huber has been a hand papermaker and mixed media artist for over 30 years. To communicate her ideas she uses this process while incorporating remnants of fabric, drawings, scraps of paper along with other mixed media to express a bittersweet nostalgia. "I have a basic dialogue in my head when beginning a work, then it starts to talk back, to communicate what should come next. It's really a collaboration," says Huber.

For further information check our NC Commercial Gallery listing, call the studio at 910/763-8010 or visit (<http://www.acme-art-studios.com>).

NC Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount, NC, Features Works by Destry Sparks

NC Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount, NC, will present the exhibit, *Material-Immaterial: the Assemblage Paintings*, featuring works by Greenville, NC, artist Destry Sparks, on view in the Dunn Center's Mims Art Gallery, from Mar. 30 through Apr. 29, 2012. A reception will be held on Mar. 30, starting at 7pm with live music by the Tar River Dulcimers.



Work by Destry Sparks

Sparks makes colorful assemblage paintings with "stuff". He attaches all kinds of rusty time-worn found objects to his burlap canvases. To complete his works, acrylic paint is applied carefully around the objects to create a particularly visceral effect atypical of traditional painting.

Sparks says, "I like to push painting a bit into different directions. I paint on burlap instead of canvas. Burlap fits with my choice of other meager, often well-worn materials. I use discarded items such as rusted bottle caps and small broken mechanical parts alongside 'worthless' natural items like sticks and smashed pine cones." Found objects both man-made and natural express humanity and our relationship with a divine plan. Using windows for frames is a way the artist can say, "look into this different spiritual dimen-

sion".

Educated at East Carolina University in Greenville, NC, with a BA in Anthropology with an Art Minor and at the Penland School of Crafts, Penland, NC, Sparks has synthesized his art by combining his anthropology and painting experience. His paintings have been exhibited around the country from Atlanta to Ann Arbor, MI. Recent exhibits include the Danville Museum of Fine Arts in VA; the American Art Gallery, 2011, New York, NY; the Sardinia Gallery at St. Thomas University, 2011, Miami, FL, and as far away as the Stefan Maguran Gallery, 2010, Plympton, South Australia. Sparks is also involved

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