

Local Artists

joy, sorrow, fear, fantasy randy simmons draws on life

Randy Simmons' *Elisabeth II* offers a second instance of this marriage of technique and expression. This large-scale charcoal adheres to the school of thought drifting throughout contemporary realism which claims drawing not as merely a preparation for future endeavors (i.e., painting), but as capable of standing on its own as a finished work. The other interesting thing about Simmons' drawing is the apparent influence of photography on his sense of light and scale. Like contemporary figurative icon Alfred Leslie, Simmons' preference for artificial light and employment of certain distortions created by the camera lend the understanding that, while presented in a traditional medium, this is a work that could not have been created, say, 200 years ago. But where Leslie's figures tend to exude a sense of frankness and kind of proud indifference to the viewer, Simmons' subject is obviously sharing an instance of intimacy and thus creates an atmosphere of welcomed vulnerability. Simmons does well to build up form through successive layers of hatching and by dragging the charcoal in a manner which highlights the tooth of the textured paper.

—ACEWeekly, January Issue, 2002, review of drawing, "Elisabeth II"
Lexington Art League's "Nude 2002" Juried Show

Looking at Randy Simmons' art, you might think you'd traveled over to the dark side. But the images are sometimes only seemingly less than joyful due to his black and white charcoal technique. And then again, some of the images are truly less than joyful. Randy Simmons literally *draws* from life.

"My large charcoal drawings, created realistically from photographs, are auto-biographical accounts dealing with my children, relationships with girlfriends/significant others and the fears and joys of parenting," Randy explains. "The most recent series is based on observations of my children (what they say and how they perceive the world) and taking direct quotes from my oldest son's kindergarten school journals and then creating works that play upon the fantasy/imagination of his quotes or sometimes giving his words a twist on the meaning with sarcasm or adult humor. Occasionally, I recreate his drawings within mine or write phrases the way he writes them giving objects or

To see more of Randy Simmons' work, you can visit his website at www.absolutearts.com/portfolios/s/simmons/.



"Elisabeth II"
46"x38"
2001



"If I Were A Butterfly" 35" x 53" 2001

words a child-like approach in an otherwise realistic drawing."

All Randy's works are done on a large format and make use of dramatic lighting (very Caravaggio-esque), rich tones and photo-like rendering. While the drawings look like photographs from a distance, they become very "drawerly" as one comes closer to the image with the lines composing the piece becoming more evident.

The drawings are done only in black and white, starting on toned paper and drawing/erasing the light first, then drawing with charcoal pencils the darkest parts and finally, the middle gray tones. Careful attention is placed on the line work and patterns of lines that are used to compose each part of the drawing.

"Jacob's Ladder" 46.5" x 55.5" 2001



"Repercussion"
36" x 42"
2000

Simmons recently moved back to his native Hickory with his two young sons, Jonathan and Andrew. The Lowes High School graduate earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Murray State University in painting in 1988 and a Master of Arts in drawing from MSU in 1991. He went on to complete a Master of Fine Arts degree at the University of Cincinnati in 1995. He also studied art in the British Isles for a couple of summers.

Simmons' work has been exhibited in numerous group and solo art shows, including a solo exhibit at the Artemisia Gallery in Chicago, Illinois, The Nude 2002 juried group show in Lexington and a solo exhibit at the Alliance for the Arts in Fort Myers, Florida. Simmons has also shown at the Clara Eagle Gallery at Murray State, at the Xavier Gallery in Leavenworth, Kansas and at the Carnegie Art Center in Covington, Kentucky.

Simmons describes some of his work as having "a sense of cinematography with the positioning of characters and cropping, the rich black and white tones, the photo-like rendering and even the use of the elongated letterbox format used in the movie industry."

"I look for imagery in science books, newspapers, advertisements in popular magazines, and dabble with my own photography," he said. "Consistent factors in all pieces include the strong sense of lighting in dark scenarios and the working of lines that compose each piece. Lines are drawn as if they are currents within the piece to push and pull the viewer throughout the drawing."

Simmons' work is also in various private and public collections, including The Drawing Center, New York; Carnegie Art Center, Cincinnati; and Murray State University.



\$250 BOB AND SARA DAVIES MERIT AWARD
 RICHARD PAINTER, Smithville, Tennessee
 CANIS FIDELIS, charred wood, 72 x 26.5 inches

36. ENID ROACH, Philpot, Kentucky
 MS. JUNE, oil on linen,
 36 x 48 inches, NFS
Jeanne Bowman Ellenstein
Purchase Award
Evansville Museum Contemporaries
Purchase Award
Tri Kappa, Epsilon Theta Chapter
Merit Award, Presented in memory of
Birgit Stewart



\$250 MARTHA RYAN MERIT AWARD
 Presented in memory of Sam Ryan
 JANE JORDAN, Evansville, Indiana
 THE WIDOWER, oil, 19 x 25 inches

37. RANDY SIMMONS,
 Hickory, Kentucky
 BUTCH KASSIDY, charcoal,
 41.5 x 55.5 inches, \$1,850
Florita Eichel Memorial Merit Award
Presented through a bequest
of Frances Weil

38. LOWELL TOLSTEDT,
 Columbus, Ohio
 COMPOSITION IN GRAY/TRUFFLES,
 prismacolor pencil,
 9.5 x 16.25 inches, NFS
Museum Guild Purchase Award

39. LOWELL TOLSTEDT,
 Columbus, Ohio
 CHERRY HOT PEPPER WITH FOIL, pris-
 macolor pencil, 9.25 x 15.5 inches, NFS
Museum Guild Purchase Award



\$100 FLORITA EICHEL MEMORIAL MERIT AWARD
 Presented through a bequest
 from Frances Weil
 RANDY SIMMONS, Hickory, Kentucky
 BUTCH KASSIDY, charcoal on paper,
 41.5 x 55.5 inches



REGIONAL '97

December 12, 1997 - January 18, 1998

INDIANAPOLIS ART CENTER

RANDY SIMMONS

Hickory, KY

"Tragedy is when I cut my little finger. Comedy is when you walk into a sewer hole and die." - Mel Brooks"

Education:

M.F.A., Drawing, University of Cincinnati (1995)

M.A., Drawing, Murray State University, Murray, Kentucky (1991)

B.F.A., Painting, Murray State University (1988)

Selected Exhibitions:

Paducah '97, Yeiser Art Center, Paducah, Kentucky (1997)

Solo exhibition, C.A.G.E. Gallery, Cincinnati, Ohio (1996)

Solo exhibition, Carnegie Art Center, Covington, Kentucky (1996)

Group exhibition, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio (1995)

Solo exhibition, 840 Gallery, Cincinnati, Ohio (1994)

Works in the exhibition:

Blister, 1995, charcoal, 80 x 50 inches, \$2430

Rocket Man, 1995, charcoal and conte, 50 x 78 inches, \$2430 (illustrated)





Pollywog: This drawing, titled 'pollywog,' is part of Randy Simmons' exhibit at the Artemisia Gallery in Chicago.

Simmons' drawings to show in Chicago

■ **The Hickory artist's work has been exhibited various times in Paducah and Murray, as well as in various states.**

An exhibit of charcoal drawings by Hickory artist Randy Simmons opens Thursday at Artemisia Gallery in Chicago.

Titled "five and seven" in honor of Simmons' works inspired by his 5- and 7-year-old sons, Jonathan and Andrew, the exhibit can be seen at the gallery, 700 N. Carpenter St., from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, through March.

Simmons, a graduate of Lowes High School, is a freelance graphic designer. He earned a bachelor of fine arts degree in painting in 1988 and a master of arts in drawing in 1991, both from Murray State University. He completed a master of fine arts in drawing in 1995 at the University of Cincinnati on a two-year, full scholarship and teaching assistantship, and also studied in the British Isles.

While the majority of his large (50 by 80 inches) black-and-white drawings, created

from photographs, are based on experiences and emotions involving his sons and the personal fears and joys of single parenting, others are more reflective of failed adult relationships.

Simmons' work has been included in group exhibits locally at Paducah Community College and Yeiser Art Center, and at galleries in Murray; Cincinnati; Covington; Lexington; Miami, Ohio; Indianapolis; Boston; Leavenworth, Kan.; Nashville, Tenn.; Baltimore; Salem, Ore.; and Jasper, Ind. He has had solo exhibits at Murray State and in Cincinnati; Covington; Minneapolis; Fort Myers, Fla.; and Cape Girardeau, Mo.

Simmons' work is also in various private and public collections, including The Drawing Center, New York; Carnegie Art Center, Cincinnati; and Murray State University.

He will exhibit at Yeiser Art Center's "Gallantly Streaming: Artists Respond to 9/11" group show opening in April, and in "The Nude 2002" juried group show hosted later this year by the Lexington Art League.

Simmons' work can be seen at www.absolutearts.com/portfolios/s/simmons/.

Hickory man speaking through his art

■ **Randy Simmons' drawings, featured in a national show in Boston this month, are photo realist art. 'I want to get my story across.'**

By Leigh Landini
Sun Features Editor

Randy Simmons speaks through the charcoal drawings he creates.

Simmons points to a drawing called "Respondent" that he created last year. It shows a man who had been suffocated. The words "Respondent shall not have contact with Jacob (3) at all" are etched into the bottom left corner.

"I had won custody of my son in 1993 but he wasn't biologically mine," said Simmons, 34, of Hickory. "It's a direct response to the judge."

Simmons at the time thought the boy was his biological son; custody ultimately was granted to Simmons' ex-wife. Although he did not see the child for four years, he said he had already become very attached to the boy. He has been allowed to see the boy once since.

"The one incident of having lost my son affected my work from then on," said Simmons, a graphic designer with Sun Publishing. "Everything I did was devoted to him."

"Respondent" has landed Simmons' work in "Explicit: Part One," a national show this month in Boston, art with mature themes and situations is featured.

Simmons said other pieces he submitted were "more on the edge" than "Respondent" and "Dross," an image of a baby born in a breech position, over which he placed stick people drawings made by one of his sons. "It gives it a really weird perspective," Simmons said. "A lot of my drawings deal with children and issues of such matters."

When he was denied contact with Jacob, the child he thought



■ **'Jonathan':** Randy Simmons says he has been drawing more of his sons lately, including this charcoal portrait of his son Jonathan.

was his, he changed his drawings from graphite to charcoal, "and that's what I'm still doing today."

Simmons calls his art photo realist.

For another work, "Nonchalant," which was shown in Cape Girardeau, Mo., he took pictures of his sons and used them as the basis for the work. It also deals with his feelings toward the court system after his second divorce and custody battle. He has custody of his two sons from that marriage, Jonathan, 3, and Andrew, 5.

His work took a dark turn in 1995 as Simmons tried to show meanness in people.

But now, he is beginning to show more of his sons. He is working on a series of charcoal drawings of Andrew, Jonathan and himself. "I don't like to draw myself at all, so this will be a challenge." Simmons smeared the charcoal in for the drawings of his boys and then erased, drew highlights and put in the gray tones.

"They look like photo realist (art)," he said.



■ **'Respondent':** Simmons said this charcoal piece was done in response to a judge's order that he not be allowed to see his son Jacob after a custody battle.

Simmons says he isn't in art for the money, he thinks it is a form of communication. "Really, I want to get my story across. ... I don't expect to sell a lot of my work."

His works have been exhibited in Louisville at the "1999 Water Tower Annual" and in Cincinnati in galleries. He also has displayed

work locally at Yeiser Art Center, Murray State University and Paducah Community College.

He has a show in 2000 at the Alliance for the Arts in Fort Myers, Fla., and in 2001 at Chemeketa Community College in Salem, Ore.



If I Were a Butterfly

Randy R. Simmons
Charcoal
2001, 35" x 53"

VOLUME 42 • 2004

ENTERTAINMENT

Sons inspire graphic designer dad

HICKORY, Ky.

Randy Simmons draws his inspiration from his sons' homework assignments.

Simmons, a freelance graphic designer, has charcoal drawings on display at the Joan Derryberry Art Gallery at Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville, Tenn., and at the Evansville (Ind.) Museum of Arts, History and Science this month. The Tennessee Tech exhibit, featuring 14 drawings, runs through Feb. 4; Evansville, featuring one piece, continues through Feb. 9.

Simmons will be honored with a reception at 11 a.m. Feb. 4 and give a slide lecture at

3:30 p.m. at Tennessee Tech.

"These are pretty big shows for me," Simmons said. He previously has had art shown in Fort Myers, Fla., Boston, Cincinnati as well as locally.

Simmons describes his art as large-scale black and white drawings focusing on parenting and relationships. A single parent rearing two sons ages 6 and 8, Simmons says his work is more realistic now than several years ago.

Journal entries by sons Jonathan, 6, and Andrew, 8, give him inspiration. In the drawing "Dirges," he depicts the boys burying a pet goldfish in the back yard. Another drawing, "Gibbous," shows the boys studying something in



Andrew's cupped hands. His next exhibit will be in the fall at Seminole Community College in Sanford, Fla.

Artist at Hickory proves perspective

By **PAUL SCHAUMBURG**

Messenger Staff Writer

Randy Simmons sees life from a unique perspective. And while a number of people might say that about themselves, he can prove it. The ruminations in his mind make their way through his hand and on to individualistic, large-scale drawings.

"My large charcoal drawings depict autobiographical scenes from mostly my adult life and deal with relationships gone awry, children, my fascination with science, or a combination of any of these," he said.

Simmons recently moved back to his native Hickory with his two young sons after going through a divorce. The Lowes High School graduate earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Murray State University in painting in 1988 and a Master of Arts in drawing from MSU three years later. He went on to complete a Master of Fine Arts degree at the University of Cincinnati in 1995. He even studied art in the British Isles for a couple of summers.

Simmons' work has been exhibited in numerous group and solo art shows, including some at Murray State University, Paducah Community College, Paducah's Yeiser Art Center, and in the Cincinnati area. Some of his drawings also are part of public and private collections in

Kentucky, Tennessee, Indiana, and Ohio.

Since his college years he relocated first to Louisville, making his living in the restaurant business. He continues that work at a Paducah restaurant now, but spends a great deal of time in the drawing studio of his home.

He describes some of his drawings as having "a sense of cinematography with the positioning of characters and cropping, the rich black-and-white tones, the photo-like rendering, and even the use of the elongated letterbox format used in the movie industry." He said, "The work is large-scale and done only in black and white."

Simmons' drawings often run 50 inches by 80 inches and lean toward an off-beat, frequently dark sense of humor.

"I look for imagery in science books, newspapers, advertisements in popular magazines, and dabble with my own photography," he said. "Consistent factors in all pieces include the strong sense of lighting in dark scenarios and the working of lines that compose each piece. Lines are drawn as if they are currents within the piece to push and pull the viewer throughout the drawing. The

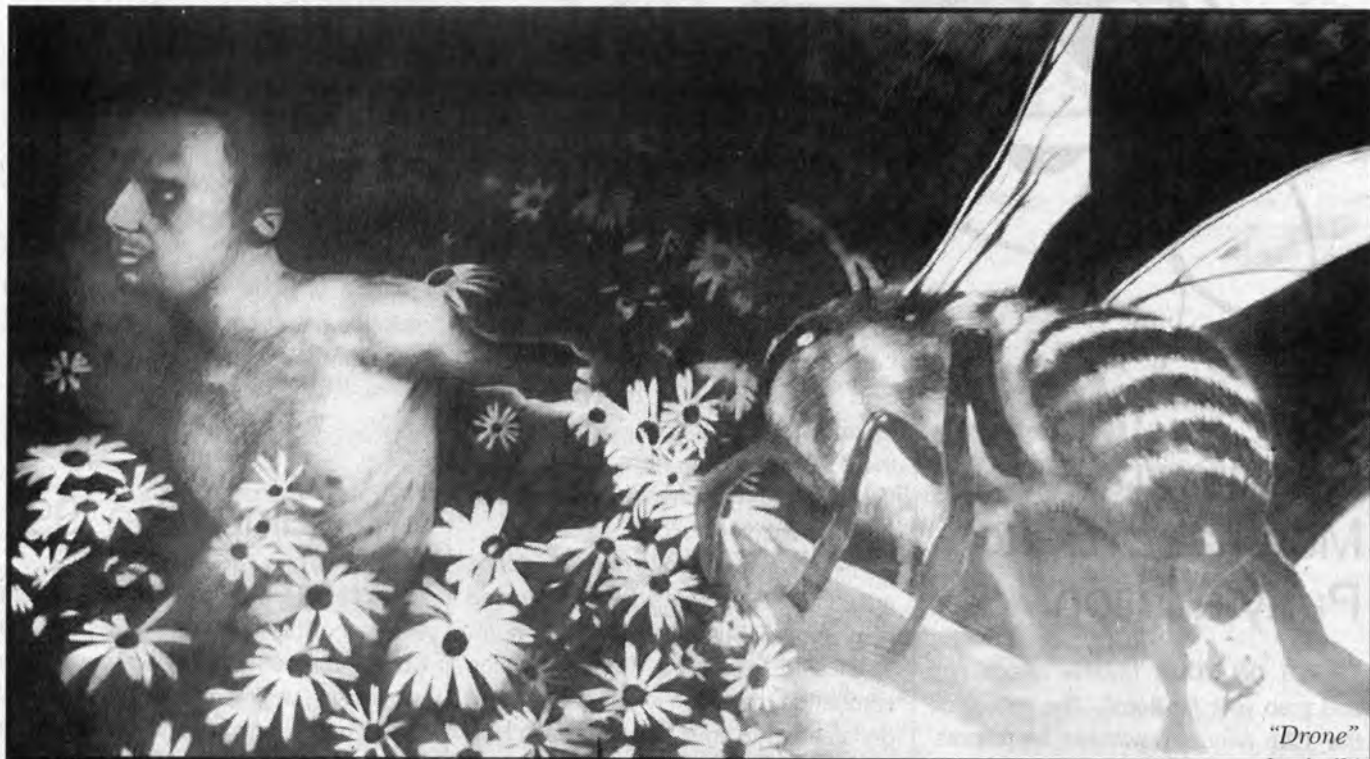
See ARTIST page 3



Artist's inspiration came from his son

"ROCKET MAN" — Hickory artist Randy Simmons has shown his large, charcoal drawings throughout the region as he's earned three college-level art degrees. In this 1995 work entitled "Rocket Man," Simmons "was inspired by my older son who likes to draw rocket ships. The image on the left here is actually one of his drawings," Simmons said. "I've got this child standing in a field of flowers looking upward, wishing to be an astronaut. Then the image underneath this rocket ship is a moon shot."





"Drone"

'Randy Simmons: Charcoal Drawings'

THE LORIMIER GALLERY and Gallery 100, The Arts Council of Southeast Missouri and the Missouri Arts Council will host "Randy Simmons: Charcoal Drawings" during the month of July at the Lorimier Gallery and Gallery 100, 119 Independence Street, Cape Girardeau. The exhibit will be open to the public Monday through Friday, July 2 to Aug. 1, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. A reception for the artist will be held on Friday, July 2, from 5 to 8 p.m. at the gallery. Both the exhibit and opening reception are free and open to the public.

Randy Simmons' charcoal drawings depict autobiographical scenes that deal with relationships, children, his fascination with science or a combination of these. All

of his pieces contain a strong sense of lighting in dark scenarios, as well as the use of lines which compose each piece and guide the viewer throughout the drawing.

Simmons received an MFA in drawing from the University of Cincinnati. A recipient of numerous awards and honors including first place in the Paducah '94 Regional Show, Simmons has studied art in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Also, his works have been featured in such places as the University of Minnesota, Lexington Art League, Indianapolis Art Center and Murray State University.

While traditionally reserving the Lorimier Gallery for regional or Missouri artists only, the focus for Gallery 100 is to bring in national artists. This allows the regional artists to see what's going on in the art world nationwide. The openings are an effective way to meet other artists in the community as well as other parts of the world.

The Arts Council of Southeast Missouri and Gallery 100 receive financial assistance from the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency. •



"Two Moons"

Border to Border

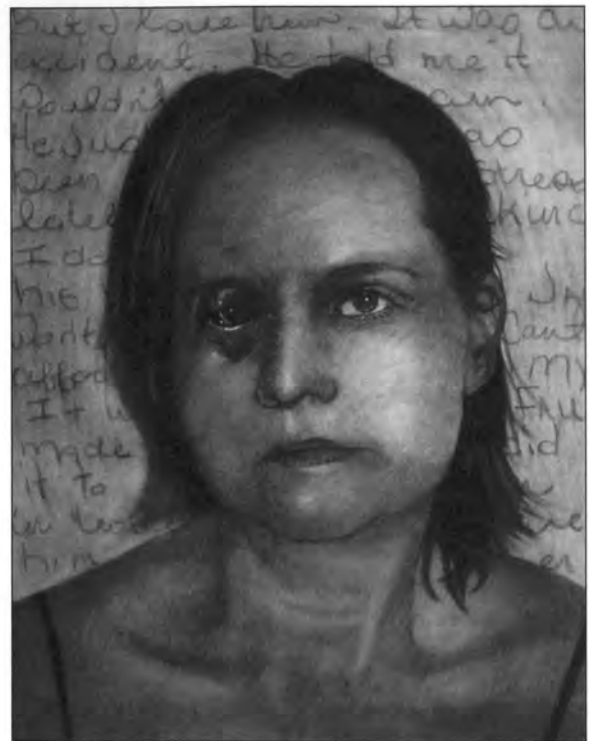
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Center of Excellence for the Creative Arts

Austin Peay State University, 2005

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State University



RANDY SIMMONS
But I Love Him
28" x 32"
charcoal/conté
Paducah, KY

40TH ANNUAL

CENTRAL SOUTH ART EXHIBITION



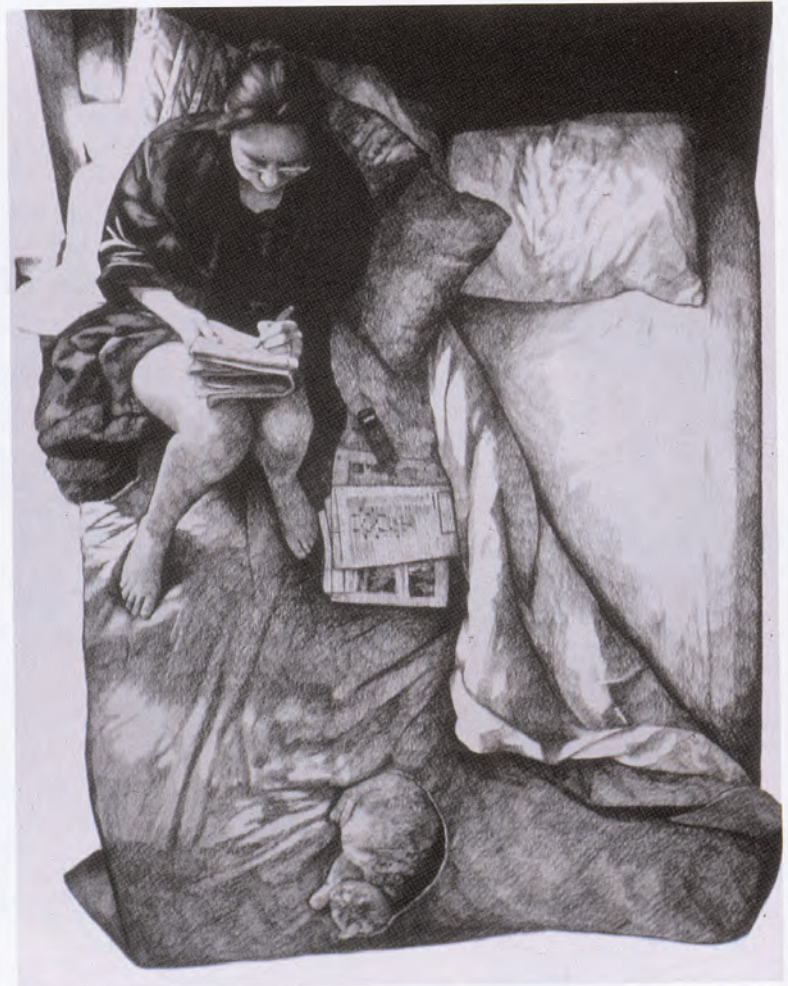
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arts

'Figure' show finds four with flair

BY MIKE GIULIANO

Even though the Howard County Center for the Arts exhibit "Focus on the Figure" remains true to its title, the finest work in this four-artist show involves moody landscapes and busy brushwork.

The highlight is four charcoal drawings by Randy Simmons that spotlight children whose thoughts remain as private as their impassive faces. Simmons' figurative skills are first-rate. You feel as if you're face-to-face with children depicted by themselves or in pairs.

Among the hauntingly contemplative images is "Counting Blue Cars," which features a closeup of a boy with upraised eyes. There are no cars to be seen in this charcoal drawing, only the boy looking upwards as if absorbed in some mental activity.

Simmons incorporates carefully modulated and very moody stretches of landscape in his other three landscapes. Especially effective is "Meridian," in which a boy with his eyes closed is on the right side of the drawing and a utility pole is on the left side; the nocturnal sky suffusing this scene makes it seem very quiet and a bit ominous.

For assertive paint application, look at Tom Block's oil paintings. He relies on thick layers of paint that are deployed in the service of large portraits done with expressive flair. Although Block's technical approach verges on overstatement, these portraits definitely pack a visual punch.

The best is "Albanian Refugee," in which a blue-robed elderly woman has her fist tightly pulled up towards her age-creased face. Densely applying earth tones and other colors to her face, Block gives a sense of an ancient person who has suffered through much — and survived it.

Layers of paint also characterize the oil paintings by Jessica Damen, with results that seem apt in some painterly passages and arbitrary in others. The children who are her subjects possess some of the same self-absorption as in Simmons' drawings, but she also has imagery

<http://www.howardcountytimes.com>



Randy Simmons' charcoal study "Counting Blue Cars," left, and Tom Block's oil painting "Albanian Refugee," far left, both from 2002, are on view along with work of two other artists in the exhibit "Focus on the Figure" at the Howard County Center for the Arts through Aug. 19.

visual arts

giving the paintings a mysterious and even quasi-allegorical quality.

Damen's enigmatic paintings aren't always convincing, but they remain interesting. Typical is "Out of the Blue," in which two girls hold each other on the right side of the picture and a monkey climbs a tree trunk on the left side. You're left to your own devices to figure out the meaning of a painting that does seem to have come out of the blue.

The fourth artist, Kristin Powers Nowlin, has both lithographs and cross-stitch on fabric works that have in common a reliance on a

gridded structure for the presentation of paired male figures. Her embroidered pictures are of particular note, because one generally doesn't encounter portraiture in this format.

"Focus on the Figure" runs through Aug. 19 in Gallery 1 at the Howard County Center for the Arts in Ellicott City. Running concurrently in Gallery II are the exhibits "Art Enables: Ellicott City Road Trips," presenting artistic depictions of that town done by participants in a program for adults with developmental and/or mental disabilities, and "No Boundaries," with artwork done in therapeutic art classes for teens and adults conducted by the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks. Call 410-313-2787 or go online to www.hocoarts.org.

concerts

Vying for vocal honors

The 12 semi-finalists in the 16th annual Mayor's Billie Holiday Vocal Competition will compete before the public as part of this year's Artscape festival at Meyerhoff Symphony Hall July 23 from 3-7 p.m. The competition is free and open to the public. The contestants, made up of nine women and three men, will perform one song associated with Baltimore's "Lady Day," as well as a second number of their own choosing. The first place winner will get a \$2,500 award and will perform along with the three runners-up for Artscape festival-goers July 24 at noon on the Festival Stage.

Jazz and pasta

The local jazz pairing of vocalist Gail Marten with pianist Clem Ehoff returns to the Aida Bistro, 7185-A Gateway Drive in Columbia July 27 from 7-10 p.m. For reservations, call 410-953-0500. Martin's new CD, "Is It Love," recorded with the Clem Ehoff Trio, becomes available the first week in August. Visit www.sonicbids.com/gailmarten for a preview.

Brown to jazz up congregation

Alex Brown, Columbia's own up-and-coming jazz pianist, will be the guest artist at the next Friday evening service of the Columbia Jewish Congregation, July 22 beginning at 8 p.m. in the Oakland Mills Interfaith Center. Brown will interpret old and new melodies throughout the Shabbat service, conducted by Cantor Jan Morrison. The service is open to the public. For information, call 410-730-6044.

bat service, conducted by Cantor Jan Morrison. The service is open to the public. For information, call 410-730-6044.

curtain up!

Dinner and 'Grease'

A musical theater evergreen and a local musical stage favorite have been joined together to finish out the summer at Toby's Dinner Theatre. The evergreen pit of tuneful high school nostalgia, "Grease," is being directed by legendary performer Ray Hatch. The high school high kinks and heartaches, circa 1958, can be sampled Tuesday through Saturday at 8 p.m., Sundays at 7 p.m. through Sept. 4 at Toby's Dinner Theatre in Columbia. Call 410-730-8311 for reservations.

'Aida' get youth vote

The Teen Professional Theatre of the Columbia Center for Theatrical Arts will give five public performances of the Elton John and Tim Rice Broadway musical "Aida" at Reservoir HJ School in Fulton July 28-31. Reservations are recommended for this limited run, though both reserved and general admission seating is available.

The prestigious Teen Professional Theatre has won major grants from the National Endowment for the Arts for its summer programs, which culminate with a full staging of a contemporary musical. Call 410-381-0700 or log onto www.CCTArts.com.

Figurative Perspectives in HFA

Mandy German
Staff Writer

The current show at the Gallery, *Figurative Perspectives*, had me captivated before it even opened. The large charcoal drawings had me peeking in the windows as they were being put up. I noticed right away that the drawings are not framed with glass or anything; they are just pinned to the wall. I think this is a very effective choice because it allows the viewer to feel closer to the subject matter. As I was reading his artist statement I discovered he works from photos which he edits on photoshop to look like what he wants his final product to look like as well as working backwards with putting the image down on paper. He starts with his darkest shades first, erases out his highlights and goes back in to add his mid-tones. These choices are all effective methods to visually enhance the detail of the drawings. There are only eight drawings which seems like too few drawings to really appreciate Simmons' talent. Of the eight, five of them are capturing moments usually not thought about in children's private playtime lives. They are discovering new things, pondering toys, and playing in cornfields. What makes these moment special is his attention to detail. The drawings overall have a sort of dark feeling to them because of the deep shadows, but the white highlights bring a lighter tone to them.

In Jacob's Ladder, we see a small child looking at or maybe playing with a small toy, but the expression on his face seems to be showing more: his brows are furrowed, his head is slightly tipped downward; he's holding the toy at a slightly higher angle. At the same time he seems to have a tiny hint of a smile peeking above his coat collar. This almost gives the impression that he'd been pondering something or wondering about something and was starting to figure it out. The background seems to be blurred in a circular motion, so we aren't fully aware of his place, but he seems to be wearing a jacket with the collar up close to his chin and we only see one hand holding the toy. This could

be a hint to autumn-- a hint to one phase of the child's life ending and another beginning.

In the three drawings where the boys seem to be aware of the viewer, they seem to be showing either themselves or a toy off to the viewer. The only exception is *Depreciate* where we as viewers feel like the child is stretching his arms out to us. I feel as if I'm a person whom this child loves very much. His eyes have such soft detail; they appear to be in hollowed out eye sockets and he doesn't seem to have any apparent eyebrows. His head is tipped down, but his eyes seem to be looking up at the viewer. In the background of bubble like circles, there are three childish sketches of tanks. These sketches in combination with the fact that he has no eyebrows is perhaps indicative of a battle with disease. Of all of the eight drawings *Depreciate* is my favorite because of the eyes and the vulnerability shown by his bare torso.

On the other side of the room, Jennifer Anderson's prints are depicting something we are all familiar with: the human body. The prints are framed and hung and read as two different series to me because of their sizes and the way they are framed and seem like they are meant to be viewed together. They have an overall disturbing feeling because the human anatomy which seems to appear dead is being dissected and pulled apart. What looks as if it should be dead has alarmingly life-like qualities. Several depictions of eyelids seem so life like and real, they make me want to reach out and touch them to feel their velvety softness. Despite this, they have a violent feel to them as well. This is a bit unnerving to me especially with the image of the baby's eyelids being held open with someone's fingers and feet being grossly depicted as weird odd shapes skewn across the paper at very awkward and unusual angles. The fact that they are framed gives them a sort of specimen like quality. The thick black bar across a young person's eyes gives them two things: anonymity and they seem to be sexless. I cannot tell if

this person is male or female. One of the benefits of these things is that we as viewers are able to place ourselves in the child's shoes. This anonymity could be something the child is feeling. Perhaps because of abuse or shyness this child feels as if he doesn't really exist as an individual, but rather as a thing. His anonymity could be chosen or not but the thick deep lines in his cheeks show what look like to me to be stress and age. These lines could be implying that the child has been through more life than a person of his age. The overall feeling of the human body being an object-- and a fairly ugly object-- is a bit too unnerving for me. The meanings behind these images are beyond a simple glance and deserve much more viewing time than probably most people would allow themselves because of the roughness of the subject matter.

Upstairs in the balcony part of the gallery, Sharon Harpers paintings can be viewed. These paintings are generally layered and primarily have lots of gold and black for colors. They are also unframed and are simply pinned to the wall. Several of the paintings use a flowery-type vine motif on them. She used very loose brushwork which gives the paintings an overall feel of being done hastily while trying to capture a moment or a feeling of some sort and many of the paintings have circles or oval shapes in them suggesting the circle of life. Harper talks about how her paintings allow her to talk about aging in her artist statement, but I got a feeling that these paintings are not only about aging and the cycles of life, but also about sexuality. Many of the paintings have faces, birds, and hands in the underlying layers. Sometimes they are so hidden by the layers on top of them that they are hard to see and it isn't clear who they belong to. Most of the faces are either defiant or angry, something unusual for an older artist. One of the paintings that struck me was *Housework*, where there is a violent screaming face underneath of the simple lines for a house. Red, black, and orange are the primary colors for this painting which set it apart for me from the rest. The colors along

April 23, 2006 Courier-Journal, Louisville

THURSDAY

Critic's pick

Artist **Randy Simmons** of Paducah, Ky., doesn't hesitate to tackle tough topics, including divorce, family breakups and domestic violence — he is married to a lawyer specializing in domestic-violence victims — or more tender topics, such as the beauty of a child's naivety.

Simmons will give a free talk at 6 p.m. in Elizabethtown (Ky.) Community & Technical College's Morrison Gallery, 600 College Street Road.

His large-scale charcoal drawings are on view there through April 30. Hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Simmons, a 2006 Kentucky Arts Council grant recipient, also will



Randy Simmons' "Pieta" is at Elizabethtown Community College.

show his work in early 2007 at Jefferson Community College in Louisville.

— Diane Heilenman, visual arts critic



HOT GLASS WORKS

5115 S. Industrial Rd., #401

Las Vegas 89118

702/739-9955, hotglassworkslv.com **Hours:** Monday–Friday 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m.–3 p.m., Monday 6 p.m.–9 p.m. **Cost:** Free ► Hot Glass Works owner Scott Dyer offers a variety of custom hand-blown glass including hand engraved, sand carved, slumped and fused glass by various artists in his showroom. Stop by the studio Monday evenings and watch local artists manipulate hot glass forms, or enroll in one of the glass-blowing workshops offered at the studio and make your own. Workshop fees vary, call to enroll.

L MAYNARD GALLERIES

In the Holsum Lofts

241 W. Charleston Blvd., Suite 140

Las Vegas 89102

702/855-0081, lmaynard.com **Hours:** Tuesday–Saturday noon–6 p.m. **Cost:** Free ► Starting in June, look for "Off The Edge" featuring Lincoln Maynard's son Dylan Urquidi-Maynard and other area artists. In July, Urquidi-Maynard joins potter Teresa Testa for a partner exhibition entitled "Generational Wisdom." Jennifer Gilbert's solo show "Eclectic Works in Iron" will feature metal and iron sculpture during the month of August.

LAS VEGAS ART MUSEUM

9600 W. Sahara Ave.

Las Vegas 89117

702/360-8000, lasvegasartmuseum.org **Hours:** Tuesday–Saturday 10 a.m.–5 p.m., Sunday 1 p.m.–5 p.m. **Cost:** \$6 adults, \$5 seniors, \$3 students, free 12 and under ► From June 11th–August 25th the Las Vegas Art Museum will show a comprehensive retrospective of California artist Martin Mull, also known for his work in film and television. Mull's paintings feature appropriated images critiquing mid-western culture. August 5th–August 31st browse the work of various artists showing in the museum's 55th annual "Art Roundup Juried Exhibition".

Sinclair exhibits drawings, photos

Triangle Gallery

The large-scale drawings of M.J. Seltzer and Randy Simmons will be on exhibit in the Burnell R. Roberts Triangle Gallery at Sinclair Community College, through Aug. 3.

The Triangle Gallery is located on the fourth floor of Building 13 at Fifth and South Perry streets on the Sinclair campus. The exhibit is open during normal campus visiting hours. It is free and open to the public.

Seltzer draws the faces of women she's known. Each glycee print is reworked in mineral and organic pigments including graphite, iron oxide, aluminum and lamp black. She combines collage in relief, adding a shallow three-dimensionality and visual inflection. "My portraits trace the slow and steady process of change and transformation of these indentured views of gender, sexuality, and selfhood," Seltzer said.

Simmons, a Paducah, Ky., artist, teaches drawing, painting, art, photography and design at West Kentucky Community and Technical College and is host of the television series *Eye on Art*, produced at the college.

"My large charcoal drawings, created realistically from photographs, are autobiographical accounts dealing with my children,



Miranda's Rights by Randy Simmons

parenting ... attempting to see the world from a child's perspective and (my) relationships with girlfriends and significant others."

Zone VI Gallery

The work of Richmond, Virginia photographer Paul Thulin will be on display in Sinclair Community College's Zone VI Gallery through Aug. 3.

The Zone VI Gallery is located in the west atrium on the third floor of Building 13, on the Sinclair campus. It is open during

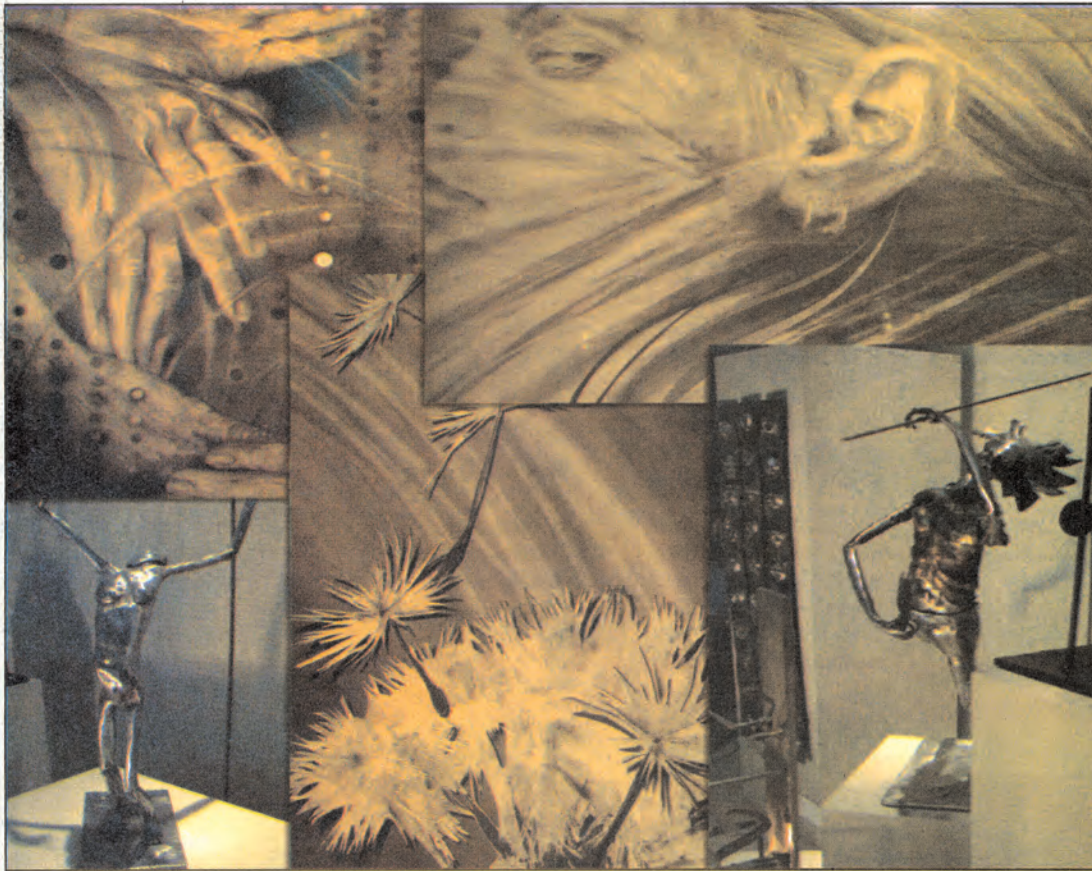
normal campus visiting hours.

Thulin has taught photography at Virginia Commonwealth University where he earned a master's degree in fine art. Elements of performance and improvisational play are essential components of the process behind most of his photographic projects. This creative technique has resulted in the production of several bodies of work that he categorizes as "personal mythologies."

Thulin's *Dissolving Boundaries of The Self: A Rhizomatic Psycho-History* is a sequential body of images that can be collectively read as an ever-evolving history of his psyche.

For more information on the exhibits or the galleries, call the Sinclair Art department (937) 512-5381 or (937) 512-2253 or visit www.sinclair.edu/facilities/galleries.

Impressive works of art on display in Building 13



Artistic works on display at Sinclair.

photos by Tashina Geisler, collage by Anala Johnson

Tashina Geisler
staff reporter

An artist's work can be an intimate revelation and exploration of the self.

The five artists whose work is on display in the Sinclair Community College's three galleries this summer have used this idea in the theme of their work.

With grand windows that look down over the Sinclair campus, Building 13's fourth floor gallery is housing the works of Randy Simmons and MJ Seltzer.

Together their display is titled *Drawings/Confessions*.

Simmons's large-scale drawings demon-

strate an impressive understanding of light, shadow and the use of line.

Seltzer's work successfully contrasts and complements the masculinity of Simmons's art. With fluid lines and layering, Seltzer's pieces voice the "feminine perspective of both identity and self discovery," according to the artist's description of her drawings.

Paul Thulin is displaying his conceptual photography in the Zone VI Photography Gallery on the third floor of Building 13.

Thulin's photography appears almost painterly with layered colors, images and scratching strokes. He presents the discovery of the self almost like an archeological find with titles that combine a place and date with the

discovery.

Thulin's display is titled *Dissolving Boundaries of The Self: A Rhizomatic Psycho-history*.

The sculptures of Jon Fordyce and Scott Wilson are also housed in the three-dimensional Hypotenuse Gallery on the third floor of Building 13.

The metal sculptures combine twisting, reaching forms with geometrical shapes that also appear to contain a rigid sense of movement. This display is titled *Small Works*.

A committee of Sinclair's Fine Arts faculty determines what will be shown in the galleries each year. About 100 artists send in propositions each year while only a relatively small number

can be shown in a year.

The committee endeavors to include both quality and variety in the exhibitions. They try to balance realistic representations with abstract work.

"(This) serves a general audience and serves our students as a teaching device," according to Pat McClelland, the gallery coordinator.

McClelland added that many good artists are turned down every year.

The current exhibition will be displayed until Aug. 3.

The next set of artists will be presented in September. The artists will be Sinclair's Fine Arts professors.

EVANSVILLE MUSEUM OF ARTS, HISTORY & SCIENCE

MID-STATES ART EXHIBITION

DECEMBER 10, 2006 – JANUARY 28, 2007



\$250 Martha Ryan
Merit Award presented in
memory of Sam Ryan

CHRIS THOMAS
Henderson, Kentucky
BACK LIGHT
Oil, 48 x 36 inches

RANDY SIMMONS
Paducah, Kentucky
M IS FOR MAN
Charcoal, 49 x 79.5 inches
\$250 Elise Strouse Merit Award

H. JOHN SMITH
Newburgh, Indiana
SAN DIEGO 2
Oil on canvas, 28 x 24 inches

CHRIS THOMAS
Henderson, Kentucky
BACK LIGHT
Oil, 48 x 36 inches
\$250 Martha Ryan Merit Award
presented in memory of Sam Ryan

JESSE THOMAS
St. Louis, Missouri
PORTRAIT OF KARA MOYER AFTER
CARAVAGGIO, 2005
Oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches



\$250 Elise Strouse Merit Award

RANDY SIMMONS
Paducah, Kentucky
M IS FOR MAN
Charcoal, 49 x 79.5 inches

JOYCELYN TODISCO
Evansville, Indiana
SHILO
Graphite on Bristol vellum,
8 x 10 inches

JAMES VIEWEGH
Martinsville, Indiana
SEVEN YEARS
Oil on canvas, 42 x 52 inches
\$5,000 Museum Guild Purchase Award

KATHRYN WATERS
Evansville, Indiana
TRAVELER'S REST SERIES: AMSTERDAM
Pastel, 15 x 22 inches



\$250 Bob Davies Merit Award
presented in memory of
Sara Davies

LAURIN D. NOTHEISEN
Bowling Green, Kentucky
THE BIKE PATH
Graphite, 13 x 26 inches



the william and mary review

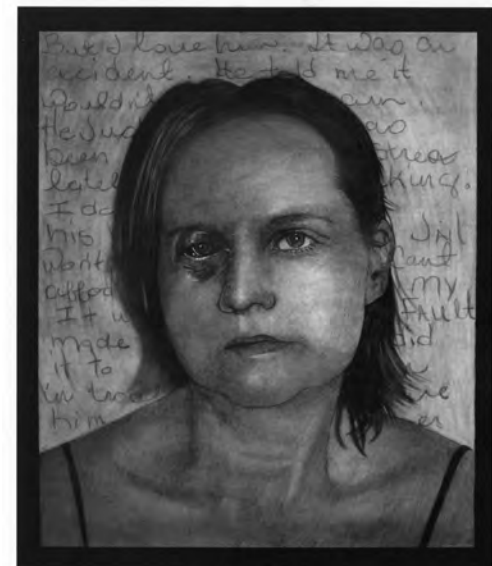


Moon Makes Dark

Randy Simmons
Charcoal

Two Drawings Featured in "The William and Mary Review"
Annual Poetry and Art Magazine

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But I Love Him

Randy Simmons
Charcoal

VOLUME 44_2006

Mid-States art entries invite a closer look

By ROGER McBAIN Courier & Press staff writer 464-7520 or mcbainr@courierpress.com
Friday, January 12, 2007

Whimsy, mystery and subtle, sometimes almost hidden images, ideas and homages lurk in the Evansville Museum's 53rd Mid-States Art Exhibition.

The politics of global domination, the psychology of domestic abuse and the impact of the machine in the garden are among ideas nestled in the puzzle pieces of several images in this show, up through Jan. 28 in the Main Gallery.

Rob Millard-Mendez, an assistant art professor at the University of Southern Indiana, pieced together sections of yard sticks with steel and ivory for "Unable to See Over the Hegemony," which seems to offer a wry reflection on the use of force in world politics.

Millard-Mendez's three-dimensional piece, which won \$1,500 in purchase awards, looks like a crazy cuckoo-clock mask bristling with cannons and towers, its view obstructed by tall, crenelated turrets. From a pair of open doors in the mouth, a white fist on a telescoping hinge brandishes a large mallet.

At first glance, "Mischief," a large oil painting by David Hannon of Muncie, Ind., looks like a glowing sunset at the junction of the city and the country. The title invites a closer look, however. Scrutinize the scene and you'll find at least five figures hiding in the foliage around some sort of industrial building. They watch as a man looks warily around from the building, perhaps trying to figure out who rang the doorbell, and what might be inside the large paper bag left on the sidewalk before him.

The painting, which won a \$300 merit award, could depict a prank, but the presence of five men hiding suggests something more ... perhaps an unfolding act of eco-terrorists? Classical art references bring a surreal power to "The Bike Path," a graphite drawing by Laurin D. Notheisen of Bowling Green, Ky.

And "M is for Man," a large charcoal drawing by Randy Simmons of Paducah, Ky., uses an inverted female torso to represent a phallus, symbolizing male domination in domestic abuse. The image hangs like an altar figure between two bowing, or perhaps cowering, half-clad female forms, before the enormous backdrop of an old-fashioned corset, with stiff ribs and a hand-pulled laces.

They're among 33 works by artists from six Midwestern states in the show, judged for the museum by M. Stephen Doherty, editor of American Artist magazine in New York.

Area artists represented in the exhibition include Millard-Mendez, A.J. Musia, Joycelyn Todisco and Kathryn Waters, all of Evansville; Michael Bartholomew and H. John Smith, both of Newburgh; Robert Pote of Mount Vernon, Ind.; and Chris Thomas of Henderson, Ky.

Lexington Herald Sunday June 11, 2006

REVIEW

BLACK AND WHITE, BOLD AND BRIGHT

Monochrome steals the show in Morehead

By Benita Heath

CONTRIBUTING ART CRITIC

Don't tell the NBC peacock, but it's the sassy, brassy, brilliant vibrancy of black-and-white that steals the latest edition of the *Bluegrass Biennial* at the Morehead State University campus.

The show features only artists from the state, and this year's chosen few squelch any prejudice that creativity on an intensely sophisticated and intellectual level is the sole province of the Eastern Seaboard. This stuff is good.

But it's the two-tone works that take over the gallery, putting color in the dark.

First, there's the powerful portrait of abuse -- But I Love Him -- by Randy Simmons of Paducah. Using charcoal on paper, he creates a dramatic and believable biography of a battered woman, from her blackened eye to expressionless face as hatred has beaten out of her any signs of life. In the background in a childish handwriting, he offers all the excuses these women give themselves for enduring this horror -- "It was an accident." "It's my fault." "Color couldn't effectively wrench out of the viewer the emotion this work does. It is a marvel of drama.

Interestingly, portraits, not usually seen much in public exhibits, abound in this show, demonstrating the strong background in basics these artists have mastered.

With a few strokes of charcoal on paper, Aimee Lynne Hirshowitz of Lexington has created a delightful portrayal of a young girl in *Cara*, impish, intelligent, lost in a world of great imagination.

Again, as in Simmons' work, this artist creates a whole biography using the subtlety of light and dark. Color would only distract. The darkness enlightens.

Equally at home with the effectiveness of black and white is photographer John Flawell of Morehead. In *Desert Brush*, his economic use of light and composition exalts what most would dismiss as detritus. It's a beautiful photograph because of its simplicity and shows the abstract and sculptural qualities that photography can offer.

Evocative of German expressionism, Erica Meuser's monotype with charcoal -- *American Wake #4* -- is a chilling indictment of war as the hands of death grip a young child. Her effective use of the white of the paper shows the vitality of the child's flesh as his eyes, already too old for his years, show his imminent decay.

Now, just because I seem madly keen about what's in black and white, that's not to say there aren't many superb canvases that draw upon some part of the rainbow.

One of the most intriguing is *Poetic Recall*, in which Ross Zirkle of Lexington re-creates, through lithography, color that resembles fabric. At first glance, it looks quaint. But look closer and you will see a wonderful satire on the dehumanization of man through our society's worship of technology. A nude tattooed with computer symbols strands with Amazonian strength as a goddess in this world where megabytes and bar codes rule. It's a strong, intelligent work. There is really nothing that doesn't work in this show, whether it's examples of figurative realism or fanciful abstractionism. It's rare to find such variety and quality in a single exhibit. And it makes a reviewer's job easy.

Seems as if the sun is shining bright on Kentucky's latest crop of artists.

Local artist to debut exhibition

West Kentucky Community & Technical College assistant art professor Randy Simmons has participated in more than 100 exhibitions nationwide, but he will debut his first solo art exhibition in downtown Paducah this weekend.

The show "Ties That Bind" is a large portfolio of photo-like charcoal works. It will be displayed at two galleries, Tribeca Mexican Cuisine Gallery and Maiden Alley Cinema Gallery, because of its size.

"My work can be divided into three themes," Simmons said. "Children and parenting, domestic violence, and relationships with former wives and girlfriends. My two young sons have inspired me with their observations giving me a window on the world as seen through the wondrous eyes of children.

"Other ideas are drawn from my wife's (Jane Osborne) past experience as a domestic



Simmons

violence prosecutor for McCracken County. Her long, difficult days spent dealing with battered women took its toll on her and her emotional well-being. Many of the domestic violence themes are derived from Jane's cases. My earlier work addresses divorce, relationships gone awry and dating in general. Most of these drawings are laced with sarcasm and are intended to be humorous."

Simmons, a Graves County native, graduated from Murray State University and continued his education at the University of Cincinnati. He also studied art in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

An opening reception will be from 5 to 6 p.m. Saturday at Tribeca and from 6 to 7 p.m. Saturday at Maiden Alley Cinema. Admission is free.

The exhibition may be viewed through Oct. 28. Tribeca Mexican Cuisine Gallery, 127 S. 2nd St., is open from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 5 to 9 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and noon to 10 p.m. Saturday. Maiden Alley Cinema Gallery is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, 3 to 9 p.m. Saturday and 3 to 7 p.m. Sunday.

the last word

SNOWGLOBE BY RANDY SIMMONS



*This world, after all our science and sciences, is still a miracle;
wonderful, inscrutable, magical and more, to whosoever will think of it.*

~ THOMAS CARLYLE



IT'S NEVER JUST BLACK & WHITE: RANDY SIMMONS

PINECONE ART GALLERY
November 1 – January 27, 2009

“Both of my boys, ages 11 and 13, have inspired me through their observations of the world they see and live in,” says Randy.

“The drawings of them document my concerns as a parent charged with raising children, and their vision of play in an adult setting. I sometimes include their drawings or handwriting within my imagery and many of my drawings are titled from words and phrases they invent. My work is done in the style of Italian and southern baroque art, creating drama through lighting and darkness and at times, through climax of the event depicted or the end result.”

Randy Simmons is currently on exhibit in Nashville at the Leu Art Center, Belmont University and his work will be exhibited at the Indianapolis Art Center in February.

Pinecone Art Gallery is located at 421 North 7th Street and is open Wednesday to Saturday.