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Briggs Library chooses artwork of Larson and Yang for library collection

Summary: Each year, the library chooses artwork from the two spring student shows.

(May 3, 2010)-Each year, the Rodney Briggs Library chooses artwork from each of the two spring student shows, the Annual Juried Student Art Exhibit and the Annual Senior Studio Arts Student Exhibit, for permanent display in the library. This year, the Briggs Library Art Committee chose the work of first-year student Leanne Larson, Garfield, and senior Yang Mee Moua, St. Paul.

Larson's Freedom

Larson creatively combined Canadian mounted police historical texts and Picasso to fashion a multi-media piece titled Freedom. A first-year studio art major, Larson's collage offers a wealth of shapes, text, and photographs that invite the viewer to explore rich details.

"At first I was nervous about doing a collage," Larson explains, "but working with found items was wonderful."

Inspired by a history class, Larson looked through old books and magazines, searching for text, shapes, and colors, initially modeling the artistic style on Picasso's. The end result, however, is uniquely her own. She also constructed the handsome frame that captures the warmth of the piece.

Originally from Australia, Larson plans to graduate in 2012 or 2013, securing a secondary education licensure along the way.

"I absolutely love drawing, painting, and printmaking," Larson explained. "I feel like I need to put those skills to use."

Yang's Walking in the Garden

Yang Mee Moua's acrylic and oil Walking in the Garden features three small children holding wooden implements, set against a textured green background.

"I wanted to portray that children go to the farm even when they're very small," Yang said. "It reminds me of when I was in Thailand and had to farm every day."

For Yang, the piece was a sort of a homecoming. Drawing on inspiration from a photograph taken in Laos, she used the theme of Hmong culture as a way of expressing her own background and culture. Her family lived in Thailand until 1993 before moving to the United States. Although Yang doesn't remember much of her former life, the act of creating art that reflects her heritage has been freeing.

"This is my culture. This is who I am."

Walking in the Garden was the first realistic work created by Yang. Previously, she focused on abstract and symbolic

pieces. Her trajectory as an artist at Morris has seen Yang learn basics from still life to fundamental techniques, often with a strong Western influence. Being able to explore her ethnic identity through painting has been the culmination of her artistic growth.

After graduation, Yang plans to move back to the Twin Cities Hmong community where she hopes to do community work before attending graduate school.

Photo above: Larson

Photo below: Yang

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