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Contact

Melissa Weber, Director of Communications
Phone: 320-589-6414, weberm@morris.umn.edu

Jenna Ray, Editor/Writer
Phone: 320-589-6068, jrray@morris.umn.edu

Professors of studio art exhibit in Winds of Inspiration, Winds of Change invitational exhibition

Summary: Michael Eble, Jess Larson '92, and Jenny Nellis were invited to contribute artwork that relates to wind, to wind turbines, or to their ancestors, windmills.

(October 29, 2009)-Three University of Minnesota, Morris studio art professors are exhibiting their work in the Winds of Inspiration, Winds of Change invitational exhibition at the Hillstrom Museum of Art on the Gustavus Adolphus campus in St. Peter. Michael Eble, Jess Larson '92, and Jenny Nellis were invited to contribute artwork that relates to wind, to wind turbines, or to their ancestors, windmills. The exhibition runs through November 8, 2009.

Nellis, professor of studio art, submitted an untitled sculpture of a box elder seed created of basswood. In her artist's statement she reflects, "As an avid gardener, I like to focus on the textures, colors, forms, shapes, cycles, and potential found in nature....So much of our designed and constructed world is based on the successful and elegant designs of nature. The wind turbine is so like so many flower forms it is impossible to compare to just one. The wind that affects the turbine also affects many plants, spinning and driving their seeds into the ground to continue the cycle. My sculpture of the effects of wind and translated design is the box elder seed that falls outside my studio door almost within sight of the turbine on the ridge."

Larson, associate professor of studio art, submitted a digital print and embroidery on silk titled 21st Century Alphabet: E is for Energy. She shares in her artist statement, "I have been collecting old flashcards out of a fascination in the simplicity of these objects as a teaching tool....For this exhibit, I thought about how the imagery has changed over time on flash cards. It's been especially important to me as I watch a close friend's young son, Oliver, navigate the early stages of learning through visual and verbal cues. Imagery from the 1950s reflects the post-war era of nuclear family and an expanding middle class. So what reflects the 21st century? I think it will soon be commonplace to equate wind with energy. Oliver lives in a world where he won't question a turbine's ability to generate electricity to power his school, home, and city."

Eble, associate professor of studio art, submitted an oil painting on canvas titled Oklahoma Windmills based on a haiku poem by Jack Kerouac:

The Windmills of
Oklahoma look
In Every Direction.

Eble explains that his painting, one in a series, was created in response to the poem. "...I reference the Japanese art of Haiga. HAI comes from haiku, previously known in Japan as haikai or hokku, three-line poems five, then seven, then five syllables, respectively. GA the word for painting, so Haiga literally means haikupaintings. Through the combination of haiga and the haiku poems, I have been compelled to produce this work. As an artist, I see this as an inventive approach to my creative research, where paintings are built upon concepts of text until a resolution is found within a piece. It is a process of forming a relationship with the written word that is compelling and interesting."

Jenny Nellis
Morse/Alumni Distinguished Teaching Professor of Studio Art
University of Minnesota, Morris
Untitled, 2009
Basswood
70 x 36 x 18 inches
(at left in photo)

Jess Larson
Associate Professor of Studio Art
University of Minnesota, Morris
21st Century Alphabet: E is for Energy, 2009
Digital print and embroidery on silk
17 ½ x 13 inches
(at left in photo)

Michael Eble
Associate Professor of Studio Art and
Curator of the Humanities Fine Arts Gallery
University of Minnesota, Morris
Oklahoma Windmills, 2005
Oil on canvas
18 x 36 inches
(at right in photo)

Photo credit: Hillstrom Museum of Art

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