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Existential Issues: Visit the HFA Gallery

Summary:

(December 18, 2003)-“Existential Issues: Identity, Self and Community” brings together the work of three artists who share similar concepts in producing their own artwork. Mike Stephens, Becki Smith and Anthony Peruzzo look at life experiences as a human source for the production of their prints, sculptures and drawings. An exhibit by these artists will be on display in the Gallery of Humanities Fine Arts at the University of Minnesota, Morris January 15 through February 6.

A public reception, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 15, will open the exhibit. In conjunction with the opening reception, artist Anthony Peruzzo will present a short lecture on the work he will exhibit. His lecture will be given at 7:15 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 15, in HFA Room 2.

Mike Stephens’ prints reflect an investigation of his own self - identity. Stephens uses his alter ego as a character in his graphic comic book style prints. His prints reflect chaotic scenarios that occur in our current society. He uses traditional woodcut prints combined with current pop images to make his commentary on life. Stephens resides in Tyler, Texas, where he is an art instructor at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Becki Smith obsessively collects and arranges bits and pieces of objects and text into and onto boxes. Each of her assemblages are unique with inherent design challenges. They contain many different objects that have symbolic meaning. Smith states, “In my boxes, I explore issues such as attachment, detachment, acceptance, control, humor, hope, memory, spirituality, and busyness of life.” Smith lives in Odessa, Texas, where she has had a private studio for the last 11 years.

Peruzzo uses his large-scale drawings to examine the relationship between the individual and the community at large and how confrontations between the two can develop into specific and undefined roles. His interest lies in examining how we react to our positions in society and the search for personal direction. The characters and scenes he depicts recall his life and surroundings, not as an autobiography, but as a source of specification. Peruzzo states, “I want to explore these issues of identity and context, using elements from my life as reference, and relate them to contemporary American culture.” A resident of Mound, Peruzzo is a lecturer in printmaking at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

Gallery hours for the exhibit, which is free and open to the public, are Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday 1 to 5 p.m.

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