



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT - ART

ART: "The Apostacy" and "Metallic Morph"

A little more meat on the bones

By Shirley M. Dawson on Nov. 7th, 2007

I spent November's First Friday looking at sculpture. Rochester Contemporary Art Center opened an interactive light/image show by Buffalo artist Michael Bosworth. Ted Lossowski's multimedia work is on display at Renaissance Art Gallery, and metal works by Jeong Ju Lee fill part of the Dyer Art Center at the National Institute for the Deaf.

The experience was like eating Chinese food: you feel full at first but an hour later you're hungry again. This art all needed a little more meat on its bones.

The good news is that Rochester Contemporary Art Center is experiencing a rejuvenation, including much-needed physical plant changes, exciting outreach programming such

as First Friday and bus tours to neighboring cities, and an improved website. This creative surge comes from new director Bleu Cease, the commitment of fresh board members, and the groundwork laid by departing ones, particularly past president Tom Burke. It may take a village to raise a child, but it takes a city to keep a not-for-profit art center running.

There is no bad news here, just an installation that has a mediocre thesis driving what appears to be a huge effort of engineering with so-so results. Bosworth has titled the show "The Apostacy," which means defection or renunciation, usually associated with religion, but here presumably rejecting photography as a fixed-image medium. Bosworth uses camera obscura to capture images through lenses inserted in walls throughout the gallery and projects them on the inside surfaces of huge blow-up nylon balloons, nylon tubes, and walls. Images change with air currents and human intervention.

I might have been more impressed with this show had I not recently visited an outdoor installation by Visual Studies Workshop MFA candidate Sara Segerlin, who used similar technology plus sound, poetry, and the eerie nighttime park setting to much greater results. Her installation was magical while Bosworth's seems earth bound.

Ted Lossowski teaches art at Wells College in Aurora. His multimedia sculpture is



Article Photos



Jeong Ju Lee's "Ring Not Ring," on display at NTID's Dyer Arts Center.



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crisp, clean, and just a whiff too similar to past Wendell Castle shapes. Combining materials clearly entrances him. Tension achieved by clashing smooth surfaces against rough, hard against soft, can be a good thing, but these pieces are too contrived and visually fall from grace.

If you miss Jeong Ju Lee's exhibit at NTID, don't fret. She's got a calendar full of shows lined up within the Rochester area over the next six months. Who is advising this young artist? Haven't they heard of overexposure in a limited market? But wait! These pieces are not for sale, so what exactly is the intent of the market blitz? Clearly Lee is an energetic metal technician, and her prototypical copper chairs are original. They combine solid metal bowl shapes with bent copper wire to form low-slung baskets for sitting that are surprisingly comfortable and could easily move from indoors to out.

Her jewelry is nearly all made of sterling silver, with gemstones used sparingly. The silver is formed into shell- and leaf-like shapes from which are attached swooping tendrils of sterling wires. Lee covered the tops of display pedestals with pieces of slate, underscoring the organic inspiration of the jewelry and contrasting the roughhewn look of the stone with the sparkle of sterling silver - a nice gesture.

Jewelry generally may 1) enhance gemstones, 2) enhance the human body, or 3) be a kind of miniaturized, independent sculpture. These aims are not mutually exclusive, and Lee clearly meets at least two of the three goals. But who are the women who serve as living pedestals for these works? It's a question I often wonder about with wearable art. As art pieces, the work is beautiful to look at under a museum spotlight. But on a real person? I'm not at all sure they would survive pulling on and off a winter coat, for instance, even if the coat were fur.

"The Apostacy"

Through December 1

Rochester Contemporary Art Center, 137 East Ave, 461-2222

"Metallic Morph"

Through December 8

Dyer Arts Center, NTID, 475-6855

2007

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