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Art Picks

BY MICHELE NATALE, Correspondent

The Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University hosts the annual Lehman Brady Presentation with artist Brett Cook and his "Face Up: Telling Stories of Community Life" from 4 to 8 p.m. today. Cook has been painting a series of large-scale murals inspired by community stories during his residency from January to May. Celebrate with music, food, an exhibit opening and other special activities. 1317 W. Pettigrew St., Durham, 660-3663, <http://cgs.aas.duke.edu>.

The Durham scene serves up plenty of tantalizing art this month. Ongoing exhibitions at the Durham Arts Council Building run the gamut of styles and messages. In the Durham Art Guild galleries, artist Klint Ericson, whose work was chosen best in show by Barkley Hendricks at last year's annual juried exhibition, revisits his winning triptych, "It was in a bar called the Four Rivers....," a compelling portrayal of psychological drama playing out in a bar, the most impressive piece on display here. Other works make painted or found-object allusion to altarpieces of medieval or folk-art traditions (a cut-tin tondo refers to the Mexican tradition of santos, for example), and update religious themes such as the Madonna and child.

David Alsobrooks takes a winning turn with art for our times. Each of the monumental heads in his show is a stenciled image of the big players of the Bush administration: Donald Rumsfeld decorated with buckshot script, Karl Rove against a background of shredded documents, Condoleezza Rice done in bleach on dark pinstriped fabric, and George W. Bush rendered in motor oil, framed in matchbooks. Each work is tagged "I am 4 sale," with additional text outlining political sins. The artist has also created a book and CD, "Facts Don't Matter," to extend his critique. The show isn't afraid to take a stand in a time when we need artists to do what they have done historically (Goya, Daumier, Kollwitz, Grosz, to name a few) -- be a moral compass for society.

Lindsay Pichaske's show of ceramics presents but a few choice works in a spare environment, but it is a strategy that succeeds. The effect of the small, emaciated figure titled "Light as a Feather," prone, bald, staring with its lifelike eyes at the viewer and displaying red-tipped fingers and toes, is visceral. A red human figure sits atop a pile of dead rabbits, another figure emerges from a draped second skin repellently sprinkled with hairlike follicles. These figures are a poignant representation of entwined human and animal tragedy -- the seemingly inescapable legacy of violence.

In the Allenton Gallery of the DAC building, Nancy McCallum's delicate "Atmospheric Disturbances," richly colored, highly glazed oils on panel, poetically contrast flight and gravity, in the form of infinite skies and plant roots. In "Halcyon," a broken pennant spans a sky that meets a low horizon line of bare, winter tree branches. "Afternoon" presents a palpable, hazy green swamp, while "Time Lapse" limns a quiet nocturne of close blue and black tones.

Upstairs in the Semans Gallery, the pairing of paintings by Mark Brown and Mario Marzan



Wan Yu Wendy Chien's 'My Hero My Land' is on display at Lump Gallery.

continues the theme of weather. Marzan's intricate linear patterns form mind-maps of storm movement, architectures, and dislocation. Brown presents paintings from the ongoing "Winterreise" series, at first glance, and austere evocation of the Schubert song cycle from which it takes its name. A closer look yields increasing subtlety and feats of paint handling, which take one further into an introspective state of mind. Open tonight until 9 p.m. 120 Morris St., Durham, 560-2713 (DAG) and 560-2787 (DAC), www.durhamartguild.com and www.durhamarts.org.

On Tuesday at 7 p.m. Gerry Lynch, an important longtime contributor to the Raleigh art scene, will speak on her work at the closing of her fine show at Lee Hansley Gallery. In 18 large-scale works on paper, Lynch creates delicate moments, such as the fresh green field of "August/Emma," splashed with touches of metallic gold wash and collaged laces, and bold statements, as in "Autumn," featuring a Zen circle fearlessly brushed in red on black. Throughout the ambitious collages, treasures such as snippets of antique Japanese prints peek through rhythmic orchestrations of diverse materials in a strong summation of Lynch's lifelong aesthetic pursuits. Twelve of the works, based on the seasons, will travel to the Betty Ray McCain Gallery of the Progress Energy Center for Performing Arts, where they will be on view through September. 225 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh, 828-7557, www.leehansleygallery.com.

At Lump Gallery in Raleigh, this is the last weekend to view "Heroes," an inspiring selection of works by 47 artists, invited by curators elin o'Hara slavick and Laura Sharp Wilson, in homage to their personal heroes. The results are varied, with heroes (and heroines) running the gamut from Sojourner Truth to Cindy Sheehan and Charles Darwin to Laurence King, a 15-year-old killed by a fellow classmate, memorialized here with a desk, a notebook telling his story, and commemorative pencils, by Nestor Gil. Saturday from 1 to 5 p.m. 505 S. Blount St., Raleigh, 821-9999, lumps1@bellsouth.net.

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