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Four Artists Discuss Underrated Medium

The First Annual Yellow Barn Drawing Exhibition took place last weekend and featured 29 artists.

By Bora Mici | Email the author | August 26, 2011 Print 0 Comments

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What some consider an underrated art form was acknowledged with an exclusive showcase last weekend at the First Annual Yellow Barn Drawing Exhibition, which took place in the Yellow Barn Studio and Gallery Saturday, Aug. 20, and Sunday, Aug. 21.

"Drawing is like making an expressive gesture with the advantage of permanence," said French artist Henri Matisse of the medium.

For Jordan Bruns, gallery manager and Basic Principles of Drawing instructor at the Yellow Barn Studio and Gallery, drawing is certainly fundamental but not quite as permanent as Matisse would have us believe. Bruns, who strives to convey the fine line between order and chaos, permanence and impermanence through his large graphite creations often depicting ruins, is constantly working through erasure.

"My drawings are about rebirth and destruction. Things have a duality about them. When they go away, they tend to come back again," Bruns said. "I am always making changes as long as the work is evolving."

For **Gavin Glakas**, figure drawing and painting instructor at the Yellow Barn Studio and Gallery, drawing is as simple as it gets. It is elemental:

"Drawing is the purest, most simple way to convey an idea. No color or texture—no bells or whistles. Just a piece of paper and a stick of charcoal," he said.

Glakas transforms charcoal into planes of light, rendering life-like portraits and figures with great facility—as if he were eating breakfast cereal.

Vian Borchert, studio drawing instructor at the Arts Barn in Gaithersburg, goes back to the basics.

Borchert will often pick up a pen or a pencil when she wants to reflect quietly and a fully-thought out drawing emerges from her process.

"Charcoal, graphite, colored pencil, marker, conte, pen and ink are really easy to just pick up," she said. "Drawing is hands-on. You can feel the hand of the artist in the work. It's a very honest medium."

Nancy Abeles, assistant studio instructor at the Yellow Barn, thinks drawing can be funny and also a vehicle for speaking out. Her recent series of graphite and color pencil drawings comments on the "suburban mindset" and what she describes as the unique quandary of women born in the 1950s.

"They were presented with a lot of new opportunities, but also burdened by heightened expectations," she said.

The series features caricaturesque, poster-like self-portraits.

With a background in illustration and advertising, Abeles cites MAD Magazine and its "visual, satyrical humor" as an early influence on her work and sensibility as an artist.

Twenty-nine individual perspectives on the art of drawing came together for the exhibition, which was unique in that it exclusively featured the medium.

"Drawing is often neglected in major shows," Borchert said. "Most shows tend to focus on painting, but you have to be able to draw well in order to paint."

"Even our multimedia members show in the winter ends up being only about 20 percent drawings," said Bruns, who organized and designed the show. "This was a fun way to showcase drawing, which is fundamental, and to put together the work of students and instructors."

A complete list of the exhibition's participating artists includes: *Nancy Abeles, Walter Bartman, Halcy Bohen, **Vian Borchert**, Margarita Brovkina, **J. Jordan Bruns**, Paige Duncan, Eliot Feldman, Nan Fuhrman, **Gavin Glakas**, Arlene Howard, Ron Jensen, Shelley Lowenstein, Sara Maddox, Lin Lin Mao, Kathleen Nelick, Barbara French Pace, Barrett Ripin, Julia Rogers, Paula Rubin-Wexler, Hannah Beth Sanford, Ann Schaefer, Sara Sennett, Rona Siskind, **Lida Stifel**, Cicely Thigpen, Joyce Turk, Ellen Tuttle and Maureen Ward*.

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