



Target by Joan M Broek

SURFACE TREATMENT

While the COVID-19 situation is keeping the galleries closed, we will keep your art experiences alive by looking back at memorable shows/reviews, as well as offering some new and special online exhibitions. Today we revisit human rights concerns from 2010 that are still relevant.

What: “The 5th Annual Human Rights Art Exhibition”

Where: South Texas College Art Gallery

When: 2010

Art and Human Rights

This exhibition reflects a growing trend for art to address and make known humanitarian issues often ignored by the national press.

By NANCY MOYER

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

A quietly disturbing exhibit awaits visitors at the STC Art Gallery. “The 5th Annual Human Rights Art Exhibition” was planned in conjunction with the Sex Trafficking Conference of 2010, held at South Texas College. Richard Lubben served as exhibit coordinator and juror.

This exhibit is intended to serve as an educational event addressing global and regional human rights concerns. About 25 artists are participating in this show, including those of local, national, and international caliber. At the gallery entrance, several works from previous Human Rights exhibits set the tone for the current display. And even though

their content is still relevant, they seem almost superficial compared to the excellent and poignant art works presented in the current competition.

A Best of Show Award was earned by Jim Boden's oil on Mylar painting, "Interrogation #42". The figure denies the perception of humanity; he is faceless, and his arms are hidden from view. The anonymous character of the man's back renders him an object to his abusers. Slashes of red paint, deftly applied, effectively suggest violent mistreatment in this diminutive painting. Reinforcing the concept of "captive," "Eye of the Beholder" by Stephanie Meyer presents an unnerving yet mesmerizing effect. In this work all we see is a partial face with an eye looking through a fresh cutout in a rusted iron structure. The eye stalks even the viewer and can serve as an analogy to the power of the media screen that also captures a viewer's focus for emotional leverage.

A variety of human rights violations are addressed in this exhibit ranging from human trafficking, sex trafficking, and general rights violations, to horrible violence against the innocent. One of the most disturbing works on display is "Manufacturing Human Bombs #1", oil, by Kim Truesdal. This small painting depicts a baby with a black mask over his head. It is a testimony to, and a reminder of, the lack of value accorded to female children in parts of our world.

"People of the Wind" by Shin-Hee-Chin, evinces a quieter commentary. In this mixed media, quilt-like fabric work, tiny representations of faces are placed within each quilted square, yet the small scale of the images evokes feelings of separation. Delicate threads and stitches are used to build facial structures that are partially obscured by dark shading. They have been ignored and their lives are partially unknown. Strokes on the background fabric suggest tall grasses blowing in the wind, separating them even more from man-made civilization. This Merit Award winner is an empathetic expression of the isolated and often lifestyle-of-abuse of a nomadic people of Iran. It could serve as a statement for many indigenous peoples.

"Through these conceptually and aesthetically unique art works we hope to connect with viewers," exclaimed Lubben. "We also hope to open both internal and external dialogues and confront the many horrors and injustices still found in our modern world." The artistic quality in this year's Human Rights Art Exhibition seems to have come into its own. This is an impressive exhibition with its keen imagery and thoughtful media provoke lingering contemplation, unease, and perhaps guilt.

"The 5th Annual Human Rights Art Exhibition" reflects a growing trend for art to address and make known issues often ignored by the national press.

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