



Untitled by Paul Prichard

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: *7th Annual Fine Arts Exhibit*

Where: McAllen Creative Incubator, 601 N. Main Street, McAllen

When: Through May.

Hours: Daily except Sunday, 9am-5pm

Contact: 956-687-2787

Recognition

With this *7th Annual Fine Arts Exhibit*, sponsored by the McAllen Arts Council, visual artists who have had studios at the McAllen Creative Arts Incubator (McA2) since its inception are recognized. This year the MAC showcases fourteen past and present residents of McA2 and has also invited a few others to take part. The *Exhibit* is displayed in the McA2 Art Gallery.

This year there are forty-three works on display, mostly paintings. The exhibit does not distinguish among current residents, past residents, and the invited artists, but all the art works reflect skillful achievement with their chosen medium. While interesting distinctions of purpose exist among the various participants, there is a noticeable trend toward the conservative bias in both the realistic and abstract approaches. Seasoned artists who demonstrate unique personal directions in their work include Ruth Hoyt and Luis Ramirez. Hoyt has achieved recognition for her masterful photographs of Texas wildlife; Ramirez is a former university art professor. True to their personal visions, Hoyt documents the South Texas nature scene that captures the spirit of her subject while Ramirez catches the uniqueness of South Texas and Northern Mexico in his realistic paintings.

The majority of the McA2 residents seem to purpose their work not so much on personal concepts expressing their own concerns, or directing their expressions to like-minded collectors, but create with the general marketplace in mind. The artworks in this

show will appeal to the general sensibility and are mostly informed by past art movements, creating comfort art for the average viewer. These works may be seen as artistic solutions for someone looking for original art for their home, but who also wants something easy to live with - something that won't constantly remind them of difficult realities. This exhibit seems to avoid topics with negative messages; it is friendly and obedient. However, Coco Salinas' abstract "Sedimentos" triptych is art that can liven up any dull room.

Appealing to the novice artist, the McA2 Creative Incubator was established through the McAllen Chamber of Commerce for the purpose of providing support and workspace for hopeful and upwardly mobile local artists. Here, through low studio fees, legal assistance, and technical support, budding artisans can more fully develop their skills not only in the traditional visual arts, but also in music, dance, and film. McA2 contains thirteen art studios and convenient resources located within the old, but completely remodeled, McAllen library. Resident artists can take advantage of exhibit spaces in the spacious central court as well as the McA2 Art Gallery. Artists sometimes take up permanent residency, putting their artistic business model into affect. Their work is public-friendly in the open court's visible studios. Regular events showcasing the artists' works are open to the community.

Overall, there is a generic feeling to the 7th *Annual Fine Arts Exhibit* that too often reflects tried and true subject matter and ideas. Landscapes and flowers, traditional figures, still life imagery, as well as work informed by celebrity, are there. The general marketplace is a noble market, but does it really exist?

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