



Untitled Portrait of Z Jorgensen by Kyle A Chaput

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: *Art Faculty Exhibition 2016*
Where: STC VAM Art Gallery, Bldg. B-103, Pecan Street campus
When: Through Dec. 15. Hours: Mon-Fri from 9am-5pm
Info: artgallery@southtexascollege.edu
www.southtexasart.com

STC's Visual Voice

The *Art Faculty Exhibition 2016* at South Texas College features a collection of art works that touches on individual concerns while simultaneously suggesting expressive restraint. With artistic expressions combined with relevant ideas, this exhibit embodies a collective compatibility and features works by twenty artists, all offering both visual and mental stimuli for the viewer.

It's hard to know where to start; every work wants attention and seems to have something to say. This is art that doesn't just comment, it wants to start a gentle dialogue with you. The exhibit offers a gamut of approaches to subjects from conceptually based works, such as "Subject Matter vs Content" by Tom Matthews, all the way to Charles Neumann's empathetic "Untitled" reliquary.

Matthews' conceptual work is the boldest in the show, displaying a bible and an "opposing" religious book on pedestals divided by what appears to be a trash bin. The books no longer have their content; they remain as empty subjects. Their pages have been removed and now reside in the bin as unreadable fragments. They seem the same; are they? Further social commentary finds its niche with "Our House" by Stephen Fessler, "Trophy to 2016" by David Freeman, "M-16 Scream" by Eduardo Garcia, and "Any Day Now" by Nathan England. Fessler has insightfully painted our ecosystem as the interior of a house; Freeman's heroic trophy depicts the cluttered mess of 2016 as reminiscent of a wedding cake gone wrong and includes unsettling moments such as a gilded rooster laying skulls; England and Garcia speak of the fear/anxiety of gun violence.

With disintegrating imagery combined with mixed techniques, Kyle A. Chaput's prints reinforce our belief in the beauty of traditional printmaking.

In this midst of familiar categories, two works really stood out to me due to the unique responses that each separately evoked. Charles Neumann's "Untitled" speaks of empathy. People's sentimental attachments to personal objects such as cars and other belongings have been defined as representing their empathy levels, translating to their ability to feel for others. The work-seasoned hammer, now without its head, is long past its days of function, yet Neumann has displayed it with reverence and kindness as a treasured reliquary. The second work emits the inner visual voice of Luis Corpus. His stunningly hypnotic mixed media work, "Bad Little Hombre," is a realistic frontal portrait of a little boy, but Corpus's superior drawing ability combines sharp focus with softened perspective creating a surprising tension in the boy's face. Simultaneously, we feel a fascination for beauty and unexpected invasion of psychological privacy. Wow.

There aren't many opportunities here in the RGV to experience a single exhibit with so many polished and thoughtful works as are found in this show. Although it certainly isn't an edgy show, it has a confident ambiance from an art program with a lot to offer. Make an effort to get over to see *Art Faculty Exhibition 2016* and listen to its loud visual voice.

Nancy Moyer, Professor Emerita of Art from UTRGV, is an art critic for The Monitor. She may be reached at nmoyer@rgv.rr.com