



*Dog*

## SURFACE TREATMENT

What: *Ezra Stieglitz*  
Where: Beyond Arts Gallery, 114 North A Street, Harlingen  
When: Through May 21. Hours are Tues-Fri: 11am-7pm,  
Sat: 10am-5pm  
Contact: (956) 230-2859

## Playful Unity

Colorado artist, Ezra Stieglitz, returns to Beyond Arts Gallery with a new and well-organized exhibit. *Ezra Stieglitz* cohesively expresses who the artist is through multiple art forms - sculpture, digital prints, LED boxes, and drawing. The quality of work has a more sophisticated luster when compared to his previous showing, and his varied output now successfully reads as a unified whole. This new exhibit has the playful ambiance of an artist who travels life in the positive lane.

While his prints, LED boxes, and drawings line the walls of Beyond Arts' secondary gallery, his whimsical sculptures dominate its floor space. Welded parts of old and new metals are combined to suggest humans and creatures. Stieglitz' clever and frequently humorous configurations encourage closer attention to their imaginative and often surprising parts. "The sculpture that I brought down last year was all prefabricated metal," said Stieglitz. "It was all stuff that had been purchased at a store, while this is more found objects and repurposing old objects." Coming from a metalsmithing background, I was particularly intrigued/amused with his use of repurposed flatware as feathers and talons in his "Bird" pieces. With a contrast of new polished parts playing against old rusted surfaces, the sculptures have achieved a spatial tension and contrast that give life to their inanimate beginnings.

Although the LED boxes exist somewhere between decorator pieces and sculpture, these metal configurations enhanced with backlighting can actually read as relief sculpture. For me, "Metal Figure Hanging" is the most interesting and dramatic of this group. It features alternating red and darker lights rhythmically seeping out onto the visual surface through its cutout patterns. Formatted as a rectangular painting, the central anthropomorphic shape suggests an alien entity. "If I sell this one," said Stieglitz, "half the profits are going to my sister's kid, and then the other half are going to my girlfriend's sister's kid. I want to be a good uncle; it's going to go to their college tuition down the road." The LED boxes also bring out the artist's altruistic side.

There are several digital prints and some are notable in their complexity and beauty. One of the latter, "Nicolas Caged Emotions," indirectly informed by the celebrity, comes with a quirky story of its creation. According to Steiglitz, he found a likable painting - a woman's portrait - at a thrift store. Happily bringing it home, he met with unsupportive words from his girlfriend who reportedly asked, "What the hell is this? It looks like Nicolas Cage." Justifying his purchase, Stieglitz photographed the acrylic painting, went online for a picture of Nicolas Cage, overlaid the two and divined the fascinating and surprising result.

Generally, Stieglitz is less interested in painting this year, partly due to his purchase of a plasma cutter, a metal sculptor's guilty pleasure; he is now doing more welding on a daily basis and considers sculpture his strongest area of interest because, he confessed, "I get to play with it the most."

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