



*Dental Safari*

## SURFACE TREATMENT

What: *Life with Wrath* by Philip Field  
Where: Lobby Gallery, McAllen Public Library, Nolana at 23<sup>rd</sup> Street  
When: Until June 5, 2016, Library hours

### **Fast Frozen Art**

Philip Field, UTRGV Professor of Art, takes his imaginative Daily Diary allegories beyond their usual narrative with his new exhibit, *Life with Wrath*, at the McAllen Public Library. These digital prints are a visual narrative about life with his wife, and several works document a visit to the Library. For *Life with Wrath*, Field has placed images in a poster format, providing whimsy, importance, and a commentary about digital printing all at once.

Over the years, through pencil drawings on 4"x6" index cards, Field has recalled in a humorous manner the main event of each day, presenting each creation to his wife. She has been recreated in this series as the red and fiery creature named Wrathhuesos (Wrath for short). Playing upon her love and care for the couple's large collection of lizards, Wrath's form is lizard-like; Field's persona in the series is that of a Bear.

Digital printmaking is not Field's first artistic identity. The earlier part of his artistic career focused on intaglio printmaking and painting, boasting solo shows of his intaglios as distant as Japan, and STC recently exhibited a large selection of his later paintings. In moving into a digital format for his ideas, Field said, "I was really segueing in the early days, not from painting to digital, but from etching to digital. It's so much more flexible, it's so much more forgiving and so much faster to do." He explained that a lot of equipment is necessary just to get an image burned into the metal plate; it is also very labor intensive, particularly the need for separate plates for each color. But with the computer, an idea/image can rapidly come into unified existence and be printed with unlimited coloration. Field also likes the ease of incorporating various media into his prints. Reflecting upon the Pop Art movement that surrounded him in 1960s in New York, he says he loved popular culture, but it never seemed to fit in with the traditional

European printmaking techniques that he embraced at the time. Now, with computer printing, he can have it all - scan anything, include photographs, draw, and, in a sense, paint. "At the Iron Skillet LWW" combines a drawing of the scene with his own figural creations, photographic images, and scanned patterns, blending them together in a narrative reality that accurately reflects his life.

His use of the compositional framing device, "Fast Food Frozen Mexican Style Art," strikes me as a serendipitous assessment of his digital work. According to Field, he was eating a frozen Mexican dinner that came in this packaging back in the late 1990s. Having just purchased a scanner, he scanned everything including the Mexican dinner package. "I just liked the package," he commented. "I thought of changing it, but I just liked the context of giving it (this series) a flavor, a smooth flavor. It's digital so it's fast; it has an association there." It also reflects an association with the Valley's Tex-Mex culture. The act of applying the frame to all of the prints is a bold statement comparing fast digital prints to the more slowly produced etchings. *Life with Wrath* gives us art as fast food, quick yet satisfying, with a dash of cultural flavor.

"I miss the embossment of the ink," Field confessed, "and I miss the etching needle, the feel of a pen. The digital pen feels more like a paintbrush. So these digital prints have some of the elements I did in etching, but they have more of a feel to me to what I did in painting."

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