



Minuet

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: *Shared Experiences by Becky Young*
Where: House of Frames, 212 W. Jackson Ave., Harlingen
When: Displayed earlier this month
Information: (956) 423-8282

Comfort and Humanness

Becky Young finds significance and humanity in a material that could easily be overlooked. Her exhibit, *Shared Experiences*, at House of Frames, offered insight and wit along with a relevant sense of design. Collages made from tissue boxes were repurposed into geometric designs inspired by the meaning of the word, "comfort". Watercolor paintings recording her Mexico experiences were also displayed.

The design concept used by Young in her collages resonates of playful geometry, but the objectivity of mathematics is not where Young wants to take us with her work. Although she identifies most of her collages simply by color, hers is an emotional journey born of compassion.

Young began collecting tissue boxes in 2013 beginning with a retreat with friends. Conversations about the plight of immigrants and personal experiences were often punctuated with tears. Young said that she always had tissue boxes handy for people because she learned through a counseling course never to offer a tissue to a crying person - it would send the message that you were uncomfortable with their tears. Rather, a tissue box should be placed on the table, and if somebody wanted to take a tissue, they could. She kept the empty boxes. "I collected a bunch," admitted Young, "and my children were afraid I was going to become a hoarder."

The art started when she was making a child's comforter; having laid boxes around on various textiles, the patterns on the boxes blended with the quilting materials. Young started seeing them as comforters, too. "From my perspective," she explained, "a comforter has a lot of significance. Our sadness and our tears, whether it's the person who's crossing the border or the person who's here; everyone has that same issue with being ill or being sad, that's our humanness." As a missionary, Young sees a darker tissue analogy with humanity. Used tissues are thrown away, leaving an empty box. Countries throw away people, too.

Her lively collages reflect wit and sensitivity to pattern. Some of the collages have a distinctly American quilt feeling, such as the "Cama Matrimonial", while others suggest the colors of Mexico or even Asia. The pairing of red-violet and gray patterns in "Comforter: Lilac" evokes a kimono or maybe an origami folding, sending our thoughts to a distant country. Young has considered the tissue boxes in the global landscape. "In Cuba, and some other countries they don't have tissue boxes," she said. "Nobody can afford that. You buy tissue by the roll. In India they don't buy it; it's by the roll. But we have this luxury of buying tissue boxes that fit into our décor, and that's humanness too; we want to fit in." She has made them even more luxurious: artworks.

Comforters, soft blankets pieced together with loving hands, and comforters from Puffs, Kleenex, or others, help Young sense the peace of the Holy Spirit as she deals with our broken world. Young has been a missionary living in Peru and on the U.S.- Mexico border for 27 years.

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