

A Profusion of Pleasure

Size doesn't matter, but color and narrative do in 'Art on Paper' show at Weatherspoon

GREENSBORO — Among the highlights of the roughly 5,000 pieces in the Weatherspoon Art Museum's permanent collection are the 600 paper-based works that make up its Dillard Collection.

This collection is named for the former Dillard Paper Company, now part of the xpedx corporation. It was assembled from donations of works the company bought from a series of large, annual group shows it has sponsored at the museum almost every year since



Tom Patterson

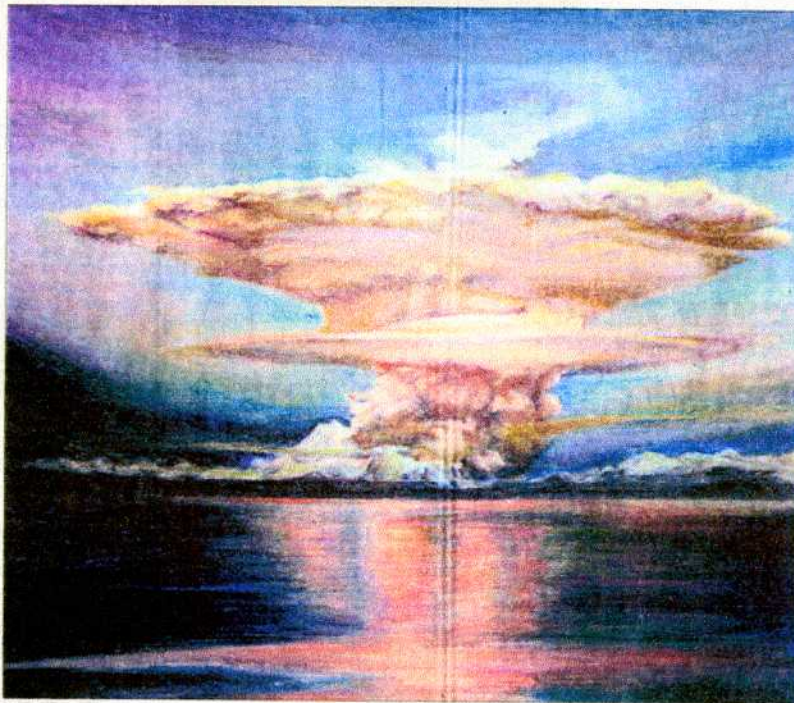
1965. The 39th and latest installment in the 'Art on Paper' series is on view at the Weatherspoon through Jan. 21, after which several of these works will remain in the Dillard Collection, courtesy of xpedx.

With more than 100 works by 86 artists from three continents, it's as lively as any previous 'Art on Paper' show, thanks to its profusion of color, detail, virtuoso drawing and narrative content, among other special qualities.

Some of the most striking or otherwise interesting works are quite small, such as three acrylic and graphite drawings by Mario Marzan, from a series titled "Sinter Method: Views from the First House." Each of these pieces is a delicate, pastel-hue line drawing in which landscape elements are fluidly interspersed with abstract passages.

Similarly delicate and intimately scaled, if more purely abstract, is Karen Margolis' *Floating Limbus*. An amorphously shaped cloud, composed of various size dots, it seems to pulsate on the paper's surface. This optically stimulating effect is achieved through the organization of dots into discrete groups according to their size and colors, which include black and several shades of pink and purple.

Hanging alongside Margolis' drawing is a piece by Aurelie Fourrier that draws you in for very different reasons. Its title, *Le Complot Anarchiste*, is the caption for an illustration on a vintage French magazine cover from 1893. The illustration shows four men involved in



Violet Hopkins' *New Face in Hell*, a pencil on paper mounted on aluminum.

a struggle in a bedroom, with one of them being strangled by another. Fourrier substantially modified this printed artifact by drawing in additional details that transform the setting into a nocturnal forest where the trees are crawling with scores of black and white snails apparently observing the human action.

Another of the show's narrative works, Barbara Schreiber's *The Story of the Little Lamb*, has a more involved, tragic plot line. It's made up of seven sequentially numbered acrylic drawings, each in an understated cartoon

style. They're displayed like the panels of a comic strip. In each scene, a lamb in what appears to be a desert setting encounters a different object or situation. The sequence concludes with scenes in which an explosion of flames erupts on the horizon, leaving the lamb lying evidently dead in the final drawing.

Violet Hopkins' oil-on-aluminum painting *New Face in Hell* is thematically related to Schreiber's piece, albeit without the humorous tone. Providing a more unsettling, illusionistic counterpart to the explosion scene in the

lamb's story, Hopkins' little painting is a photorealistic view of a two-tiered mushroom cloud erupting on the horizon beyond a placid expanse of ocean.

At the other end of the size scale are several outstanding pieces, most notably Ed Pien's intricate paper cutout *Encircling*. It's a panoramic view of seven people perched in a forest of densely entangled, leafless vines, all rendered in black silhouette.

Also commanding attention because of its large size — not to mention its riotous, Day-Glo palette and wacky imagery — is *Free the Pets*, a painted

collage installation by a three-artist collective known as Dearandrop. Wedged into a corner, it's a free-form sampling of printed imagery from cartoons, children's books, wrestling magazines and other pop-culture sources intermingled with cutout passages of handpainting. It takes on a weirdly psychedelic, 3-D appearance when you view it through specially tinted glasses.

Michael Scoggins adopted what passes for a child's patriotic notebook drawing to a 67-by-51-inch format. His piece, titled *I Question Your Patriotism*, replicates a childlike drawing of a vertically oriented U.S. flag on a page from a spiral notebook. The confrontational title, in an enlarged version of a child's labored handwriting, is printed in black across the bottom of the drawing, which is the most immediately effective of several politically themed works in the show.

Seeing what's special

Another noteworthy large-scale piece is Marco Maggi's cut-paper installation titled *Hotbed*, which also includes decidedly small-scale components. Displayed on a low pedestal, it consists of 77 reams of white paper, neatly stacked and aligned to form a rectangular grid.

Only when you view the piece up close, from a crouched position on the floor beside it, can you see what's special about it. The top sheet of paper in each of the 77 stacks has been precision-cut and otherwise manipulated to create an angular, architectural sculptural form on a miniature scale. Maggi's installation also stands out as one of the few sculptural works in this year's 'Art on Paper.'

The show isn't short on works of special interest, though. Among others to look for are pieces by David Dupuis, Linda Williams McCune, Dominic McGill, Ryan McGinness, Mackie Osborne, Peter Saul, Mathias Schmiel and Jon Smith.

■ The Weatherspoon Art Museum is on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, at the intersection of Spring Garden and Tate streets. For more information, call 334-5770.

Winston-Salem Journal

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JOURNAL COLUMNIST

Sunday, December 31, 2006

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