

The Fitchburg Star

April 22, 1999 News



One of the showcased pieces at Promega's Biotech Center's current art show. The show, "The Art of Women - A Collection of Methods" is open to the public.

A Walk on the Female Side

by Ann Waters

The latest in the series of art shows at the Promega Biopharmaceutical Technology Center, is titled "The Art of Women - A Collection of Methods". The opening Tuesday evening brought out a larger than usual crowd. The artists, most of them local, were in attendance to explain their works and rub shoulders with the attendees.

The public is invited to take a stroll through the halls of Promega's Biotech Center for a varied experience with the different mediums represented. Not a show for the sofa traditionalist, the eight artists, who also happen to be women, make a stab at pulling out the fluff of sofa stuffing. Take O'Reilly's paintings for instance. Large, abstract shapes in bright, primary colors dominate her paintings in oils. They challenge the viewer with their non-traditional colors and form. O'Reilly, a geneticist with McArdle Labs, loves to blend science with art. Many of her images deal with shapes she has discovered under the eye of the microscope.

Those organic shapes that she works with daily have found their way into her newest work, a three part sectional, combining faux stained glass with x-ray film. O'Reilly's "Exploring Molecular Worlds" is a refreshing use of mixed media. Used x-ray film from failed genetic experiments to detect DNA, RNA and proteins, are the clear segments interspersed between the painted glass. "The road to scientific discovery is lined with failed experiments. This artwork is dedicated to all scientists who persevere despite numerous failed experiments in pursuit of scientific truth," says O'Reilly.

Bright spots in the exhibit are the many neon sculptures by Marj Inman. Her light sculptures are interspersed throughout the halls, creating lively interludes. Favorite pieces include the Mountain Quilt - a juxtaposition of neon light tubes on a quilted section of material. Also favored is a bright red King Kong. Marj is co-owner of Electric Eye Neon.

Another artist whose work is unusual is Leslee Nelson. She works with wire, paper and paper wrapped twirls. These wrapped sculptural shapes are interspersed throughout the exhibit, adding texture to the

mostly two dimension works.

The Biotech Center must have been designed with large art pieces in mind. The second floor has high ceilings and huge windows that illuminate the large pieces that fit so well there. For this exhibit, this space was mostly filled with pieces by watercolorist Laura Draeger. One over-sized hanging paper piece by Leslee Nelson accompanies them. Draeger's large geometric pieces combine tightly regulated woven strips of intense color that seem to glow by their own nucleic power, giving each piece an appearance of radiant light.

Other artists to experience in this "walk of mediums" include photographer Jan Krieger, represented with a collection of black and white images; colored pencil artist Barbara Ahrens whose geometric rendering of people reminds one of those wooden "Bill-Ding" blocks, brought to life with neon colored streaks of light. Acrylic artist Katherine Steichen Rosing is well represented with a large collection of her emoting impressionistic mind-scenes and last but not least is a collection of Geri Schrab's petroglyph watercolor cave paintings.

Show producer Daniel Swadener has again brought us art for thought.

Swadener said that he put this all-women show together as "a kind of balance and atonement for the all-male dominated shows". The purpose and direction he tries to achieve through the shows is to "provide a conduit for the artists and help them find an audience."

Take a Walk on the Female Side. The exhibit is interesting, thought provoking and worth experiencing.

Visit the show during business hours (M-F 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) at the Promega BioPharmaceutical Technology Center, 5445 East Cheryl Parkway, in Fitchburg. For further questions, or to schedule a group tour, call 277-2669.