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Photographs taken by Nina Williams.

When speaking of artistic talent here at Radford University, the conversation or the thoughts have to do with the numerous art students of all different variations. However, how often do we actually think of our staff being the talented ones?

This past weekend I went down to the RUAM Gallery Downtown which had artwork of adjunct faculty from the RU department of the arts. To say that these people are talented seems almost an understatement of the word. The pieces, all in different mediums and done by different artists, show a wild array of themes, thoughts and ideas.

One of the first artists who's art I viewed was Yumiko Ichikawa and her numerous paintings and drawings. She had two charcoal pencil drawings; *Sitting Male Nude* and *Evelyn*, and two oil on canvas paintings; *Adam* and *Eve*. However out of all of these, the first to grasp my attention was *Evelyn*.

The piece is a portrait of a woman and the incredible detail that is put into it just amazes me beyond belief. She seems tired, having a slight ring under her eyes and her lips are in a resting pout as she stares with glazed eyes at some unseen point. It is an incredibly beautiful piece and her others are no different in the amount of beauty they hold within themselves, but personally *Evelyn* is my favorite.

The next artist that I viewed was Shaun C. Whiteside. He had two pieces in the gallery and one immediately sees his largest piece, *Darkness*. A piece done in India ink, *Darkness* resembles a Rorschach test ink blot more than anything. To me, it is a sort of dark entity that sort of just stands there, reflecting perhaps someone's fear of the dark or rather the unknown, which is something most people fear.

His other work, an acrylic piece by the name of *Elegy to the U.S. Republic No. 3*, shows something different. While a good deal of the painting is pure black, there are a few spots where it seems the light has broken through to reveal these large white blotches. I am not sure why, but the piece seems a bit macabre to me, which is why this piece fascinates me and why the name seems so fitting.

The next artist that I came upon was Knic Umstead. The first of his pieces that I saw was *Ups and Downs on the Carousel*, an oil painting of, well, of exactly what it sounds like. Although, there is a slight twist. The horse, which the viewer seems to be seeing from the rider, is braying and looks almost frightened. Perhaps it's the rider's steed through life and the numerous ups and downs that it throws the rider.

The other three paintings of Umstead have a theme of water and, if it were not for the fact that they hung up in the gallery, it would be difficult to distinguish them from real water. Two of them are oil glazes, *Water Onto Rock* and *Water Over Rock*, and the other, *Large Small Waterfall*, is an oil painting. All three are very well done and exhibit a talent that I could only wish to have.

The next artist, W. Ratcliffe, had twelve small art works, all of which were a part of his *Old World Series*. All 12 paintings are of ancient ruins or buildings, some that the viewer would immediately recognize, and are all done in a unique silver gelatin paint.

Now, each picture looks incredibly realistic and appear to be photographs, yet I am unsure since the medium is a paint. However, I adore this series. As a lover of history, these paintings made me smile as I got to explore the old ruins from the comfort of the small downtown gallery.

The next, and one of the last artist which I saw, was Chris Lively. Lively's art was very different from those around him. All of his works are done in porcelain and almost all of them feature a blue tint of some kind and are simply stunning. These pieces are hard to describe since they are mostly pots and platters of some kind, but they all are wonderfully made and show a great deal of work behind them.

The last works that I looked at were photographs by Jan Downs. The three works on display all featured a theme of being about the rural United States. My personal favorite of these was her string of photos titled *In Trouble*.

They picture a bull rider falling off the bull and almost getting trampled by the large and wild creature. Luckily enough, he avoided it but it still shows a pretty interesting story in pure pictures, which I find pretty interesting to see.

I encourage you all to go down to 1129 E. Main St. to go view these wonderful pieces of work for yourselves and create your own conclusions about what they each mean, because that is the beauty of art. It means something completely different to every person. So please go out and view these amazing pieces of work before they are gone!

By: Nina Williams