

New Art Exhibits in Dickinson

Katya Beisel, Staff Writer

As an icy rain and wintery chill descended on the evening of Friday, January 23, Piedmont Virginia Community College's V. Earl Dickinson building emanated warmth and welcome as two separate exhibits opened in its galleries. Curated by PVCC faculty members Beryl Solla and Fenella Belle respectively, *A Necessary Fiction* and *Summer of Love* opened amidst a jovial atmosphere, replete with conversation, food, and music.

A Necessary Fiction features the work of Kim Boggs and Michael Fitts and was curated by Beryl Solla, who is a professor of art at PVCC. While Boggs and Fitts each utilize different materials and styles, their shared focus on alternative materials unite the distinct and individual pieces of the exhibit. Boggs creates assemblage art, meaning that she uses found objects to form multi-dimensional pieces while Fitts' works centered on photorealistic paint renderings of mundane objects on metal.

However, *A Necessary Fiction* serves a greater purpose than to provide mere decoration. "We link everything to our classes. It's very much a student-centered event," Solla said when asked how the exhibits impacted PVCC students. Boggs and Fitts' work will give Solla's students vibrant and diverse references as they study assemblage and learn from Fitts, who is a



Photography by Katya Beisel

local artist and will lecture in Solla's class.

Summer of Love possessed a much more relaxed and liberated atmosphere to *A Necessary Fiction*'s more textured style. Adjunct professor Fenella Belle curated the exhibit, which features the work of artists Sheila Metcalf-Tobin, Leslie Wilkes, Amy Helfand, and Michael Miller, whose psychedelically vibrant paintings inspired the collection's name. Belle shares a personal connection with the artists featured in the exhibit, which she began conceptualizing over a year and a half ago; they studied together at the Art Institute of Chicago. While the works featured in this exhibit are as unique and diverse as the artists behind them, the theme that unifies them is bold, effervescent color and individual aesthetic. "There's something that everyone can find to enjoy and I hope everyone goes home and gets inspired to make art and buy art," said Belle in an interview.

Thanks to the dedication and effort of professors Solla and Belle, PVCC students, faculty, and community members now have access to not one but two professionally compiled and curated exhibits replete with fantastic pieces from talented artists. So, next time you find yourself a few minutes early to an art class or need to kill time before meeting with a professor, take a moment to appreciate the stunning array of art assembled in the North and South Galleries as well as the work that brought them here. The exhibits will be open to view until April 1.



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