

Sheldon Art Gallery

Photos, metal shown

By David Ware

Currently on display in the Sheldon Art Gallery print gallery are a series of photographs by Michael Simon of Beloit College. Simon employs a deliberately slow technique in his image composition, employing extremely slow, fine-grained films, small camera apertures and wide-angle lenses in his quest for an extreme depth of field.

Exterior views predominate in Simon's work, both with and without human intruders. Simon preserves a certain ambiguity regarding his humans, their features and bodies blurred by movement during his obviously lengthy exposures. Simon's skies are washed-out areas of negative space, their glow spilling over into the darker regions of the compositions.

The best of Simon's images are characterized by a vaguely whimsical, snapshotish "slice-out-of-time" air, especially those that have children as subjects. Figures move, leaving traces of their paths in the air, but somehow not really leaving a mark on their natural surroundings. This suggestion of "just passing through" lends a certain ambiguity to Simon's attitude towards man and his habitat, which in turn imparts a glow or enigma to the photographs that draws and fascinates the viewer.

Also on display in the Sheldon front lobby are several metal creations by Wichita artist Bill Rutherford. Worked in brass, copper, colored glass and wire, Rutherford displays whimsical interpretations of railway and inter-urban train cars, a Victorian street scene, a drummer boy, two riverboats and what must qualify as the most unlikely collection of "flying machines" ever assembled.

Rutherford's trains and boats are carefully constructed models, quite realistically detailed, but his flying machines, leaning heavily towards the "flapping-wings-and-turning-crank" school of aerodynamics, are pure flights of fanciful design. Their brass wings flapping give the impression of an archaic frailty that is their most endearing feature.

Rutherford's mood changes somewhat in his largest work, a representation of a Victorian street scene, with vestiges of modernity (otherwise known as television aerials) clinging to the rooftops. The mood of this composition is a quiet one, with a twilight feeling promoted by the warm tones of the metal and glasses.

Rutherford's work will be on exhibit through December 8, with Simon's collection staying until December 13.

Sebastion album 'smooth'

Review by Meg Greene

From the man who brought you good times, bottled blues, and jug band music, John Sebastion, comes another solo effort. "Tarzana Kid" is probably his best album to date.

"Tarzana Kid" combines all of the above plus some fine instrument work by Sebastion and strong back-ups by his musicians. His vocals are clean and pure, sometimes haunting, always hopeful.

Sebastion sets his mood quickly and his musical transitions are smooth and don't jolt one's reveries. Each song is a painted picture and Sebastion is able to achieve a deep feeling of intimacy with his listener. It's like having him sitting three feet away. And despite what anybody says, that's a real feat to pull off.

Whether he's "Sitting in Limbo", or responding to a young miss to be her "Dixie Chicken", or recalling his "Sportin' Life", this versatile musician carefully sets a relaxing atmosphere that invites one to lie back and have a good time.



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