

Local portraitist focuses on faces

By Josh Nichols
Staff writer

Oftentimes, we associate portrait paintings with famous historical figures.

Before photography, people would hire talented painters to sketch their images on a canvas so they could stare at an image of themselves on the wall.

Many people today probably never have considered having a portrait done of themselves, unless of course, they are friends with local artist Audrey Greve.

If you know her, you know that she loves faces and loves to paint them.

Her portraits are being exhibited in Gallery 9, 124 S. Ninth St.

On display are colorful portraits she has done of her children, neighbors and friends.

Most of the images she paints are based on photographs of the people, she said.

Despite a lifelong interest in art and drawing, painting is a relatively new medium for Greve, a former University of Nebraska-Lincoln, English major.

"I've been drawing all my life but only painting the past few years."

Six years to be exact, and two of those she has been a member of Gallery 9.

Steve DeLair, a local artist, has known and worked with Greve for 3 1/2 years.

He said she comes at her paintings through her own eyes, which he said is important for an artist to do.

"Her unique personality shows up in her work," he said. "It's not some formula, but her own perspective."

PREVIEW Exhibition of Recent Work by Audrey Greve

WHERE: Gallery 9, 124 S. Ninth St.
WHEN: April 5 - 30, opening reception April 7, 7 - 9 p.m.
COST: free
THE SKINNY: Exhibit displays artist's fascination with faces.

Along with her pictures of family and friends, Greve also has painted pictures from magazine clippings, pictures and posters.

One of her pictures on display includes an image of the young Annekin Skywalker from the recent movie, "Star Wars: Episode I," and another was from the cover of "Focus" magazine.

Another painting is of a young boy playing a piano.

Greve said this image is of a boy who came over to her house, sat down at the piano and became absorbed in playing it.

The piece of work that will catch one's eye the minute they approach the exhibit is Greve's Zoo Bar painting, which is an interior look at the local jazz bar on a happening night.

Greve, who has been a regular patron of the bar for years, said the painting was done to commemorate the bar's 25th anniversary.

She recalled one evening, while sitting at the end of the bar when she described herself as becoming high just staring at the faces along the bar.

This high happened without the assistance of any outside drugs or drinks, she made sure to point out. It

was a totally natural high. She said she would draw many of the faces she saw in the bar and then got the idea to make notes for a painting.

"I wanted to do an atmosphere picture," she said. "I wanted to show tables and people dancing and give an idea of what it feels like in the bar."

Every face in the Zoo Bar painting is an individual portrait of a person in the bar, she said.

This includes employees, band members and frequent patrons.

One of the people who can be recognized immediately is Bob Kerrey, who was known to hang out at the bar in his early days as governor.

The painting, which was drawn in 1998, previously was hung in The Coffee House, 14th and P streets.

She has indefinite plans to make the painting into a poster, but in the meantime, she will keep painting.

When it comes to making a choice of what to put on the canvas, it is obvious that the subject matter doesn't really matter to Greve, as long as it is a face.

From the time she was a child drawing sketches of people, to a time in the early 1970s when she was in Paris and would draw images of people every night, to her present-day paintings, Greve always has been fascinated with the human face.

She loves to travel and has found that drawing is the universal language wherever she goes.

And what's more universal than a face?

"I just love watching everything, especially faces," she said. "I've tried to do other things, but I always come back to faces."

Orkin bugs viewers with ad

ATLANTA (AP) - That cockroach crawling across the screen isn't ON your television. It's IN it.

Many viewers have felt like suckers after being frightened by the roach in a commercial for Orkin Pest Control. Two viewers even asked the company to repair sets that they damaged when they hurled objects at the bug.

"Apparently, when you're sitting in your darkened den it seems pretty real," said Michael Lollis, executive creative director at the Atlanta office of J. Walter Thompson, which created the ads, titled "Fake Out." They began airing, mostly at night, on March 1 in 90 percent of the country.

Orkin and the ad agency have received dozens of calls from people who reported being frightened, amused or both by the commercial, which starts as an ad for a fictional fabric softener.

Matt, from Tallahassee, Fla., wrote to Orkin, saying he had just stepped from the shower when he saw the roach on his TV set.

"I immediately snatched my towel off and proceeded to snap the

roach with the towel," he wrote. "He did not die or even get knocked off the TV. I thought it was SuperRoach or something. Then to realize that it was just a commercial, well, I felt dumb. But got a great laugh out of it."

A woman from Greensboro, N.C., said she woke up two neighbors late at night to come to her house to hunt and kill the roach. One of the neighbors quickly figured out the bug was from the commercial.

"I felt really stupid for getting my neighbors out of bed in the middle of the night," Darlyn wrote. "You really got me!"

An irate Tampa, Fla., woman who tried to kill the roach by tossing a motorcycle helmet at it and instead broke her TV set demanded that Atlanta-based Orkin buy her a new one. Another man said his set was damaged after he threw a shoe at it.

Sorry, the Orkin Man doesn't do TV repair.

"Both of them were very startled and they wanted us to fix their TVs, but that's not going to happen, I'm afraid," said Martha May, a spokeswoman for Atlanta-based Orkin.

German artist displays work in airports

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ports, and we like to cooperate with that effort," he said, citing the large sculptures that already adorn parts of the airport as examples of Eppley's commitment to art.

He said all safety concerns have been met. Those concerns included the piece getting blown over by the wind and interference with traffic flow and vision.

"We required her to anchor it down on the concrete,"

Kathol said. "It's a metal-frame structure with paraffin-wax panels, so we were worried it would be top-heavy, but she gladly anchored it down. She's acknowledging responsibility for any damage to the piece."

When deciding on a location that wouldn't block traffic and vision, Gutbrod and airport administration picked the same spot, Kathol said. The piece will be on display outside the Door 5 Terminal on the north side of the airport on an island between a lane and a parking garage.

Gutbrod had the chance to display

"Tower" in Atlanta but decided against it when Omaha was confirmed.

"The size of the city of Omaha is similar to Nuremberg, and she wanted to do the works in smaller cities," said Kelly Goodall, a Bemis spokeswoman.

Gutbrod said it was important to display her work in smaller cities.

"It's not important to just have shows in New York, Paris and major cities," Gutbrod said. "Works should also be shown in smaller towns."

"Tower" will be on display in the small city of Omaha all day Saturday.

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