

"Faces" Captured Me

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For SPR

The "About Faces: Capturing Personality through Portraiture" exhibit at POAC's Powerhouse Gallery was a wonder to behold. I saw a few names I knew, and some artwork that looked familiar, but in essence, I was a stranger in a colorful land.

There were portraits of family members, famous people, and imaginary individuals. There were fascinating sculptures, and wacky carvings. Some were disturbing, with bug eyes and swirled noses, and others quaint, with children, kittens, and normal features, but every piece was interesting.

I made a complete fool of myself, walking from painting to painting about every five minutes, my mouth in danger of falling open. I am not an artsy-type person - I'm a writer, so my paints are found in dictionaries and thesauruses - but I couldn't keep my eyes off the display of creativity I saw splashed along the hallway.

One that I liked in particular was called "Pity Stew" by Rhea Griffin. It consisted of a cup, a bowl, a spoon, and a napkin on a tray, all in a deep blue. Accompanying it was a copy-righted poem that I fell in love with. It turned the stew and all things associated with soups, like salt, into ingredients for pity- little hurts, and have-nots.

Another that caught my eye was the "Beekeeper" by Betty Gardener. The thing that intrigued me most were the elements that made up the bust. Wasp nests formed a neck, lichen was hair, and flowers and other plant components decorated the face. A third eye was represented by a five-petal flower.

While I particularly liked both of these unique creations, my affection for them is out-numbered a thousand



to one in favor of another of Griffin's works, "Blind Patriotism."

I stared at this figure for ten minutes and kept coming back even after I had-ahem-"moved on." Every time I looked at it, I saw a new symbol.

The basis of the piece was a blue woman in front of a three layered box with clouds on the top level and a pair of eyes perched on top. When you look closer, you'll see - or at least I saw - that it is covered in messages. *Note to the creator: If my interpretations are wrong, do forgive me, I am merely an uncultured teenager.*

The woman is the center piece, but even-her simple movements are worth noting. In reference to the title, she is blindfolded by a scarf bearing the United States colors. One hand is over her heart, and the other is gesturing towards the box behind her.

She is almost showing a type of possession in her posture, but at the same time, it is defensive - covering her life-source.

The world behind her is one I would not gesture to, were I in her place.

The bottom level is empty and

dark, where the woman is. The second level is a sea with high wild waves, and the third has clouds hanging from strings, and one cloud that seems to have fallen.

Above the box is a pair of "All-Seeing" eyes. The God-like half a face's eyes are spirals, which seem to indicate a sort of madness. To me, these portions seem to indicate Hell, Earth, Sky, and Heaven.

The sides of the box are just as interesting as the insides. To the left are three American flags: the top and bottom ones are normal and right-side up, but the one that is level with the second portion of the box is upside down, a universal signal of distress.

I find it interesting that the section that represents Earth has the distress symbol.

The right side of the box has three identical flags of no country I recognize, each with a different icon on it. The top one has a heart circled, equal with the "sky" portion.

The middle one, parallel with Earth, fittingly has an Earth drawn on it.

The Earth is not shown as it normally is, with the Pacific Ocean split right down the middle. Instead, it is only of Africa, and the bottom portion of Europe.

The third flag has a peace sign scrawled across a corner of it. However, the peace sign is distorted and one bar is missing. Are we missing peace, by any chance?

I found this politically slanted piece of art astounding and beguiling. I can hardly wait to look at it again.

The entire exhibit is well worth taking some of your precious time out to see. Maybe you'll find your own "Blind Patriotism."