

Art openings crowd the fall schedule

By David Bonetti

POST-DISPATCH VISUAL ARTS CRITIC

09/17/2006

"Carmon Colangelo: Configured/Disfigured"



It's amazing really. The visual arts world, grown sleepy and sometimes even lazy over the hot and steamy months, rebounds every September with renewed vigor. So many openings of new exhibitions mark the September and October calendar that one soon forgets how slow it was only a month before.

The local season has begun with a flourish and will grow only more intense as museums join the gallery rush.

'Carmon Colangelo: Configured/Disfigured: Prints and Works on Paper, 2003-06'

Carmon Colangelo is new to St. Louis, having moved here only a few months ago from Georgia to take charge of the new Sam Fox Center of Design and Visual Art at Washington University. Popularly called the uber-dean, he is also a printmaker, and this show at Bruno David's marks his local debut as an artist. Because it comes so soon after his assumption of such an important position, it packs extra artistic interest.

We can relax, however. Colangelo is a real artist, and his prints show an interest beyond technique - the sign of the academic - in issues ranging from art to science.

Look at "Cornered" (2006), a studio corner with prints and drawings tacked edge to edge. Here is Colangelo's repertory of images - the eyeball, the rabbit, the spiders, the nude male and female figures - all laid out for us at once. Could this be his farewell to Georgia, where he was director of the university art school for nine years?

But science, particularly biology, seems to be Colangelo's primary interest. In two prints, "Evolution" and "Devolution," the familiar sketch of skeletal figures emerging from the sea and rising in stages to become erect Homo sapiens fills backgrounds while spiders and specimens from anatomy books occupy the foregrounds.

I don't know what it is about spiders that attracts Colangelo, but they reappear in his work like a leitmotif. Easier to grasp is the pair of male and female nudes, their hands clasped. In a print titled "Bride and Groom" the two are topped by an upside-down rabbit. The rabbit is, of course, the symbol of fecundity, but what does it mean that it's upside down?

David is also showing 10 digital prints by gallery regular Kim Humphries. From the "Certain Places" series, they capture the casual wonderfulness of strange things in juxtaposition, one of Humphries' abiding interests. If the idea of garish color images of a plaster saint against a basement wall, a pair of blue and white folding chairs by a battered red barbecue and a crudely painted concrete horse appeal to you, you'll like this show.

Where: Bruno David Gallery, 3721 Washington Boulevard

When: Through Oct. 7; Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesday through Saturday

How much: Free

More info: 314-531-3030 or www.brunodavidgallery.com