

Spartanburg County Museum of Art Hosts Reception For New Exhibits

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A large crowd gathered at the Spartanburg County Museum of Art on the evening of Saturday, March 19th for a reception honoring three North Carolina artists whose exhibits are featured this month. After listening to the artists tell their stories, one could get a clear sense of the struggles that they have encountered while devoting their lives to the pursuit of fine arts.

Lin Barnhardt is a resident of Mt. Pleasant, North Carolina. He has taught art for twenty-nine years in North Carolina public schools. His exhibit features clay sculptures of three-dimensional architecture.

One stand-out piece is his 2003 model of the Lucas Mansion in Hiddenite, North Carolina. He used an interesting technique to create the roof by pressing out the clay with a pasta noodle rolling pin to give it a fluted edge.

Local residents will find a familiar piece in the model Carl Sandburg House, made in collaboration with artist Ginger Spangler. It is based on Sandburg's original home located near Flat Rock, North Carolina.

Also of note are Barnhardt's models patterned after the late Edward Hopper's architectural paintings. Barnhardt worked with painstaking accuracy to make these models, recreating the same light source that Hopper used so that he could represent Hopper's unique artistic perspective.

Artist Vadim Bora's work, displayed in the Milliken Gallery, is extremely varied and includes paintings, sketches and sculptures. He has been a professional art teacher in Asheville, North Carolina since he left Russia twelve years ago.

He eagerly explained to visitors, "This exhibit has several samples of my art and several pieces from each of my series. Every series or theme has its own gravity or weight..."

Speaking of his first theme, Bora said, "I do portraits all my life. Why they are so different is because everyone is different. Since I was a kid I have made parodies on people. I make fun of how they walk, talk and move."

"Another theme is figurative," continued Bora as he pointed to more paintings. "These pieces represent the metaphorical and allegorical

meanings." He singled out a painting of two women crying while standing in water and said that this represented the September 11th tragedy.

His third theme is Landscape or "Lifescape."

"These represent my feelings and present relationship to the universe," he explained.

Sculpture is the subject of his fourth theme. His technique which he calls press-mold with a twist, and his use of painting on the pieces, produced many questions from the audience.

Bora's fifth and most unusual theme is political cartoons. Humor was the only way to portray the truth in his native country of Russia. Bora says that his cartoons can be called political statements.

One cartoon shows a hand holding a sickle and hammer. One finger of the hand is injured. Bora explained that this means the communist system is broken.

Another cartoon shows a man trying to milk a cow whose teats are shown as a fist. According to Bora, this cartoon represents the notion that collective farming doesn't work.

Exhibit Coordinator Scott Cunningham commented, "I



am glad to present

Vadim and bring his cartoons to this exhibit. We can compare the humor of Dennis the Menace with Russian humor and satire."

The Parson's Gallery holds the works of Marcus Hamilton, who draws the cartoon Dennis the Menace. Hamilton is a resident of Mint Hill, North Carolina.

Hamilton previously worked as a commercial illustrator for twenty-two years. Exhibit pieces from the first part of his career include magazine covers featuring his drawings of former President Ronald Regan, baseball hero Reggie Jackson, and entertainer Bob Hope.

Hamilton's illustrating job ended when computer

graphics came into use.

At age fifty, he had to go to work for Wal-Mart at minimum wage.

Needless to day, it was a low point in his career.

One day he saw Hank Ketchum, the creator of Dennis the Menace, on television. Ketchum was talking about drawing the cartoon for forty years and saying that he would love to retire and have the freedom to paint, travel and play golf.

Hamilton went to the telephone and called Ketchum. Hamilton told Ketchum, "If you are serious about retiring I would like to take over."

Ketchum reviewed Hamilton's work and agreed to train him.

Hamilton has great

respect for Ketchum's creative genius and tries to stay close to Ketchum's guidelines to this day.

The exhibit features a number of Hamilton's sketches and drawings of Dennis the Menace cartoons.

Vadim Bora's work will be on display through April 17th, Marcus Hamilton's exhibit can be seen until April 24th, and Lin Barnhardt's sculptures will be shown through May 8th. The Spartanburg County Museum of Art is open Monday thru Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Sunday from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free.