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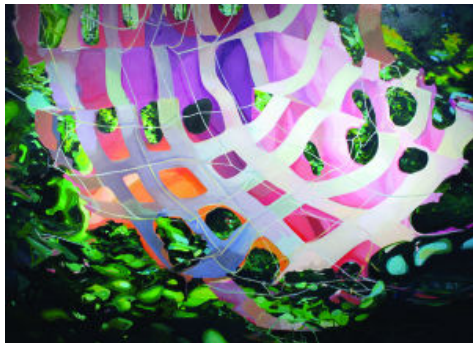
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'Biennial' paints exuberant portrait

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South Bend Tribune

Amanda Smith's "Nets Nest," an oil and acrylic on canvas painting, will be featured in the South Bend Museum of Art's "Biennial 27" exhibit from July 6 to Oct. 6, 2013.

Posted: Thursday, August 1, 2013 1:22 pm

EVAN GILLESPIE *South Bend Tribune*
Correspondent | **0 comments**

The South Bend Museum of Art's "Biennial 27" is a big show with a deliberately tight focus.

Although the works included in the show fill the museum's Warner Gallery, the point of the show is to create a narrowly conceived vision of contemporary Midwestern art by exhibiting just a handful of artists but giving those artists plenty of room to present their ideas.

Participation in the show was open only to artists residing in eight Midwestern states — Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, Michigan, Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota — but even with this limitation, the show's prospectus drew submissions from 230 artists this time around. From those submitting artists, juror Lisa D. Freiman selected 11 artists to participate in the show.

Freiman, who spent 10 years as a curator of contemporary art at the Indianapolis Museum of Art and who has recently been appointed the first director of the Institute of Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University, brings a distinctly current character to the show.

The gallery overflows with big, bright works with very few hints of the traditional about them. Forms are overwhelmingly rooted in the 20th and 21st centuries, with sculptures, assemblages, constructions and installations pulling most of the attention away from more traditional inclusions.

On exhibit

"Biennial 27" continues through Oct. 6 at the South Bend Museum of Art, 120 S. St. Joseph St., South Bend. Hours are from noon to 5 p.m. Wednesdays through Sundays. Admission is free, but a \$5 donation is suggested for non-members. For more information, call 574-232-9102 or visit southbendart.org.

Reception

A reception takes place from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Friday at the museum. Admission is free

The works of Todd Reed, a painter from Bolingbrook, Ill., and David Masters, a painter from Cleveland, for example, are ostensibly examples of that most traditional of media, but both artists push the traditional boundaries of painting. Reed works with color and geometry in a way that's reminiscent of the abstractionists of the 1950s and 1960s, but he tries to find and balance on the dividing line between painting and sculpture, or, as he puts it, between image and object. Masters explores the same boundary in a slightly less polished way. In this company, the vibrant acrylic paintings of Amanda Smith (Bloomington, Ind.) end up looking almost old-fashioned.

27

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- Today 5 pm **Dodge High Fares...**
- 8/30 7 pm **Indiana Comedy Festival...**
- 10/05 6 am **The Color Run South Bend**
- 10/26 7:30 pm **Gabriel Iglesias**
- 1/13 8 pm **American Idiot**
- 1/25 7:30 pm **The Nureyev Ballet...**

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WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What's the most appropriate strategy for dealing with a public online school in Indiana that fails to meet state averages for student performance?

- The Indiana Department of Education should step in.
- The chartering organization should shut it down.
- Parents should make the call by deciding whether to continue enrolling their students.

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This striving toward new forms comes perhaps from the fact that many of these artists are more concerned with examining aspects of site, place and experience than they are with creating self-contained objects or purely visual expressions. Even in the photographs and drawings of Meredith Foster (Urbana, Ill.), Terrence Campagna (Ann Arbor) and Cherith Lundin (Wheaton, Ill.), the emphasis is on texture, a tactile approach that encourages the viewer to engage senses other than vision; you might not be able to touch the works, but you wish you could. The importance of the tactile is even more explicit in the sculptural work of Kylie Lockwood (Detroit) and Margaret Leininger (Oak Park, Ill.).

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Nowhere is the importance of site more apparent, though, than in the show's installations. The mechanical work of Derek Coté (Grosse Pointe, Mich.), with its whirring, moving, flashing activity at once transforms the gallery space and depends on the space for its definition. The sculptures of Leticia Bajuyo (Madison, Ind.) are even more intimately connected to the gallery. Her immense, glittery, three-dimensional tunnels were created specifically for the site, and they are so organic and imposing that you effectively get the impression that they're right where they belong; if you know that the CDs used in the sculpture came, at least in part, via local donations of old discs to the museum, the effect is even more pronounced.

Beyond its statement about place, the work of Bajuyo is simply fun, and that's a consistent part of the show, too. Although it wouldn't be right to say that the show is necessarily across-the-board cheerful, it is undeniably not somber. Contemporary art, at least as seen through this intentionally narrow-angle Midwestern lens, is, it seems, an exuberant exploration of sensory stimulation that is unwilling to be limited by the old rules and pigeonholes.



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Posted in [Inthebend](#) on *Thursday, August 1, 2013 1:22 pm.*

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Pro baseball: White Sox move on after trading Peavy

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Ohio State lands three recruits (espnW)
James Gandolfini's \$30 Million Estate Tax Mistake (Daily Finance)
Bradley Cooper Gets a Kiss From Suki Waterhouse at Wimbledon (POPSUGAR Celebrity)
Top 10 Most Beautiful Women from the Detroit Auto Show (Motor Pros)
Regis on Notre Dame: "I Can't Tell You How Much I've Suffered!" (AARP.org)

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Threats of harming another person will not be tolerated. AND PLEASE TURN OFF CAPS LOCK.</p> <p>3 Be Truthful.
Don't knowingly lie about anyone or anything.</p> | <p>4 Be Nice.
No racism, sexism or any sort of -ism that is degrading to another person.</p> <p>5 Be Proactive.
Use the 'Report' link on each comment to let us know of abusive posts.</p> <p>6 Share with Us.
We'd love to hear eyewitness accounts, the history behind an article.</p> |
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