

FAB Gallery roots itself in everyday senses

Sense of Familiarity

Runs until 28 October
Fine Arts Building Gallery

TONY KESS
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Most art is presented as a finished, unchanging product, but in the case of Erin Schwab's exhibit *Sense of Familiarity*, transience and reductiveness are what you'll find.

In her MFA showcase, Schwab uses sketch work and organic pieces—such as plant roots—in order to challenge the convention of polished works that need to force a message into the viewer. Schwab's installations are instead based upon emotional response and viewer interaction, and having a history with plant life, she uses these influences to create her work.

"I grew up around plants my whole life; I worked at greenhouses, tree nurseries, tree farms and my earlier work in my BFA mostly concerned flowers and leaves," Schwab says. "When I started working at the tree farm, it became very apparent to me that the leaves and the flowers were what the roots were doing ... there is no flower without a root."

Sense of Familiarity is concerned with growth and the departure from static, traditional depictions of

natural beauty. Her creations also portray fragility and chronicle the transitions undergone by both living and decaying matter.

"I dropped my focus down and started looking at a less stereotypical view of beauty," Schwab says. "I treated them like portraits or icons ... as transitory icons of nature. I started collecting the roots, and found I was trying to find a way to record what I was seeing. I collected them all and they were all breaking apart, and in trying to capture them before they fell apart, I was trying to record them."

And as Schwab's choice of title alludes to, her work is more than simple depictions of the ever exciting lifestyle of the root; her collection is also about evoking emotional responses in the viewer.

"It comes from the idea that sight has become the sense that we rely on," Schwab says. "We no longer rely on the emotional response to objects. When I collected the roots, I had no idea what I was going to do with them, but I knew that I wanted to do it."

"The works are about that sense of feeling, a sense of being connected to something before knowing what it is," Schwab continues. "There's that sense of familiarity, even if you've never encountered it before. For a lot



SCOTTJENNINGS

BRANCHING OUT Erin Schwab hopes viewers will find beauty in the mundane, organic things that are often passed by.

of the drawings and sculptures, once you become acquainted with them, you know that they're roots, but initially, they're more abstract. You can't tell right away, but you know and sense that it's familiar. So it's about an emotional response before visual gratification."

Schwab's media, specifically her charcoal sketches, also reflect her focus on creating the personal and interpretative analysis in the viewer.

The personality of the artist is found within this medium, and allows for an emotional dialogue between creator and critic.

"Drawing leaves a lot of evidence behind of the artist, in fingerprints and smudges," Schwab relates. "In the works, the artist is present, and people can see the process and the mistakes. It generates more personal questions in the viewer. People ask if my works are body parts or hands, and they tend

to identify with these works because the medium of drawing conveys that personality."

However, personal interpretation can sometimes work in weird ways.

"Because people can connect with these works, people have a tendency to view them as familiar objects, say ... body parts. Someone asked me if my drawings represented flayed body parts or hanging people," Schwab says.

Trailer Park Boys still ridin' white and dirty

Trailer Park Boys

Directed by Michael Clattenburg
Starring Rob Wells, Mike Smith and John Paul Tremblay
Empire Theatres
Now Playing

MIKE SMITH
Arts & Entertainment Writer

This film is dirty. No, I'm not referring to foul language, although there's plenty of that. I don't mean gratuitous nudity, either, but hey, some of that too. What I'm trying to say is that this movie is just pure grease.

The *Trailer Park Boys* movie is the theatrical translation of the hit

Showcase show of the same name. The film follows the adventures of three 30-something trailer park hoodlums. Or, in other words, it showcases their silly and sometimes plainly stupid criminal schemes. The three make for a colourful cast, and are supported by characters ranging from white trash rappers to single moms who moonlight as strippers. All together, they help to explore the stereotypes commonly associated with trailer parks.

The film centers upon Ricky (Robb Wells) and his quest to win back his ex-girlfriend, Lucy (Lucy Decoutere). During Ricky's last stint in prison, Lucy decided to start stripping in order to make ends meet and to support their

young barbeque-stealing, chain-smoking daughter. From that point on, the film spirals in a tragic tale of individuals living in a bad situation.

However, what makes the show—and the movie—so funny is the fact that these characters aren't upset with the lot that's handed to them. Ricky's perfectly happy living in a busted old car, and cooking tater-tots in a toaster oven on the hood. Lucy just wants him to get back on his feet before she takes him back, which to her means having a stable income from growing weed.

The characters are so greasy, and they all relish in it so very much. For example, Jonathan Torrens' character, J-Roc, makes amateur porn in his

trailer. Everything is so damn ridiculous that we can't help but ignore the fact that they're criminals and empathize with them—after all, Ricky just wants to take care of his daughter. Who cares if he thinks growing weed is a good retirement business?

Most impressive, though, is director Mike Clattenburg's ability to keep the movie interesting and entertaining. Taking a half-hour show and turning it into a 90-minute movie isn't an easy thing. The film never drags on; it feels perfectly paced.

However, because it falls outside of the continuity of the show, it's difficult to judge. Anyone who didn't like the show will probably not like the movie

due to its discontinuity, whereas those who haven't seen the show will do well to see the film. *Trailer Park Boys* makes a very good introduction to the characters, at least on the basic level.

For you fans, though, the film is still fun; it just feels like one long episode. Unfortunately, for those of you who are hardcore, *Trailer Park Boys* offers some entertainment, but there's no real additions to the storyline or characters. At best, it offers diehard fans a quick fix that should last until the next season debuts, but because of the huge amount of back story that the show has developed, it would be impossible to truly make *Trailer Park Boys* as meaningful to fans as some might hope.

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