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## ‘Art in the Region’ Show Opens With Cubist Photography And Collages

By Maggie Wolff Peterson  
*Special to The Winchester Star*

Cubist photography and collages in mixed media are on exhibit beginning Saturday, in a show, “Art in the Region,” at the Shenandoah Arts Council building in Winchester.

They are the works of Rick Bruner and Rhonda Smith, who teach art at Shepherd College. Assembled by arts council member Geraldine Kiefer, the show’s installation was



Artist Rhonda Smith hangs her work in the Shenandoah Arts Council building in Winchester. The show, “Art in the Region,” features her paintings and the work of Rick Bruner. It opens Saturday with a reception from 6 to 9 p.m. Gallery hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Sundays.  
*(Photo by Ginger Perry)*

overseen by Shenandoah University student Erin Donovan, 19, who is now a business management major but was once a student of both exhibitors.

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“When I was their student, I had never seen their work before,” Donovan said. “Now I understand why they taught certain things.”

The council’s front gallery is given to Smith’s collages, which she created after a month-long trip to Mali in 2003. Smith calls Africa “a truly inspiring and inspirational place.”

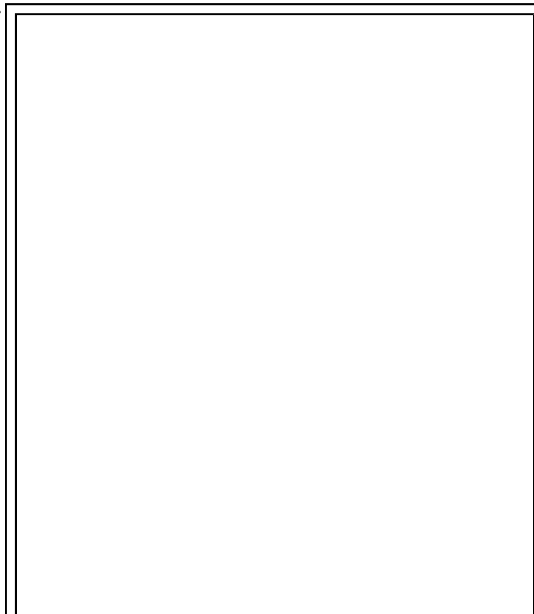
Maps, beads, shells, postage stamps, and coins are worked into pieces that also feature small watercolor images that Smith made of the people she encountered. A quick rendering features a woman who caught Smith’s attention. Adorned in gold and selling bells, “she was just beautiful,” Smith said.

Another watercolor features a tribal leader, called a Griole, “a person who records orally the history of a family,” Smith said. “He tells stories, and the stories are the stories of the families. In Mali, it’s a very respected and revered individual.”

A larger image is a rendering of the central well that gave Timbuktu its name. Originally known as Bouctou’s Well, it was located at a trading center, at which northern Africans traded salt for goods from southern Africa. The indigenous word for well was “tin.”

So, locally the well was known as tin-Bouctou, which eventually became the name of the place we call Timbuktu, Smith said.

The image of a zebra-striped teapot appears in a couple of Smith’s pieces. Although it looks exotic, it is the most mundane of things: a plastic pot that villagers use to carry water.



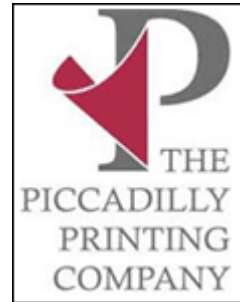
and Health, after running as an independent in the governor’s race in November?

Yes

No

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Striped in orange and yellow, the pots were everywhere Smith went, she said. They became totemic to her, a symbol of her journey. Now they appear in her work both as a pencil drawing and a watercolor study.

In the back gallery, Bruner's pieces display a photographic craft he

developed, in which color images are disassembled and flipped, then reconstructed and enhanced with spray paint and colored pencil.

"The idea is, I enjoy cubism," Bruner said. "I enjoy the fourth dimension, being time. And I love graffiti."

Mostly nudes, Bruner's images seem to move within the frame, an effect of his technique of sandwiching photos shot sequentially. "I'm creating a three-dimensional object on a two-dimensional surface, and making it photographic," he said.

"I tell them to move around," Bruner said. The final piece is constructed from an original assemblage of 16 images.

"It flows together," he said. "You have the front and the back and the side all together."

Bruner chose nudes because "it's a classical form," he said. "First of all, it's the most beautiful thing. You want the gracefulness and there is a symmetrical aspect



Rick Bruner's work is featured in an art show that opens Saturday at the Shenandoah Arts Council building in Winchester. He has developed a photographic craft in which color images are disassembled and flipped, then reconstructed and enhanced with spray paint and colored pencil. (Photo by Ginger Perry)



to it.”

But eventually, Bruner found doing only nudes too restrictive. “I’d flunk a student if they did that,” he said.

Today, “anybody that comes around, I’ll photograph,” Bruner said. His gallery pieces include a study of his wife’s parents and an adult with a child. Many of his pieces are purchased by their subjects as soon as they’re completed, Bruner said.

For Donovan, the experience of putting on a show at the arts council may have practical advantages someday. Her goal is to open a photographic studio.

“That’s my dream,” she said.


“Art in the Region” opens Saturday with a reception from 6 to 9 p.m. at the council building, 811 S. Loudoun St. Gallery hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Sundays. Call 540-667-5166 or visit [www.shenarts.org](http://www.shenarts.org) for more information about the Shenandoah Arts Council.

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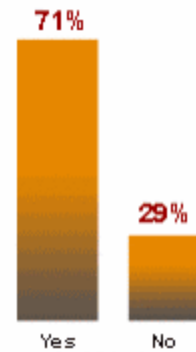
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