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Art Picks

BY MICHELE NATALE, Correspondent

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Chapel Hill/Carrboro's Second Friday Art Walk is anchored by the Ackland Art Museum's "Art After Dark" event, held from 5 to 9 p.m., offering the last weekend for viewing "New Currents in Contemporary Art," the annual showcase for MFA students in a particularly worthwhile show this year. Recently opened, "Contemporary Drawings from the Ackland Collection" promises "rarely, if ever, exhibited" artworks from the Ackland's extensive cache of works on paper, favorites selected by director Emily Kass. Included are works by Ellsworth Kelly, Agnes Martin, Julian Schnabel, Chuck Close and Kehinde Wiley. As always, live music and light refreshments add to the festivities.

UNC-CH, S. Columbia and E. Franklin streets, Chapel Hill. 966-5736, www.ackland.org.

The ArtsCenter in Carrboro hosts its annual juried Community Photography Contest, while the adjacent East End Gallery is one of nine venues displaying "Elements," the 2008 community art project, now in its fifth year. Each year, a different theme inspires artwork by artists throughout the community -- from children to professionals to Sunday painters. They all hang democratically side-by-side in a celebration of community spirit. Any interpretation of the theme was welcomed, resulting in a lively mix of styles abstract and representational, and some intriguing interpretations pushing the theme's boundaries. A sophisticated Web site allows for online viewing of all artworks, accompanied by statements from each artist. Public and private venues hosting "Elements" include Carrboro Town Hall, Carrboro Century Center, Open Eye Café, PTA Thrift Shop, Chapel Hill Town Hall, Jack Sprat Café, Chapel Hill Public Library and the Robert and Pearl Seymour Center. 300-G E. Main St., Carrboro. www.artscenterlive.com, 929-2787. www.communityartproject.org and Chapel Hill Public Arts Commission, 968-2749, info@chapelhillarts.org

Downtown Chapel Hill celebrates the opening of a new art gallery and specialty retail store with the unlikely name Toots and Magoo, nicknames of owners Cheryle Jernigan-Wicker and Maggie Pearson. The venue will offer fine art, antiques, paper goods, appraisal services and classes in paper arts. A recent peek into the location, next to Sugarland on Franklin Street, yielded pleasant surprises. A ravishing Ben Long sketch recalled the style of Pre-Raphaelite Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Upon inquiry, I learned the gallery will arrange portrait commissions by Long, whom Jernigan-Wicker represented for more than 20 years in her San Francisco gallery. Contemporary carved wood sculptures by Heidi Kennedy of New York mingled with 19th-century American paintings in the primitive style. Hungarian furniture, dramatically hand-painted with floral folkloric motifs, cutting-edge contemporary art and beautiful vintage Nez Percé beaded bags (a stunning example depicting a deer and a bird available for \$1,800) were on view. Despite the presence of some pricier items, Chloe Greene, Jernigan-Wicker's daughter, says it is her goal "to have a well-rounded gallery so that everyone in the community can come in and participate." To that end, she has located wonderful Cavallini papers from Italy, so lovely they could serve as framed works of art, for just \$3.50. There are a range of handsome letterpress stationery items, and Greene offers specialized letterpress invitations that she will custom-design. In addition, she intends to hold workshops in the space, including bookmaking, origami, paper flower-making and box construction. Pearson, a senior



David Ringenberg used more than 15,000 images of local scenes to create this work for the Community Art Project.

member of the American Society of Appraisers and president of Pearson Tribal and Fine Arts, will offer estate and fine art insurance appraisal services. This rich visual environment is welcome on Franklin Street. 142 E. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 942-3339, www.tootsandmagoo.com

Ceramic artist Marina Bosetti's graceful art nouveau and figurative decorated tiles are featured at N.C. Crafts tonight, and the artist will be present. 212 W. Main St., Carrboro. 942-4048, www.nccraftsgallery.com

Also in Chapel Hill this month, but not on the Art Walk, Rachel Campbell's idiosyncratic canvases grace the Horace Williams House. The best moments of the show are full of the quirky charm of her purposefully off-kilter perspective and oddly balanced compositions. Her exhibit is titled "Further Observations of a Resident Alien," and this native New Zealander has an eye for curious vignettes of American life, as in "The Fabulous Mystery of a Strip Mall at Night." 610 E. Rosemary St., Chapel Hill. 942-7818, www.chapelhillpreservation.com

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