

Spruill's 'Good on Paper' packs punch

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Spreading across the floor, climbing the walls and pinned to the ceiling of the Spruill Gallery are more than 250 works by 119 artists who flex their creative muscle in a broad range of styles and mediums.

Among the bright spots – contemplative abstractions by Richard Sudden, Kathy Yancey's wry and vibrantly colored collage, a lovely book of transfers and fragments from Adrienne Anderson, Dale Clifford's striking linocuts, Helen Durant's mixed-media portraits (one signature goat, two intriguing heads), Maxwell Sebastian's small sketch pad paintings and from Harold McNaron, three diminutive scenes with the raw, energized appeal of street art.



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Some particular high notes:

- Cecilia Kane's "Helping Hand Wings for Hazel" is a poignant how-to for passing gently from this world into the next. An illustrated set of instructions for crafting angel wings from a variety of objects (including fluttering white gloves), Kane's delicate composition addresses the challenges of easing a loved one's fear of death.

- Terry Scopelliti's trio of minimalist scan-a-grams, "Unwrapped I, II and III," results from capturing images on an open scanner. His sculptural forms appear like twists of crepe paper caught in midflight, with light, movement and textural detail set against a stark black background.

- Jena Sibille's "Self Portrait à la Chuck Close" combines Close's grid technique with the sobering quality of his portrayals. Sibille's accomplished portrait features her straight-on stare and cigarette, rounded contours of the cheeks, chin, glasses and cascading curls, all effectively contrasted against small squares and diagonal markings.

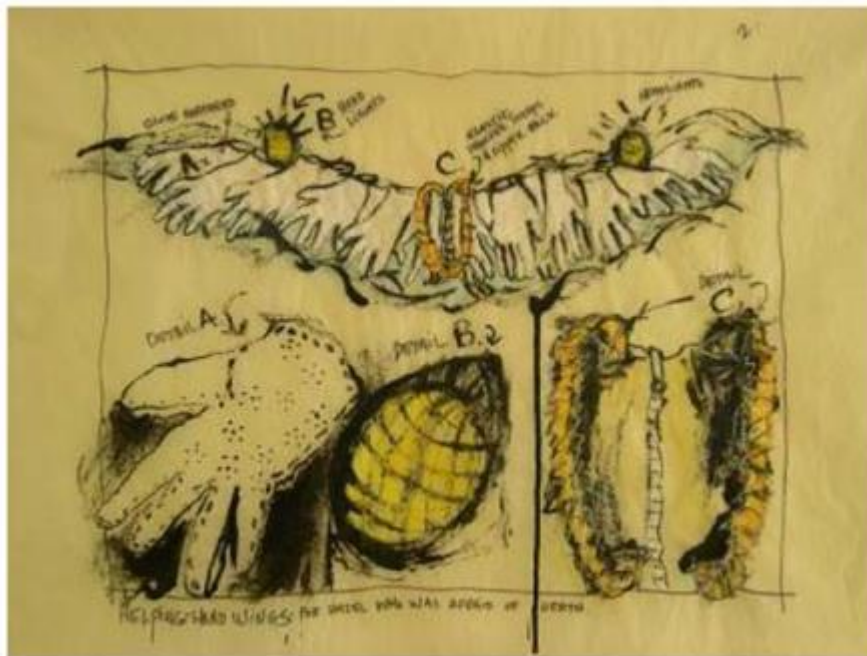
- In two graphite drawings, Yanique Norman pushes her medium – the pencil – to unexpected qualities of concise line and rich, painterly shading. "The Modern Back," an allusion to slavery's young black women, highlights the artist's distinctive style and flair for metaphor in a macabre composition of heads and legs and an organlike, mutating back.

"Leased Emancipations" also takes a social stand, as Norman depicts the countless invisible victims of AIDS, laid, curled and coiled around each other, buried in an African terrain.

In a show of this size, the sheer amount of art is a bit overwhelming, but there's something here for every taste and more than enough that "looks good on paper."



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