REFLECTING ON 20 YEARS' GROWTH

Unity College art faculty exhibits works

By Corinne Vaccaro

UNITY — When Unity College's art gallery director Leonard Craig invited the college's art faculty to exhibit works reflecting their own growth, the resulting body of work demonstrated that the teachers make good students.

The exhibit, *XX Years* includes at least two pieces from each teacher and is designed to represent what the teachers were doing as artists when they came to the college, a mid-piece and where they are now. The lively array of offerings in different mediums reveals the scope of the arts program at Unity, as well as each artist's range and unique perspective.

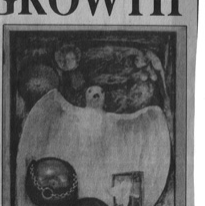
Displayed about the studio gallery are sculptural works in clay, metal, porcelain and wood, as well as photographs, monoprints and oils and pastels.

Most outstanding are the pieces by Joseph Ascrizzi, Squidge Davis, Ron Cross, Mark Kuzio and Liv Kristin Robinson, all of whom approach the theme of growth from different angles.

Over the years, Joseph Ascrizzi's sculpting has become more finely tuned. Like a wizard working spells, he embeds, carves, glues and appliques found objects, such as moose antlers, bone, seashells, mirror, semi-precious stones and silver, in wooden boxes, to create powerful, magical compositions that need to be seen to be appreciated.

appreciated.

Appropriately enough, a haunting pair of stone-clay figures, titled *Winter/Spring* by potter Squidge Davis guard the entrance to this then-and-now exhibit. Looking vaguely reminiscent of the aliens in the movie *Cocoon*, they serve to remind the viewer that the process of ageing, with its inevitable decline, is also growth. Something in the expression of the softly-contoured figure, who compassionately regards the proudly-held head of the time-ravaged figure, speaks of the fragility of human beings in the face of death.



Featured in the Unity Faculty Art Show is *Winter/Spring*, a stoneware clay sculpture by artist Squidge Davis, *Coming Out*, a ceramic sculpture by Mark Kuzio and *The Prison and the Gate, a Personal Bell*, a three-dimensional piece by Joseph Ascrizzi.

Another sentinel, *Watcher of the Wood*, a black, welded metal and stainless steel piece of landscape sculpture of a feathered head of a Mohawk Indian on a metal column by Ron Cross, knows how to wait. Every element in this appealing piece contributes to its overall impact. Nothing is wasted; color, steel, line, title, all suggest something hard, cold, alert, possibly dangerous and cruel. In profile, the piece resembles a tomahawk, which further imbues it with a martial quality.

Three, colorful, gender-defying ceramic sculptures by Mark Kuzio, looking like extraterrestrial Buddhas, deal with the process of change in their own way and are fun to ponder. The title of one, *Homage to a Deity*, suggests that the artist is posing a question about icons, the sacred images human beings revere, and how they change over time. Why doesn't he assign gender to the pieces, despite the fact they appear to have all sorts of protuberances that look like secondary sex characteristics? Is he suggesting gods should be neither female or male? Or is he poking fun at what human beings have idolized over the centuries?

Liv Kristin Robinson shows one of her latest, intriguing, hand-colored, silver-prints of the work of the "sidewalk Michelangelo," who paints Sistine Chapel-type images on the sidewalks of New York City. Her photo of St. John being "defaced" by the blurred image of a baby carriage rolling across him, emphasizes the contrast between the old and the new and the cycle of rebirth.

The show, which runs through April 1, offers other notable works including: Leonard Craig's paintings using the encaustic process; monotypes on handmade paper by Francis Hodsdon; Robin Brown's computer-manipulated, still-video images, part photography/painting, thermal wax prints; Fred Dearnley's cibrachrome prints; wood and aluminum paint sculptures by Stewart Henderson; Mark Tenney's photographic work juxtaposing steel buildings with trees; Jonathan Taylor's beautifully contemplative and mystifying photographic images; nature-inspired paintings by Pat Aldrich; and raku-fired sculptures by Gretchen Lucchesi.

Unity College is located on Quaker Hill in Unity. Gallery hours are from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Call 948-3131. ■