

AGGIELIFE

PERSPECTIVE

Exhibit lets students focus on nature

By Amy Collier
THE BATTALION

By creating original works of art, some Texas A&M students are showing that flowers are not just for fragrance.

The J. Wayne Stark University Center Galleries are presenting 29 floral designs by students in "Perspective 95," an exhibit open until July 2.

James Johnson, a senior lecturer of horticultural sciences, taught the floral art class that has its work on display.

Johnson has coordinated the annual exhibit since 1989 with Catherine Hastedt, registrar and curator of the Stark gallery.

Hastedt and Johnson created a pool of artwork from the University Art Collections and another collection of floral art. Students in the class then chose a work that inspired them. They then had to interpret the artwork in an original design of their own.

In addition to using traditional art supplies, students were also required to use natural materials in their artwork.

What resulted is a wide variety of interpretations, made with materials ranging from flowers

to orange slices.

Johnson said he gave the assignment to his class to help them connect with nature.

"We are losing opportunities to stop and reflect, to feel, to appreciate and to understand simple things around us," Johnson said. "It is a noticeable fact that our daily routines are becoming faster-paced and filled with more deadlines."

"This design exercise requires each student to put on the brakes, to stop and look into a work of art, to think about it and to respond to it."

Hastedt said the annual show is eagerly anticipated because it broadens people's perspectives on art.

"People get a good taste for the wide variety of artwork here on the A&M campus and also gain an appreciation for the talent of the students," Hastedt said.

The use of flowers also makes the art unusual, Hastedt said.

"It brings art to another dimension," she said. "It's a way of showing people that floral design is a form of art. Perhaps it will inspire people to look around and see nature as an art form."

Students enjoy the exhibit because the designs

are made by fellow classmates, Hastedt said.

"I think it's an added benefit that other students could come in and see what their peers are doing," she said. "Students can see it and think, 'I can do that too.'"

Hastedt said that, even though some of the works are literal interpretations of the original pieces, some are highly imaginative, and others are sparked by memories students had when they saw the original work.

Julie Hooks, a senior agricultural development major, used one of the Academic Building's original windows — removed during renovations last year — in her interpretation of "Home No. 1" by Lucinda Johnson.

"In my composition, the window represents a doorway for the flowers trying to survive as we would move through the doorways to survive," Hooks said.

Johnson said that besides the excitement of having their art displayed in an exhibit, students gain knowledge about nature and their own self-worth.

"It can bolster self-confidence, increase self-esteem and plant the seed for creative problem-solving later on in life," he said.



Eddy Wylie, THE BATTALION

A student's sculpture from last semester is one of the works on display in the J. Wayne Stark Galleries.

It's a Wonderful Town

Night life is what you make of it in Bryan-College Station

I was walking along the row of bars we so affectionately know as Northgate when I got back this summer. A few tumbleweeds flew by me. I think I heard a coyote scream. And I asked myself, "Where is everyone?"

Well, they abandon this town in the summer.

But the music scene in the greater Bryan-College Station metropolis is still alive. And it is right where we left it. The pool-playing, bar and dance-club scenes are also maintaining a pulse this summer — even if they may need some life support.

That's where we come in. Bars are not like Morrissey. If we ignore them, they don't get any closer to us. They close down.

Instead of breathing life into these places, too often we prefer to complain.

"There's nothing to do in this small, conservative town."

But the size of a town has nothing to do with it. When I was home over the break, I ran into some old friends from high school. They were all trapped for summer in Katy, another small town, right?

Hell no. Katy is right next to Houston.

But my friends were not too happy about the prospect of another summer spent having bonfires in fields. And the complaints started. ...

"There's nothing to do." "What are we going to do tonight?"

I offered a suggestion: "There's that little place down the road called 'Houston,'" I said. "We could go there. I've heard it has bars and clubs and stuff."

It was almost worth it to

MICHAEL LANDAUER

AGGIELIFE EDITOR



make the drive back here to go out.

My friends continued to wallow in misery until we rented a movie. Renting movies is not bad, but it is something you do when you're 16 and your parents won't let you take your car anywhere. You go to Taco Bell, see what's up with the field party scene and then rent a movie and go home.

We don't have to do that anymore.

Clubs need our support. Bars are not like Morrissey. If we ignore them, they don't come any closer to us. They close down.

We're big kids now. And we have bars and clubs. Even in the summer.

So, as I walked down the barren streets of our city, I fell into the "there's nothing to do" trap.

And then I heard a sound. A pinch was needed to make sure it wasn't a dream. And when I realized it was a real live band, I started on my Jimmy Stewart victory run. You know the one, where George Bailey from *It's a Wonderful Life* realizes that he's back in Bedford Falls and he's

got a second chance at life.

I realized that we have a chance for fun. I ran along Northgate yelling greetings at all the buildings.

Later, as I sat in my jail cell wondering how I got arrested for public intoxication when I was perfectly sober, I realized something. We've got six bars across the street from campus. We've got places to hear live music in downtown Bryan and other places on any given weekend night. And it takes longer to get out of my neighborhood back home than it takes to get to Bryan.

We've got pool halls, dance halls and enough movie theaters to show every Ronald Reagan movie on a different screen at the same time — not that this would

ever, or should ever, be attempted.

Some people say this town is too conservative and that, even with all these options, somehow we don't party like other towns. But individualism and live music do exist here. If we recognize that and ignore the closed-minded people who exist everywhere, we can still have a good time.

And, yes, a lot of people have gone home this summer. But as much as they would like to, they could not take the bars and clubs with them. They left them here for us to keep an eye on until they came back.

So we owe it to the poor saps home working this summer to venture out into Aggeland, take in a band, shoot pool and stop complaining.

MUSIC REVIEW

Punchbowl goes nowhere with a typical Primus sound and old tricks

By Amy Uptmor
THE BATTALION

Primus
Tales from the Punchbowl
Interscope records
** 1/2 (out of five)

There are no unexpected tricks on Primus' new album, *Tales from the Punchbowl*. That is, if you know what to expect from a band like Primus.

What listeners should expect is one of the most unconventional sounds in modern music. Mission accomplished, but this album would be much better if most of the songs did not drag on forever and take the listener nowhere in the process.

Take the song "Southbound Pachyderm," for example. This tune is a six-and-a-half minute repetitive ode to flying elephants — literally. It sounds funny, but it is not. Extensively long songs are an art form that Primus has yet to master.

"Space farm" suffers from the same problem, minus the lyrics. This song is an irritating instrumental that could be amusing if it was 30 seconds long, but, unfortunately, it runs about five times that long.

Primus does succeed at what they are best at — novelty music — on this album with the song "Da Anza Jig." Arguably, no other band this far from the country end of the musical spectrum could get away with using a banjo as the lead instrument, but it works for Primus.

But what really makes this song work is bassist Les Claypool's storytelling ability. The song, complete with background music reminiscent of the theme from the "Beverly Hillbillies," is a kind of "where are they now" story of four friends



from the singer's past. It rates up there with "Johnny was a race car driver" as far as classic Primus songs go.

There are some other classic Primus songs on this album. Primus' lyrics are, to put it mildly, unusual. "Hellbound 17 1/2 (theme from)," a song that tries in vain to be serious, ends by asking the question, "Is there heaven is there hell/Is that tuna melt I smell?"

Claypool does succeed in making some serious points. "Year of the Parrot" compares plagiarism to teaching a mimicking parrot to sing. Lyrics like "Take a Zeppelin riff/And you alter it a bit/You make lots of money," are used to deal such accusations. He even names Kate Bush and Van Morrison as guilty of "mimicry."

One of the more disturbing moments on the album comes in

"Mrs. Blaileen," a lovely little ballad that tells of an abusive teacher's effects on an already-disturbed child, Don, who snaps and stabs one of his classmates, Steve — nice song topic. This song tries to make a good point, but is a little too twisted to work.

Claypool's eerie bass line adds an almost whining sound to the background of this already gloomy song, which ends with the boy handing a bloody knife to his father and telling him, "I think I hurt Steve." Leave it to such a deranged group to sing a song about an even more deranged boy. The result is not good.

Primus is a decent band, and if you do not take it too seriously, this album is at least fun to listen to. Of course, it would be a lot more fun if most of the songs were much shorter and didn't sound the same.

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