

Out of the Woods



Stew Milne, THE BATTALION

A sculpture by Emmett Amos titled "Art Imitates Life" stands over six feet tall and is on display in the MSC Visual Arts Gallery.

By Libe Goad
THE BATTALION

A 7-year-old boy tugged at the coat sleeve of wood sculptor Emmett Amos, who also works for the A&M Purchasing Department buying equipment for the college of engineering. "Dad," the boy said, "can I go play?"

A smile broke the artist's serious countenance as he excused himself and attended to his son, Bradford.

As they talked, children and adults milled about the MSC Visual Arts Gallery, taking in the various wood sculptures that compose Amos' "Out of the Woods" collection.

It was no mistake that his son got first billing, and Amos said he looks to family unity for artistic inspiration.

"Sculpting is therapeutic and hard work," he said. "It must be to justify taking away time from my son and wife."

Amy Day, adviser for the MSC Visual Arts student committee, said the 20-piece exhibit is one of the largest the gallery has showcased.

"We used all of our lights - even ones that don't work well," she said. "We maxed out our resources."

Over the past 24 years, Amos' number of sculptures has increased sporadically.

Amos began sculpting after several friends invited him to attend a woodcarving workshop. He returned to the workshop two more times in the early '70s and finished a

total of eight sculptures.

He said working with wood came naturally to him.

"I believe I had an association with wood in a different lifetime," he said. "It's a karmic relationship and a spiritual experience."

Amos familiarizes himself with the wood by boring a hole into it to see the wood's natural curves.

From there, Amos spends hours chipping, pounding and drilling the wood, bringing the art form to the surface. The artist spends 100-200

hours on each piece.

Others like the sculptures for their artistic value alone.

Camera Kuich, a senior biochemistry major and MSC Visual Arts committee member, said she like the various

happen," he said. Amos said he tries to make the long process a fun experience - especially through music. "When I play music, my mind is freewheeling," he said. "I don't concentrate on anything but the work piece, and my mind fleetingly goes off on tangents."

Tim Goorley, a senior nuclear engineering major, noticed a lighter element in Amos' pieces. "It's fun to look at," Goorley said. "It looks like he had fun making it."

woods and textures incorporated into the pieces.

"You can feel the smooth lines with your eyes," she said. "If you touch one of them, it feels as smooth as it looks."

Amos tries to make the sculptures fun because he gears them to younger audiences.

"I particularly like to share my work with children," he said. "It's important to expose them to art."

A wooden turtle bearing a collection of walking canes on its shell is one such piece.

Amos said his inspiration for the piece, "Turtlesticks," came from his favorite childhood story, "The Tortoise and the Hare."

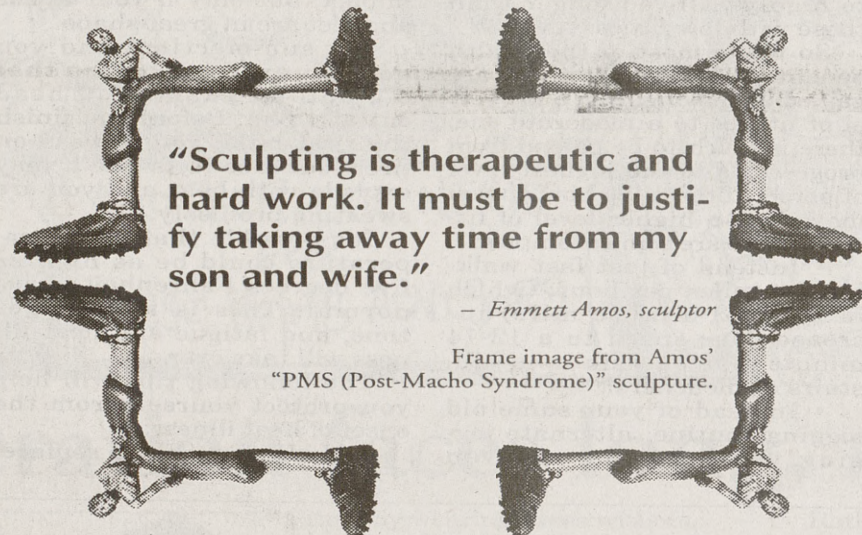
A patron wanted to buy the whimsical turtle sculpture, Amos said, but his son burst into tears and begged him not to sell it.

"I do not need to tell you that I did not sell it," Amos said in a description of the piece. "It was the first time he (Bradford) had taken a serious interest in my sculpture, and I was more than touched."

"Turtlesticks" is now a permanent member of their household.

Amos' sculpture collection will continue to grow as Amos develops what he calls his "extra-sensory" abilities to release the natural artforms in the wood.

"My life-state determines how well I may experience my work piece," he said in a gallery guidebook. "Therefore, it becomes most important to develop my life first."



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- Emmett Amos, sculptor

Frame image from Amos' "PMS (Post-Macho Syndrome)" sculpture.

hours on each piece.

No matter how much work he does on a project, Amos said it is the wood that guides the artistic process.

"I simply lie back and let it

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One mediocre talent is enough

AMY UPTMOR
COLUMNIST



Popquiz hotshot. Here's the situation: a bad actor makes a lot of money playing brainless roles but enjoys playing bass guitar. He has the opportunity to take a hiatus from movies to tour with his very own rock band.

What does he do? If he is Keanu Reeves, he momentarily ditches Hollywood and hits the road.

Last Saturday, Reeves and his band Dogstar played to a sold-out crowd of 800 fans at Numbers in Houston. Dogstar "fans" (i.e. hormone-driven teenage girls) packed the nightclub to see the mega-movie star, who was pictured in the Houston Chronicle wearing picture-perfect grunge attire, jam out to his self-described "folk music."

It's enough of a shame that Reeves' face continues to appear in so many movies. Those who are blinded by his "acclaimed" performance in *Speed* should remember a few of his not-so-glorious performances. His presence in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* made the movie almost painful to watch. Even worse, Reeves' villainous role in the otherwise-perfect *Much Ado About Nothing* earned him a "worst actor" honor from Rolling Stone in 1993.

Now Reeves is trying to poison the world of music, and he is earning similar reviews. People at the Houston concert told the Houston Chronicle that Reeves shouldn't quit his day job.

But, maybe Reeves should be commended. He knows what works for him and he goes with it.

His success can be summed up in two words: pretty boy.

Reeves knows that no matter what he does, he will continue to make money as long as he can please the female crowd. In other

er words, if he can avoid being severely mangled and continue to land roles that allow him to play the shirtless, sensitive, shy-guy-type, then he's set for life.

Reeves said his musical career exists purely for the sake of fun. That's a good thing, because I doubt anyone will ever take it seriously. He says the band won't sign a record contract unless it can find a record label that recognizes Dogstar as more than a Keanu Reeves promotional vehicle.

In other words, fans shouldn't hold their breath in anticipation of the debut Dogstar Album And non-Reeves fans can postpone those feelings of dread.

But with his less-than-promising music career lower on the list of priorities, Reeves can concentrate on becoming a serious actor. And that's the biggest tragedy.

His role as a moron in *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* at least was good for a few laughs. Watching him act out serious roles and come across as a moron is disappointing to say the least.

Reeves' life truly imitates his early roles. In *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*, Reeves' moronic character also wanted to be in a rock band. If

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Reeves had to become one of his characters, the most brainless one of all seems like the quintessential choice.

Kudos to Reeves for making the most of his money-making potential and living out his fantasies at the same time. It's just a shame that his side effort can't add credibility to his career rather than belittle it further.

At least the hordes of girls in attendance had one good thing to say about the evening - apparently Keanu looked really good.

WEEKEND PREVIEW

THURSDAY

Bobby Schilling and Friends, a progressive country band, is playing at Fitzwilly's.

Room Service, a rock band from Austin, is playing at The Tap.

Vertical Horizon, an alternative band from Washington D.C., is playing at The Dixie Theatre. **Bee Stung Lips**, an acoustic rock band from Houston, is opening. **Vertical Horizon** is also doing an in-store appearance at Marooned Records at 4:00 p.m. See related story.

FRIDAY

Joe "King" Carrasco, a salsa rock and reggae performer from Austin, is playing at The Dixie Theatre. **Pushmonkey**, a rock band from Austin, is opening.

Eugene Eugene, a jazz band, is performing at Sweet Eugene's House of Java.

The Texas A&M Film Society is sponsoring a free screening of **Ferris Bueller's Day Off** at 8:00 p.m. in 601 Rudder.

Omar & The Howlers, a blues band from Austin, is playing at 3rd Floor Cantina.

Peeping Tom, a local cover band with a few original songs, is playing at The Tap.

Sterling Country, a country band, is at The Texas Hall of Fame.

SATURDAY

The Bradshaw Gang, a country band, is at The Texas Hall of Fame.

Mike Cancellare, an acoustic performer from Lochart, is performing at Sweet Eugene's House of Java.

Fondue Monks, a rock band from Houston, is playing at The Dixie Theatre. **Jasmine Blue**, a rock band, is opening.

Ruthie Foster, a rhythm and blues artist from Gause, is at 3rd Floor Cantina.

Soul Food Cafe, a rhythm and blues band from Austin, is playing at The Tap.

Vertical Horizon Dixie Theatre hosts acoustic duo

By Libe Goad
THE BATTALION

Keith Kane and Matthew Scannell have resolved to saturate the masses with their music.

Vertical Horizon will make a stop at the Dixie Theatre Thursday night before climbing to higher altitudes the northern leg of its national tour.

The duo plans to tighten its touring schedule in the fall, playing three to five shows every week.

Kane said the band welcomes a busy schedule to help attract a larger following.

"We're dedicated to our goal of playing music everywhere we go," he said.

Living out of suitcases and missing loved ones makes touring difficult, Kane said.

"Right now we're touring with six males," he said. "So, there's a lot of testosterone flowing around."

Touring with a tight-knit band can cause problems, but he said it ultimately strengthens the band's internal ties.

The original tie formed in 1991 with Kane and Scannell playing acoustic guitar together while attending Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

After graduating, the duo cast aside degree-related plans and

made music a full-time job.

"That was a tough phone call to make to my parents," Kane said. "They didn't think it was such a great idea."

His parents' protests subsided after they heard the band's debut album, *There and Back Again*, which has sold 10,000 copies.

Kane said working with Carter Beauford, drummer for the Dave Matthews' band, and Jack O'Neill and Cary Pierce of Jackopierce on their new album, *Running On Ice*, brought an emotional intensity to the new songs that the acoustic guitars alone could not capture and that he was especially honored to work with Beauford.

"I could sit and watch him play the drums every day," he said. "He also reinstalled our faith in humanity - he was the nicest guy and always prepared to play."

Todd Traylor, manager of Marooned Records, said the store has sold hundreds of copies of *Running On Ice*.

Marooned will host Vertical Horizon for a free in-store set Thursday afternoon at 4:00 p.m. The band will play a few songs, sign autographs and give away posters to promote the Thursday night show and the new album.

"Most people in this town



Vertical Horizon

don't want to pay money to see something they haven't heard yet," Traylor said.

Fans across the country may be the same way, and Kane said the band has a long way to

go before acquiring national recognition.

"I wouldn't be upset if we were recognized internationally either," he said. "We just want to get our music out there."