

BRICK

BY

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By Wesley Brown
The Battalion

Timothy Vanya never attended Texas A&M, but from the looks of his office, few could tell. The artist and owner of The Red Brick Gallery in downtown Bryan has been focusing



PHOTOGRAPH: Sarah Johnson

Paintings, drawings, photographs and sculptures are on display at The Red Brick Gallery in Bryan.

on A&M traditions for almost a decade. Paintings and drawings of Aggies young and old figure prominently throughout, most of them by Vanya himself.

"I have a new set of works coming out this fall that focus on children and A&M — everything from 18-month-old toddlers to older kids and their first experience with Aggie traditions."

It is no wonder this theme is important in Vanya's work — his daughter is a student at A&M. Red Brick Gallery does not, however, focus primarily on the work of its proprietor. The gallery, which opened in June, is a permanent showcase for Vanya's work, but it also displays work from other artists. Five artists are featured besides Vanya.

The gallery exhibits paintings and drawings, photographs and sculptures, but it is not going to be just a gallery for long. Vanya has big plans for upcoming months, including a "coffee house night" with live music and a poetry reading every third Saturday of the month and a "Friday philosophy forum" to encourage intellectual discussion.

"I think the intellectual exchange of ideas in a comfortable setting is what this university environment should be about, and it's what this world lacks in general," Vanya said. "There's no interaction like that with TV or computers."

The Red Brick Gallery also will function as a learning center. Vanya keeps a well-stocked art library on hand and welcomes anyone who wishes to sit down and read as they visit the museum. In addition, Vanya and several other artists will be teaching their crafts to any interested students. Vanya plans to teach beginning through advanced drawing, as well as life drawing, in which he has a particularly strong background. In addition, Dave Brady, whose sculptures are exhibited in the gallery, will be

Gallery grows with new themes, exhibits

teaching pottery classes.

Vanya is heavily involved with the development of the fine arts throughout Bryan-College Station. The building in which the Red Brick Gallery is located will soon be at the artistic heart of the community. Owner Kay Conlee has donated an 8,000-square-foot area near the Gallery for a new project.

"We've donated this area to the upcoming Children's Museum, so that they can have a temporary space to show a large part of their exhibit," Conlee said. "They're going to need a lot more room in the long run, but they're going to start off here."

The Children's Museum will be next-door to the Red Brick Gallery for at least two years, chairman Dale Whittaker said. Vanya welcomes his new neighbor and the business it will bring.

"Every big city has one, and it'll be great to have one here in Bryan," he said. "If it's like other children's museums, it'll be extremely popular. But even without that help, business here is getting better every day."

Vanya and some of his fellow artists are pushing for even more artistic growth in the Bryan-College Station area, appealing to the Bryan City Council for a joint-venture fine arts museum.

"The museums on A&M's campus have been great for encouraging art appreciation in this area, and we want to build on that foundation," Vanya said. "We want to be the spark that gets a true fine arts community going in Bryan-College Station."

The Red Brick Gallery is at 202 S. Bryan down the street from 3rd Floor Cantina.



PHOTOGRAPH: Sarah Johnson

Artist Timothy Vanya owns the Red Brick Gallery in downtown Bryan.

Men In Black eclipses typical summer movies

By James Francis
The Battalion

They wear black suits with matching Ray Ban sunglasses. They hunt down the scum of the earth — aliens in human form, spread out all over the world. They keep us from knowing their existence and the unseen population of aliens on Earth. They are the Men In Black.

Some may speculate that the pairing of Will Smith as "J" and Tommy Lee Jones as "K" in the sci-fi adventure-comedy *Men In Black* is an odd one, but the onscreen chemistry between the two is pure movie magic.

Box-office figures from this past weekend confirm that there certainly is some film element that makes *Men In Black* appealing to audiences across the nation. With a three-day domestic gross of \$84.1 million, this film is on the road to summer-blockbuster success. It just goes to show that if actors want to make a splash in the summer, they should market their films on the Fourth of July weekend.

The film opens with Smith, as New York police officer James Edwards, in pursuit of a sus-

pected criminal. But when the felon jumps from a tall bridge and lands safely on the ground, Smith realizes he might not be dealing with an ordinary person. Later, Smith and the audience come to the understanding that there are numerous aliens on Earth. The only problem is that audiences can't tell, because they take the

form of human beings.

Soon, Smith is confronted by Jones and is selected to be one of the few, elite agents of the Men In Black organization. These agents go by single-letter names, so Smith becomes Agent J and is paired with Jones, Agent K. The plot doesn't get much thicker than this, other than both agents attempting to save the world from total destruction by a gigantic bug. Although it is straightforward and not hard to follow, the storyline for this film is still intriguing, and it keeps the audience in touch with its characters.

The best aspect of *Men In Black* is the comedy. Although the special effects were conducted by masters at Industrial Light & Magic and Steven Spielberg served as Executive Producer, no one can deny the comedic pairing of Smith and Jones. The classic television show *The Odd Couple* can not even come close to the banter played back and forth between Smith and Jones.

Smith comes through in the film as his usual funny-guy

Men In Black
Starring Will Smith, Tommy Lee Jones
Directed by Barry Sonnenfeld
Rated PG-13
Playing at Hollywood 16
★★★★ (out of five)

character who is just as normal as all of us — only a bit funnier and more wealthy. His performance displays a range of emotion from bewilderment toward an actual alien population to hilarity when faced with assisting in the birth of an alien. With his past success as the star of *Independence Day*, Smith may have a knack for the sci-fi genre, or at least sci-fi films that doesn't take themselves too seriously. Smith is a comedian by nature, and his skills truly shine in this film.

Jones, on the other hand, takes his comedy like black coffee — straight, strong and at times, a bit subtle. Throughout the entire production, Jones shows no emotion other than a very serious nature for being an agent of the MIB. This is the brilliance of casting someone such as Jones in this film — he doesn't have to try to be funny. Because of his serious facial ex-

pressions and reactions to what many people would deem out of the ordinary, Jones comes across as a natural-born comic.

A good surprise and great addition to the film is Dr. Laurel Weaver, played by Linda Fiorentino of the critically-acclaimed film *The Last Seduction*. Fiorentino is New York City's Deputy Medical Examiner, who becomes involved with the MIB agents through a series of dead victims she must examine.

Although she can usually be found attacking more serious roles, Fiorentino takes on a new identity as a quirky medical doctor. The funniest sequences she appears in are those in which Agents J and K must erase her memory so that she will not remember their existence or the circumstances surrounding the victims she examines.

As far as cinematography goes, *Men In Black* is a special effects smorgasbord. From alien creations to spaceship crashes, this film delivers an array of interesting and realistic-looking computer-generated images.

Such is also the case with the entire concept and filming of *Men In Black*. Its story is original, the acting is funny and the action is finely tuned. The only drawback to the film is that it might not be long enough for some audiences to get a full helping of the artistic accomplishment that is the *Men In Black*.



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