

AGGIELIFE

Visions of Apocalypse

Artist Joanou revamps classic art for modern times

BY MELISSA PANTANO
The Battalion

While Phil Joanou worked as an advertising executive in Los Angeles, he became exposed to some of the darker sides of modern human nature. But it was when he decided to leave the corporate world that his true talent surfaced.

Modern society inspired Joanou to produce "Art of the Apocalypse," for which a reception with Joanou will be held at 7:30 p.m. in the Visual Arts Gallery on the second floor of the Memorial Student Center.

Joanou's art style can be classified as expressionism. All his paintings take images from classic works of art, such as Michaelangelo's "David," then alters them to demonstrate how the image would look if the event happened today.

The theme of his work is that classical images have been corrupted by modern society.

Joanou, who is a classically trained artist, received his masters of fine arts from the New York Academy of Art; he continued studies with a focus on art history and modern masters' techniques.

Joanou used his training and experience to make a pictorial statement about society.

The paintings deal with many situational themes from war to the workplace and depict how

modern society has chosen the people it idolizes.

For example, in one painting, Joanou focuses on Botticelli's "The Birth of Venus." Joanou said he wanted to show a modern-day representation of the piece.

The original painting shows Venus attended by deities. In the Joanou version, the world watches, as if by television, as the goddess emerges. Joanou said the painting depicts the goddesses of the present.

"The attraction to the goddess in these modern times would not only be her beauty, but her power, influence and popularity," Joanou said, "the same qualities that movie stars and sport superstars have today."

Joanou also uses provocative issues to draw people to his art.

"Lunch at the Office" is inspired by Edouard Manet's "Dejeuner sur l'Herbe" ("Lunch on the Grass").

Joanou said this painting depicts a modern woman in the corporate world who has to struggle to show her intelligence and not be judged by her looks.

"All the people around the woman are wearing masks, which represents society's tendency to cover up the truth and to cover our feelings," he said. "The woman stands out in the picture because, not only is she nude, but the rest of the people in the painting are very gray, whereas she is bright and has a soft, round body."

"King David" depicts Michael-

angelo's "David" on a New York City subway. The twist is that, in this version, David has been stripped of his underwear.

Joanou said if David lived today he would probably be portrayed more as a Calvin Klein model.

"The nude figure was commonplace in Greek and Roman culture, but in our time it is widely used mainly for shock value."

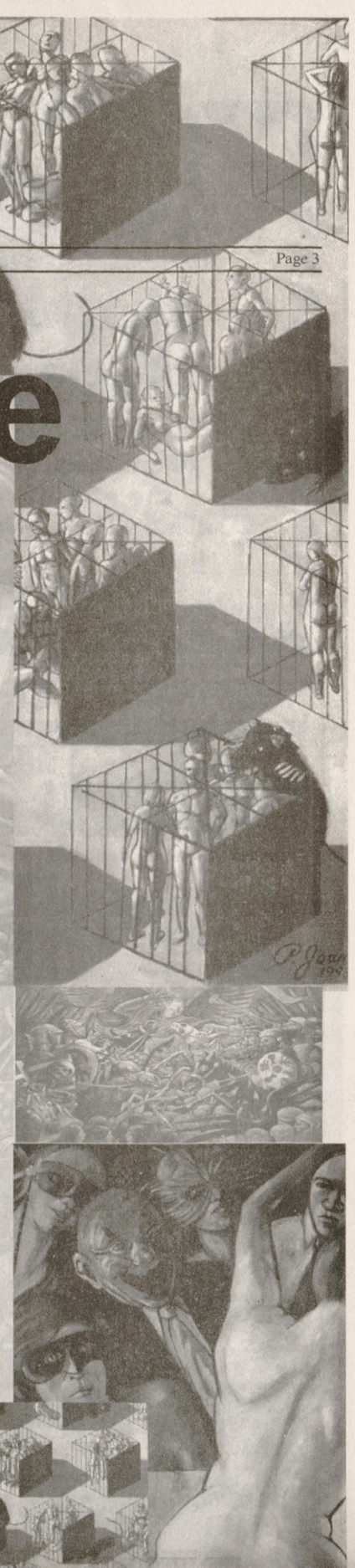
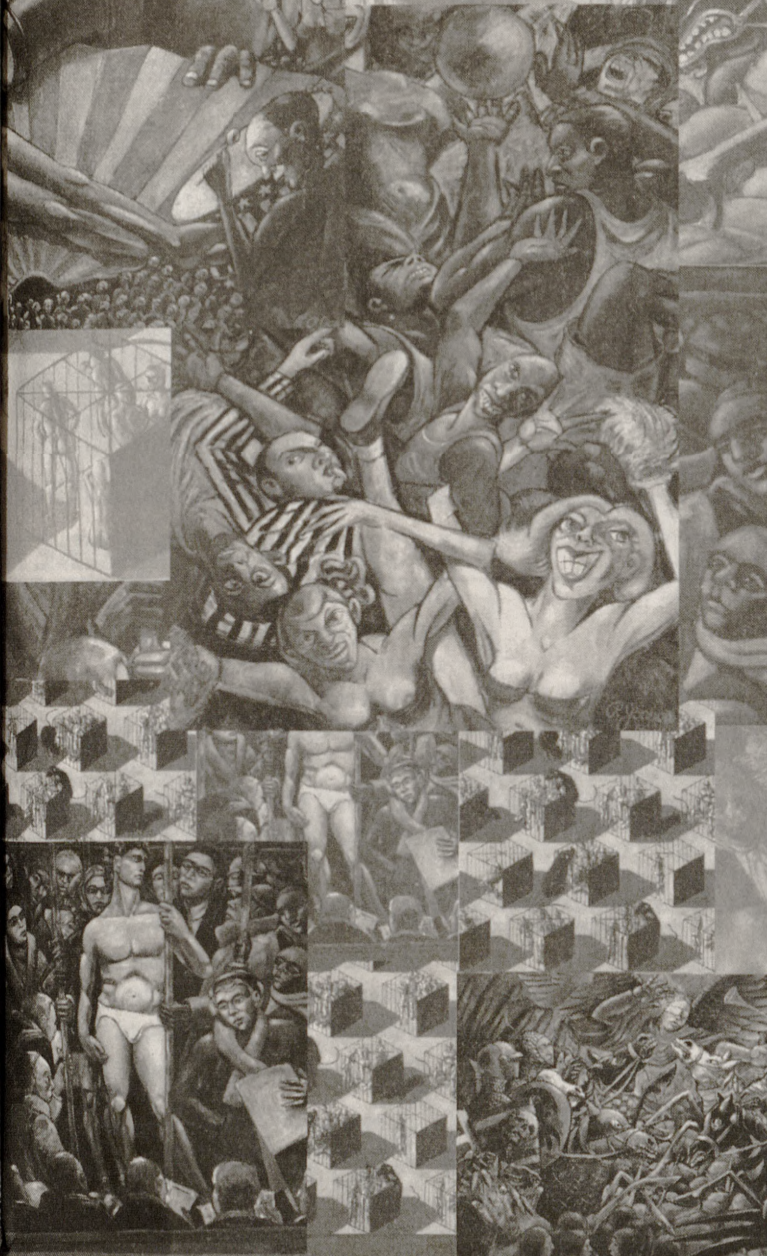
Anne Turner, director of marketing and promotions for MSC Visual Arts Committee and a junior English major, said this exhibit is appropriate due to its themes.

"Even though the year 2000 was not the beginning of the new millennium, there was a panic," Turner said. "Y2K and the end of the world, so 'Art of the Apocalypse' is sort of appropriate."

Turner said the goal of the Visual Arts Committee is to reach students in a way that is missing from campus.

"We bring art because there is not this great opportunity on campus to become cultured," Turner said.

"One thing that people say is lacking of A&M grads is that exposure to culture. We chose an exhibit like this because we felt like it would speak to students. Art is supposed to be challenging; it's not supposed to be something that you can view passively—it's supposed to spark thoughts and emotions."



Liberal Arts Career Week

Tonight: Networking Workshop
7:00 - 8:15 p.m.
Rudder 410

Thursday: Alumni Forum
6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Reed Arena
Social
8:00 - 9:00 p.m. Reed Arena

Friday: Career Fair
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
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