

Flourish: Jennifer Davis, Erika Olson Gross, Terrence Payne, and Joe Sinness

Four Minnesota artists showcase new work at the MIA



Erika Olson Gross, *Dream Quilt* (detail), 2010, graphite, gouache, and watercolor on paper, 26 x 33 inches



Joe Sinness, *The Giving and The Taking*, 2010, colored pencil on paper, 22½ x 30 inches

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The Minnesota Artists Exhibition Program (MAEP) presents “Flourish,” a group exhibition opening October 22 in the MAEP galleries at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA). On view through January 2, 2011, “Flourish” showcases new work by four Minnesota artists: Jennifer Davis, Erika Olson Gross, Terrence Payne, and Joe Sinness. “Flourish” is an exhibition that revels in the aesthetics of form, the pleasure of color, and exploration of decorative surfaces. Each artist uses a different set of priorities and tools, allowing their work to be understood on its own terms. Their work gleans images from many sources and compresses the physical properties of painting and drawing into flat planes. Thus, art-historical portraiture, decorative patterning, coded language, and personal narratives can all occupy the same space.

Throughout her career, Jennifer Davis has endeavored to begin each acrylic painting quickly and intuitively. She does not rely on preliminary sketches but rather starts painting each figure, beginning with its eyes. Presented in series, her works aren’t meant to be read as scenes in an ongoing narrative. Each piece can be interpreted through expressive patterns, colors, fantasy characters, and delicate details. In *Four Arms*, she depicts a glowing aura at the tips of a young alien’s four index fingers.

Erika Olson Gross is a multi-media artist whose sculptures and paintings express the poetry and fecundity of nature. Her new suite of intricate graphite and gouache drawings show off her figural and compositional abilities. She admits that in drawing from photos of her young sons, the raw material is quite personal. Yet even in their intimacy, Olson Gross's paintings are invitations to explore ideas of creativity and family. *Dream Quilt* is painted with a subjective sensitivity from an objective distance. *Teddy Bear* employs cut-out snowflakes, underscoring her interest in graphic and textile patterns.

Known for his large oil pastels, Terrence Payne is a keen observer of the roles people play. His bold fields of color, wallpaper backdrops, and torqued figures compress his interest in Renaissance paintings and filmmaking. He is intentional about the imagery he borrows. The hand-written text next to each pastel drawing has a sense of humor tinged with melancholy; they reveal his characters' internal narratives. He is interested in the ironic personal motivations behind human behavior.



Jennifer Davis, *Curious*, 2010, acrylic, charcoal, and graphite on panel, 30 x 24 inches



Terrence Payne, *The Only Thing I Smell Is the Stink Eye*, 2010, oil pastel on paper, 60 x 48 inches

Rendered in colored pencil, with fastidious, hyper-realistic attention to detail, Joe Sinness's baroque-style drawings are filled with color, pattern, and texture. Sinness is interested in the particular coding attached to objects and celebrities. For years, singer/actor Dolly Parton has been one of his favorite subjects. Sinness reveals his appreciation of Parton's sincerity and longevity.

This exhibition is presented by the Minnesota Artists Exhibition Program, a curatorial department of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, which features work selected by Minnesota artists. MAEP is made possible in part by generous support from the Jerome Foundation.

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