



HLC Accreditation Evidence

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Theoretical physics and art collide in Wayne Conyers exhibit at the Shafer Gallery

"Three Twelve P.M." by Wayne Conyers

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Story by Micah Oelze

Courtesy Photo

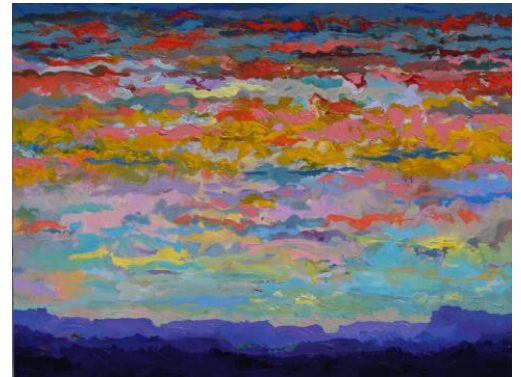
The search for meaning in life is one as old as time. People have gone to extremes to explore this question. Professor and artist Wayne Conyers' search for meaning explores the world of theoretical physics through his art.

The Shafer Gallery will host his latest exhibit, "Quarks, Quirks & Quantum Conundrums", from Jan. 13-Feb. 10. An opening reception will be held at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 13 at the Shafer Gallery. The reception will feature refreshments and a gallery talk by the artist.

This year the Kansas Art Education Association named Conyers Outstanding Art Educator in Higher Education for the 2016-2017 academic year. He was struck when he received a letter informing him he was the recipient.

"Twice I have been 'Professor of the Year' here at McPherson College; that has been pretty cool," he said. "But to be named professor of the state...wow, that means a lot to me."

Conyers has taught art for 43 years, 10 at Baldwin City high school and 33 at McPherson College.



In addition to teaching and creating art, Conyers loves to learn about theoretical physics.

"It fascinates me. Trying to prove the theory of everything." Conyers said. "Anything that has to do with 'You know what? There may be something greater to reality than what we can perceive,' fascinates me."

During the fall of 2013, Conyers took a sabbatical and decided he would read about theoretical physics and paint and see what happens. Soon inspirations would appear and as a result, Conyers created the beautiful works of art that can be seen in his newest exhibit.

Some of the featured work took an incredible amount of time and others were more spontaneous. All of it comes back to his driving force to find meaning.

"Everything relates back to the idea of trying to understand what is going on in the world that we cannot see," he said.

While Conyers is best known for his watercolor pieces, that will not be the only medium featured in this show.

Conyers's drawings are based around whether time even exists.

"The titles of the drawings are the moments I finished them," Conyers said. "If it was 11:50 p.m. then that was the title of it."

Another inspiration came from his studies of the smallest sub-particles of matter that make up our world. This can be seen in his "Quantum Chromodynamics Fluctuation" series featured in his show. Conyers took his paintings and began to zoom into the furthest point possible on a computer which left him with only pixels. Pixels turned into patterns and patterns into inspirations for his art, but not re-creations.

"What is the most elemental building block that matter is made of?" Conyers asked. "That is what the Chromodynamics pieces are about."

Conyers organized the pieces in this show based on concept, with an explanation of what he was thinking about or where his inspiration came from. This way Conyers hopes viewers are given the opportunity to properly respond to his work instead of questioning what is going on.

The Shafer Gallery also features ceramics exhibit by Brenda Lichman

Studio potter Brenda Lichman of Wichita will also have work on display from Jan. 13-Feb. 11. Lichman's ceramics will be available for purchase during the exhibit.

"Making things is important to me," she said. "It is the way that I ground myself and connect to people and the world around me."

Lichman grew up in Brookfield, Wisconsin, where she developed an early interest in art and the handmade object. She received her B.F.A. in ceramics from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire in 1998 and earned her M.F.A. in ceramics with a minor in drawing from the University of North Texas in 2002.

Lichman teaches at Wichita State University's School of Art, Design & Creative Industries. She coordinates the annual "Empty Bowl" fundraising project with the WSU Ceramics Guild, which benefits the Kansas Food Bank. Lichman believes that we can make a difference in our lives and our communities through art, food and pottery.

Lichman was featured as an "Emerging Artist" by Ceramics Monthly Magazine in May of 2009. Her work has been broadly exhibited across the country in notable exhibitions, such as the "23rd Strictly Functional National" in 2015.

Her work is represented by Red Lodge Clay Center, AKAR, Plinth Gallery & Crimson Laurel Gallery.

Lichman will close the Wayne Conyers and Brenda Lichman Exhibit with a free workshop from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. on Feb. 11 hosted by the gallery.

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