

# The Shape of Experience Times Four

By Ilene Rosenberg  
Class of December 2002

Occasionally events, experiences, or works of art cut through the cobwebs of habit so effectively one is available to see the world again with fresh eyes. Such is the case with the Faculty Exhibition at the Morrison Gallery in the library.

Each of the professors, Nancy Mendes, Victor Viser, Linda Mylin Ross, and Samuel Winch, offer a vision so artfully conveyed we are able to glimpse a view of the world through the prism of their experience.

Nancy Mendes both opens and closes the show with a full burst of color. In "The Table," one is immediately met with a still life throbbing with vivid intensity. At the reception given for the artists on February 13, Mendes said that she began the painting a long time ago. She let the painting sit, unfinished, until she received a vase of red flowers. "That's it," she said, and after years she finished it in a matter of hours. One thinks the painting did not just sit, but accumulated power, latent and coiling like a spring, until it could release its energy.

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Drawing on her experience as a member of a family of African and Portuguese heritage, Mendes tells stories in her paintings. One story, "A Family Reunion", portrays a family gathering at the beach. The painting vibrates with color so exquisitely the people come alive and one feels the heat of the beach, captured in a moment of eternity.

So fortuitous is the combination of the artists of this exhibit, one imagines they were chosen from amount 100s for

their ability not only for how they express themselves, but also for how they compare with one another.

Viser's muted tones contrast with Mendes' vibrant ones. His Earth Series consists of soft-edge photographic landscapes, some of which have been slightly digitally altered. Based on actual locations they have a dream-like quality. One feels that the harnesses of the world have been filtered out, leaving either a cherished memory or a view of where one would like to be.

At the reception Viser commented that the small size the photographs are intended to allow the viewer to enter into the picture. His device works like a small portal, where one gets closer and closer and, "voilà!", a world opens up.

Winch's photography of the objective world contrasts with Viser's portrayal of the subjective one. Where Viser uses landscapes to express feelings, Winch shows us the rich color and texture of the external world. True, Winch picks exotic locations to show us – India, China, Singapore – but his true strength lies in

his ability to capture moments of ironic incongruity about the world. For instance, in "Woman Turning a Bamboo Barge," a fragile-looking woman commandeers a huge raft by herself.

"Scenes present themselves to me, I just take the shot," Winch says, dismissing the notion that he has an active role in the creative process. If that is the case, his talent lies in his ability to instantaneously recognize the expressiveness of a scene, and capture it. His creative faculties may seem so natural to him that he can determine whether a photograph needs selenium-toned Gelatin-silver print or inkjet print, the way Michael Jordan, for example, decide between a rim-rocking dunk or a lay-up.

Ross also uses an intuitive approach toward her material, which in her case is charcoal and paper. She says she likes the "rawness" of charcoal, the "direct, unmediated, visceral quality" of the medium. Her landscape scenes are drawings that show off charcoal at its expressive best, that is, as capable of a vast range of shade between black and white, of various textural surfaces, and of its ability for creating mood.

Fully in command of her medium, Ross puts her talents to work to show the threat to the environment by encroaching development. While her works do not show development actually taking over, they do show danger as a palpable presence throughout the landscape. By extension, Ross explains that her drawings can also be seen as a potential loss of individuality by the machinery of production and the superstructure.

However one interprets her drawings – one interpretation given to Ross is that her works are life affirming by virtue of the power of forces at work.

It is worth mentioning that the gallery itself is a contributor to the success of this exhibit. The rectangular room is wide enough to allow each artist enough space, yet narrow enough to hold the contrasts between them together. The clarity of the spare lines of the room, and the skylight, shows off the works to optimum effect. Praise must also go to Ross, who in addition to participating in the exhibit, is its organizer. Decisions to place what where are an element in the coordinated effect of the exhibit.

Occurring as it does in the depths of the harsh winter when living for the most part is driven indoors and underground, this exhibit urges one to awake from the isolation of winter's hardened bark and dried root. Before the exhibit closes on March 21, the official Spring Solstice, give yourself an opportunity to feel a personal Spring Solstice, and to view other people's visions come to life.



**Civil War Era Teaching Ball**  
Saturday, March 29  
Capital Union Bldg.

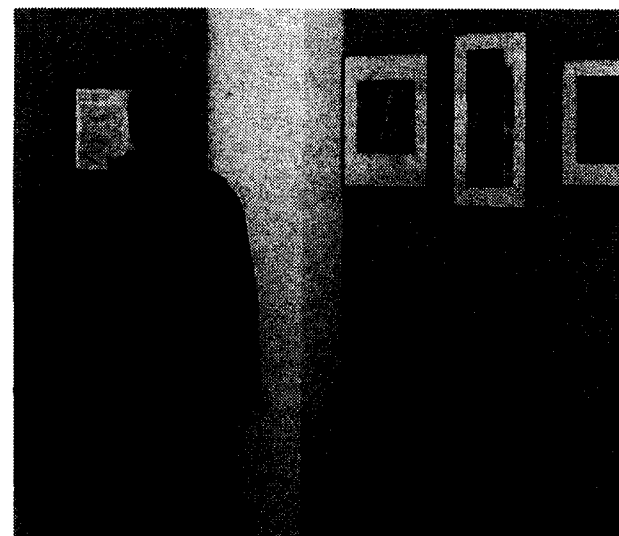
PSM Community & Guests

**5**  
All Others **10**

Period Attire Encouraged  
Light Refreshments Served

**Ticket Sale Dates & Locations**  
Main Lobby Olmsted  
March 5, 6, 19, 24, 25, 26, and 27  
11 a.m. - 2 p.m. and 4:30 - 6 p.m.

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One student reads Dr. Samuel Winch's profile prior to the artists' reception.