

Gallery Lounge Exhibit: Sean P. Kennedy's silk screen collection contrasts childhood and the reality of aging

By **KAREN PLOTT**

Staff Reporter

Imagine being ten years old again in the living room you grew up in. You are looking out your window for Santa dashing across the sky with his reindeer and you excitedly wonder what is in his little bag for you.

Now bring yourself back to reality. When Christmas catches up to you again, you get caught up in agonizing lines and waste away hard earned savings guessing what everyone on the endless "people to buy for list" will like.

Everyone has a nostalgic mental picture book of memories of childhood that is triggered from time to time by their senses. The experiences and wonder of these memories seem out of grasp with current reality. This is because there comes a time when the enchantment of childhood starts to fade away and with it fun, spontaneity, innocence and curiosity of the world that define what it means to be a kid.

These stages of life are what Sean P. Kennedy explores in his collection of silk screens located in the Gallery Lounge.

This combination of childhood and adulthood (particularly parenthood) as depicted in Kennedy's images not only plays at the viewer's most memorable childhood experiences but also contributes to the disenchantment of being older and being faced with the burdens of reality.

Kennedy's use of color and design illustrate this relationship.

The colors chosen for these pieces consist of bright blue, yellow, red and orange in addition to baby blue, light pink, pale orange, aqua and lilac, which are playful childlike colors.

The subject matter mainly emanates the feeling of growing old. Even though the viewer can experience the longing for their childhood memories with a smile, they also get that overbearing sense of loss, because the memories are far from being attain-

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able.

One can easily relate to the image of the boy and his dog jumping in the autumn colored leaves while the father figure is standing behind him simply smoking a pipe with a rake in his hand. The story of the child playing is evident; however, the image of the rake hinting at labor cannot be ignored.

Even though the immediate background color is bright blue the sadness can still be felt. The entire image is encased in a pale orange upside down isosceles triangle, which suggests liveliness. The two elements are ingeniously combined to instill both feelings in the viewer.

Another image consists of a mother letting her baby walk on his own for the first time into his father's arms. The triangular shape the image is placed on is baby blue, which symbolizes the child and the dominant element of youth. In this piece, there is not an atmosphere of sadness in aging, but it illustrates a positive experience of both the baby and the parents.

"Dialogue is created about the aspects of a simple rural life vs. the urban art world," said Kennedy.

The geometric shapes the images are placed on are that of the contemporary urban art world, whereas, the subject matter of the images suggests the "simple life" of rural living, many of which include nature in some degree.

For example, there is another silk screen that complements the image of the baby's first steps of three kids enjoying nature while fishing, yet it is on a solid bright orange triangular shape, which is a dominant characteristic of a contemporary design.

The difference between these two elements that make up the composition, suggests similarities between the two lifestyles and that everyone has those innocent nostalgic childhood memories. The change from childhood to adult is simply a basic element of life regardless of lifestyle.

The rate in which a person grows and experiences the different stages of life as depicted from these works varies. Our pasts shape what we are today, even though some elements of the past are untouchable. The stage each viewer is at during their self-discovery is going to affect what the artwork means to them.

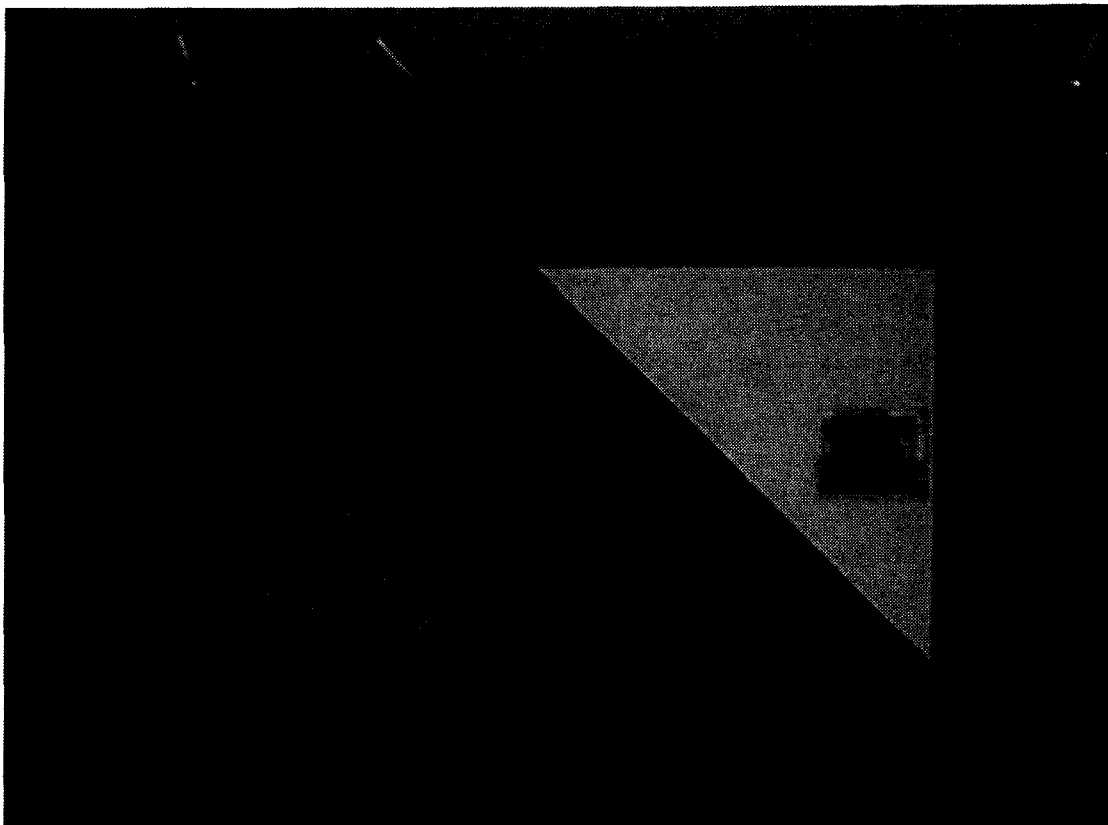


photo by Marko Primorac

ABOVE: Complimenting each other: a baby's first steps and children enjoying nature

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