

Roswell Daily Record

The Voice of the Pecos Valley Online



Tuesday, February 03, 2009

1/7/2009 9:54:00 PM

[Email this article](#) • [Print this article](#)

Local News
Public Records

Artist-in-Residence exhibit opens Friday at RMAC



Cid Standifer
Record Staff Writer

It might not be apparent at first glance that the convoluted paper structures in Roswell Artist-in-Residence Renee van der Stelt's exhibit are actually maps.

One piece that undulates over the wall like the framework of a manta ray is made up entirely of a paper grid criss-crossed with ink lines. The outlines, which might look like incomplete sketches of storybook characters at first, are in fact the tracings of contents where they cross a grid of latitude and longitude. All the paper in between has been cut out, leaving just the frame of the globe.



Renee van der Stelt (Mark Wilson Photo)

A smaller work traces an old map of the moon as seen with the naked eye from Earth. Van der Stelt cut the map out of paper, complete with outlines of dozens of tiny craters. The cutout is suspended an inch or two in front of an ink-dot projection of the stars. Van der Stelt says that the miniature moon piece took more time to produce than any of the other wall-dominating pieces in the exhibit.

By focusing on mapping phenomenon from the cosmic to the microcosmic, van der Stelt hopes to prompt people to think about the layout of their own environment.

"It's about trying to get people to think about space, and their local space, and trying to think in a global perspective," she said.

RDR MAGAZINES

She admits that she doesn't maintain 100 percent accuracy in her work.

CITY CALENDAR

"I reserve the right to take poetic abstraction," she jokes.

ADVERTISING

"Obviously, for me it's not just about the maps. It's about form," she added. "I'm definitely playing with the pattern and the shape and the light."

CHURCHES

But part of her work plays with the ways that maps give us an idea of the land that's already askew. One sketch is covered with large geometrical shapes, which van der Stelt explained are overlapping shadows of various map projections, all forms that cartographers have used over the centuries to compress the spherical Earth onto a two-dimensional sheet of paper.

RDR HISTORY

"A lot of the continents end up distorted," van der Stelt explained. If people aren't aware of the way the images are squeezed and stretched to fit the projection, "It may really affect the ways they think about the size of their continent or their country."

BUSINESS REVIEW

Van der Stelt began her tenure at the artist-in-residence program seven months ago, after receiving a grant from the Pollock Krasner Foundation and quitting her job as an art instructor at the University of Maryland. The Roswell program was rare in that it allowed her to bring along her family, and had the added bonus of paying enough that she could support herself.

As she started to adjust to the new location, she found that the Southwestern landscape offered vast opportunities and ideas for creating new art.

"It's so different, because Maryland is such an urban center, Baltimore, so I'm really out of touch with the land there," she said.

Some of the pieces in her new exhibit are directly inspired by the desert prairie. One series includes a detailed drawing of wild grasses, followed by three canvasses of short black paint markings, and three more of pencil scribbles. Each represents a different level of van der Stelt's involvement in documenting the grass's movement. For the pencil marks, she held the paper in the shadow of the grass, and then traced the way the seed head moved in the wind. The other three pieces she made by putting paint on the grass and holding a canvas up to it, letting it mark its own path.

"In an odd way, these are more representative of the movement of the grass," she said. "They're more realistic."

She's glad she still has five months of her residency left, because she hasn't even begin to explore the artistic possibilities of the birds and clouds.

The exhibit will open to the public on Friday at the Roswell Museum and Art Center. Van der Stelt will give a

Search

NEW HOME LISTINGS

CLICK HERE

FOR ROSWELL

**The Loans You Need.
The Service You Deserve.**

Roswell
2211 N. Main 1900 S. Main
627-3000 627-4900

Click Here to View Today's Front Page

presentation about her work at 5:30 p.m., followed by a reception.

Copyright 2009 Roswell Daily Record
P.O. Box 1897 Roswell, New Mexico 88202
External links are provided for reference purposes. The Roswell Daily Record is not responsible for the content of external Internet sites.
Software © 1998-2009 1up! Software, All Rights Reserved