

MRAC presents Hui-Chu Ying

The Mimbres Region Arts Council will feature printmaker Hui-Chu Ying at the /MRAC/Wells Fargo Bank Gallery through March 26.

Originally from Taipei, Taiwan, Ying is currently an Associate Professor of Art at the University of Akron in Ohio. Ying has exhibited her work worldwide, including installations in Spain and Finland.

Layering — adding one thing atop another without altering either's essence — is an important characteristic of Ying's work. She not only places handwork over mechanical process, color over color, image over pattern, and language over image, but also combines techniques and material from contemporary Western culture with Asian traditions. Ying playfully uses images of hands and birds alongside ancient ornate symbols; text alongside richly pigmented amorphous forms.

Ying's use of color is stimulating while her use of form is thought provoking. Her work is inspired by the power of healing and hope that emerges in tragedy. Ying was present in Spain during the oil spill from the tanker Prestige. Her subsequent work reflected the positive response of volunteerism that came from the environmental disaster.

In Ying's autobiography, she explains that the best part of being an artist is that it allows one to discover, to examine, and to respond to life experiences.

"We enjoy our routine lives and take them for granted until the day arrives when they are interrupted by illness, death, war, or a sudden natural disaster. It is such an amazing thing that each one of us has the inner compassion to give and share of ourselves and our material goods. We learn to nurture and to embrace one another, to cope with the loss of loved ones, and to endure obstacles. The best medicine for healing the wounds that life throws at us is the offer of hope and courage. Helping one other to develop empathy, tolerance, patience and humility is one of life's greatest gifts," she writes.

Ying's work employs all the possibilities of various media by combining painting, drawing, etching, screen-printing and collage, as well as others, in her work. She creates large-scale installations using drawings and prints on paper producing a space for meditation or communication.

One of her wall installations included many pieces of metallic leaf pasted on paper and silkscreen printing with text selected from several religious books including Arabic text from the Koran, Hebrew from the Torah, Chinese from Buddhist sutras, and Spanish from the Christian Bible. The prayer texts reside under a drawing of a Zen rock garden, a visual space for meditation. Another installation was comprised of a group of boat-shaped, woodcut relief prints. Images of hand gestures symbolized the Buddha's mudras of giving, sharing and blessing. The boats represent prayers of hope, which rescue the ill, those who experience loneliness or grief or loss.

According to Ying's students, she is a compelling, inspirational artist pushing them to excel.

"Hui-chu rocks my socks! She is a difficult teacher, but you won't mind working hard, because you feel if you're really learning and treated like an adult. That and she's hui-chu!" one student wrote.

Light refreshments will be served.

For more information, call the Arts Council at 575.538.2505 or stop by the MRAC Office located inside the Wells Fargo Bank Building, 1201 Pope St.

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