

Life in the Valley



Former Marines Matthew Boulay, left, and Eddie Caine are pairing up to create “Yellow Squares Bombed,” to combine their fine art and graffiti art styles at the Salem Art Association on Jan. 8. The exhibit runs through Feb. 20. ANNA REED/STATESMAN JOURNAL

MIXED MESSAGES

Opposing art styles unite in exhibit

Abby Luschei Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

The walls of the Annex at the Bush Barn Art Center were pristine Wednesday morning.

But in mere seconds, and several brush strokes, one of the walls would soon be covered with splashes of blue, gray and black.

This wasn't the first time Eddie Caine created art on the walls at the Salem Art Association, and it probably won't be the last.

Caine is a graffiti and tattoo artist in Salem. He's teaming up with Matthew Boulay, a Salem-based fine artist, for their new exhibit, “Yellow Squares Bombed.” It opened Jan. 8 and runs through Feb. 20.

“Yellow Squares Bombed” is a collaboration between the two artists, both of whom are former Marines, and their art styles.

Years ago, Boulay created a series of yellow squares after returning home from Iraq. The squares were inspired by a Gold Star, he said, “using simple shapes and colors to try to tell the story of war.”

The paintings were used in the exhibit, “Yellow Squares, or The Opposite of War,” held in Newport and Salem.

Boulay was introduced to Caine at a public art forum in September, and they later met for lunch. After learning about Caine's graffiti art style, Boulay invited him to “bomb” his yellow squares.

“Bombing” is a contemporary art form where graffiti art changes an immediate environment. Caine said this style is often found in rural areas where there is conflict.

“(These yellow squares) symbolize peace from war,” he said. “And (bombing) is the complete opposite.”

Over the next several weeks, Caine will “bomb” dozens of Boulay's yellow squares to create an ever-evolving exhibit at the Salem Art Association.

The exhibit will change sometimes and be static the other — when some yellow squares go up, others will come down. There will also be a time-lapse video projected on one of the walls.

The “bombing” will take place in the Annex and various other locations in Salem, like streets or parking lots. Boulay wanted to be clear they are not going to vandalize or bomb any property that hasn't invited them.

“Yellow Squares Bombed” is designed to start a dialogue about public and private art — who is to say what goes where?

Caine started doing graffiti art around 2008. It's the art form that allows him to express himself the most, he said, but it hasn't come without sacrifice. At 15 years old, he had a felony on his record because of it. He enlisted in the Marines to get on a different path.

“It changed my life,” he said.

Last fall, Caine was involved in the graffiti art exhibit “Latinos Uni-



Matthew Boulay speaks at the Salem Art Association on Jan. 8. Former Marines Matthew Boulay and Eddie Caine are pairing up to create “Yellow Squares Bombed,” to combine their fine art and graffiti art styles. The exhibit runs through Feb. 20. ANNA REED/STATESMAN JOURNAL

dos Siempre” at the Salem Art Association. Boulay has also had several exhibits there, like “Combat Grass.” It was an interactive display meant to serve as a reminder of the female soldiers who lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Their current exhibit is about a clash of styles and cultures and what is created when they are combined.

“I do my side ... and (Eddie) does his,” Boulay said. “Then at the end, something completely and totally different emerges.”

Kathleen Dinges Rice, the community arts education director at the Salem Art Association, said it'll be interesting to see the development of an exhibit from two artists — with completely different styles — who didn't know each other a few months ago.

“It'll be fun to see how things change over time,” she said. “This is amazing.”

A reception for “Yellow Squares Bombed” will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 17. For more information, visit salemart.org.

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