

Arte Guenda

Megan Koler

The Clackamas Print

Clackamas can now glance into a world where the artists and teachers have more political impact than the politicians and lobbyists. The Alexander Gallery in the Niemeyer Center opened the "Arte Guenda" exhibit to the public Thurs., Jan. 18. In Spanish, "guenda"

means "the soul of all things." The exhibit showcases 10 women with varying degrees of connection to the city-state of Oaxaca, Mex., including Clackamas' very own ceramics instructor, Katy McFadden. The theme of the show is "personal geographies," which McFadden describes as "looking inward at the place from which we draw our inspiration," much like picturing oneself as a landscape. Within that common theme, the artists present their personal interpretation in several different mediums, including sculpture, photography, collage, embroidery and paint. They all still manage to revolve around Oaxaca.

"Oaxaca is predominantly indigenous and has a long-standing history of art and culture," said McFadden. "I think that could be a source of the creative inquiry in that area."

The art scene in Oaxaca received an international nod in 2005 when Francisco Toledo, a Oaxacan artist, won the Right Livelihood Award (also known as the alternative Nobel prize), for what McFadden calls "his role and commitment to his society and culture through his art."

"The role of the artist in the world, for sure, is quite different than it is here in the states," she said. "Art not only plays an aesthetic quality, it reaches the whole fabric of this society."

McFadden and the entire Arte Guenda group were hoping to have a gallery showing in Oaxaca, though due to political unrest, they've had to put things on hold.

"The whole city has been closed down and is really under military occupation," said McFadden. "It changes the orientation and the freedom to work."

This past May, thousands of Oaxacan public school teachers protesting low wages and quality of life issues were met by 3,000 policemen. It resulted in 11 deaths, including two children asphyxiated by tear gas.

"It was the teachers, and the intellectuals and the artists that have organized and put demands forth to the government," said McFadden.

Ivonne Kennedy, one of the exhibitors, summed up Oaxaca's plight in her body of work.

"I've seen a major shift in her work in the past year," said McFadden. "She looks at interior spaces, and in this new body of work that she sent up for this show, that theme still applies, but within that architecture, there is resonating current events that are taking place."

"It would be very interesting to look at the events down there as a model for change - commitment to nonviolence," she said.

Those who wish to view the exhibit have the entirety of Winter Term to do so.

"I've gone into the gallery when people were there, and I've gone in alone and looked at the work individually," said McFadden. "The overall feeling that I have is one of quiet and looking inward ... and that it will take many times to go back and look again at it."



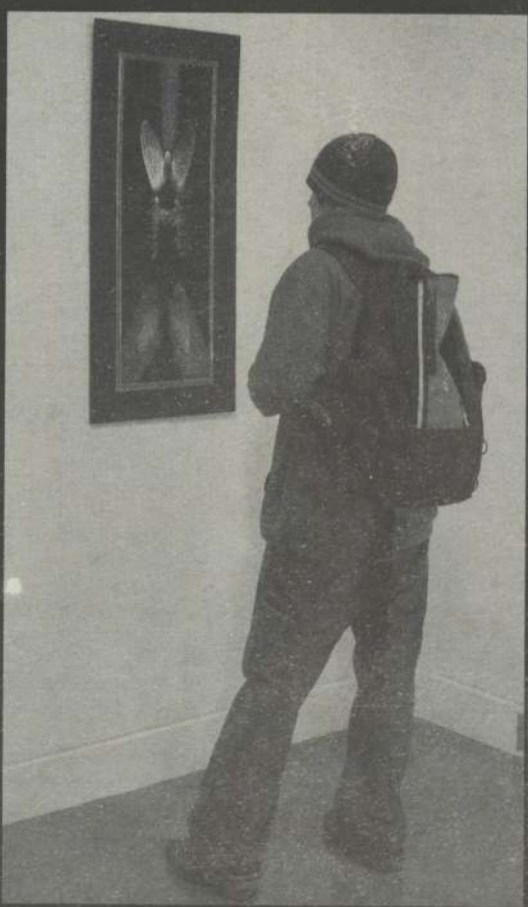
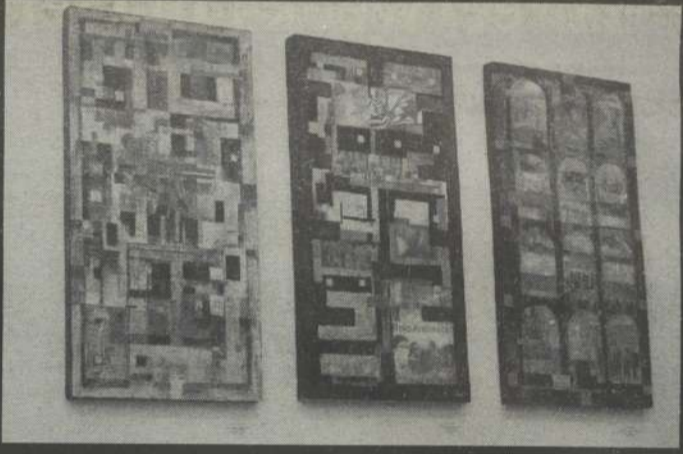
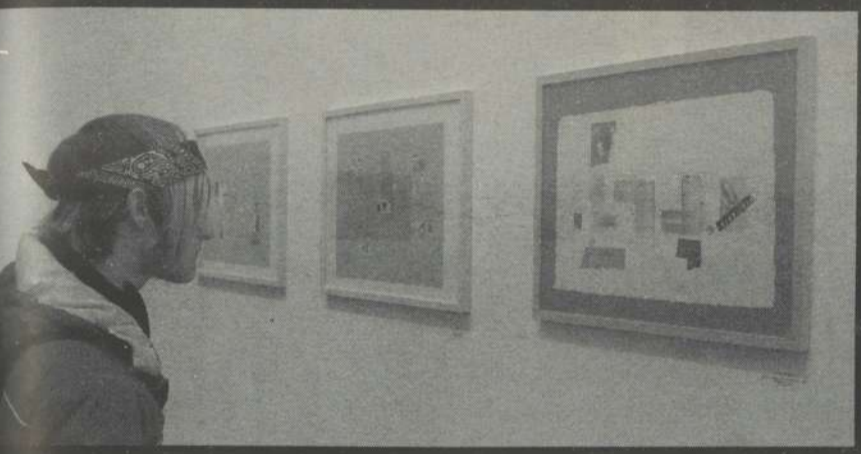
LEFT: McFadden stands with her sculpture and paintings.

FAR LEFT: Painting by Martha Toledo.

BELOW LEFT: Justin Church looks over several paintings by Sandra Garfias.

BELOW RIGHT: The paintings of Ivonne Kennedy.

BOTTOM: Photo/painting by Marcela Taboada.



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