

Art abounds at First Thursday

Story and photo by Jose Velazquez

Artists, photographers and many other patrons of the arts have attended the First Thursday event in Portland. First Thursday is a monthly event that takes place primarily in the Pearl District and Downtown. For 30 years, Portland has celebrated the talents and creativity of many artists.

Each and every participant had his or her own views on art and a unique way of defining it. Among these artists is Derrick Villalpando. He illustrates characters he comes up with in his head and adds certain elements that change the emotions and tone of the picture. It's not only the picture that has key factors, but each drawing has its own significant story behind it. "I like taking things out of context and putting them in a new environment," said Villalpando.

Tom Poirier has a unique but almost archaic style of art that is very different from painting or photography. He creates pieces of cloth using a loom machine, a manual way of making cloth sheets that takes a great amount of patience and a steady hand to master. Poirier started as a young kid making these sheets of cloth with convoluted shapes and patterns stitched in them. He was introduced to this art form first by his mom and as he grew older, he started to make his own pieces.

"Some of them are traditional; some of them are my own creation," said Poirier.

Going old school was Amy McDermott. She is an artist with more than 40 years of experience who likes to include messages in her paintings. Her messages mainly included current events and sometimes her emotions directed towards those events.

On the other hand, Catherine Odell only has three years of school experience.

"I like to leave the person wondering," Odell said. If you look closely at her

work, there are subliminal messages in almost every piece she works on. Whether it is anger or happiness, she finds a way to send that message in a subtle manner.

First Thursday featured many great artists and a vast variety of original works. Each artist was open, friendly and even playful, but they all have one thing in common - a serious desire to continue pursuing their passions.

The next First Thursday will be held on Thursday, Nov. 6, from 6 to 9 p.m.



Dogs at the First Thursday event on Oct. 2 model masquerade masks.