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— Rebecca Hubbs



Left: Odd Rebecca has been informally creating dolls since age four. Middle: Hubbs work is heavily influenced by the Victorian and early Edwardian eras. Right: Nora Brodnicki's ceramics class visited the exhibit in the Alexander Gallery April 18.

PETITE PECULIARITIES

THE ALEXANDER GALLERY'S NEWEST EXHIBIT SHOWCASES HIGH-QUALITY DOLLS WITH STRANGE, EERIE BEAUTY

BY NICHOLAS ALLISON

The strange, the eccentric and the outsider. These three come together into a singularly unique collection in an otherwise normal gallery.

“Petite Peculiarities” is an art show that opened recently in the Alexander Gallery and is displaying high-quality dolls appealing to the horrors of classical tales.

The artist who crafted this memorable collection, Odd Rebecca, has been creating dolls informally since she was just 4 years old, and this collection includes her favorite pieces from the past five years.

The show features eight strange and exotic dolls, from arachnid women to werewolf men, from the strange to the exotic; the only ties that connect them all are their humanoid shapes and how abnormal those shapes are.

According to Kate Simmons, gallery director at CCC, the show is about “confronting ideas of differences.”

“There’s kind of these personal characteristics we might be able to be familiar with in a way,” said Simmons. “There’s ideas of beauty she’s addressing, and adornment.”

Further, Rebecca Hubbs, the artist of the gallery said, “Something I think a lot about is the concept of the ‘other,’ the outsider or the eccentric. Someone who possesses traits that separate that individual from others around them in a given context — whether that be in appearance, demeanor, place of origin, etc. It is hard to be an outsider or different, and those who are, are often made to feel they should conform more to the situation they find themselves in, mostly to make those around them feel more comfortable. Personally, I prefer the ones who brush aside this conformity.”

Her dolls reflect this, whether a woman in a dress with squid tentacles emerging from under it, called “The Kraken’s daughter,” or a woman with two arachnid legs, and a dress that reveals itself to be hiding a mouth in plain sight, known as “Arachnia.” Still, others play with themes of horror and eccentricity hidden in a strange, eerie beauty. Truly, it screams of the uncanny valley, almost human but not quite, and all the stranger for it.

Hubbs was inspired by a number of sources, saying, “I am fascinated by the styling of the Victorian and early

Edwardian eras. These styles gave the bodies really unique lines and silhouettes, as well as providing ample opportunity for embellishment. I am also playing a little bit off of the idea of a classic porcelain doll; the ones in frilly dresses that everyone’s grandmother, at least in the Western world, seems to have.”

Kelila Henkin, another artist exhibiting at CCC, said in reference to the show, “Very obscure. It’s definitely strange to see all these walls bare, except for the baby doll.”

The way the show is set up is very strange, with bare walls and all the art gathered in the center of the gallery, it creates a unique feel, compared to other shows in the gallery over the years. Hubbs clearly makes the space her own.

Altogether, “Petite Peculiarities” combines horror, dolls and forgotten items into a strange, distracting collection of ideas that makes you feel like an outsider when you examine it.

The show will be on exhibit in the Niemeyer Center through April 28.