

Art show intrigues audience

BY ALLIE PERKINS
STAFF WRITER

“Everything isn’t always exactly what it seems,” said Matthew Dennison. Dennison, a Portland-based artist, is showing his paintings, drawings and sculptures in his show, “Birth Mark,” in the Niemeyer Center on Clackamas Community College’s Oregon City campus.

Dennison was recommended by art instructor Dave Andersen during a faculty meeting to discuss the upcoming exhibitions in the gallery.

Kate Simmons, studio technician at CCC, reached out to Dennison to see if he wanted to sample his artwork in the gallery for the next year. He was thrilled.

An artist reception was held on Wednesday, Jan. 16, where Dennison discussed his work with students, teachers and community members, who were able to ask questions and learn more about his art.

Many in attendance were awestruck at Dennison’s unique and fascinating artwork, leaving wonder to fill their minds with a new perspective on how people see things.

Simmons, along with other staff members, thought that Dennison was perfect to showcase his abilities at CCC.

“We felt like his work would really have a lot to offer to the student body and to art students in particular, of things that we want to touch on artistically,” said Simmons. “His methods in addressing the human figure, his styles and processes of painting, how he works when he’s working three-dimensionally, in contrast to how he’s working two-dimensionally.”

Dennison said his artwork was inspired not by people but by how he views the planet. “My inspirations are actually the whole world around me, the environment and how we respond to our daily lives,” he said.

His goal is to create a narrative for people that makes them think harder about situations, rather than passing by them



Matthew Dennison attends the artist reception for his exhibit in the Niemeyer Center on Jan. 16.

without second thought.

“Sometimes we don’t pay attention enough to what’s going on in the world, and I think the work that art can do can slow people down and capture a moment,” said Dennison. “Then people can look at that moment and go from there.”

His artwork creates a message to tell viewers to stop for a moment and focus on the current time, not to worry about the future that’s coming.

Dennison gave tips to students seeking art opportunities in the community.

“I chose to show my work through galleries, and so I show Froelick Gallery in Portland, and that’s kind of a vehicle for

me,” he said. “That’s a conduit for my work.”

Art students who want to become professional artists can use the resources at CCC to connect with open gallery positions as well as the Regional Arts & Culture Council. Students and community members had much to say after attending Dennison’s artist reception. Leeland Jone, a former teacher, said, “I’m glad to see someone kind of combining the old works with the modern ones. It takes so much work to know the hard work with the pretty designs, colors and all of that. Also adding human interest and stories.”

Chris Mooney, another community

member, expressed gratitude toward the artwork. “What I like about it is that it’s very stylized,” Mooney said. “Each stylized piece, it’s different, you know? Each piece has its own stylized reason. I’m trying to understand whether it’s metaphorical or mythological, or if it has a mystery behind it, curiosity behind it, so I have to find out what, or where he gets his thoughts and feelings that create things. That’s kind of interesting to find out.”

Others who attended said Dennison’s work allowed them to pause for a moment and breathe. “Birth Mark” is available to see through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. until Feb. 1 and is free to attend.



Visitors peruse the art exhibit in the Niemeyer Center.

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—Chris Mooney



One of Dennison’s sculptural pieces.