



arts SHORTS

Form and Fury

The world of a visual artist exists between meditation and volition. Painters, drawers, sculptors, photographers, dancers, printmakers, architects and other artisans must command the push and pull, yin and yang, hard and soft elements of their respective crafts in order to captivate their viewers. It is no different in the world of a martial artist; the martial arts are a form of visual art. This truth is what inspired the folks over at Blunt Graffix to team up with Leung Martial Arts and more than 40 visual artists to put on the martial arts-themed art show *Dragon's Fury*.

"Movement-based art and visual art such as paintings both attempt to move the spirit," kung fu and tai chi master Sifu David Leung says. "The tools we use as artists are different but the essence is the same."

Leung, who has taught kung fu and tai chi in Eugene for more than 40 years, was the inspirational force that moved artist Matt Dye (of Blunt Graffix) to put on *Dragon's Fury*. It was at Dye's very crowded and extremely successful *Dead RockStars* show, that Leung and Dye first discussed the idea of a martial arts-themed exhibit.

"I've been wanting to do stuff with a martial arts theme for a while now," Dye says. "When Sifu suggested it, I started inviting artists and it just went from there."

Those artists, such as Texas-based up-and-comer New Flesh, Beijing's Idle Beats, Asheville, N.C.'s James Flames, L.A.'s Jim Mazza and many more were all given the loose parameter of creating works that displayed the spirit of martial artistry. Mazza himself enthusiastically designed the show's poster that features a snarling dragon being pulled along in a rickshaw by a small band of sword-wielding ninjas.

"I've always been a big fan of old martial arts movies," Mazza says. "I was interested right away."

So from traditional martial arts, to old Bruce Lee movies, to Ultimate Fighting Championships, the artists had free rein to get wild with it. Dye says he wanted to leave the theme restriction as flexible as possible to maximize creativity. Mazza says he hopes the show will attract artistic appreciation of a different variety for his work.

And it's not just the theme of everyone's favorite kung fu fighting flicks that will be flooding the studio space at *Dragon's Fury*. The instructors of Leung Martial Arts will be putting on several demonstrations of kung fu, tai chi and traditional weapon fighting.

There is also a bit of community outreach going on amidst all this fury. Dye, using vintage pictures of Leung, has created large screen prints that embody both Dye's artistic craft and the Sifu's martial discipline. A portion of the proceeds from purchase of those prints will be donated to White Bird Clinic.

"This is all an opportunity to give back to our community," Leung says. "We are all expressing the spirit of the artist and we hope they come out and support."

Dragon's Fury runs 3 pm to 8 pm Saturday, July 21; 11 am to 6 pm Sunday, July 22; 4 pm to 7 pm Monday, July 23, at Blunt Graffix; FREE. (Martial arts demonstrations only on Saturday, at 4 pm.) For more info go to www.bluntgraffix.com - Dante Zufiga-West



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:

'CROUCHING TIGER HIDDEN DRAGON' BY NEW FLESH

'KUNG FU ALLSTARS' BY BRENT CHESHIRE

'DRAGONS FURY' BY JIM MAZZA

Woodworks

Kerry G. Wade carefully combines pragmatism and found objects in his handcrafted furniture on display at the Jacobs Gallery. His materials are simple: old water skis, toboggans, snow skis and board games. All are used, all are authentic and all are reminiscent of Wade's childhood.

"I love the nostalgia that vintage material brings about," Wade says. "It brings a sort of mystery."

Wade's inspiration for his current work began with a pair of wooden skis bought at a thrift store. He took the finding of this discarded equipment as a challenge to create something out of nothing. It's been 15 years since Wade's first chair and not much has changed. His creations are still handcrafted, well preserved and picturesque.

Wade's journey as an artist started long before his first chair. At the age of 8, he sent a drawing to President Kennedy, and he received a letter of response in which the president remarked that he enjoyed Wade's work. "From then on I considered myself an artist," Wade says.

Wade's most popular piece in the collection of handcrafted furniture is a skillfully constructed Adirondack chair made of wooden skis and stained with marine varnish.

The work is clever and visually pleasing, but Wade sees his art as more than just surface-level aesthetics.

"Chairs are almost thrones in someone's home," he says. "A chair can kind of become a symbol for someone."

It is this sense of symbolism and sensitivity that Wade hopes to pass on to others through his creations.

Along with Wade's handcrafted furniture, the works of Herbert Berman and Craig Spilman will be showing as part of "Berman-Spilman-Wade" through August 18, at the Jacobs Gallery. - Ali Enright

