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"HEAD FULLER" BY BRYAN SCHULDt

## OUTSIDE THE WHITE BOX

*Inkblots, fishing crews and furniture cycle at the Mills International Center*

If you were an artist, how would you represent the worst of the human condition? How about rabid hyenas emerging from the swollen, bandaged head of a faceless man? That's how artist and University of Oregon student Bryan Schuldt imagined it with his piece "Head Fuller," on display at the UO's Mills International Center. "Hyenas seemed to be the perfect animal to show disgust, fear, restlessness, anger and just a lot of 'bad' emotions that we have in everyday life, especially in interactions with others," Schuldt says.

The Mills International Center's fall exhibition, *Cycles*, features the work of four students: Bryan Schuldt, Mary Campbell, Alisa Akay and Bryan Putnam. First-time curator Justino Long hand-picked the artists.

The Mills International Center, in the Erb Memorial Union, is where many UO students go to study, catch up with friends or catnap on the saffron couches. More than that, this is a place for students to ease the transition from summer to fall, whether they come from Cambodia or Cottage Grove. For Long, the challenge with *Cycles* was to integrate the art with the space. "This room is not the typical white box of the gallery," he says. "My intention was to create some sort of connection between the work and the space, instead of just having the work here for decorative purposes."

In *Cycles*, the motif of reinvigorating sequence is the common thread. Long selected artists who examine familiar styles and compositions, yet find ways to arrive in foreign territories. Schuldt's "Rorschach Study," for example, is a new perspective on the psychological inkblot test. Putnam takes a look at the symbolic and narrative properties of tattoo in his "Sightings" series. Campbell places living room furniture in a fresh setting, and Akay's fall foliage takes on a metaphysical bent.

Putnam skillfully engages the contemporary artistic and cultural landscape through visual storytelling. In "Sightings," he invites us to interpret a strange, life-altering incident in the lives of a small fishing crew. See for yourself what this means, and while you're at it, make sure to check out his fantastic fish and "ESAV Studies" etchings.

Schuldt is another standout. In Schuldt's "Have Heart," two wraithlike figures with dotted halos part fabric to reveal a blue heart. His sculptural screen-print collage, "In the Quiet Absence of God," invites the viewer to decode the black and white scenes and their relation to each other. Horses graze, figures blur in ghostly symmetry and bridges against stark landscapes carve into the white sky.

Akay and Campbell use a color palette of pinks and reds to different effect. Campbell uses specific moments in her life as fodder for her work. She begins with the memory as a concrete reference point, and then dips "into a more unconscious world of color and experimentation with mark making." A Portland-born painter, Akay cites local artists Adam Grosowsky and Ron Graff as pivotal instructors. Akay renders her paintings with visible brush strokes, dynamic textures and vibrant, saturated colors. ■

*Cycles* runs through Dec. 3 at Mills International Center, University of Oregon; free. The exhibit is part of the Lane Arts Council's ArtWalk.