

MONOTHON AND ON AND ON

Crow's Shadow Institute of Arts' regular printmaking event returned

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MISSION — The Monothon needed to slow down before it could come back.

After a four-year hiatus, the Crow's Shadow Institute of Arts' regular printmaking event returned on July 22-27, culminating in a Walla Walla gala where each of the artists' works were auctioned off to the highest bidder as a part of a fundraiser for the Umatilla Indian Reservation-based institute.

Crow's Shadow Executive Director Karl Davis called the revival "Monothon 2.0," because it had undergone a number of reforms.

Instead of a printmaking sprint where 60-80 artists worked one of three shifts over three days, Crow's Shadow invited more than a dozen artists to work a whole day over the span of the week.

Davis said the Monothon went dark for a while as Crow's Shadow turned its attention toward the institute's 25th anniversary.

With its silver anniversary out of the way, Davis said Crow's Shadow intends to resume holding Monothons every other year.

Artists were deep in the throes of the printmaking process on the afternoon of July 23, and each artist brought their own unique style and experience to the studio.

Although the gala is over, the artists' prints will be available for sale on an online auction Aug. 1-9.

Name: M. Acuff

Age: 49

Residence: Walla Walla

The art: Acuff tackled a familiar subject in an unfamiliar medium.

The artist and Whitman College art professor said his work often deals with climate change, but his preferred medium is sculpting instead of printmaking.

"The thing about climate change is that it's hard to visualize," he said.

The prints Acuff made on his day in the studio featured polar bears and melting ice, and



M. Acuff paints on an acrylic plate to be used to create a monotype print during Monothon at Crow's Shadow studio. Crow's Shadow studio is a nonprofit arts organization founded in 1992 in Pendleton.



Alx Kujana mixes ink on a plate to use in his monotype prints. Kujana mixed a variety of vibrant colors for use in his works.

he thought printmaking was a new way to express his artistic themes.

Name: Alx Kujana

Age: 32

Residence: Umatilla Indian Reservation

The art: When Crow's Shadow invited him to participate in the Monothon, Kujana

decided to self-impose a fast on making art so that the creative juices were flowing for the event.

A member of the Confed-

erated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Kujana said his abstract art is usually focused on shapes and warm colors.

Kujana isn't a formally trained artist or come from an academic background, so Monothon week for him is about proving himself.

"I just want to show you what I could do," he said.

Name: Kevin Haas

Age: 48

Residence: Moscow, Idaho

The art: A printmaking professor at Washington State University, Haas has recently started introducing new themes into his work, like text.

The series of prints he was producing in the studio were in stark black-and-white, and although the images were different, the text that narrated it was all the same: "words are easy, images just disappear."

Haas said the the text was sometimes meant to challenge the image while other times it was "cryptically personal."

Name: Mike Sonnichsen

Age: 52

Residence: Moscow, Idaho

The art: While some artists at Monothon were departing from their comfort zones, printmaking is right in Sonnichsen's wheelhouse.

The University of Idaho art professor said he loves the "physical presence" of printmaking, and for the monothon, he was using everyday items as the basis of his prints, which usually involve geometric designs.

At Crow's Shadow, Sonnichsen was using the floral shape of some non-slip bathtub traction stickers as the basis of one of his prints.

Name: Yoshi Kitai

Age: 50

Residence: Vancouver, Washington

The Art: Although Kitai is a printmaking professor at the Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland, the art he was doing at the Crow's Shadow "was a little bit new" for him.

Kitai's style of art incorporates the traditional Japanese gold leaf design and applies it to Western themes.

Kitai also had a level of familiarity with the organizers: Kitai works at the Froelick Gallery, where Karl Davis worked as gallery director before coming to Crow's Shadow.



Artists mix paint colors atop sheets of glass to create the desired hues for their work.

Staff photo by Ben Lonergan