

Tim Kowalczyk and Desiree Swanson

REALITY



The McLean County Arts Center presents *REALITY*, an art exhibition featuring the work of Tim Kowalczyk and Desiree Swanson, from June 6 – July 26, 2014. An Opening Reception for the exhibition will be on Friday, June 6 from 5 to 7 pm in the Armstrong Gallery and will be free and open to the public during Downtown Bloomington's First Friday.

Artists Tim Kowalczyk and Desiree Swanson make hyperrealist, representational artwork exploring the inanimate objects that define our individuality. Both artists value the power of objects to express a narrative, emotion, situation, or memory and use the skilled art technique of realism to make their reality ours.

A ceramic artist, Kowalczyk creates sculptural "trompe l'oeil" work- French for "deceives the eye", a term used to describe artwork that appears real through manipulation of perspective or skilled realist painting or sculpting. Using various clays, slips, and glazes Kowalczyk is able to match texture, color, and surface of objects to startling effect. The inspiration for his current body of work stems from professional boxer Muhammad Ali's notorious speech of *How Great I Am*. Kowalczyk explains, "I drew my own parallels between the way Ali was speaking and the way I make work. We both start very "real" or "simple". Then it quickly takes a turn and becomes more and more absurd but still making a point. Where he is doing something no man can do I thought of my way of constructing could make visual iterations, but it was also in the manner in which he delivered his statements. Sincere but grinning, the same way I always talk about my work, the absurd beauty. The rhyme and meter of his speech allowed me to see sculptures and begin working."

Desiree Swanson creates intimate oil paintings on panels of seemingly ordinary objects that hold specific personal meaning. The objects she paints, oil cans, Ball canning jars, marbles, are common things that could be found in any home in a Midwestern agricultural town. The collecting of these objects could be called nostalgic, but the painting and display of them could be called reverence- devotion to a doctrine of life. Swanson explains, "I give them new life and value in my paintings as storytellers, metaphors, and portraits. By transforming these objects, I allow myself to continuously revisit this time and place that I cannot reclaim but will always exist vividly in my mind."

Tim Kowalczyk earned his BFA from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, and his MFA from Illinois State University. He lives in Minonk and is the Ceramics Instructor at Illinois Community College in Peoria. Tim received the Merwin Medal in the 82nd Annual McLean County Amateur Art Competition/Exhibition at the McLean County Arts Center.

Desiree Swanson earned her BA from Monmouth College and her MFA from Northern Illinois University, DeKalb. She lives in Minooka and was a Curatorial Intern at the McLean County Arts Center in 2011.

***The exhibition is generously sponsored by
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