

EDITH NEWHALL

GALLERIES

"Art" by Thomas Hine and "Galleries" by Edith Newhall appear in alternating weeks.

# Ursinus show a strong statement

**W**ith new director Charles Stainback and new curator Ginny Kollak at the helm, the Phillip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art at Ursinus College is quickly becoming something this formerly sedate Collegeville institution had never aspired to being before: a serious destination for contemporary art. (Stainback was director of the Norton Museum of Art and founding director of Skidmore College's Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery; Kollak received a master's degree from the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College and participated in the Young Curators Residency Program at the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin, Italy.)

A case in point is the Berman's latest exhibition, "Good Neighbors," a show of works by 11 Philadelphia artists — three of whom teach at Ursinus: Cari Freno, Kay Healy, and Sarah Kaufman — that, seen together, reflect



"Jo," a watercolor by Emily Smith Satis.

on various notions of community, including its lack.

It's a fresh, provocative show that captures the diversity of Philadelphia's art scene in every sense. But it also shines a light

on the quiet, even introverted nature of much of the work being made here by young artists, even when raucous color, a raw, disturbing image, or an exaggerated DIY look might suggest otherwise.

That could explain why this show looks so comfortable in the Berman's elegant galleries, although there was clearly an effort to maintain a sense of spaciousness amid wall hanging and freestanding works, some of which are monumentally scaled.

Community and introversion are evoked, respectively and humorously, by Sarah Kaufman's color prints from "Devil's Pool" and "Moments of Absorption." In the former series, Kaufman catches the antics of young day-trippers at a famously deep pool in the Wissahickon, diving into it from boulders, smoking while swimming, and otherwise clearly hamming it up for Kaufman's camera. The latter series depicts individuals in

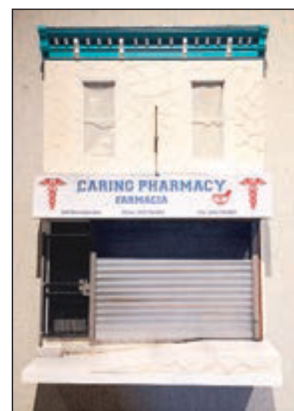
their own rooms involved in such private activities as bathing and sleeping.

Drew Leshko recreates his immediate Kensington neighborhood with his small, three-dimensional facsimiles of buildings and trash bins made from cut illustration board. But as individual sculptures, they evoke a Hopperesque loneliness, his handsome buildings symbols of a former community and prosperity.

Despite the fact that they're quilted, which automatically confers a tangible sense of coziness, Kay Healy's large-scale screen prints on stuffed fabric recreating rooms in houses and other domestic scenes have the appearance of memories of such places, especially since the appliances and furniture in her "rooms"

would seem to date from the 1960s and earlier. People rarely populate her works, adding to their look of places of the past.

Like Healy, Kelsey Halliday Johnson investigates



"Caring Pharmacy" by Drew Leshko, at the Berman Museum of Art.

the home and the past as untapped sources of information, but she takes a quasi-scientific approach, rejiggering cameras to take photographs of rooms and herself that show auras. Her display case of a collection of her own objects and ephemera recalls a do-it-yourself natural history museum of her own highly personal curating.

Raphael Fenton-Spaide has the least quiet work in this show, his enor-

mous wall hanging *who done it?* On a huge piece of irregularly cut Astroturf, Fenton-Spaide has created a crime scene of strewn Lucky Charms cereal, spray paint, gum-balls, fiberglass reflectors, bubble pens, and other materials surrounding something that looks like a taped-up vinyl dinosaur in a pool of vomit.

It's a sickly sweet-smelling, almost painterly evocation of childhood innocence interrupted by unspeakable violence and an absolute failure of community if you see it as a metaphor for real life. Or it's art, outspoken in its over-the-top grossness. Either way, it is a powerfully disturbing image.

"Good Neighbors" also includes works by Lewis Colburn, Christina P. Day, Cari Freno, Emily Smith Satis, Becky Suss, and Seneca Weintraut.

Phillip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art at Ursinus College, 601 E. Main St., Collegeville, Pa., 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays, 12 to 4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. 610-409-3500 or [www.ursinus.edu/berman](http://www.ursinus.edu/berman). Through Jan. 11.



Seneca Weintraut's "Untitled (Potbelly)."



Two photographs from Sarah Kaufman's series "Devil's Pool," taken on the Wissahickon.