

FINDING JOY IN CREATION

Dishman hosts alumni's collages of memories

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UP editor

The night sky is clear, shades of blue and black contrast the bright white of the full moon. A group of friends stand in front of Port Arthur's Hollywood Theater, talking and laughing. The image is a time capsule of memories.

Lamar University's Dishman Art Museum is hosting "Piece Of My Heart," an exhibition of collages created by artist and LU alumni Evita Tezeno.

The Port Arthur native said she always dreamed of becoming an artist creativity runs deep in her family.

"My mother's an artist, her mother was a quilter and seamstress, my grandmother's mother was also a quilter, and my grandmother's sister was also — she made dolls," Tezeno said. "There was always fabric in every house, so that really influenced me."

Tezeno uses hand-painted paper and found objects to create her own unique style.

"I don't like to use just one medium," she said. "I think that it's more interesting when you use several mediums, and it gives it more contrast."

Tezeno graduated from Lamar in 1984 with a degree in graphic design, but at the time, many companies were not hiring women, especially Black women, she said. For a while, Tezeno worked as a chef full time and painted on the side.

"I was painting Impressionism, and I felt like I was stuck because everybody said that my work was derivative," she said. "So, I prayed and I asked the Lord to give me some direction, and I had a dream that an angel came to my door and gave me a blueprint on another style that was completely different.



Evita Tezeno's "Saturday Night at the Hollywood Theater" is part of the exhibition "Pieces Of My Heart" at the Dishman Art Museum through March 8.

"I took that blueprint and I started doing sketches. I did a piece, and it was chosen for the Congo Square poster in 1999, and I also was chosen

for the Essence Music Festival poster as well. So that was my new style. It was a turning point, and from there, that's where I pivoted."

Each painting has bright and vibrant colors conveying different emotions and memories Tezeno has experienced.

"Picture Perfect" portrays the way people in relationships hide their flaws and imperfections especially in the 1940s and '50s. The audience sees a "loving" couple, but there's bitterness in their eyes.

"Saturday Night at the Hollywood Theater" is based on the old cinema in Port Arthur and the times Tezeno would sneak out of the house to watch movies with her friends. Even though the physical building is no longer there, we are transported through just a glance.

A standout piece from the collection is "Summertime and the Livin' is Easy," which is themed around Tezeno's memories of visiting McFaddin Beach with her family. The bright blue sky and sea contrasts beautifully with the golden sand on the bottom. The title references the classic song, "Summertime" from "Porgy and Bess," and the renditions of real people are small touches which come together perfectly.

"Reflections on Times Past" and "Stay with me while we grow old" take a step back from the joyous days and nights. The birds which fly around a portrait of Tezeno in "Reflections" represent her friends who have died, and "Stay with me while we grow old" portrays a marriage lasting through the sands of time. These paintings invoke feelings of sadness, but without the somber memories, the feelings of joy would no longer be as special.

"To me, art is personal," Tezeno said. "All of these are pieces of my heart, because I put my heart and my soul in it. My work is about relationships, it's about family. It's about people loving each other. I want to let people know that there is joy in loving people, even though sometimes people will get on your nerves, there is love in loving people."

"Piece of My Heart" is on display through March 8. The Dishman Art Museum is located on East Lavaca Street in Beaumont. For more, visit lamar.edu/dishman.

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LANDSCAPE from page 3

dome trying to seal the viewer in, save for the cracks of sunlight in the corners.

However, not all of the British artists stayed in the comfort of their homes. By the late 1700s, many traveled to Italy, Rome, The Netherlands and Greece combining their topographical landscapes with a new inventive style. John Warwick Smith's "Lake in North Italy (Lake Como)" is divided in horizontal sections of sky, land and lake, with the translucent watercolors evoking the scenery. The blues on both the top and the bottom help the land pop in a beautiful display.

Thomas James' "The Aventine from the River Tiber, Rome" has landmarks stretched across the left with the open vast sea on the right. The foreground was left to paint at a later time but was never truly finished. However, this unfinished section of the piece sets it apart from his other works, making it stand out on its own.

Joseph Mallord William Turner's "A Distant View of Chambéry, from the

North, with Storm Clouds" is an abstract landscape of the Alps mountain range. The mix of the light blue on top with the stronger tones of yellow and green are a fantastic combination of colors. Even in its abstract nature, one can easily find the cascading mountains from a distance.

Edward Lear's "Mount Olympus from Larissa, Thesaly, Greece" is a stunning landscape of the mountain, said to be home to the deities of Ancient Greek mythology. The layers of brown and gold cover the terrain, with shades of soft pink near and on the mountain. The little touches of cattle drivers and figures in the distance are a nice touch of detail.

"Picturing Nature: The Stuart Collection of 18th- and 19th-Century British Landscapes and Beyond" is a wonderful and eye-opening experience, recommended for anyone interested in seeing how artists capture what they love about the world.

For more information, visit mfah.org.



John Constable's "A View on the Banks of the River Stour at Flatford"