
Midwestern BLAB! 2, curated by Monte Beauchamp, showcases the work of 5 artists, often featured in the pages of BLAB!, a celebrated art anthology Beauchamp has edited for the past 24 years. The artists that appear in the anthology come from an array of backgrounds (comic art, graphic design, illustration, painting and printmaking). Beauchamp places a high value on attention to craft, and eclecticism has long been a hallmark of BLAB!. For **Midwestern BLAB! 2**, part of NIU Art Museum’s Pop Culture Exhibition Suite, Beauchamp has chosen work by midwestern artists: Don Colley, Tom Huck, Teresa James, C.J. Pyle and Fred Stonehouse. The reception for this exhibition will take place Thursday, January 21, 4:30 – 7:00 p.m.

The exhibition will be as visually varied as BLAB! itself. Works will range from gigantic (4 x 8 feet) woodblock prints by Tom Huck to Don Colley’s sketchbooks and include C.J. Pyle’s “woven” portraits drawn on the interior of album covers, dreamy scenes by Teresa James and selections from Fred Stonehouse’s “Bat Series”.

**Don Colley**’s art was described by Claudine Ise, contemporary art writer and curator, as “noirish, grab-you-by-the-throat depictions of evil clowns, brawling boxcar hobos, and flamboyant carnie types... intensely cinematic, evoking angsty narrative scenarios that are part Nicholas Ray, part Coen Brothers, and part *Mad Men*, with a dash of Bruce Nauman thrown in for good measure”.

**Tom Huck** is known internationally for his provocative wood-cuts, described in the *New York Times* as technically impressive jam-packed compositions that are gleefully obscene and violent without being too offensive. The large woodblock prints are mischievously grotesque, provocative and darkly comical often satirical depictions of rural America rendered in painstaking detail.

**Teresa James** fuses numerous influences (folk art, Renaissance painting, Victoriana) which lend her subjects a peaceful, serene and whimsical quality which seems to depict an unseen reality somewhere between heaven and earth. Teresa is owner of White Wings Press and was Master Printer at Big Cat Press.

**C.J. Pyle** creates “Bizarre, yet captivating” portraits drawn in ballpoint pen and colored pencil in the inside of old LP sleeves. The portraits depict hair and faces that appear to be made of twisted fibers, weaving–like drawings utilizing a technique he’s been developing since he was a kid.

**Fred Stonehouse** is nationally recognized for his beautifully executed artwork and witty sense of rebellion illustrating his mordant wit and acute sense of visual irony. His style has a sophistication that reflects his diverse, cross-cultural interests, and outsider and folk art influences and has been described as “familiar and hallucinatory”.

---more---
Curator Monte Beauchamp’s work has appeared in GRAPHIS, PRINT, COMMUNICATION ARTS, AMERICAN ILLUSTRATION, and THE SOCIETY OF ILLUSTRATORS. He has received numerous design awards for Excellence in Print and Television Communications. His books include: STRIKING IMAGES: Vintage Matchbook Cover Art (Chronicle), THE DEVIL IN DESIGN (Fantagraphics), THE LIFE & TIMES OF R. CRUMB (St. Martin's Press), NEW & USED BLAB! (Chronicle), and DEVILISH GREETINGS (Fantagraphics).

The NIU Art Museum is located on the first floor, west end of Altgeld Hall, the “castle,” at the northwest corner of College and Castle Drives on the NIU campus in DeKalb. The galleries are open to the public Tuesday – Friday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Saturday 12 noon – 4 p.m., and by appointment for group tours. Exhibitions are free; donations are appreciated. Pay parking is available in the Visitor’s Lot on Carroll Avenue and at metered spots in front of Altgeld Hall. Free parking is available on Saturdays and during receptions and visiting artist lectures in the lot northeast of Gilbert and College Drives. The exhibitions of the NIU Art Museum are funded in part by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, the Friends of the NIU Art Museum, and the Arts Fund 21. For more information, please visit our website: www.niu.edu/artmuseum or call 815.753.1936. Photographs are available upon request.