

Alumni exhibit reveals depth of Fort Hayes talent pool

A high-school homecoming with no football game? Get out.

Better yet, get on over to the Shot Tower Gallery for "Inspired Reunion," featuring 11 Fort Hayes alumni in a homecoming of sorts.



**BILL
MAYR**

Columbus Public Schools opened Fort Hayes Arts and Academic High School in 1988 as part of the district's Metropolitan Education Center just northeast of Downtown.

The school's graduates have spread throughout the nation.

"This is what kind of inspired it (the exhibition). I was bumping into people in San Francisco who went to Fort Hayes," said photographer Naomi Campbell (Class of 1994), who lives in the California city.

One e-mail led to another, and eventually the exhibit developed, said Campbell, who represented with a couple of multiple-exposure color photographs that create a sense of time flowing past the viewer.

Several participants returned to their school Friday for a reception.



Operation History by Stephanie Rond, at the Fort Hayes gallery

Although the exhibit is diverse, the artists repeat a consistent refrain: The school, with its arts faculty and emphasis on culture, provided an invaluable foundation for their careers.

"This served as a catalyst for a lot of us to become professional artists, being here at Fort Hayes," said Elizabeth Gerdeman, ('98). She is an Ohio State University graduate student studying printmaking who has several pieces on display.

"Fort Hayes did a lot for me,"

"This served as a catalyst for a lot of us to become professional artists, being here at Fort Hayes."

ELIZABETH GERDEMAN
Class of '98

said Daina Higgins ('97). "It was a lot of work, a full high-school curriculum with a vocational curriculum in art."

Higgins lives in New York, showing her spray-painted works there and in Columbus, now at the Rebecca Ibel Gallery, 2 Miranova Place.

The graduates are committed to their art.

For Joshua Peach ('94), photography is "a compulsion, something I have to do." His photographs of the California punk-rock scene are on view.

"It's a place, the punk subculture, where I feel comfortable with the sort of do-it-yourself ethic."

Julie Abijanac ('87) studied art as part of the district's career-center program before the arts-and-academic high school was established. She teaches at the Columbus College of Art & Design.

Like several other alumni, she has taken new twists on established mediums — in her case, printmaking with computer images (*Dental Record*).

Melissa Vogley Woods ('87) adds elements of quilt patterns to her paintings, including *Mariners Compass*.

There's more to see — such as the feminist-based paintings of Stephanie Rond ('91). Not to be missed is her *Periodic Table of Phobias*, a funny takeoff on the periodic table.

New York photographer Elisa-

beth Westwood ('00) displays a sensitive series of portraits of her relatives.

Pieces by Rose Willow McCormick of Portland, Ore.; Jennifer Reeder of Chicago; and Michael Strickrod of New Haven, Conn., are also part of the show.

Organizers hope to have an alumni exhibition annually, with an online version planned for next year.

Given the latest display, the Fort Hayes alumni pool is broad and deep.

"Inspired Reunion: The Fort Hayes Alumni Exhibition" continues through Feb. 2 in the Shot Tower Gallery, 546 Jack Gibbs Blvd. Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.

For more information, call 614-365-6681.

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