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# Visual thrill ride

Exhibit offers colorful works by 14 artists at Contemporary Art Center

**A** thrill-ride in visual experience." That's how the Contemporary Art Center describes its group exhibition "Painting Pink Pajamas," which opens Saturday and runs through Jan. 2 in the Preston Jackson Gallery.

The 14-artist exhibit borrows its title loosely from Dr. Seuss' ABC's, and the artwork presented by the artists pushes the limits of luxurious color and form, even to the point of discomfort or chaos.

## 'Painting Pink Pajamas'

► **What:** Group exhibit by 14 contemporary painters, curated by Heather Brammeier of Bradley University.

► **When:** Saturday through Jan. 2. Hours: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

► **Where:** Preston Jackson Gallery, Contemporary Art Center of Peoria, 305 Water St.

► **Opening reception:** 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Saturday. Also honors Rockford artists Keith and Shari Grace, whose work will be on display in the Gallery 3R, and Chicago artist Sung Jang, who will exhibit in the Side View Gallery.

► **Admission:** Free, although a donation is requested. For more information, call 674-6822.

A riot of color best describes much of the work being displayed in the exhibition, which includes artists from across the United States and one artist from Japan. Actor Jim Carrey, who appeared in a 2000 live-action film of the Dr. Seuss classic "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," once said on a late night talk show that Dr. Seuss is "like the punk of kids' stories."

And here in this exhibit the artistic imagery is allowed to run wild.

Exhibit curator Heather Brammeier says "Painting Pink Pajamas" represents a trend in contemporary painting toward playful abstraction.

An assistant professor of art at Bradley University, now

in her fifth year of teaching painting, Brammeier says she came up with the idea for the show and pitched it to William Butler, the Contemporary Art Center's executive director. She also got a research grant from Bradley to help fund it.

Her own work in the show includes "Dark Sun," a large 54 inch by 36 inch work that contrasts a playful maze of lines with "some really dark colors."

Brammeier says "it's representative of the exhibit, which is playful but has a dark twist to some of the artists' imagery."

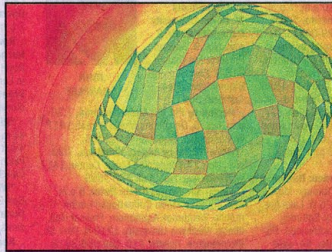
For example, Amy Casey's "Climb," a square 44-by-44-inch acrylic, "uses playful color and imaginative imagery but also has houses on stilts that look as if they might fall over, and highways on stilts that might collapse," Brammeier says. An army of multicolored tentacles swarms the canvas in lovely colors — despite the fact that they could wreak unlovely havoc on homes and roadways.

And Jackie Tileston's "Dharma Ripple" is a large, 66-by-40-inch oil and mixed media on canvas piece with sherbet colors that recall the striped landscapes of Dr. Seuss.

The artists represented come from the East and West coasts, as well as several from the University of Pennsylvania, where Brammeier attended graduate school. In addition to Brammeier, Casey and Tileston, participating artists include Erica Bradbury, Yasemin Kackar-Demirel, Paul Komada, Shigeo Kuroki, Lauren Macko, Deirdre Murphy, Susanne Nestory, Nicholas Nyland, Aurora Robson, Mariorie Van Cura and Susan Zierler.



"Dark Sun," oil on canvas by Heather Brammeier



"Crazy Tamago," watercolor by Paul Komada  
"Dharma Ripple," oil and mixed media on canvas by Jackie Tileston, at left.

STORY BY THEO JEAN KENYON OF THE JOURNAL STAR