

'Greater Nebraska' from view of critic-curator

Tuesday afternoon, I was holding a rolled-up giant drawing against a wall at the Lux Center for the Arts, gradually unrolling it as artist Charley Friedman pinned up the top.

Thursday, I got to bang around on a new, amplified musical instrument made up of wires, bowls and plastic balls

while Jay Kreimer installed it in the same gallery.



**L. KENT
WOLGAMOTT**
Lincoln Journal Star

By Friday, "Greater Nebraska" was up and

ready for viewing; it opened that night and will be open for the next two months.

I don't normally have anything to do with exhibition installation. But I co-curated "Greater Nebraska" with artist Craig Roper, and getting the show in place is the final part of the process that began last year when we solicited artists to submit their work.

Our intent, as I wrote last year, was to put together an exhibition "open to all artists working in Nebraska, regardless of medium, style, experience or any of the typical qualifiers attached to art shows. ... There are no preconceived notions of what will go into the show and no predetermined theme."

On that front, I think, we succeeded, at least in getting a mix of media and approaches that resulted in no theme or discernible connection between much of the work.

Most of the artists, however, are from Lincoln, and none are from western Nebraska.

One hope we had was that we'd get at least one "outsider" artist with little connection to the local art world and zero academic credentials. Instead, we ended up with seven of the 12 artists with MFAs or

If you go

■ **What:** "Greater Nebraska"

■ **Where:** Lux Center for the Arts, 2601 N. 48th St.

■ **When:** through June 28

■ **Hours:** 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Friday; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday

morning, I was, first, happy that everything fit in the space — a challenge for curators of any show, anywhere.

The paintings of Ryan Crotty and Kim Reid Kuhn and Friedman's drawing are all big, taking up large expanses of the gallery's walls. But, as designed by Roper, the rest of the work fit in nicely on the walls.

Mo Neal's hanging sculpture of a pink house "Home Body," Kreimer's floor-standing instrument "Bobbbers" and Nancy Friedemann-Sanchez's tables covered with rows of handmade small vessels "Crisoles" fill much of the rest of the space without overcrowding.

I was even more pleased, and surprised, with how the show works together.

To pick the best example of an unexpected resonance, there is a little clay figure with arms in the air reacting to the brightness in front of Friedman's 14-foot-wide, bright yellow "Looking at the Sun."

Mirroring that on the opposite side of the gallery is a small Virgin Mary with a culvert pipe through her midsection that sits in front of Mo Neal's collage "Garden of Po Mo Desire."

That may be something only a critic, who looks for that kind of thing, would notice. I certainly had no clue about that cross-gallery reflection before the exhibition was set up.

Similarly, I got a pleasant surprise from a couple of pieces that reference other artists and their work.

Neal's small sculpture



An installation view of "Greater Nebraska" includes Jay Kreimer's "Bobbbers" and Nancy Friedemann-Sanchez's "Crisoles" in the center of the gallery.

Courtesy photo

the work connect in person.

Roper and I will be curating another "Greater Nebraska" show at the Lux in the fall of 2015 and will be asking for

artist submissions in January. We'll keep you posted about submission times, etc., on our Facebook page.

The first "Greater

Nebraska" is on view through June 28. I'm very interested in knowing how it will be received — which will be the final lesson in a

series that I've learned since the project began.

Reach the writer at 402-473-7244 or kwolgamott@journalstar.com. On Twitter @USWolgamott.



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**Hello
Better:**

we did choose one person who doesn't consider herself an artist. But Katherine Endacott's project — taking a picture of the sunrise every morning and posting it to Facebook — is an artistic endeavor, and the images presented in the show as framed photographs are as Nebraskan as it gets.

You won't find an explanation of "Good Morning Pleasant Dale" on the wall next to her pictures. Nor is there any writing in "Greater Nebraska" beyond object labels — artist, title, medium, etc.

That's by design. I abhor wall labels, particularly for contemporary art and especially those that try to force the work into some kind of curatorial vision.

My belief, and it's shared by Craig at least for this show, is that this is visual art. If it needs explanation in words, it doesn't work. If nothing else, the pieces in the show work visually, and there is zero need to express some curatorial philosophy to muddy things up.

Looking at the show Friday

takeoff on a legendary late 1990s installation done by Robert Gober that contained a far-larger Virgin bisected with a pipe and "Home Body," a model of a Bruce Naumann's "House Divided."

Friedemann-Sanchez's "Leaning Chumbe" is an even more pointed critique. It's a plank that leans against the wall, ala John McCracken's work — which can be found in museums across the country, including the Sheldon Museum of Art. But her piece is the polar opposite of McCracken's sleek, masculine minimalism. She has painted the plank with a design based on fabric belts, making the piece female and feminist.

Finally, and I knew this would happen, many of the images Roper and I saw on his studio computer are far different when the objects themselves are viewed.

That's particularly true for Crotty's large geometric abstractions, which, seen on computer, lack the subtlety, layers and expressionism created by his use of spray paint that makes

GALLERIES

■ Lincoln opening

Aurelia Thomas Residence — "Art & Jazz on Sunday Afternoon," works by Aurelia Thomas and local artists, 2-5 p.m. Sunday, 3030 S. 48th St. Donate a can of food for the Food Bank of Lincoln.

Governor's Residence — photography by Ron Quick, opens Wednesday, through June 6, 1425 H St.

Immanuel Fine Arts Gallery — "A Walk on the Wild Side" and "A Stroll Down Memory Lane," works by Sherie Garner and Sherry Everhart, opens Saturday, through Aug. 1. The Landing at Williamsburg Village, 3500 Faulkner Drive.

■ Nearby opening

Hot Shops — Spring open house, demonstrations in a variety of mediums, noon-5 p.m. Sunday, 1301 Nicholas St., Omaha.

Joslyn Art Museum — "Visions of Lewis and Clark: An Exhibition of Art Kites," ongoing through Aug. 23, 2200 Dodge St., Omaha.

Red Path Gallery — Second Saturday Art Walk, 1-4 p.m. Saturday. Meet and greet Nebraska artists; music provided by Marble Violin Studio and Stan Mitchell, 514 Seward St.

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