

CNN features Denver artists Martin Mendelsberg and Xi Zhang in an on-line 9/11 showcase

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Fine Arts Critic

Xi Zhang's 'The Text,' acrylic on canvas, 48 by 60 inches is part of a CNN on-line art showcase.

Two members of the faculty at the Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design in Lakewood were among 23 artists from across the country chosen to create works for “9/11 Ripple,” an on-line showcase on the CNN website commemorating the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001.

“CNN.com commissioned artists to create or choose work to illustrate the ripple effect of 9/11 — the incredible changes we’ve seen these 10 years as individuals, communities, a nation and a world.” states an introduction on the gallery site. “We left the idea of ‘ripple’ open to interpretation and received a wide variety of work.”

Mendelsberg, a professor of graphic design at RMCAD, assembled a digital work titled “Stars and Stripes and Security Lines.” In it, strips of photos of people waiting in airport security lines are superimposed on an angled image of the American flag.

“The Stars and Stripes fly freely in the blue sky, but we all lost our enjoyment of traveling by air,” writes Mendelsberg in an accompanying statement. “After 9/11, travel within and outside of America continues to be more invasive and restrictive. Who remembers when we could kiss our loved ones hello or goodbye right at the gate?”

Xi Zhang, who recently completed his master of fine arts degree at the University of Colorado at Boulder, contributed an acrylic on canvas, titled “The Root.” Rendered in the form of still image from an imaginary video game, it presents a kind of semi-abstract view of swirling goblin-like figures.

“After 9/11, we began to live in insecurity and fear,” Zhang writes in his accompanying statement. “This radical change reshaped relationships

between nations and people. Living in the post-9/11 era, I feel everything terrible could happen at any moment . . .

“The title of the painting refers to an old Chinese tale, ‘Grown from the same trees, Why boil us so hot?’ I created an abstract painting as the main body for the piece. It symbolizes qualities of ‘organic’ and ‘realness.’ I used simple lines to draw many ‘fear expression’ faces on top of it . . .”

To view CNN’s 9/11 showcase,
visit: cnn.com/interactive/2011/09/specials/911.ripple/index.html

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