

First annual Folliard Gallery Project winner is 'on the fringe'

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MILWAUKEE – Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design (MIAD) President Robert Rindler has announced that senior painting major and Batavia, Ill., native Liz De Decker is the first annual Folliard Gallery Project winner.

De Decker was chosen from among 15 senior painting majors in a juried, educational collaboration by MIAD and the Tory Folliard Gallery to foster the works of emerging MIAD artists. Her paintings will be shown in an exhibition at the gallery entitled "Liz De Decker: On the Fringe" and at MIAD's 2006 Graduate Exhibition, both starting on Gallery Night, April 21, and running through May 13. (IMAGES AVAILABLE)

"I feel extremely privileged to be the first MIAD senior painting major selected for this annual award," said De Decker, who also serves as the student representative to the board of trustees. "Each of the five finalists chosen by MIAD faculty for the gallery's final selection was more than worthy to receive such an opportunity. I am elated to not only show my work in the Tory Folliard Gallery, but to also represent my MIAD peers and the entire the MIAD community."

On congratulating De Decker, Tory Folliard said, "We were impressed by Liz's use of color in her urban abstractions. The quality and strength of her paintings also translated consistently between her pocket-sized paintings and her larger, out-stretched compositions. There was an overall sensibility to the artist's work that we felt transcended the immediate subject."

De Decker's oils on canvas catch an extraordinary light – such as a building's color reflecting off a puddle – that ruptures the spatial stability of the ground. Rather than having us move simply into her paintings, her space begins to fill outward, expanding into ours. Her works present a distinct spatial complexity, seemingly contradictory, but expanding and contracting as though the paintings themselves could breath. The larger paintings that will be exhibited are colorsapes that developed from De Decker's intimate perceptual experiences of light, reflection and space during the most ordinary occurrences, such as running an errand. The canvases, ripped, or fringed, and mounted on wood blocks, transform the ordinary into the extraordinary.

"Everyone involved in this project," said Rindler, "deserves the highest commendation. This was truly a collaborative experience led Tory Folliard and MIAD Provost Richard Higgs, Dean of Fine Arts Al Balinsky and Professors of Painting Ron Bitticks, Michael Howard and Fahimeh Vahdat. As I congratulate Liz De Decker, I also want to commend finalists Benjamin Bowman, Kendra Barron, Caitlin Carroll and Stephen Hamsch for their exemplary work.

(MORE)

MIAD Folliard winner

“This opportunity for Liz and our new annual project with the gallery underscores the extraordinary gift the well-respected Folliard Gallery has given our college. It helps to convey the message that there is a place for artists in Milwaukee’s social and entrepreneurial landscape, in which MIAD graduates, and the gallery, play such a vital role.”

The Tory Folliard Gallery is located at 233 N. Milwaukee St. (414.273.7311)
MIAD’s 2006 Graduate Exhibition will be held at 273 E. Erie St. on the River Level and Fourth Floor.

MIAD is Wisconsin’s only college devoted exclusively to the education of artists and designers. Founded in 1974, it today enrolls 650 talented students from across the country who are taught by artists and designers recognized regionally and nationally for their professional and educational accomplishments. Its unique academic approach blends curricular and extracurricular experiences, a community service requirement, and liberal studies in 11 majors toward the bachelor of fine arts degree. As critical thinkers, MIAD’s graduates are educated to be Wisconsin’s and the Midwest’s next “creative class” – people who become change agents not only in art and design, but also in our culture and society. 80 percent of MIAD’s graduates remain in Wisconsin, contributing a vital “brain gain” to the state.

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