



Emerging Artists : Ricky Nesbitt is *Best in Show* at CEPA

When Autistic Services, Inc first began its Arts Work program, Ricky Nesbitt flatly refused to walk into the agency's art room. Six years later, he is being acknowledged as one of only two Best in Show Awardees in CEPA's 2009 Members Exhibition.

Though Ricky communicates primarily through sign language and written notes, the arts have become a third mode of expression for this emerging Buffalo artist who is nonverbal and deaf. From a once reluctant artist, Ricky has since embraced the arts whole-heartedly, working non-stop until someone reminds him that his art session has ended. The past two years, in particular, have been especially productive for Ricky. His portfolio has not only increased in numbers, but has also physically expanded into "color field" works that measure as high as two hundred feet in length.

Ricky now turns these expansive color fields into landscapes for his surreal wildlife photos comprised of miniature plastic animals taken from his personal collection. It was this inventive juxtaposition of mediums

that caught the eye of CEPA's Exhibition juror, and recent Albright-Knox curator, Heather Pesanti.

Using a tripod and RCA jacks, Ricky plugs his camera into a television to give himself a large screen view-finder that allows him to place his models into a deliberate and sophisticated use of color and space. The resultant narratives range from serene and humorous to predatory and violent.

CEPA's Members Exhibition opened on Saturday, February 7th and continues until March 21, 2009. Along with co-awardee, Jan Nagle, Ricky's photographic tableaux proved compelling enough to capture Best in Show honors. The two award recipients will present solo exhibitions at CEPA's Gallery in 2010.

Ricky is a program participant at Autistic Services and a regularly featured artist in the agency's traveling exhibitions. His work will have a permanent home at Autistic Services' two recently opened Arts Work for Autistic Services' galleries in Buffalo and Williamsville.

For more information, please call Veronica Federiconi at
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