

Crain-Jager, Sally
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TENNESSEE TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

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TTU PROFESSOR SALLY CRAIN-JAGER'S INSTALLATION EXHIBIT ON DISPLAY AT CRAFT CENTER UNTIL MARCH 22

COOKEVILLE, Tenn. (Feb. 27, 2001) – Sally Crain-Jager's visual language of windows, portals and words comes to life in a 240 square feet installation exhibit titled "Point/Counterpoint" showing at the Appalachian Center for Crafts until March 22.

"Point/Counterpoint" is an installation consisting of 10 large canvases unified into a free-standing room-sized construction – the largest such piece Crain-Jager has created. The canvases stand seven-feet high and has 90 running feet of painted surface. The heavily textured surfaces are created from layers of paint, scraped through and re-layered, she explained.

"Repeated throughout the work are smoothly painted blackboard-like surfaces, on which chalked words are written. Some of the words are erased, an other words are written over them; some words are readable, some are simply graffiti or gestural lines," she said.

"Point/Counterpoint" explores the concept of windows or portals in wall-like structures. The contrasts of architectural structure and organic form have become a metaphor for the contrasts I feel exists within one's life," she added. "In looking beyond the layers of what is on the surface, more personal contents are revealed."

The images and techniques used by Crain-Jager have become her "visual language" she says: windows; actual open portals as well as painted illusions; contrasts of organic, textured paint over architectural structure; blackboard shapes with heavily erased and re-written text and graffiti; layers of paint which allow glimpses of what's underneath to show through.

"All of these have made me want to work bigger, to make a more obvious reference to the house which is at the core of many of the works I paint," she said.

"My graduate thesis exhibit 12 years ago was based on memories of the outside of the house in Oklahoma I grew up in. While I made references to the inside/inner walls of this house, it dealt more with the exterior.

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"Paintings since then have explored, more and more, the interior aspects of the house, abstracted for more expressive meaning. This large painting – the largest I have ever attempted – was a very natural outgrowth of my wanting to be 'inside' the painting, and wanting to give the viewer the same experience," Crain-Jager said. "An installation should change one's perception of the space, and 'Point/Counterpoint' attempts to do this."

This installation exhibit is very significant to Crain-Jager, she said.

"Much of the work, in painted symbols and written/graffitied text includes reference to experiences of not only my childhood home, but my growing up, career-wise, and maturing as an artist/teacher at Tennessee Tech. In this last semester prior to my retirement in May, this installation represents the culmination of 34 years of creative work and teaching at Tennessee Tech."

Crain-Jager received her bachelor of fine arts degree in painting at Phillips University in 1960 and a master's degree of fine arts from Texas Christian University in 1989. She is currently a professor of art and adviser to the bachelor of fine arts painting degree program at TTU.

An installation this size could not have been completed with the help of the following, said Crain-Jager: Jason Roberts, an art student at the Craft Center in crafts for his carpentry design; and Doak Layne, manager of the Sherwin-Williams Company, for funding assistance. Paints used in the exhibit were Sherwin-Williams products.

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The Appalachian Center for Crafts is located six miles off Hwy. 56 (Interstate 40, Exit 273) near Smithville. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.