

EXPLORATIONS

A Publication of Mountain Empire Community College's Fine Arts Magazine • 2015



Photography • Drawing • Painting • Writing

WELCOME to Mountain Empire Community College's 2015 arts magazine, Explorations. In these pages you will find the photographs, drawings and paintings of some of our very talented students and alumni. The artistic style and vision that produce each piece may vary greatly, but all the works represent an artist who's creative, inspired, engaged with the world, full of curiosity and energy, and eager to reach an audience.

On behalf of the entire campus community, we would especially like to thank all the contributors for their willingness to share their talents with all of us. Also, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the very talented judges, all distinguished in their respective fields, who agreed to judge the entries for us: Ms. Val Lyle for painting and drawing and Mr. Mike Smith for photography. Finally, we appreciate the support of the college administration, Student Services, the Arts and Sciences division, the Print Shop, and the Office of Community Relations for their financial support and technical expertise.

Explorations Faculty Sponsors:

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JUDGES 2015

MIKE SMITH - Photography

Mike Smith was born in Germany but served in Vietnam as a part of the U.S. Army. He earned a BFA from the Massachusetts College of Art and an MFA in photography from Yale University. He is a professor of photography at ETSU, where he has served since 1981. Mr. Smith has published several works in the New York Times, Washington Post, Oxford American and Harper's magazine, among many others. He has been featured in countless exhibitions all over the country from New York to California and has won several awards for outstanding photography, including the Tennessee Governor's Distinguished Artist Award.

AMANDA HOOD - Painting and Drawing

Amanda Hood is an artist and Visiting Assistant Professor at East Tennessee State University, with an MFA in Integrated Visual Art from Iowa State University, and BFA from Pittsburg State University. Amanda's paintings and prints have been exhibited nationally, and internationally in venues such as the Gallery of the International Pavillion in Ulsan, Korea, and the Evansville Museum in Indiana, and can currently be seen at Gallery 13 in Minneapolis, MN. Raised in the midwest, her work often references the regional landscape, and draws heavily upon the traditions of Romanticism and the Sublime.

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Explorations First Place 2015 - Color Photography

Left Behind

Kayla Gillenwater



Explorations Second Place 2015 - Color Photography

For you, Mommy

Kristy Hood Pickell



Explorations Third Place 2015 - Color Photography

Solitude in Placencia

Victoria Cooley



Explorations Honorable Mention 2015 - Color Photography

Peacocks in Evora

Geena Phipps



Explorations Honorable Mention 2015 - Color Photography

Sailor's Delight

Kristy Hood Pickell



Explorations First Place 2015 - Black and White Photography

Azulejos

Geena Phipps



Explorations Second Place 2015 - Black and White Photography

California Green

Victoria Cooley



Explorations Third Place 2015 - Black and White Photography

Iguana in CR

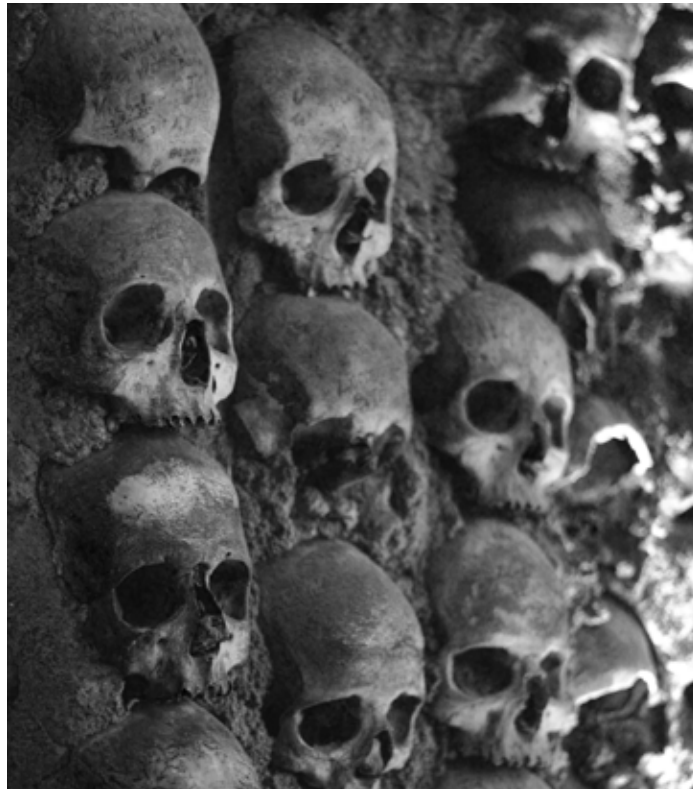
Kristy Hood Pickell



Explorations Honorable Mention 2015 - Black and White Photography

Broken Down Home

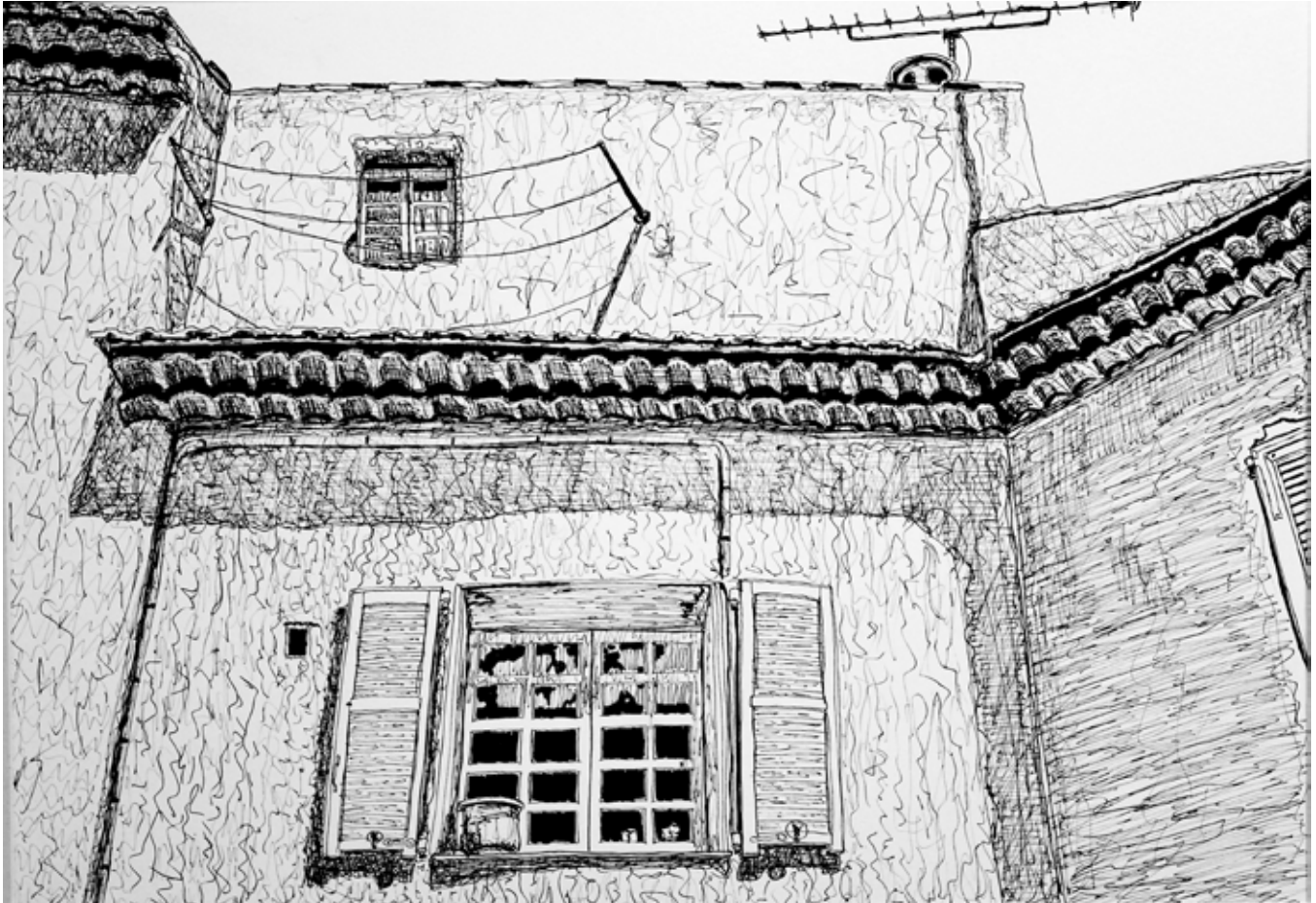
Kevin Cooper



Explorations Honorable Mention 2015 - Black and White Photography

Chapel of Bones

Geena Phipps



Explorations First Place 2015 - Drawing

Roofline in Italy

David Barton



Explorations Second Place 2015 - Drawing

Converse

Marcie Gonzales



Explorations Third Place 2015 - Drawing

Cabin

Lisa Davis



Pack Gathering

Heather Gilley



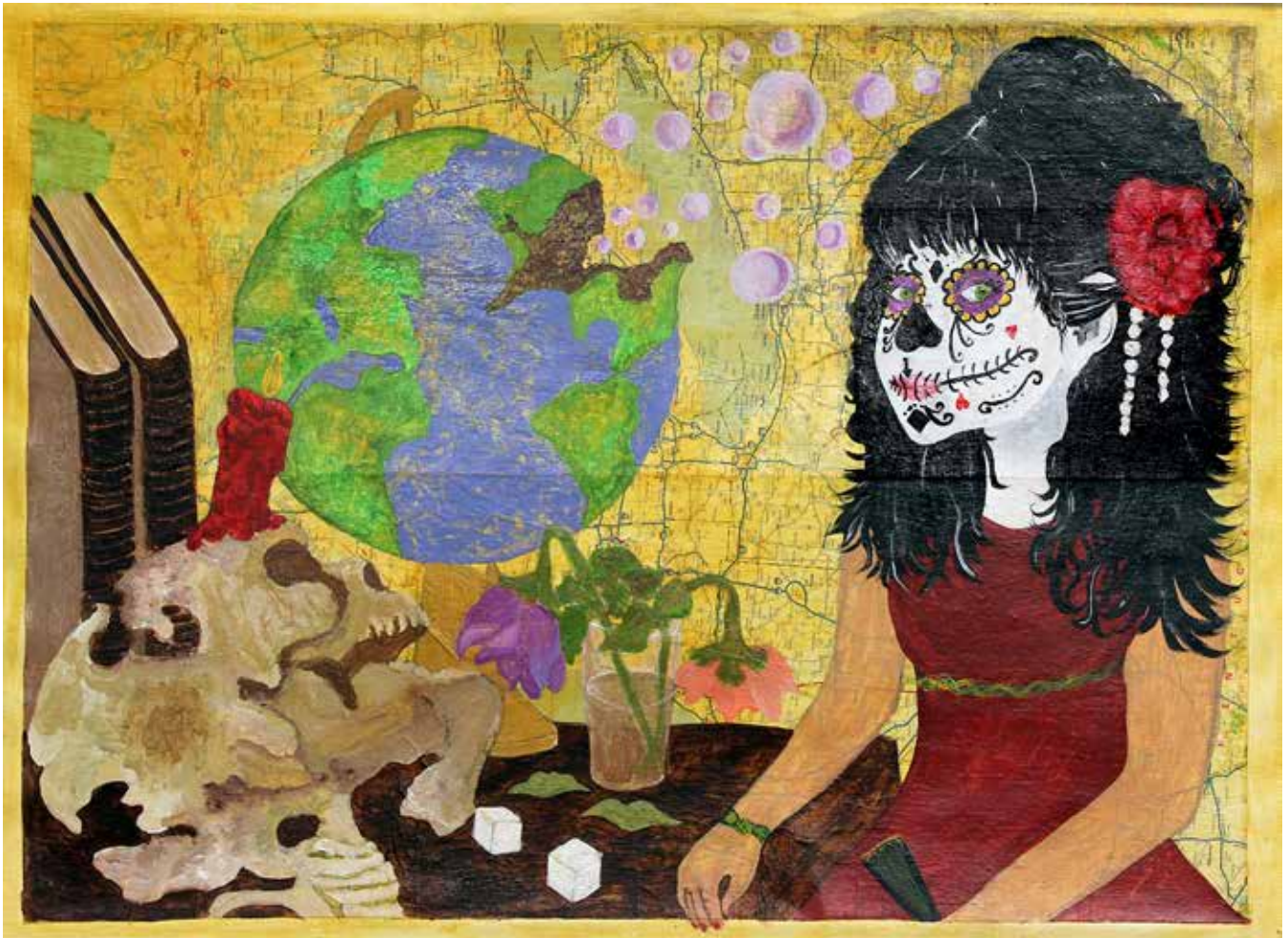
Danza

Taylin Valentin



No Work Today

Sharmin Merriam



Explorations First Place 2015 - Painting

Frozen Time

Taylin Valentin



Explorations Second Place 2015 - Painting

Goofy Green Pin-Up

Lisa Davis



Explorations Third Place 2015 - Painting

Lord Kimmer-Jim

Keaton Lawson



Foundering

Wayne Culbertson



Tomatoes

David Barton



Thirty-Three

Victoria Cooley

Remembering Hope

Angela Jo Christian

The dust and debris hovered in a thick, heavy cloud, causing the brunette to cough violently as she struggled to move. For a paralyzing moment in time, her pitch-black world was silent. That wasn't right. Why was no one calling for help? There had been others in the office. A sickening chill of fear ran down her spine, reinforcing for the first time that she, in fact, was not paralyzed. Her stomach lurched as her heart skipped a beat. Surely she wasn't the only one? Others had survived, right? Everything had happened so quickly that it was all a blur. She had been a little excited to be back at work. After all, some of her friends and coworkers had not seen her in nearly three months.

The young woman winced as the numbness of shock slowly began to melt away, giving way to a deep, searing pain in her left leg. Try as she might, she could not manage to twist her body around to survey what might be the problem with her leg. She opened and closed her mouth several times in an attempt to locate help, or anyone that may still be alive. Panic began to set in when she realized no sound at all seemed to be leaving her lips. She could clearly feel the tears beginning to stream down her cheeks, wincing again as the salt from her tears washed into what she was sure had to be numerous scratches and bruises. Her first day back from maternity leave had started off so well too. Of course, that all had changed when the first plane was spotted. Never before had she seen such panic and confusion.

Regaining as much of her bearings as she could in her new, sightless world, she attempted to bring her hands and arms underneath her upper body to gain any available leverage. From what she could tell, she was laying flat on her stomach with something very heavy on top of her. The young woman pinched her eyes shut as the penetrating pain surged through her body at the slightest movement. Her hands felt wet and sticky. Something cold and rough scrapped against her elbow. It was then that she realized that she must have a hole in the sleeve of her suit jacket. It was becoming increasingly difficult to breathe. Trying to bring her arm back, she discovered that whatever it was that had scrapped her elbow was too large for her to simply nudge out of the way. Unable to tell whether her eyes were open or closed in her current environment, she tried to pull herself forward. The pained groan that escaped her lips was what could only be described as music to her ears. Her silent world slowly began to fill with muffled sounds.

A feeling of paralyzation swept over her as she lay motionless, already exhausted. Why? Why had this happened? Why had she even come into work today? It's not like it had been all that urgent that she come into work today. After all, her boss had been very generous with her maternity leave in light of it being her first child. Perhaps her husband had been correct in his efforts to persuade her to stay home this morning. Another violent cough escaped her, her body rippling with pain once again. How was she going to get herself out of this? Was she going to get out of this?

For the first time since she had regained consciousness, she began to contemplate what would happen if she failed to survive. Her husband would be so lost without her, and her newborn son... Her tears began anew. She could just make out the muffled cries of the many others in her same predicament, some of them sounding much further away than others. With renewed vigor, she doubled her efforts in trying to push herself up.

I can't die here. I WON'T die here.

Her efforts were short-lived as she realized that the heavy object pinning her down was endowed with a sharp edge. A painful yelp escaped her as she felt it sink into her skin just below her ribcage. Everything

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suddenly seemed hopeless; a losing battle. The thought nearly made her give a bitter laugh. What was hope, anyway? Now it seemed like such a distant memory. It seemed like only in times of tragedy did one have time for sobering reflection. Just where had all her time gone? How long had it been since she'd had faith in anything? How long had it been since she'd gone to church? One year? Five? Looking back now, she had honestly lost track. After her father's death, she had simply...stopped. Why? It wasn't as if she had changed, was it? As if in answer to her inner questioning, floods of memories came rushing back to her. Little things that had seemed so insignificant at the time suddenly held a far greater meaning now. All the things she had taken for granted now weighed heavily on her frazzled mind. Her mother was always such a faithful, religious woman. It seemed that she was always praying for others. Only now did the twenty seven year-old begin to understand why.

The realization caused the young woman to burst into sobs yet again. She had been so preoccupied by her growing career and the daily endeavors of modern life, that she had somehow lost her faith in the compassion of others along the way. Just what had happened to her? How had something that once was so important to her become so lost within herself? It wasn't that she was without compassion, or so she longed to think. The object bearing down upon her back now suddenly seemed to weigh twice as much as her exhausted body shook with silent sobs. Once again, the feeling of utter hopelessness returned. She could feel her head begin to grow heavy, and she was certain that she would soon be asleep. She was only vaguely aware that she didn't seem to be taking in enough air. A moment of complete clarity seemed to come over her as the realization that the wet, sticky sensation on her hands and back had to be her blood. Far too weak for panic at this moment, she did the only thing she could think of that would bring her any form of comfort in the situation; something she hadn't done in what seemed like years: she prayed. At first, she felt strange, almost inadequate, due to her lack of prayer as of late. However, after a moment, none of her fears and inadequacies seemed to matter. Surprisingly enough, she did not pray to be rescued. Instead, she prayed for strength, not only for herself, but for her family and loved ones as well. Judging from what she could hear, she appeared to be less injured than some of her trapped coworkers. She then began to pray for them as well.

What could have only been mere moments seemed like an eternity in the darkness when the sweet sound of her salvation finally reached her ears. She could faintly hear the voices and the sound of scratching and digging as one by one, lucky ones were pulled from their dark prisons beneath the rubble that had once served as the World Trade Center's Twin Towers. She supposed that she must have lost consciousness again at some point, for she thought she knew, she could make out the sound of digging and scrapping above her. How had they found her? Had she called out to them without realizing? Shutting her eyes as bright sunlight invaded her vision for the first time in what had to have been at least five hours, she determined that none of it mattered. She was one of the lucky ones. She had been discovered and rescued, and that was what mattered. Opening her eyes as much as her vision would allow in the bright glare after having had been in the darkness for so long, she glanced around at her surroundings in absolute horror. There was nothing left of her workplace at all. As she was gently lifted onto a stretcher, it almost seemed ironic how only now did she have an answer to her earlier inner question. Hope was faith. Faith was the resolve and belief that, against all odds, one could make it through any challenge life saw fit to throw their way. "With God, all things are possible," that's what her mother would always say. The brunette closed her eyes, a small, tired smile finally lightening her pale features. God was the very essence of hope, and she would never forget that again.



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