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NWA Times Article - September 12, 2005: Kaminsky family combines talents in joint exhibit at Iris Arts

Relatively unique

Kaminsky family combines talents in joint exhibit at Iris Arts

BY EMILY KOSCHESKI Northwest Arkansas Times

‘A FAMILY OF ARTISTS: THE KAMINSKYS’ When: through September Where: Iris Arts, 330 N. West Ave., Fayetteville Hours: Noon to 8 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays The living room just wasn’t the place for the Kaminskys’ family portrait.

A gallery would make lots more sense, as the family is represented best not by a photograph of smiling faces but by nearly 100 paintings, drawings, sculptures and mixed-media works.

On display through September at Iris Arts in downtown Fayetteville, “A Family of Artists: The Kaminskys” marks the first time the Kaminskys have shown their works together. Hank Kaminsky, who is most known for his World Peace Prayer Fountain at the Fayetteville Town Center, and his wife, Jo Ann, a professional counselor focusing on art therapy, have displayed their works as a couple before. But they have not yet included their sons, Jesse and Daniel.

“[The idea for the exhibit] just suddenly occurred to me,” Jo Ann said. “There’s something really amazing when that happens, when you see how your work integrates. It’s really a fun thing to do.”

Daniel, 24, a musician living in the San Francisco Bay Area, has created some visual artwork but concentrates primarily on poetry and songs. He does not have any art in the exhibit, but participated by sending some poetry for his father to read at an artists’ reception that took place Friday.

Jesse, 27, of Boston, traveled to Fayetteville a few days ago to deliver his contributions of several mixedmedia pieces and wire sculptures. A former student of the Kansas City Art Institute, Jesse showed artistic inclinations as early as age 3, his mother said. He often joined his parents at art fairs, setting up his own booth to sell his works.

“He took in a lot of people’s art,” Jo Ann said. “He had an amazing focus. Once he got going on something, he was going for quite a while.”

“No all-nighters, though,” Jesse joked.

A few of Jesse's works in the exhibit are created as part of a series, such as a group of wavy-edged, flat black circles that are covered in shiny staples. They are displayed at Iris Arts in a turtle-shell pattern.

The impetus behind his creations is always different, he said.

"I never know with my art," he said. "I just make it, and it's there. It sort of has a life of its own."

Many of Jo Ann's paintings on display were inspired by her trip to Africa earlier this year. The pieces employ a variety of colors and communicate her passion about the land.

"I've always just been drawn to Africa," Jo Ann said. "Going made me fall even more in love with it."

With its cliff dwellers and simple houses, the continent looked a lot like the American Southwest, she said.

"Everything they did was a work of art," she said. "It was visually stimulating wherever I went."

Hank's part in the exhibit is a series of drawings and sculptures related to the human figure, his first inspiration when he began creating art 40 years ago, he said. Some of the works use words, a familiar motif in his art.

The family considered defining a theme for the collection but decided to let the works come together on their own and allow viewers to make their own interpretations, Hank said. Still, they are anxious to learn what gallery visitors will think, as the exhibit contains many works that have never been shown.

"Our work is more to lead you into an experience. We don't give you all the answers, we just lead you into a conversation," Hank said. "There's always things you can imagine with a work of art. With our work, that is "



"Baobab Dreams," a painting by Jo Ann Kaminsky, and an untitled wire sculpture, by her son, Jesse Kaminsky, are two of the many works by the Kaminsky family on display through September at Iris Arts in Fayetteville. The joint exhibit, "A Family of Artists: The Kaminskys," marks the first time artists Hank and Jo Ann Kaminsky have participated in a show with their sons, Jesse and Daniel.

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