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# McDaniel graduates showcase abstract work in 'Reversed Polarity'

BY ARIN GENCER  
SUN REPORTER

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Opposites attract in Carroll art exhibit

A gallery exhibit at the Carroll Arts Center in downtown Westminster shows that opposites can pair in art as well as they do in life.

Called Reversed Polarity, it features the work of two artists who are **McDaniel College** graduates. Their common thread frays from that point.

The work of Kenny Ditto and Jessica Watson, the creative minds behind the display, is as different as night and day, which both artists strive to convey in their respective pieces with similar titles.

But those contrasts are what drove Susan Williamson, the Carroll County Arts Council's visual arts coordinator, to combine them.

"It is really good to have artists together to complement each other," Williamson said. "I think that the two work really well."

And so visitors to the arts center's Community Gallery enter a world full of colorful paintings on some walls, black and white images and prints on others.

While Watson works mainly with acrylics and chalk pastels, Ditto



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experiments with tape and newsprint, compressed air cans and corduroy-covered books that he bound himself using a bookbinding press.

For Ditto, his book of scratchy, distorted black-and-white photos of Centralia, Pa., - a ghostly mining town where an underground fire has burned for years - reflects his general interest in "looking at things differently," he said.

"Typically, I look for things that are kind of overlooked," said Ditto, 23, who works for the college's post office.

Reversed Polarity is the 2006 McDaniel graduate's first professional show, he said.

The display also includes his photographs of New Orleans homes destroyed by Hurricane Katrina and the dilapidated Hampstead School, screen prints and framed pieces of tape with imprints of newsprint, titled Subject to Adhesion.

Watson, who graduated from McDaniel in 2005, has had other exhibits, some in her apartment and a recent one called Happy Hour at a Mediterranean restaurant in Baltimore. The 23-year-old works as a graphic artist for Solo Cup Co.

While Ditto focuses on things that have been abandoned or overlooked, Watson's work explores open landscapes with skies of amber, ocean-like vistas with undulating waves and vibrant tableaux that couple a woman's profile with glimpses of a beach and trees against a sunset.

Watson said those tableaux, titled Beauty of Color I and Beauty of Color II, are among her favorites.

"There is so much symbolism and detailing in there," she said, noting the African symbols and trees in the paintings.

Williamson said the contrast in the art extend to the artists, too. Watson, she said, is "very outgoing," while Ditto is "very quiet."

"What they do share is this determination and drive," Williamson added. "Both of them are very, very methodical. They both take chances, as well."

The artists' divergent visions do cross paths, however shortly, in some abstracts made for the joint exhibit: Ditto's "Night vs. Day" and Watson's "Night" and "Day."

Ditto's abstract is a set of orange and black images created with watered-down acrylic paints and compressed air in a can. Watson's "Night" comprises spots and swirls of silver, black and white paint set against a dark blue, while her "Day" hosts a similar abstract design with a red background.

Ditto and Watson said they were pleased with the result of merging their creative forces.

"Because our styles are so different, I think it gave the show a more unique element," Watson said, "something that you might not have found elsewhere."

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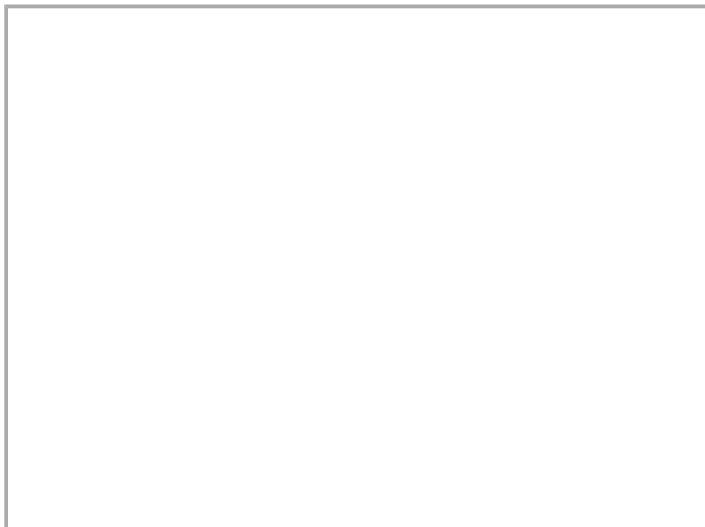
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*Reversed Polarity is on display at the arts center's Community Gallery, located at 91 W Main St., through Jan. 16.*

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