


The Journal

Artist: never be complacent



Staff photo by Connor Cumiskey Artist Brian Frink stands next to his painting “Everywhere Everything/Reflection” which he made in response to the recent performance of “Musical Tales Concerto: Growing Young, Growing Wise” written by resident composer Peter Michael von der Nahmer with the help of local talent.

NEW ULM — A new artist who focuses on realistic and abstract renditions of nature is coming to The Grand.



Starting with an opening reception Friday, Sept. 8, from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m., painter Brian Frink's show "*Odd Shapes and Other Delights*" will be on display in the 4 Pillars Gallery in The Grand Center for Arts and Culture until Sept. 29.

"I consider myself a fairly eclectic painter," Frink said. *"Sometimes I do more realistic-oriented stuff, other times it is more abstract. I do water colors, I do oil paintings and I have a whole process where I use India Ink on a paper called yupo, which is a plastic paper."*

Frink's paintings vary from realistic Canadian landscapes to abstract mixes of color reminiscent of fields and forests to patterns painted on oddly-shaped pieces of wood.

"I think I am just making paintings that are sort of in reverence of the world I live in," Frink said.

He became interested in art when he was a child growing up in the Chicago area. Frink's parents brought him to the Art Institute of Chicago and he decided that was what he wanted to do.

Since then, Frink has painted for most of his life, only dabbling in photography in high school. He is now the head of the art department at the Minnesota State University, Mankato.

The medium of painting attracts Frink because of its ability to capture

depth and dimension on a flat plane.

“A painting is an illusion, kind of like you are looking through a window,” Frink said.

The artist is excited to bring his work to New Ulm. This is his first show here, but he says his work has a connection to New Ulm from when his wife worked in town.

“We used to come here a lot when she would come to work so the landscape between Mankato and New Ulm has really informed a lot of my work,” Frink said.

Frink advises hopeful artists that it is not a simple nine-to-five job, *“It is both a profession and a lifestyle,”* he said.

To succeed with art, Frink said, an artist has to be able to handle the business of selling art. He cannot stop thinking about his art.

He also, somewhat embarrassed at sounding like a Nike advertisement, said the best way to get into the art world is simply to do it. Start looking for places to display art and build momentum.

“There are all kinds of opportunities for people to exhibit their artwork all over the place,” Frink said. *“Whether it is a place like The Grand or a coffee shop down the street or your dentist’s wall.”*

Frink advises younger artists that no matter what, always try to keep improving. Complacency is something he does not appreciate.

“I think people get to this point where they think they are good enough. Well, you are never good enough,” Frink said. *“I am always — even though I have been painting a long time and I have been teaching painting a long time — I am always trying to improve myself.”*

Frink has earned a National Endowment of the Arts Fellowship in 1995, two McKnight Individual Artist Fellowships in 1992 and 2001 and was

named the 2012 Artist of the Year by the Twin Cities weekly arts and culture paper City Pages among other awards.

The Gallery is open 5:30-7:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays and from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays.

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