

## Photoshop Tennis volleys art between artists

By Michael Miller  
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### Art across the Internet



Just two of the fruits of four artists' online collaboration.

Art is generally a personal expression, and so it is not often that two or more artists are able to work together. That may be changing through the connectivity provided by the Internet.

Starting this month, visitors to the Montgomery County Government Center's Fisher's View and Poor Mountain galleries will be able to view Photoshop Tennis, an exhibit of art created through

the online collaboration of four regional artists.

Leslye Bloom, Kathy Cudlin, and Craig and Sally Shaffer have been playing a virtual game of tennis with their art. Each artist posts an image on a Web site. Next, they take turns downloading, changing or adding to it and then uploading the altered image back to the site.

They discuss the results via e-mail, and then often repeat the process, creating additional variations of the original art until it evolves into one or more works bearing the artistic fingerprint of each artist. The results are often totally unexpected and uniquely creative in ways none of the artists could have achieved alone.

"We each respect the special artistry and style of the other. Beyond that, no holds barred," Craig Shaffer said. "I mean, we might take a finished painting or exquisite photo by one of us and whack it out beyond recognition. There is something maliciously delicious about using someone else's work as an experimental palette."

The process began when Bloom, a Blacksburg resident, was invited to speak at a Blue Ridge Photographic Arts Society meeting where she met photographic artists Cudlin and Craig Shaffer, both from Lynchburg. Bloom and Shaffer immediately began to imagine a collaborative effort through their common interest in the computer as an art tool using image programs such as Photoshop.

After Bloom used one of Shaffer's processed im-

ages to create a second work, the collaboration expanded to include photographer Cudlin and papier-mache mask-maker Sally Shaffer. Bloom is known for coining the word "computage" to describe the fusion of computer imaging and traditional art media. She works with digital images using Photoshop and then renders the computer images onto paper using pigmented

wax through an ancient process called encaustics.

Among her many awards, Bloom was a finalist in The Artist's Magazine's experimental category, which receives more than 13,000 entries each year.

Craig Shaffer is president of the photographic arts society and is director of marketing and communications for Progress Printing, the largest private commercial printer in Virginia.

*"There is something maliciously delicious about using someone else's work as an experimental palette."*

**Craig Shaffer**  
photographic artist



From Left: Artists Leslye Bloom, Kathy Cudlin and Sally Shaffer stick Identification and Price tags on pieces that will be exhibited at the Montgomery County Government Center.

Photo by Mike Miller

He has been a reporter, editor and photographer for a number of newspapers including The Roanoke Times. He has participated in 45 photography exhibitions since 2001, winning a number of awards. Craig Shaffer's wife, Sally, is an operating room nurse at Lynchburg General Hospital. Sally Shaffer began making masks in 1978, and her creations often blend animal and human characteristics. She has exhibited broadly in the area, including the Lynchburg Fine Arts Center, the Lynchburg Art Club, Magnolia Foods and Studios on the Square.

Cudlin has been the art director for Lovern Advertising since 1995, where she also serves as agency photographer. Her first love was traditional black-and-white photography. Her use of Photoshop in her commercial work made the evolution to digital imaging a natural progression, and now her images come from her computer screen rather than the darkroom. Cudlin also has dozen of exhibits and awards to her credit..

AnonartistwillfindPhotoshopTennisparticularly helpful in understanding how artists create their works.

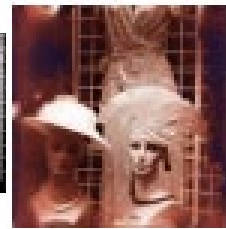
One of Bloom's images of a woman panhandler in Jamaica prompted Cudlin to feel she was an outsider. To emphasize the emotion, she clipped the image out of the photo and placed her outside the frame, leaving a blank space where she had been standing. Both Bloom and Shaffer created their own interpretations, evoking other emotions in the viewer.



*Panhandler Poem*



*"Night 2"*



*"Ladies of the Night"*



*"Oh Venus"*

A black-and-white photo of mannequins in a department store window picks up red hues to become "Ladies of The Night" for Shaffer. An additional background substitution of the statue "Venus de Milo" combines with blue highlights to transform "Ladies" into "Oh Venus" for Bloom.

Viewing these collaborative works is like watching the artist in the act of creation.

The group's experiments in Internet-enabled art forms will be on display through the end of January at the Montgomery County Government Center on Roanoke Road in Christiansburg, and will move to Central Virginia Community College in Lynchburg in February. The Blacksburg Regional Art Association supports the Montgomery County exhibit.



*"Aunt Duck"*



*"Duck-a-Lisa"*



*"Manicure"*  
(detail)

Beginning with a photograph of Sally Shaffer's "Aunt Duck" mask, Cudlin thought it would be interesting to transplant the image over Mona Lisa's face in Da Vinci's famous painting, creating "Duck-a-Lisa."

Bloom added her own touch - long fingernails - further morphing the work into "Duck-a-Lisa's Manicure."

While "Duck-a-Lisa" and another of the exhibit's works, "Maori Elvis" with his facial tattoos, are whimsical, others of the group's images are more serious and evocative.



*"Maori Elvis"*  
(detail)