



Leslye Bloom's 'Midnight Reverie' will be part of an exhibit opening May 2 at the Lynchburg Fine Arts Center.

Artists take photos to new levels

By Amy Coutee
The News & Advance

The power a photograph has to touch and move people becomes magnified in the hands of Leslie "L. S." King and Leslye Bloom, the two artists featured May 2 through June 14 in the Dillard Gallery at the Lynchburg Fine Arts Center.

The King and Bloom show opening reception — from 5 to 7 p.m. on May 2— will feature "Narrow Way," a band known for bluegrass, Celtic and traditional music. Also available for viewers, in Gallery II, will be watercolor, acrylic and oils, by local artists Karen Bowden, Geral Butler, Bernice Johnson and Janet Schaffer.

King, whose work will appear in the Studios on the Square in

Roanoke in June, and Bloom begin their creations with a photo. What they end up with is as different as night and day — and all of it is one-of-a-kind.

Bloom creates "Computages" while King creates hand-painted photography.

"I thought these two would pair up really well," says Jill Jensen, curator for the FAC. "I thought it would be interesting to see how two women take the same idea" and jump off from there.

Bloom begins with a digital photo on her computer screen. She manipulates it in terms of size, shape and color and then prints it with a special printer, which uses wax-based paint. She then redefines the image in any number of ways — by scratching or melting the wax, painting over it, tearing the art up and putting it back together in another format, or adding crystal paper.

"What I'm doing is playing, I'm seeing what I can do," says Bloom of Blacksburg. "I'm trying to create a feeling about things and places. I think that the visceral reaction to the place is ever so important," she says, explaining why she created images such as "Los Alamos After the Fire," "D-Day Twilight" and "Gilbert's House."

It's not easy to create these images because "it's an ornery medium," says Bloom; but the personal rewards make it worthwhile.

In contrast, King's artwork can almost be read like a book, one that reveals a bit of her life in each of the series of paintings.

"It's very journalistic as to my life. It's autobiographical," says King. A series of six works, "Mr. Handsome," follows a day in the life of her old dog while "Morning

Rituals" is based on everyday life.

Her work, from small to medium in size, originates from a black and white photo. She prints an image on photo paper or watercolor paper then paints on top of the image with colored, transparent oil paint which allows a bit of the image to show through.

"I like the idea of the photo coming through in some forms because it's very real and what I am doing is making the unreal with my painting," says King. She says few people are able to decipher that the painting is merged with a photograph. Still lifes and picture within pictures are also included in the show.

"I like pretty things and peaceful things and I guess that's what I'm trying to do," says King of Southern Maryland. "I'm hoping that audiences enjoy them and I hope that they get a sense of peace from them."

IF YOU'RE GOING

WHAT: Photographs by Leslie "L.S." King and Leslye Bloom in the Dillard and artwork by Karen Bowden, Geral Butler, Bernice Johnson and Janet Schaffer in Gallery 11.

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday May 2 through June 14. First Friday opening reception 5 — 7 p.m. on May 2 with "Narrow Way."

WHERE: The Lynchburg Fine Arts Center

TICKETS: Free and open to the public. Works will be on sale, ranging from \$125 to \$900.

INFO: (434) 846-8451

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