

## FLASHPOINT

The Gallery at Flashpoint is delighted to inaugurate its 2006-2007 season with Evan Reed's New & Recent Sculptures, the artist's first solo exhibition in DC. Reed's large-scale sculptures transform salvaged materials into sculptural entities that subtly suggest personal narratives. The substantial scale of these works generates a commanding presence in the gallery space while their rustic materials create an intriguing counterpoint to the gallery's exposed infrastructure.

Evan Reed, Herald, recycled roofing tin, 17x6x1', 2006



# Gold rush: Illustrated manuscripts for the eye and spirit

By Robin Tierney  
Special to The Examiner

Poetry has inspired fine art through the ages. Perhaps the most popular source is the Bible, with its sweep of subjects from tests of faith to cataclysmic events to the barely veiled erotic love poetry of "The Song of Songs," the shortest book of the Old Testament.

The latter became an obsession for Debra Band, a descendant of rabbis and modern master of the rare genre of manuscript arts. She moved from California to Maryland five years ago, and her studies have included art, medieval history, archaeology and Hebrew calligraphy.

In Jewish tradition, she explains, "The Song of Songs," "was understood not simply as the love songs of a pair of human lovers, but actually as an expression of the love between God and the people of Isra-

el [enduring] repeated exiles and oppression." She felt compelled to reconcile the dual interpretations through a classic illuminated manuscript, pages painted on the kind of vellum used in medieval European manuscripts.

"Walking on the beach one Sunday morning with my husband, I hit upon the idea of framing the poetry as the daydreams of a pair of lovers within a walled garden." What began as a personal six-year project caught the eye of a national publisher, resulting in a coffee-table tome in 2005.

Band's new illuminated work, "The Song of Songs: The Honeybee in The Garden" opens Thursday at the D.C. Jewish Community Center's Ann Loeb Bronfman Gallery.

The calligraphy is hand-drawn in ink, the painting in intensely-hued gouache (opaque watercolor), the gold in 23-karat leaf and 24-karat powder. Decorative accents include silver (palladium) and copper leaf.

## THE SONG OF SONGS: THE HONEYBEE IN THE GARDEN

**Venue:** On view Thursday through Jan. 7. D.C. Jewish Community Center's Ann Loeb Bronfman Gallery, 1529 16th St. NW

» **Opening Reception** with the artist 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 7

**Tix:** Free

Papercutting, learned through trade with China, has been part of Jewish manuscript tradition since the early Middle Ages, so Band's work also features papercuts.

The frontispiece illumination depicts a gate swinging open from an arid, cobbled street to the lovers' lush green garden. Pink lilies springing through the gate symbolize, in rabbinic legend, the beauty of the Ten Commandments in contrast to the corrupt human world.

"Illumination 9" visualizes a much-

loved passage translated by Band as, "I am the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valleys. Like a rose among the thorns, so is my beloved among the girls. Like an apple among the trees of the forest, so is my love among the young men." Fruits and flowers modeled on plants of the time symbolize morals and ethics of ancient Israel. Look for the honeybees, also freighted with multiple meaning — including a nod to the illuminator's transliterated name.

It's fascinating to think such biblical verses as the Song of Songs may date to the 10th century BCE. Band's unique 65-page integration of medieval Sephardic and Ashkenazic calligraphy, with chapters divided by handmade papercut leaves, open windows on ancient Hebrew spiritual life while breathing new life into the arcane field of manuscript arts. Especially if the phrase "back to school" elicits more of a grin than a grimace, you'll delight in this illuminated and illuminating text.

## WINE FRAUD

# Wine lover's nose for fraud leads to famed bottles

By John R. Wilke  
The Wall Street Journal

PALM BEACH, Fla. — When Boston's Museum of Fine Art displayed William Koch's private collection last year, the treasures included paintings by Monet, Degas and Dali, a trove of Greco-Roman and American West artifacts, and his renowned racing yacht, winner of the 1992 America's Cup.

But the museum wanted proof of the provenance of some of the energy tycoon's most prized possessions: hand-blown bottles of Bordeaux from the 17,000-bottle cellar beneath his estate here. The wines bear the vintages 1784 and 1787 and the initials of the then-ambassador to France, Thomas Jefferson.

The museum's questions prompted Mr. Koch to bankroll a year-long quest to discover whether he,

along with many experts in the wine world, had been duped by the mysterious bottles.

Mr. Koch assembled a team of former Federal Bureau of Investigation and British intelligence agents, wine and glass experts, Sotheby's former head of wine sales, even a nuclear physicist. Led by a former federal judge, the effort has already cost more than twice the \$500,000 Mr. Koch paid for the four bottles in 1987.

Now the 66-year-old chemical engineer and yachtsman believes he has found proof the bottles were fakes — as well as evidence of other fraud in the wine-auction business, especially for vintages older than 1945. And he wants to settle the score.

"I bought them for the mystique, to own something that belonged to the third president, a framer of the Constitution," Mr. Koch says over a silken 1971 Petrus in his ornate din-

ing room here. "If someone robs you of those bragging rights, you get p— off."

In the rarefied world of historical wine collecting, the Jefferson bottles, said to have been discovered in a bricked-up cellar in Paris in 1985, have long inspired awe and controversy. In December 1985, the late Malcolm Forbes paid \$156,000 for a Jefferson Lafite at a Christie's auction, still a record bid for a bottle of wine.

While doubts about the authenticity of the bottles have been voiced over the years, many wine experts vouched for them, including Christie's board member and wine author Michael Broadbent. The Jefferson bottles are believed to have been sold to wealthy buyers around the world by auction and private sales.

Thursday Mr. Koch filed suit in federal court in New York against a German collector and dealer, Hardy Rodenstock, who supplied the Jef-

erson bottles and other rare vintages to auction houses and merchants. Mr. Koch alleges that the former pop-music promoter defrauded him and engaged in a scheme to deceive wine buyers and reviewers around the world. Even his name is a creation, the suit says: He was born Meinhard Goerke, and later changed his name.

A second wealthy collector, Russell Frye, says he also bought wine provided by Mr. Rodenstock, including some of the world's rarest Bordeaux vintages. In federal court in San Francisco Thursday, the Massachusetts software entrepreneur filed suit against a California distributor that sold him Mr. Rodenstock's wines.

Christopher Forbes, vice chairman of Forbes Inc., publisher of Forbes magazine, has also challenged the authenticity of the Jefferson bottle purchased by his father. — AP

## ARTSCAPES

# Making the scene: D.C.'s Expressionist movement

By Robin Tierney  
Special to The Examiner

German Expressionism ... Pop Art ... Contemporary Post-Expressionist Subpop Romantic Surrealistic Lowbrow on the Potomac. OK, the third is too cumbersome and limiting a moniker for D.C.'s burgeoning art movement. Nonetheless, a formidable, distinctive scene has surged up from the underground, and a great place to dive in is Studio One Eight in Adams Morgan.

"Soul Mining," on view by appointment up to the Sept. 9 closing reception, features an arcade of colorful, eye- and mind-popping works by alt-art legend-in-progress Matt Sesow and J. Coleman, a Mary Washington grad who moved here to apprentice with Sesow in 2004. The show's title refers to the use of art as a therapeutic release; the two dozen works reflect on emotions from agony to hope, and issues from personal isolation to a war-torn world.

Among the all-new works are four large-scale collaborations created earlier this summer on Coleman's Mount Vernon Place urban rooftop, where he does most of his painting, much of that inspired by the energy and poverty on constant parade below.

"Martyr" proffers a tableau of religious iconography and political zeitgeist, commingling Coleman's Day of the Dead-derived figures, sacred hearts and sacrificial virgins with Sesow's strapped-up suicide bomber. "Salvation meets self-destruction," Coleman says of the visual collision, recalling the duo's efforts to capture desperation about world violence ... and to a lesser extent, working conditions as the roof heated to 110 degrees.

"It's a grimy type of piece [that reveals] the passion in its making," says Coleman. As testament, the unstretched canvas bears footprints, sweat and spillage from drinks. "Martyr" is the artist's pick, but the other pieces merit attention as well.

Normally a loner, Coleman feels supercharged with the action/reaction interplay with collaborator Sesow.

## WHERE TO SEE SOUL MINING

**On view by appointment**  
Artists' closing reception 7 to 10 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 9  
**Venue:** Studio One Eight, 2452 18th St. NW, Washington  
**Tix:** Free  
**Info:** 703-862-2775; studiooneeight.com