

Visual haiku Artist Ron Moppett working hard in his retirement

VISUAL ARTS »»PREVIEW

RON MOPPETT: COLOURED PICTURES

Runs until February 3
Trépanier Baer

WES LAFORTUNE

Calgary artist Ron Moppett is working hard during his retirement. Shrugging off the shackles of full-time work he can now concentrate on what he loves to do best — create art.

Moppett, the former curator of the Illingworth Kerr Gallery at the Alberta College of Art and Design (ACAD), seems to be enjoying his new-found freedom from the evidence he's presented in his new exhibition at the Trépanier Baer Gallery, *Coloured Pictures*.

A series of works titled *Stencil Drawings* are among the best pieces in this show. Four colourful shapes balance in one united form in what becomes visual haiku.

Other observers must agree, because these attractive pieces are already sold with the distinctive red dot, advising that Moppett is back.

His multi-media work *Paris* is



Works from Ron Moppett's new show, *Coloured Pictures*, on display now at Trépanier Baer

also sure to draw attention. Through the use of slim fabric strips that hang across a portion of the work, a third dimension is created in what would otherwise be a more sedate affair. They fall over two orbs that mimic the moon rising in a starlit sky. This work is comprised of seven separate panels with Moppett's signature top hats dancing across four

of them. One could imagine French painter Magritte — who turned the top hat into an icon — being very pleased to see Moppett's abstractions of the object.

Moppett is less well known for his sculptural work, but for more than three decades he has created pieces that are often as visually intriguing as his paintings. In this exhibition, his piece *Canard* shows

that Moppett can still insert a good dash of humour into his work.

Defined as a small wing on an airplane, *Canard* does indeed take lift through its combination of Plexiglas artist's palette, surrounded by caps from tubes of oil paint and the handles of paint brushes poking through. The whole structure is then crowned by an invert-

ed (tobacco) pipe connected to a piece of copper piping.

Canard is also defined as a false or baseless rumour. And the word fits perfectly here, with rumours that Moppett has retired remaining just wild exaggerations.

Moppett was not only a long-time employee of ACAD but also a graduate of the institution in 1967 when it was known as the Alberta College of Art. His continuing presence in Calgary is a reminder to younger artists that although far-away locales may beckon, it is possible (now more than ever) to remain in Alberta and build a successful career.

Make The Connection

Feb 16, w: 45-50, m: 47-53

Feb 24, w: 27-35, m: 30-37

Feb 27, w: 36-44, m: 38-46

March 20, w: 45-50, m: 47-53

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