

Stall thrives in its 'specific' environment

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Contributing Writer

review

Created for the specific space in which it is displayed, installation art is unlike those pieces that can be moved and exhibited anywhere. The installation needs its environment to survive.

Each of the four artists – Polly Lanning, Keitha Lowrance, Terri Thornton, and Paul Booker – whose works are featured in *Stall* was (more or less) given a quarter of the Haggerty Gallery space. Playful, bold, subtle and mysterious were the results.

Upon entering, viewers first confronts Paul Booker's whimsical pieces constructed from little slips of paper resting varying distances from the wall upon pins. The lighting increases the perceived depth by the shadows cast.

Like smoke, *Limelight* ascends the wall, slightly curving as it climbs. The light-gray paper rectangles are outlined in hesitant black lines, as though drawn with a caffeinated hand. Moving in slightly from the edge, a white frame of blank paper peeks through.

Three-inch Deep slightly curves the rectangles of *Limelight* and turns them royal blue. Single black lines replace the white frames.

While *Limelight* slithers up the wall, *Three-inch Deep* swirls in and out of whirlpools as leaves on a pond or clouds in the sky.

The little rectangles – this time shaped as arrowheads – in *As If* are divided into two groups – the black ones on the right with "IF" typed on their surface and the clear ones on the left with "AS."

The two groups face each other – between them an invisible wall. Towards the bottom is the "doorway" – two horizontal, parallel raised "line" surfaces. A few of them move through the doorway. It seems as if they will eventually trade sides or, maybe, reach homeostasis.

Polly Lanning's boldly colored pieces deal less with movement and more with layers.

One of Lanning's pieces has vertical slabs of plywood leaned against the wall with strips of blue paint streaking the surface, giving it an unfinished appearance.

The piece reveals the layering of the creative process. The strips of painted completion fail to disguise the layers underneath it. The next layer – the unfinished plywood, in turn, remembers its origins with its natural rings.

Contrasting Lanning's painted pieces is a horizontal

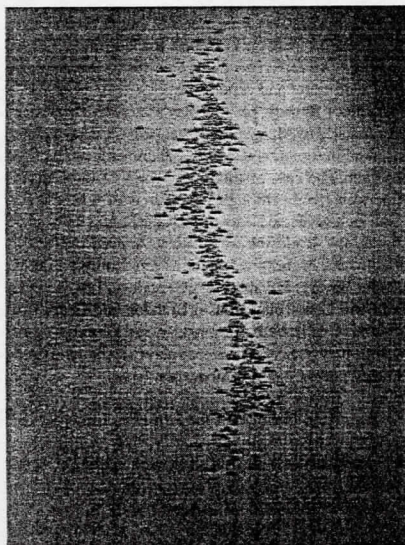


PHOTO BY JODI DICKENS

Paul Booker's piece, *Limelight*, consists of small pieces of paper arranged whimsically as wreaths of smoke.

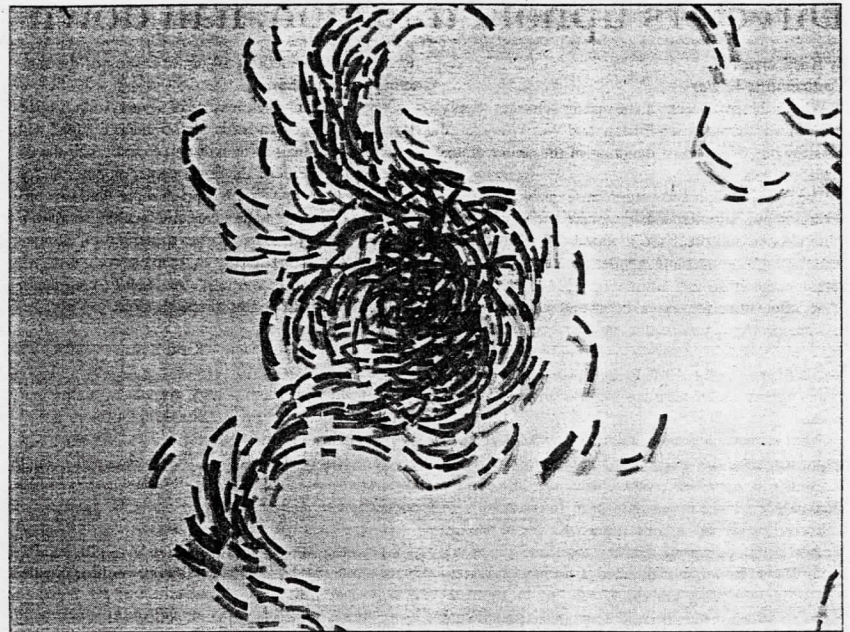


PHOTO BY JODI DICKENS

Three-inch Deep is one of the works featured in *Stall*, an exhibition of installation art, on display in Haggerty Gallery through Feb. 27. Here, a detail of paper slips fixed by pins to the wall and arranged in a whirlpool-like fashion.

row of photographs hung from nails like clothing from a clothesline. Repeating itself in the row is a snapshot of bright pink flowers in a sky blue box.

Moving from the bright world of Lanning to Terri Thornton's installation, viewers must let their eyes adjust to a subtler realm. At first glance, viewers will only see two pieces; but if they look carefully, they will realize there are actually three.

The secret one is *Tattoo Drawing on Ghost Skin*. On the outside wall, Thornton has painted faint columns of blue. She then perforated these walls in four major spots (at least four detected by my eye) with multiple pinholes.

On the back wall there are six vertical, parallel strips positioned right next to one another. On the side wall are three spots: one is divided down the center with the white of the gallery wall and the light blue column.

Opposite *Tattoo*, on the other two walls, is *Wall Wounds* (pocs 2). Here, Thornton painted a multitude of off-white circles one half-inch in circumference. On those she drew smaller circles with black pen. In the center of such circles, she placed a dollop of off-white paint. The walls look as though they have taken ill.

The line where the two walls are to connect, they do not meet. If viewers look closely they will notice white dots have been painted on the floor behind the gap.

Turning to the center of her space, viewers will notice thin pieces of black tape arranged in ellipses, one inside of another, on the ground.

If viewers look closely, they will notice the lines split in places and join again further down.

The lines break in other places to make room for the

letters "shshhhh" or "SHHSSHHHSS" – perhaps a reminder to the visitor. The piece is called *sound drawing*.

Keitha Lowrance's contribution to the exhibition consists of two pieces – an installation (*String Thing 5*) and a video (*Lines*), which complement the installation.

Black, white, and gray string pulled taut between nails comprises *String Thing 5*.

The way in which the lighting is employed creates additional lines and shades of gray with the shadows it casts.

The piece appears to climb up the wall with a mountain-like presence, curve around the room, and descend.

Thornton's web of string faces, in fact, almost cradles, her other piece *Lines*, where the repetitive images of lines moving up and down; in and out are accompanied by the sounds of falling footsteps, a gushing fountain,

and rushing cars. *Stall* runs through Feb. 27 in Haggerty Gallery. Call x5087 for gallery times and more information.

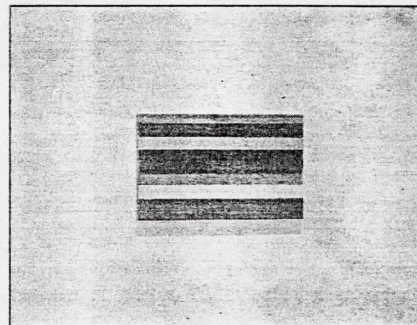


PHOTO BY JODI DICKENS

As this piece demonstrates, Polly Lanning employed plywood and blue paint in manipulating the space she was allotted.

This Week's Horror Films

February 14: *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935, 75 min) & *Son of Frankenstein* (1939, excerpts)

February 15: *Young Frankenstein* (1974, 106 min) & *Gods and Monsters* (2000, 106 min)