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Review: Artists pack a range of emotion in 'My Summer Vacation' at Winston Wächter in Seattle

The current multimedia group exhibition at Winston Wächter in Seattle offers both bitter and sweet recollections in "My Summer Vacation."

By **Nancy Worrssam**

Special to The Seattle Times

Ah, the delights of summer — ocean surfing, woodland hikes, foreign travel, road trips, so much to look forward to. Sometimes it's better than expected, but not always. The current multimedia group exhibition at Winston Wächter offers both the bitter and the sweet.

The work of nine artists at various stages in their careers evokes plenty of memories. Remember your first solo trip to Europe, and how the grandeur of the buildings combined with the too-frequent sense of loneliness? One look at Peter Waite's acrylic painting "Hotel/Pisa" with its vast Callebottle-like empty floor will bring it all back.

Then there's Zaria Forman's chalk pastel on paper called "Breezy Point Brooklyn." Under threatening clouds the foaming sea rolls into shore, so real you can almost hear the breaking waves and blowing wind.

Seattle glass artist Erich Woll takes us into the woods with animals that carry a heavy weight of symbolism. Note the alignment of the three animals in "The Enemy's Enemy is Not the Enemy." Then think about the strategic alliances created by politicians and diplomats for short-term gain, not necessarily long-term benefits.

Woll considers another of his groupings — nine blown-glass beetles, each more than a foot long, each unique — as an observation of changing times. It's equally an observation of the magic of glass art. You'll see an enormous variety of colors, iridescence and shapes. The textures vary greatly. Matte finishes ranging from rough to smooth have been achieved by sifting powdered glass onto the blown piece at different stages of the cooling process.

Mayme Kratz, an inveterate backpacker and observer of nature, creates images in resins, incorporating within her work seed pods, grasses, cicada wings and other items collected in gardens and woods. The pieces, built up layer by layer, draw the viewer into their depth. "It's about light; the translucence appeals to me," she says.

Zack Bent, a Seattle photographer, is represented by five archival inkjet prints. He uses 8-by-7-inch film that he then digitizes. From that he creates extra-large images with the softness of film yet the crispness of digital. Little boys too young for their scoutlike uniforms practice first aid, tend fires. They're performing in situations beyond them. Bent's prints highlight the tension between childlike tendencies and maturity, a subject that fascinates him.

All the artists in this show have something to say about summer, whether it's a nude bathed in sunlight, or an empty phone booth along the side of a highway. The images aren't exactly what you would expect, but the evocations are rich as is the enjoyment.

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COURTESY WINSTON WÄCHTER

Zack Bent's archival inkjet print "Praxis" seems to capture a moment between childhood and maturity.

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EXHIBITION REVIEW
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