

Michon Weeks

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507 MAGAZINE

Northfield Artist Paints Prized Possessions

Written By: Louis Livingston-Garcia | 12:00 pm, Oct. 3, 2019



Boombbox, 2019. Acrylic on canvas, 20" x 24"

An airplane, boombox, and car might just sound like ordinary things. And they are. But for St. Olaf College professor and artist Michon Weeks, they're the items that have helped her understand the church choir she has been part of for the past six years.

Weeks wanted to get to know the people in her choir a little bit more, so she asked what they were interested in – especially what their prized possessions are.

"The boombox in the title refers to a retired person in the choir who listens to classical music on MPR on her boombox," Weeks explained, referencing Airplane, Boombox, Car, the Rochester Art Center show displaying her art (through Oct. 26). "Each one of the objects has an interesting story."

Like one that is yellow and looks like an M. It looks like the golden arches at McDonalds. Because it is. One guy in the choir worked at the home of the Big Mac for 33 years.

"You can recognize the things but they're a little bit abstracted," Weeks explains.

In addition to the paintings, she has cardboard sculptures on display as well.

But how does a boombox change when it's painted? Or fashioned from cardboard?

"I basically want to see it as concretely as possible, what my mind can imagine," Weeks said.

"In the paintings, I make a lot of revisions," Weeks continued. "I shift things around or disrupt what's happening. But I leave those edits and leave them very visible so you can see the mistakes and edits. I like that to be there to show the whole process of making."

Weeks likes to create work that makes it seem as though "you're moving through time and space as you look at these things."

So although a boombox might be a regular thing to find in someone's home, Weeks is doing her best to create exaggerated versions of these objects, to take viewers on an adventure.

A lifetime of drawing led Weeks to become a professor and active artist.

"I think it's really flexible medium," she said. "I like to see the world translated from three dimensions into two dimensions, and negotiate that gap from real things to a painted surface."

If you want to learn more about Weeks, another window to her past is on display at the show.

"I did make a painting in the show representing myself," she said. "It was of a gate and I was remembering when I was a kid. I grew up in Washburn, Iowa, a little unincorporated town by Waterloo. The backyard had a chain-link fence and a gate going into the backyard. I always remembered that... fondly. It was a little paradise. The gate was what I painted to represent myself. It's something that's important to me, just remembering that gate and how you could enter the backyard through that."



Golden Arches, 2019. Acrylic on linen, 12" x 16"



Airplane, Boombox, Car, 2019 at the Rochester Art Center



Dog, 2019. Cardboard, 32" x 46" x 8"



Sewing Machine, 2019. Acrylic on line, 24" x 18"



Gate, 2019. Acrylic on linen, 12" x 16"