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Today's forecast

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Visual artists featured for Shocker ArtReach event

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The scent of freshly peeled onions floated freely through the Shift Space gallery Friday night as Toby Dai presented his performance piece titled "Onions."

"It's highly conceptual," said Jennifer Holt, Wichita State art and design faculty member. "Part of it is about the format of the performance and the actual experience of the viewer and him in the gallery space, so it's not framed on the wall like a painting. It's more time-based."

"You can smell the onions, you can feel them

in your eyes—and so can he. By the end of the night, he will probably be in tears. It's the push and pull of watching him do that, and you, the viewer, being able to experience that right along with him."

Dai's piece—along with jury-selected pieces by WSU undergraduate students—was featured in the "Current III" showcase, one of four art exhibits for Shocker ArtReach, a series of events sponsored by the WSU Alumni Association and KMUW.

Featured undergraduates included Beth Post, Abram Howell and Aeric VanDorn.

Post's painting, Howell's

pencil drawing and VanDorn's installation piece were encompassed in the realm of visual arts, which includes drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, performance and installation.

Post's painting, "The Winklyns," is part of a series about nostalgia and its potential to change throughout generations and with our visual culture.

"I take my own family pictures and mix them with Facebook pictures, to get the feel of the old pictures but have the more contemporary themes of

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Photo by Sreedhar Vasomsetti

Undergraduate students Abram Howell and Beth Post discuss their painting exhibits featured in the "Current III," one of the four art exhibits for Shocker ArtReach, a series of events sponsored by the WSU Alumni Association and KMUW.

what we project of ourselves," Post said. "Mixing the two, trying to make it look like the character of our time is in the older setting."

The family pictures are contrasted with the Facebook pictures.

"With the original photos, the idea was that they would stay within the family," Post said. "With Facebook and mass media, it's not going to stay in the family. It's way more permanent than it would've been back then, and I think it's important to keep in mind what's going to happen to these photos."

The idea for Howell's "Goddess of the Cult" drawing was sparked by a conversation with a friend.

"The idea came from a lengthy discussion about what the world would look like now if, instead of Christianity, Greco-Roman mythology had kept being propagated," Howell said. "What gods would be like today—for example, God of Nuclear Fusion and Goddess of the Internet."

The figure in the painting

has six arms, many of which are symbolic of a different religious faith, Howell said.

"I decided to make the goddess female instead of male because I wanted to talk about the wholesale oppression of women that has been the hallmark of religion since its conception," Howell said.

VanDorn's instillation piece consisted of yellow tissue paper scattered across fishing line, which took 17 hours to install. The transient nature of the piece is the epitome of the name "Shift Space."

"This is essentially a student-run gallery," said Rodney Miller, dean of the College of Fine Arts. "Even though we don't shift from one location to another anymore, the term 'shift space' stuck. It's a learning laboratory for our art students."

The work of graduate students and post-graduates was featured at Tangent Lab.

"It worked out great to have a graduate show and undergraduate show at the same time," said Brad Ruder, owner of Tangent Lab. "It worked out really positively."

Ruder hosted an event called 10 @ 10 in Tangent

Lab, a time for artists to meet viewers.

"I go to art shows, and I could be standing right next to the artist and not know it," Ruder said. "I really like the idea of putting the person's face with their work."

Friday's event, featuring visual artists, was just one of a series of events.

"The mission of the Alumni Association is to support the university, so this is one way that we are supporting the College of Fine Arts," said Lisa Capps, director of development for the Alumni Association.

The next Shocker ArtReach event will feature jazz music.

"A WSU faculty member will be the jazz expert and take us through a tasting of jazz music," said Connie White, senior communications editor for the Alumni Association. "We have a great jazz student organization at WSU, so it all rolls into one."

Following the jazz event, Shocker ArtReach will focus on the performing arts, working in conjunction with WSU's production of "Assassins."