

Jennifer Vanderpool
Sacralicious
Whittier College
Whittier, California
March - May 2006

“The Wondrously Strange and Sumptuous Sacraliciousness of Jane Callister and Jennifer Vanderpool”

By Eve Wood

Collaborations are, at their most successful, the temporary marriage of disparate psychologies, or rather, the temperaments of two very different people combined, or rather fused together, only to be pulled apart again for further scrutiny. Ideally, each person's vision is amplified by the other, as is the case with the unique and mesmerizing artistic union of Jane Callister and Jennifer Vanderpool. As the title of the exhibition suggests, (Sacrilicious), the greatest sacrilege is always mouth-wateringly luscious and most definitely limitless, and mind-expanding.

Their newest collaborative project, “Sacralicious” is the fourth in a series of recent installations by Vandallister (Jennifer Vanderpool and Jane Callister). As with prior installations, this large scale work involves a variety of materials from wax to video to plaster casts, each element employed with tremendous sensitivity, and operating as both a visual and visceral response to the unique architectural challenges presented by Whittier College's Green Leaf Gallery with its high arching ceilings and near Gothic architecture.

Steering away from the pop oriented, hyper-reality of previous installations, the duo has chosen this time to explore the darker, more subversive underbelly of American Pop culture, examining the blatant travesty of its own uselessness as we've evolved from the recklessness of prior generations with their “fun in the sun” attitudes, toward an equally alienating, though darker, more poetically charged attitude toward living. The work is generous, taunted and unforgiving, as a black sand beach unfolds in the gallery, leading the viewer toward Callister's near-hysterical splash paintings, all linearity confounded, as Vanderpool's Jell-O mold casts rise up with embedded video monitors flashing footage that resembles the old film noir graphic novel.

Callister and Vanderpool are riotous in their aesthetic, as their work defies the usual, predictable expectations of beauty with rampant explosions of color and ribald bubbling craters made of adhesive vinyl attached directly to the walls of the gallery. Their scrupulousness and attention to detail combined with a sense of deepening irony and sardonic humor inform their work to a point beyond which the viewer cannot return, but must continue forward into the ever-expanding “Vandallisterland,” a world which promises no concrete answers but pushes on through an imaginary terrain of unmarked alien graves and bristling, scintillating eruptions of paint and velvet flocking toward a single goal of self expression. These two women are here to be reckoned with. We won't forget them.

