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ART REVIEW | 'Spaces Between'

Two find burning inspiration on paper

Meditations on the female body and similar themes emerge from each artist's work.

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Two artists draw with fire in "Spaces Between" at Rockhurst University's Greenlease Gallery of Art, but don't expect charred remnants from an inferno.

Los Angeles-based Leigh Salgado and Kansas City artist Susan White find common ground in their controlled and delicate drawing with wood-burning tools on paper.

Salgado, who recently quit her job as an art therapist to work full time on her art, shows promise in six abstract works that reference the feminine via detailed, patterns of delicate lace, mesh netting and floral design.

Salgado draws with red and black markers and a hobby style wood-burning tool, then cuts out negative space with a razor knife. She mounts the works a couple of inches away from the wall so that light streams through the holes, creating lacy shadows that weave dimension into the work.

Although some works feel timid and too experimental, including "Sunday Best" (2006) and "Rollercoaster" (2006), Salgado's talent shines when she nimbly injects feminine references in complex designs informed by the internal anatomy of the female body.

"Tetrology of Fallot" (2004-05) is a gorgeously intricate work that fuses imagery of peony petals and lingerie lace into an abstracted body cavity. Using a simple palette of Valentine red, bone white and lightly toasted brown, decorative lines and interlocking loops resolve into blood veins and vital organs, a motif verified by the title's reference to congenital heart disease.

"I don't think of specific representations when I work, but themes of the female body and the experience of having a body are always involved in the artwork," Salgado said in a recent phone interview. "Drawings or paintings are like body equivalents to me and are like skin or the surface of a body."

A similar work, "Tetrology of Folie" (2005), clearly references a human torso. Again, Salgado slices into physical and psychological issues. Mirrored patterned sections yield a lovely Rorschach motif, but any notions of the appealing or alluring are quickly nullified by the realities of mortality and thoughts of disease and surgery.