

Arts & Entertainment

Polsky's 'Structural Process' takes over Westby

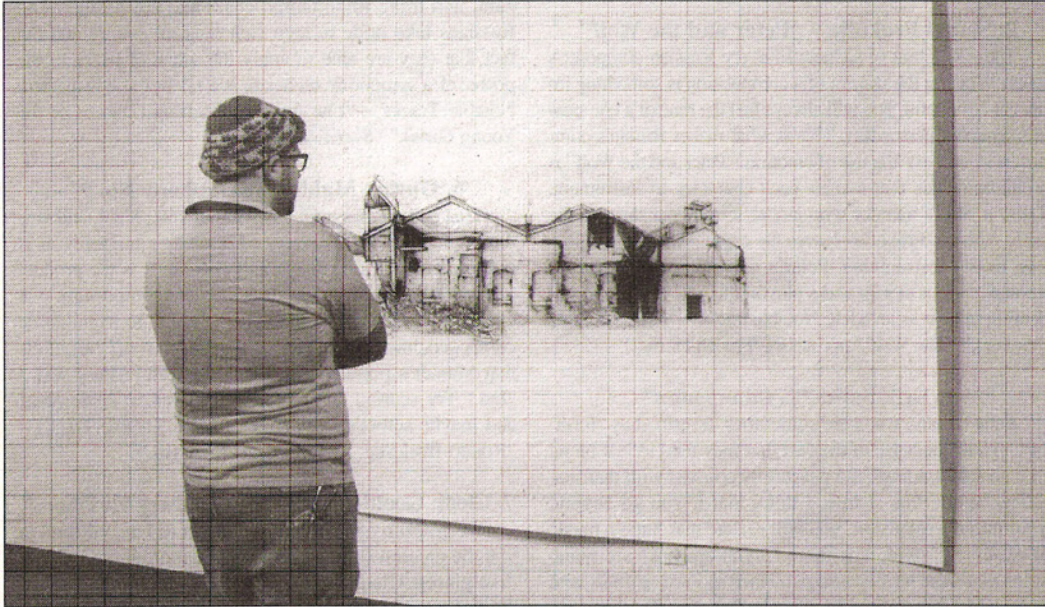


Photo by Calista Condo

A student admires a piece of artist Ben Polsky's "Structural Process" in the Westby Gallery.

By Calista Condo
Photo Editor

An artist from Newark, New Jersey, who has his works hanging in Rowan's Westby Gallery, shows Rowan student artists how to turn industrial garbage into works of art. Ben Polsky, a successful local artist, redefines demolition in to the opposite with his exhibit, Structural Process. Polsky, who has studied art at the San Francisco Art Institute and the School of Visual Arts in New York, has had his work displayed in over 12 exhibits and is now showing work in Westby Gallery until Feb. 24.

The show is made up of drawings portraying heaps of rubble and run down buildings. While many people pass such scenes in their everyday routines, Polsky seems to be the one out of the million who sees beauty in this wreckage. Polsky describes his work as organic and beautiful on his website, <http://www.benholti.com>. He sees his work as construction not destruction, because art is a process of construction. To him the sites are not devastation or ruin. He breathes new life into the remnants of inanimate objects.

The show consists of seven pieces on panel, Mylar, or rag paper. They vary in size from 5 inches by 6

inches to 100x80. Although size may vary, the detailing and complexity never decreases. The drawings are composed through a multilayered process that combines drawing techniques with technology. Using a digital camera, Polsky wanders around Newark to find his desired site and capture the image. He then transfers the image to his thin bright white Mylar paper, a raised canvas-like panel, or a long scroll-like rag paper, through a long and very detailed carbon transfer process. Tracing the desired sight, Polsky chooses only what he wants from the photograph then uses the photograph as a reference. After he has transferred the image on to his planned medium, he fills in the minute details by hand.

Polsky takes the tragic, lifelike scene and places it in the middle of a blank page, giving it no time or place. He focuses on the pile of rubble as if it were a portrait of a beautiful person or piece of nature; similar to Chinese paintings that use asymmetry and balance one main component slightly to one side of a blank canvas. The focus is on one small part of nature but the whole of nature and life is encompassed within that small component. Polsky's works become universal.

Polsky gives life to a scene of destruction and devastation; words that many relate to the idea of death. One of the most intriguing pieces in the exhibit is the smallest. It is a very intimate closeup of a small pile of rubble entering the canvas on the left side. One piece is rolled away, isolated from the rest of the heap of corroded metal matter; reminiscent of the death scene in a film when the hand of a dying person falls toward the floor. His works are the tombstones of industrial architecture.

Different people have different definitions for what constitutes something as art. But many people understand that art is an idea written down, painted, or conveyed in some type of medium. Through Polsky's images of destruction and demise of once useful structures, he has given his audience a new appreciation for what is beautiful, what represents life and what art is.