

The color of emotion

Penn State Altoona exhibits 'sensational' paintings

By **CHERIE HICKS**

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The vibrant colors in Clarissa Gerber's artwork are there by design. They reach out and pull you into the emotion of the subject on the canvas.

"I am particularly interested in color, both the formal properties of color and color's ability to affect us emotionally," said Gerber. "The conveyance of emotion is important in my work, and I often find that intense colors reach out to viewers."



Gerber

An exhibition of 19 of Gerber's work, entitled "Sensation," is on display in the Misciagna Family Center for Performing Arts at Penn State Altoona through Dec. 13.

A Connecticut native and assistant professor of art at Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland, Gerber was selected to exhibit her work after winning this year's Ivyside Juried Exhibition at Penn State Altoona, said Eleanor Feeley,

theater and gallery manager at the Misciagna Center.

In addition to that, at only 30, Gerber has won a national and regional juried exhibition, and her work has been displayed at more than a dozen venues across the Northeast and Midwest,

If you go

What: "Sensation" exhibition by Clarissa Gerber

Where: Sheetz Gallery, Misciagna Family Center for Performing Arts, Penn State Altoona

When: Through Dec. 13, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Thursday and before and during all performances at the center.

Admission: Free

More information: www.ClarissaRGerber.com or from Penn State Altoona at 949-5452

from New York City to Chicago.

Gerber said she was influenced by early undergraduate courses at Alfred (N.Y.) University where she studied art, philosophy and religion. For example, she learned a Hindu term, "darshan," that refers to the "ritualistic exchanging of glances between an individual and a deity," she said.

"It is a very powerful experience," she said. "I find the exchanging of eye contact very central to how we connect to one another, and something that I include within the majority of my paintings. You look at my paintings, and they look back at you. I am very much interested in identity — how we identify or categorize others, how society influences our identities, and also how



Courtesy art

"Tom's Monitor" is one of the works by artist Clarissa Gerber on display at Penn State Altoona until Dec. 13.

we can create our own identities."

For example, she did a series on her older brother, Tom, in 2013 that includes "Tom's Monitor"; it shows him viewed from a computer monitor in a private moment.

"We spend a lot of time looking into screens, often with this blank zombie-like stare, a mood amplified in this painting by the green and blue tones of his skin," she said.

She painted "Tom's Cell" to show "how we display ourselves for others."

"Specifically, I was interested in exploring the self-objectification of the male form that is often present within the gay dating community, and also how we, in general, display ourselves for others through this classic selfie pose," she said.

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