

**VISUAL ARTS**

**Signs of change in central Ohio captured in colored pencils**

*Thursday, December 07, 2006*

**BILL MAYR**

Linda Wesner's coloredpencil drawings and paintings of scenes in Delaware County are tranquil, with a wistful touch.



**Delaware Crossing 5 by Linda Wesner, at the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission**

"Vanishing Landscapes of Central Ohio" is on view in the Columbus headquarters of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, an appropriate location.



Wesner has drawn scenes of rural roads and traditional houses, of undisturbed woods and railroad tracks crossing the landscape.

She is contemplating the changes coming to Delaware County as the population grows. And she's considering change in general.

"My idea is that this is a universal idea, that things change — and are we aware of the changes? I want to get people looking at the transformation of the whole society around us."

She captures such complex issues using a simple medium: colored pencils.

Having drawn for about 30 years, she has developed a trusty arsenal of 30 to 40 colored pencils.

"I was working in graphite pencil early in my career. As time went on, it seemed like a natural progression," Wesner said.

"Color opens up a whole new set of possibilities. I think people attach a lot of emotional content to color.

"There are certain scenes that just cry out for cool colors, while others are much more strident, with sharp emotions."

Her work requires patience.

"Colored pencil is tedious. You have to lay individual marks on the paper and build up layer after layer of individual marks, whereas painting is much faster."

Her "Delaware Crossing" series features scenes of railroad crossings.

"I'm intrigued by the railroads going through. They are a little bit romantic, in a way, and annoying when you're stuck at a crossing. Here we are in this high-tech society — but, boy, when that (crossing) gate comes down, everything stops."

February Skies shows a quiet scene of an older woman walking past a storefront in uptown Westerville.

None of the seemingly endless lines of traffic that pour through the city are depicted.

House at Field's Edge is a pair of drawings from different perspectives of an old two-story house along a traffic-free rural road.

Such scenes are fast disappearing in southern Delaware County, as the Lewis Center artist knows.

"I want to really capture a slice of time," Wesner said.

"I'm not against change. It's inevitable and a lot of times for the better. But I think people should be careful about how much they tear down."

In addition, the commission is featuring "Fractal Flight," with digital art by Alice Kelley and David Ziels that shows cats piloting spaceships.

The scenes are goofy, funny and almost believable.

As Kelley and Ziels wrote about the exhibit: "You've always suspected cats were from outer space, and now there's proof."

Both exhibits continue through Dec. 29 at 285 E. Main St. Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. Call 614-228-2663.

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