Techno-art

New techniques enrich 2002 Triennial

By Kevin Lynch
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A portrait of Wisconsin: a land of precious, profound and beautiful natural resources and people who — like the Simpsons — often trample the scenery.

The way nature rises above humanity in the 2002 Wisconsin Triennial may reflect how poorly humans often behave — despite Wisconsinites’ high-minded self-image and artists’ distaste for their own kind when there’s nature to celebrate and champion.

And yet the 10th Triennial, which runs at the Madison Art Center through June 2, pushes the edges of art far beyond bucolic landscapes.

New technology has spurred many of the 38 Wisconsin artists to find fresh imagery. Their often-excitng results share the stage with classic media frequently executed with a renewed sense of exploration.

For all the techno-tinkering, Wisconsin artists still gather like hovering birds around the seemingly irresistible wellspring of nature. Artists are also looking at humanity as an aspect of nature, like a biologist with a few drinks and a poetry reading under his belt.

One example is video artist Cecelia Condit of Shorewood, who harkens to a primordial sense of nature. “Why Not a Sparrow?” films two female cousins, an adult and an adolescent, frolicking in the woods, encountering an earth mother and humans.

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