

Quick Sketch: Harry Geffert at Gerald Peters

By Mike Daniel

WHAT: “The Sketchbook Series,” new sculptures by Harry Geffert, at Gerald Peters Gallery.

Background: Most area art enthusiasts need no introduction to Mr. Geffert. The 69-year-old native of Three Rivers (south of San Antonio) ran Green Mountain Foundry in Crowley, the state’s premier metal sculpture facility, until 1998, guiding the likes of James Surls, Linda Ridgway and Joseph Havel through the nuances of bronze casting. That, along with a nearly 20-year stint as an instructor at Texas Christian University, shaped the career of a number of Texas sculptors working today.

Green Mountain is Mr. Geffert’s playground now. He’s produced a barrage of stunning pieces that address nature, humanity and memory with flawless technique, delicate symbolism and crafty innuendo. The 26 works now on exhibit are only months old and occupy the space in and around the southwest gallery at Gerald Peters Fine Art for 3 ½ years before co-head Ted Pillsbury announced he was leaving the space last weekend.

The artist introduces a couple of new approaches in the exhibit. “The Sketchbook Series” alludes to his inclusion of notebook pages, bronzed and coated with a white patina, with most pieces. He’s almost using bright hues of paint in place of patina for the first time in many years.

HOW IT LOOKS: Mr. Geffert applies paint on two of his signature items: the rose and the apple, which he uses to represent purity and temptation. Both objects are coated in red in works such as *There Was a Garden (of Eden)*, which also features a leaping white rabbit that represents lust). A forest-green stem is attached to the red flower in *Nesting Place*, which also includes a chain of nine of the artist’s cast saltine crackers.

The rose is yellow at the top of Tied, one of two large indoor centerpieces. A tree trunk, two lengths of rebar, a pair of 2-by-2 wooden rails, a heavy rope and other elements mingle to form a fantastical abstract tableau. A Place Beside the Road features a sublime cast arc of heavy liquid, reminiscent of crude oil but actually unset acrylic, bisected vertically by a beautiful network of branches and roots horizontally by a beautiful network of branches and roots and horizontally by a loop of rope.

The two outdoor works are Come-Along Rose, a snakelike river of bronzed acrylic and a large branch topped by a white blossom, and Garden Rose, a beach ball size flower with a heavy rope as a stem that sits atop a 3-foot-tall cylindrical concrete pedestal.

Among other notable pieces are Below Hallit's Peak, which incorporates a disc of un-bronzed clear acrylic below the graceful sweep of tree branch, and Shocked, a black-coated tripod of bush twigs and metal rods held together by a coil of rope that seems to float in midair.

DETAILS: On display through June 21 at the gallery, 2913 Fairmount St. Hours: Tuesday through Saturdays from 10 a/m/ to 6 p/m and by appointment. Free 214-969-9410