

## Life and art

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"A lot of people don't seem to get it."

Amanda Nadeau is an attendant at Northeastern's Gallery 360, a position which gives her plenty of opportunities to view the audience responses – variant as they may be – to the work on exhibit. And the current slate of art, especially, has caused visitors to do a serious double take, she said.

"[It's] definitely different," said Nadeau, a middler pharmacy major. "A lot more creative, a lot of symbolism – a lot more personal."

The exhibit to which she's referring, a collection of three installations by local artist Timothy Murdoch, is the first of the season at Gallery 360, located in the second floor hallway between Ell Hall and Curry Student Center.

"It was really different and for opening week, we wanted something that would promote emotions and thought," said Cassidy Need, this season's Gallery 360 co-op.

Murdoch, who has been active in the Boston art world for years and teaches sculpture at Clark University in Worcester, was invited to show his work at Gallery 360 after gallery co-chair Bruce Ployer came to one of Murdoch's shows. Although Murdoch started out painting, he said he has come to develop a special affinity for sculpture and installation.

"The reason I became a sculptor is the freedom," he said. "In painting, you have a frame."

Murdoch said that eventually his work started to move out of that frame to incorporate, and even call attention to, the wall. Now, he said aspects of his work have moved off the wall entirely. At Gallery 360, wooden tubes meander across the floor, polyethylene pipes lay piled haphazardly, and mirrors protrude curiously from motorized springs.

But what appears to be an arbitrary hodgepodge of recyclable this-and-that, is, in reality, a metaphor for Murdoch's acute observations on life, art and connections, he said.

A carved old oil tube becomes a meditation on life-as-journey and "the space between forms."

Reconstructed found lumber, configured especially to fit the space of Gallery 360, is a reactionary piece analogous to a lifetime of adaptations and indelible experiences.

On the wall, proximity sensors cause mirrors to shudder as visitors walk by, creating a distorted, discombobulating and involuntarily self-aware reflection of themselves.

"I have to do it because nothing else stimulates me like art does," said Murdoch of his work. "Making your art into visual form – it becomes kind of addictive. Art doesn't really have a purpose. It doesn't have any rules. It doesn't need to exist – but it does."

As for the reoccurrence of abstract existential themes in his pieces, Murdoch said simply, "At some point, you can't really escape yourself."

Right now, he said he's working on a piece commissioned by the Massachusetts College of Art and Design that will be ready for next summer.

In the future, Need, said she hopes to showcase more student art at Gallery 360.

Along with Murdoch's work, the Gallery 360 area features photographs by Northeastern faculty members Mary Robbins and Phyllis Strauss, paintings by Northeastern senior Loraine Peone, photography from alumna Annie Rosen and work from Artists for Humanity, an organization that works to bridging social divisions through jobs in the arts, according to it's website.

"For me, it's like everyone's an artist," said Need. "If you want to put yourself out there and make something, you're an artist. Give someone a chance to see your point of view."

Murdoch said he aspires to do just that.

"I just want to add something new to the conversation. To add a new idea or something to the world."

His installations will be at Northeastern through Oct. 6. In the meantime, how does Nadeau respond when baffled visitors ask her to explain complex pieces like Murdoch's?

"I tell them how I feel about it," she said. "Art is just how you perceive it."

Students interested in having their work displayed in Gallery 360 can contact Cassidy Need at [need.c@husky.neu.edu](mailto:need.c@husky.neu.edu).

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