

# Features

## Showing God in human form

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*I like to call it visual theology. People write about theology in books all the time. I'm trying to present images of God in another form.*

Calvin and Nelia Kimbrough, both ministers and founders of the Patchwork Central, a community in Evansville Indiana, graced Guilford with their presence two weeks ago. Patchwork joins prayer and worship with social service within the inner city neighborhood. The Peace and Conflict Studies department brought them to campus for the Week without Violence, commemorating the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

In addition to being participants in a powerful panel discussion on social activism and community life, the intention of the visit was to open the exhibit, "Doors of the Soul: Photographs of the Open Door." This exhibit shared the images of some of the people that live at the Open Door Community in Atlanta Georgia, also committed to social justice.

Beginning nine years ago, Kimbrough, a long-time friend of

Murphy Davis and Ed Loring, the founders of the Open Door, began to capture the images upon each visit he made to Atlanta. For each photo, using no flash, and a 35-millimeter camera with black and white film, he would quickly focus on the individual no more than five feet in front of him. "Together we make a photo," Kimbrough said, as he explained the subject-object relationship between him and the person whose picture he takes.

Many of the folks living at the Open Door are formerly homeless. "They're not the people that people want to see," Kimbrough said.

The exhibit opened on March 30 at 7:00 p.m. in the Commons in Founders. Kimbrough began with a song before he shared his thoughts about the photographs. To help illustrate them, he read a few lines from the poem by Naomi Shibab, entitled "Famous." As we sat and listened, he read, "The bent photograph is famous to the one who carries it and not at all famous to the one who is pictured." He commented on how most of the people photographed and mounted on the wall are not used to someone wanting to take their picture. He then explained

that in our culture, we tend to see Hollywood actors or big athletes as famous. He looked around the room and said, "These people aren't famous to anybody... but they're famous to me."

The final prints are all 25 by 35 inches in honor of the person pictured, making them almost life-size. Kimbrough also told us a few anecdotes about the reactions of some of the people after seeing a photo, especially one this size, of themselves.

The arrangement of the photos in the commons cultivated a feeling of community, since they were set up on the walls and laid out in patches, in relationship to each other. Kimbrough explained that this was his intention, to show the people as they live at the Open Door, as interconnected and learning to survive with one another.

"I found the photographs to be an effective way to bring a human face to the national problem of homelessness. It's easy to distance oneself. Seeing the exhibit and listening to the photographer helped me realize that the only difference between myself and a homeless person is that they don't have a place to live," said Joanna Kete-Walker, a first year student.

"The pictures themselves

showed the basic human dignity that we should give to everyone. They're still human and they still have their stories which are just as great and equal to our own," said Sadie McDonald, a senior who grew up around homeless people as her mother ran a soup kitchen.

One of the most striking things about the exhibit was that when you would gaze at each portrait, the eyes of the person before you were so clear and lifelike that you seemed to establish a connection within them.

"It's most important to see a person's eyes," Kimbrough explained. In addition to focusing on the individual in front of him, his aim is to use their eyes as a mode of personal communication. "They're the most descriptive," he said.

"The reason why I named the exhibit 'Doors of the Soul' is because the eyes are the doors of the soul," Kimbrough said. "It's a way of discovering who God is, visually."

Unfortunately, the pictures were taken down Monday, April 16, to allow space for other exhibits. If there are any questions about the exhibit, the Open Door, or Kimbrough's work, you may contact Hannah Loring-Davis at extension 3888.

## GUILFORD COLLEGE STUDENTS PRESENT SENIOR ART THESIS EXHIBITION

### Press Release

The Guilford College 2001 Senior Art Thesis Exhibition will open Friday, April 20, with a reception for the artists from 5:30-7:30 p.m. The exhibit and reception will take place in Founders hall on the Guilford College campus. The reception is free, and students are cordially invited to attend. The exhibition will remain on display through May 5, 2001. (Gallery hours vary; please call 336-316-2301 for daily schedule.)

This year's exhibiting Bachelor of Fine Arts candidates include: Carol DeVries, from Greensboro, N.C., whose mixed media collage involving etchings, woodcut prints, calligraphy, and painting explore memory, family, history, and place; Katie Elkins from Birmingham, Ala., who creates her own personal my-



Senior thesis candidates.

thology and brings it to life in large ceramic vessels; Isabel Foley, from Columbus, Ohio, whose photographs explore isolation and the realm of the subconscious mind; and Liz

Saintsing, from Winston-Salem N.C., a printmaker whose images deal with childhood issues of discipline, obedience, and objects from her deceased grandmother's home.

Bachelor of Arts candidates include: Marc Berstein, from Charleston, S.C., whose works are highly realistic self-portraits in mixed media ranging from paper to bronze; Alex Gingrow, from Knoxville, Tenn., whose paintings explore the artist through visual autobiography; Molly Gochman, from Katy, Texas, whose fiberglass-impregnated hand-dyed fabric sculptures are constructed to make the viewer think that the fabric is moving; Alicia Grogan-Brown, from Tacoma Park, MD., whose paintings attempt to challenge the glorification of certain body types, and raise awareness of body image issues; Sarah Nix, from Atlanta, Ga., whose sepia-toned pin-hole camera photographs focus on strange root formations within the Guilford College woods; and Haley Woodward, from Swarthmore, Pa., who describes his steel sculptures as "pain from the brain."