

The More Things Change...

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Two New Exhibitions Dissect History

Annual Juried Women's Art Exhibition

The Basement Gallery, 928 W. Main St.

Community Connections:

Charles Williams

Boise Art Museum, 670 S. Julia Davis Dr.

Both exhibitions run through March.

Some suggest that there's a basic human truth within each of us that finds its way into the cultural mores of each generation. Other truths seem to evolve over time, to become clear only in retrospect. Two current exhibitions in Boise grapple with these concepts.

Artist Karen Bubb presents a provoking installation as part of an elegant group show for Women's History Month at the Basement Gallery. Bubb's piece is unique, in that she's one of the few local artists doing large, room-scale installations. She explores the concept of "Female" within several cultures and belief systems. She has creat-

ed a shrine to the Three Fates (the goddesses who govern human destiny), the Nine Muses (the daughters of Zeus who preside over the arts and sciences) and the Virgin of Guadalupe (the patron saint of the Americas—and symbol of maternal power).

Elements from the myths and religions of Norway, Greece, Rome and several other cultures, including Catholic Europe, are intertwined in the exhibition. Among the traditions explored, the idea of the "trinity" is paramount: Three sets of three make up the Muses and there are three Fates, not to mention the Christian trinity.

Bubb doesn't focus on the masculine trinity of the Father, Son and Spirit (this is, after all, Women's History month). The prominence of Marian devotion within Catholicism relates back to Roman goddesses and traditions. Christianity has historically incorporated elements and festivals from others into its traditions, adapting them to fit its mold. Many saints, after all, were

originally pagan deities.

The main section of Bubb's installation consists of dresses representing the three ages of woman—Virgin (infant), Mother and Crone. While each is white, the mother, ripe with sexuality and sustenance, has elements of red. The old woman has bits of black, in her approach toward death.

Each tiny embellishment contributes to the installation's final meaning. The Venus of Willendorf (an ancient fertility figure) shares space with nine small apples, connoting Eden.

While history and tradition build upon themselves in Bubb's installation, an exhibition across town takes a more critical, political look at history.

The Boise Art Museum features photographic images from pre-WWII Europe. Boise photographer Holland Williams, while looking through the

family attic, found the negatives of these historical photos taken by his father, Charles.

Many images capture people and places throughout Europe. One wall, however, presents four haunting visions of Nazi Germany. In one, Hitler and his storm troopers parade through the streets of Munich. German citizens signal their approval *en masse* with outstretched arms.

One photograph is of four teen-aged boys. These are clean cut, well-groomed, athletic and attractive young men. In fact, they look like a bunch of present-day Eagle Scouts. Look a little closer, and you realize you are looking at a group of Hitler Youth. They're laughing and smiling, unaware of their ignominious place in history, unaware that their images would become chilling to people thousands of miles and 60 years away.

—Tyrus Clutter