

CP City Arts



Belmont art students explore war through sculpture

BY ALEXA HINTON
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A life-sized baby doll with a bullet wound puncturing its small forehead stands in the entrance of Belmont University's Leu Art Building. A stream of blood trickles down the smooth, porcelain face.

This is a visitor's first glimpse of *114: The Effects of War in Daily Life*, an exhibit by the seven women in professor Lanie Gannon's advanced sculpture class.

"I hear students walk by saying, 'Why do they have to do such depressing art. That's really morbid,'" said Belmont art student Britney Doyle, who participated in the show. "The show is about war. War can be morbid, so, yeah, it's depressing. That's a given."

Named for the number of ongoing wars and conflicts around the world, the show of sculptural installations is the women's responses to the war photography of award-winning international photojournalist Fred Clarke. The Nashville native has traveled the globe photographing violence-devastated places such as Chechnya, Afghanistan, Georgia and Liberia. His photographs document the often less-seen side of war: not the soldiers fighting, but the civilians caught in the crossfire — women, children and the weak and wounded — and the effects of war on their lives.

Gannon first saw Clarke's work at the Zeitgeist Gallery in Hillsboro Village and knew immediately his subject material was a topic ripe for her students

What: *114: The Effects of War in Daily Life*

When: Now through April 8

Where: Belmont University's Leu Art Building, 1900 Belmont Blvd.

Cost: Free and open to the public
Info: belmont.edu/art or 460-6770

to explore through their sculpture, she said.

"College students have always participated and had a voice in the discussion of war and what it means. The soldiers who go to war are usually college-aged — people their age, people they know. And, it is a theme artists have always grappled with," Gannon said. "I consider my students

to be social activists. They are very knowledgeable about what is happening in this world and they are very concerned, so this was a natural topic for us to explore and discuss and respond to."

Four of Clarke's photographs hang among the pieces *114*. One of which is a poignant portrait of a grandmother and her granddaughter standing outside the home they've made inside the barren rooms of an abandoned factory in eastern European country of Georgia.

Doyle, for her sculptural installation, focused in on the clothesline with garments drying in the cold air behind the pair. Using white PVC piping she seared with a torch, Doyle created a clothesline from which she hung three ripped, hole-pocked, dirtied white T-shirts.

"One of the most striking aspects of Clarke's works is, though constantly surrounded by death, [he] chooses to photograph life and those who survive," Doyle wrote in her artist statement. "The clothes represent life and the living. Domestication among destruction. In a world completely shattered and destroyed there will be those who make the

choice to carry on with living, regardless of how grim the situation may seem."

Ruble that Doyle gathered from local construction sites forms the ground below the clothesline. The viewer can interpret the rocks as literally and figuratively as they wish, Doyle said, meaning the rocks can represent actual debris caused by bombs and other war weapons or as the obliteration of their previous lives, now reduced to broken chunks at their feet.

Student Ashley Kinner took a more conceptual approach to her installation piece. From wood she fashioned a giant clock face. A sandbag hangs by rope from the face, suggesting the heavy, slow-moving hands of time.

"So often we wait and wait and figure that someone else will take care of our problems, the world's problems, etc.," Kinner wrote in artist statement. "Civilians, the victims of war, have lots of time to wait. They wait and wait...to die. They have no families, no food, no proper shelter. There are the other people. People, like us, who have time to spend countless hours doing...what? What are we doing with our time? How do we bring awareness about the wars going on around the world?"

114 is on display through Easter weekend in the lobby of the Leu Art Building, a location that at first disappointed the show's artists.

"We were all kind of bummed — the lobby was meant to be a lobby, not an art gallery," Doyle said. "But in the end, we all agreed it forces people to walk by it so it gets a lot more traffic and causes more discussion and forces people to understand." CP

THEATER REVIEW

'Intimate Apparel' stitches seamless dramatic event

BY AMY STUMPFEL
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With vibrant colors and vintage costumes, Tennessee Repertory Theatre's current production of *Intimate Apparel* initially gives the impression of a lovely museum exhibit. But thanks to well-drawn characters and a gifted cast of performers, history comes to life with dialogue every bit as rich and colorful as the set itself.

Written by Lynn Nottage, *Intimate Apparel* offers an unusual study in class and race relations through the eyes of its main character, Esther.

A gifted African-American seamstress living in Manhattan in 1905, Esther (played with thoughtfulness and intelligence by Stella Reed) sews intimate apparel for a clients ranging from socialites to prostitutes.

She has built a good life for herself, though at 35, she fears she may never marry. Still, Esther continues to dream — of love, happiness and even a successful business venture. So when she begins to receive beautiful love letters from a Caribbean man named George (John Brooks), she opens her heart to the possibilities of romance.

An original story to be sure. But what sets *Intimate Apparel* apart are the every-day interactions between Esther and those who make up her little corner of the world. There's Mrs. Dickson (Tamira A. Henry), a bossy landlady who reminds Esther that "we can't always be so particular" when it comes to men; Mrs. Van Buren (the always entertaining Jenny Littleton), a rich, white socialite trapped in a loveless marriage; Mayme (a delightful Lisa Kimmey), the proverbial prostitute with a heart of gold; and Mr. Marks (Ross Brooks), an

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What: *Intimate Apparel*

When: Through April 7. Performances begin at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 5; 7:30 p.m. on Fridays (March 30 and April 6); 7:30 p.m. on Saturdays, March 31 and April 7; with a Saturday matinee at 2:30 p.m., on April 7. (Signed Performance April 7, 2:30 p.m.)

Where: Johnson Theater, Tennessee Performing Arts Center, 505 Deaderick St.

Cost: \$10-\$40 (some restrictions apply)

Info: 255-ARTS; Ticketmaster or tnrp.org

The production carries an audience advisory for its mature content and themes. It is recommended for high school students and above.