

# Mixed mediums

## Landscapes for modern times

Urban scenes make depiction of loss compelling

By Elizabeth Trapp  
FOR THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

More than 50 works by 16 contemporary artists in the Riffe Gallery's "The Urban Landscape: A Tale of Grandeur and Abandonment" use the stoked history of landscape painting to redefine our relationship with the genre.

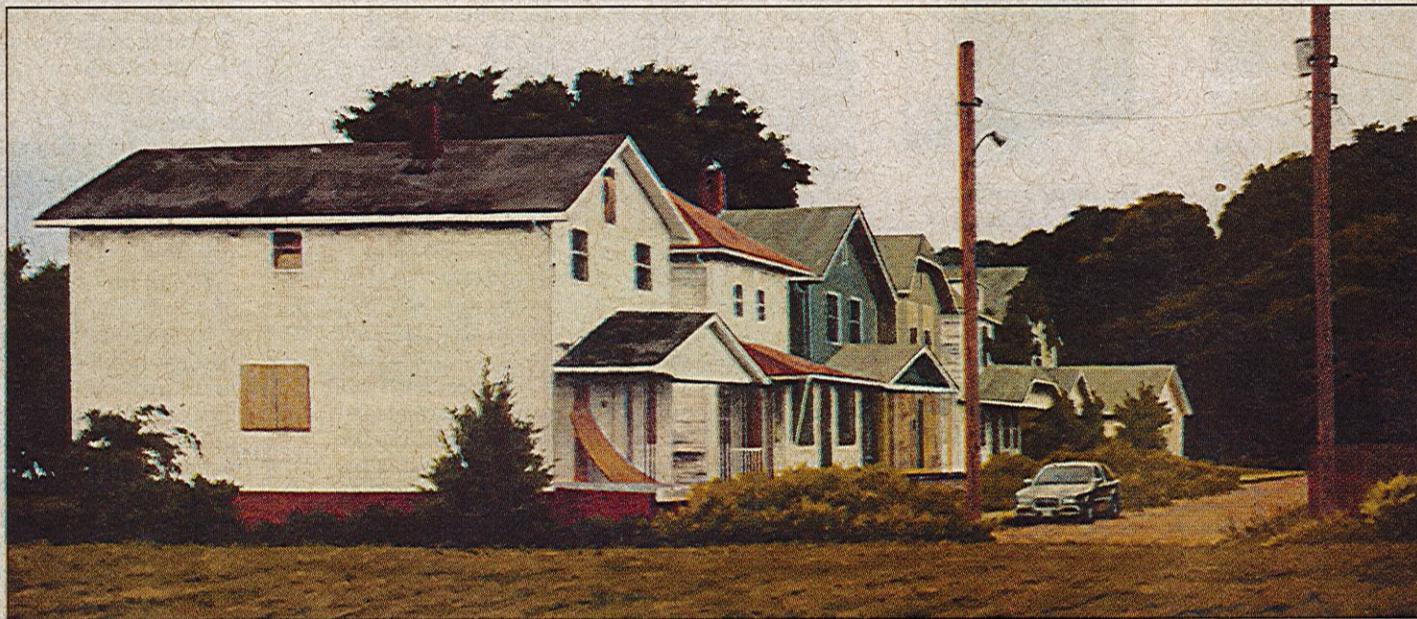
Historically, landscape painting has been used to reconfigure the artist's relationship with nature, often reflecting an idealized view of it.

Curated by Christine Fowler Shearer, "The Urban Landscape" presents a contemporary approach marked by a sense of postindustrial abandonment, loss, absence and empty or decrepit spaces painted in extreme detail.

Willard Reader's pristine acrylic paintings feature almost-photographic depictions of run-down neighborhoods years past their prime. His *Dead End Street* captures the effects of abandonment in one gesture: On the side of a boarded-up house, and almost perfectly in the center of the painting, is the fading inscription "Gangsta."

His style, tight and immaculate, is at odds with the images of neglect he pictures.

Images related to fading memory define the works of



*Dead End Street* by Willard Reader

Laurence Channing and Gary Pettigrew in diametrically opposed ways.

Channing's charcoal drawings are reminiscent of dark and rainy street scenes from old films. His *Tremont, Black*, an aerial view of a neighborhood street, is rendered just out of focus so that it recalls a blurry photograph. It is the materialization of a memory slipping away.

Pettigrew's hyper-realistic paintings meditate on destruction with an ominous tone. His *Bye Bye Blackburn* makes the exhibit's underlying theme of loss tangible by portraying the demolition of a building. He continues the theme in *Storm*



*Over E State*, which displays an ominous sky that would give anyone chills.

A few artists lean toward abstraction and seem to meditate on the effects of the contemporary urban landscape.

► "The Urban Landscape: A Tale of Grandeur and Abandonment" continues through Jan. 11 in the Riffe Gallery, 77 S. High St. Hours: noon to 4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Wednesdays and Fridays, and 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursdays. Call 614-644-9624 or visit [www.oac.state.oh.us/riffe](http://www.oac.state.oh.us/riffe).

LEFT: Detail of *Looking Southwest* by Fred Fochtman

Ryan Orewiler's *Broad & High, ALIVE* focuses on the vibrant glow of city lights as they turn into broad planes of color and electric energy in a dark, wet urban scene.

Cole Carothers' paintings buzz with a similar energy. His gemlike palette transforms wrecked cars in a junk lot into brilliant pieces of confetti

dancing across the canvas.

Other works in the exhibit include high gloss city-scene paintings, multimedia collages, heavily textured surfaces of foreboding landscapes and paintings that portray the sad grandeur of abandoned strip malls.

The exhibit might make viewers ponder their connection to the urban landscape, perhaps now more familiar than the natural one.

### Exhibit / Ohio Wesleyan University

## Photos capture sculptural power of water

By Christopher A. Yates  
FOR THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

For the past 30 years, the Sagan National Colloquium at Ohio Wesleyan University in Delaware has explored critical issues of national and international importance.

Its programming includes visits from scholars and authors, readings, performances and exhibitions.

In response to this year's colloquium, "H2OWU," exploring the theme of water, students under the leadership of faculty adviser and Ross Museum Director Justin Kronewetter prepared an exhibit of works by Columbus photographer Rick Buchanan.

"Waterscapes: Transforming the Landscape" features



*Marble & Water Texture #1* by Rick Buchanan

photographs taken in locations worldwide. All underscore the power of water.

Buchanan's photos have a

theatrical quality that conveys wonder and awe. With their intimate viewpoints and dramatic vistas, they direct the

► "Waterscapes: Transforming the Landscape" continues through Dec. 18 in the Richard M. Ross Art Museum, 60 S. Sandusky St., at Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware. Hours: 1 to 5 p.m. Sundays and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays, and until 9 p.m. Thursdays. Call 740-368-3606.

viewer to the unexpected.

Some photos underscore cause and effect. In *Marble & Water Texture #1, Shakadang River, Taroko National Park, Taiwan*, running water cuts through layers of rock.

Other images have a mystical air, revealing how water has sculpted stone into organic and fluid shapes. *Upper Antelope Canyon, Page, Arizona* has a magical quality

and looks strangely liquid.

With a dramatic vantage point, Buchanan shows the power of the Colorado River to cut through mountains in *Horseshoe Bend, Page, Arizona*.

Other pieces capture the texture of moving water or land forever altered by erosion.

Having given up a 16-year advertising career to launch a photography studio, Buchanan maintains both a commercial and a fine-art practice. Most of his artistic photos embrace the power and beauty of the natural world.

Well-presented and cohesive, "Waterscapes" successfully underscores his passion for grand expanses and intimate details.

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