

## *In Irons and Nightscaping @ Civilian Art Projects*

Now permanently located on the second floor of 1019 7th Street NW, the entrance to the new Civilian Art Projects gallery boasts a menacing archway with crudely sharpened bed posts poised to strike any who enter. While the large haunted house-type installation by Trish Tillman isn't the most welcoming art piece, it is a great representation of the type of work the gallery can once again house.

In this inaugural exhibit, Civilian Art Projects hosts two solo shows: *In Irons* by Trish Tillman and *Nightscaping* by Erick Jackson. Each exhibit tends to a macabre or dark sensibility, which work to highlight these themes in one another other.

Inspired by amusement parks, Tillman's installation *Pajama Party with Murder Holes* is a high note of *In Irons*. Its patchwork covered arch is a symbol of welcoming, as is the pineapple perched atop of the sculpture -- but the stakes and sharpened bed posts pose an interesting juxtaposition, positioning the piece as both luring and repellent.



Tillman explained her work by saying that people romanticise evil; that fantasy evil is romantic but real evil is despair. This sentiment is easily seen throughout her work in both her collage and cut paper pieces, as well as her sculptural ones.

Silhouettes of iron gates are familiar images throughout the exhibit, especially in the collages. These dark compositions, in both color and subject matter, are punctuated with accents of unexpected glitter, but none are as obviously threatening as *Pajama Party with Murder Holes*. The collages are more subtle.

This subtlety and romanticism makes its way into *Dawn of the Dead*, consisting of a quilt on the floor, fenced in with low posts and high saloon doors. Tillman is a self-taught quilter and composed this piece to show vegetation creeping in and taking over. The ability to depict chaos in a medium that is highly precise is rare, and here again the effect is subtle, more like a start to the overgrowth than total dominance. A cut paper black cat is also a part of the installation, ready to run across the scene -- a play on superstitions. But it is held back on purpose by an orange clamp. While startling and seemingly out of place, the clamp grounds the whole installation in reality while also holding the cat back from being completely within the scene.

Jackson's work easily compliments Tillman's -- both are a bit rough around the edges. Tillman's collage lines of cut paper are obvious, while Jackson's work in gauche and wet pigment shows sketchy swatches of color very similar to color pencil. Both mediums give a bit of chaos to the artists' work.

*Hare House* also offers such hushed feelings with a composition of a dark room with an open door to a long lit hallway. The bright colors of the hallway glow softly in the night, while other lights in the distance, signal something more alarming. With the placement of the hare, along with the bright but mellow light in the foliage, one can't help but think that a devastating forest fire is about to enter the scene.

Civilian Art Projects is located at 1019 7th Street NW and is open Wednesday and Saturday, 1 to 6 p.m., and Friday, 5 to 8 p.m. *In Irons* and *Nightscaping* run through October 16.