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9/22/09

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Buckhead artist with a message

By [Laura Braddick](#)lbraddick@neighbornewspapers.com

Staff / Nathan Self

Proudly standing next to a few of her latest paintings, artist Virginia Parker anticipates the opening of her new show at Huff Harrington Fine Art.

Advertisement

Virginia Parker is witnessing the demise of something she cares about deeply and she couldn't be happier.

The Buckhead resident and former journalist turned painter depicts the decline of print publishing in her newest body of work she calls "Metamorphoses."

Ms. Parker not only depicts the changing media landscape with hyper-realist still-lifes using obvious and hidden metaphorical images, but her work itself is a manifestation of her message.

"This is probably the most entrepreneurial and interesting time to be a journalist," she said, commenting on the collapse of many large metro newspapers and publishing houses included The Rocky Mountain Times.

"Everything the human race knows has been poured through our minds, out our voices and onto paper since Gutenberg," the 59-year-old artist said of the printing press inventor. "Now it's poured through our minds out our fingertips and onto a Kindle or Facebook."

In Ms. Parker's case, her story is poured not only through her Facebook page and blog which she updates regularly, but through her paintbrush.

True to her writer's roots, her pieces tell a story. Her newest work tells the tale of the undefined future of traditional print media.

An hourglass slowly ticks away sand atop a heap of dusty old books while a house of cards including "The Star," "The World" and "The Sun" tarot cards teeters above a crystal ball in her painting "Publishing's Bleak House."

"A house of cards, what writer could resist that?" she laughed. "It's not such a cliché when you paint it."

Her new series will make its debut at the opening of Huff Harrington Fine Art's annual "New Works" show Thursday.

"Her work is so different," said gallery co-owner Meg Harrington. "It appeals to us on such an intellectual level. It also has a funny sense of humor."

Ms. Parker, born and raised in Buckhead, said she spent the '60s in California as a self-proclaimed hippie and the '70s in Europe as a model only to return to her native community and reside 1.4 miles from where she grew up.

With no background in art, she began painting about 11 years ago and is enjoying her personal metamorphosis.

"I know painters are supposed to be cryptic, abstruse, technical, cranky, all that stuff. I'm just happy," she said. "The brush is like a magic wand. Out of nothing comes something I love."

Her work has been in numerous exhibitions over the past two years including juried exhibits at South Cobb Arts Alliance and the Atlanta Artists' Center in Buckhead. Her most recent honor is being granted a residency at the Hambige art center in Rabun Gap.

If you go

- o **What:** annual "New Works" opening reception
- o **When:** 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday
- o **Where:** Huff Harrington Fine Art, 4240 Rickenbacker Drive, Buckhead
- o **Cost:** Free
- o **Information:** (404) 257-0511 or visit www.huffharrington.com

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