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Bowling Green State University

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BGSU Monitor

JANUARY 25, 2011

B O W L I N G G R E E N S T A T E U N I V E R S I T Y

Top Stories

Jan Bell wins Ansel Adams photo prize

For the last 10 years, photographer Jan Bell has been building a reputation with audiences at art fairs in the Midwest, who have been drawn to his pristine, meticulously crafted images of natural subjects, and more recently, urban forms, often shown in tight close-up.

Bell's work recently debuted on the national stage when he won the Grand Prize from the Ansel Adams Gallery for his black and white photo "Agave." Shot in Golden Gate Park, the image reveals the delicate striations in the succulent's leaves in soft, pure grays, its curved shapes punctuated by the sharp spike of the flower stalk.

In asking viewers to pause and consider the beauty of the plant, the photo promotes the gallery's mission to cultivate artistic appreciation of and concern for the natural world. Operated by Adams' heirs, it is located in Yosemite, in a former 1902-era hut owned by his wife's family. Photos in the competition had to have been taken in a national park.

Unlike the iconic photographer, who for over 60 years documented some of America's most spectacular wilderness landscapes, Bell tends to work with a more intimate view. "It is the same world that we all see, but often overlook due to our hectic lives," he says.

His body of work is also notable for its clean, elegant design. "I eliminate the clutter," Bell said, attributing his aesthetic in part to his 30-year career as a graphic designer at Bowling Green State University. "Graphic design really comes through in what I'm doing now and influences my compositions," he said.

Like Adams, Bell is an avid adventurer, and treks to remote locations throughout the U.S. in search of subjects. It is this time in the wilderness that allows him to connect with the land and compose his images, he said. His presentation illustrates his attention to detail—which has paid off, for example, in "Trees in Fog," a mystical image of slender tree trunks taken in the Presidio area of San Francisco. Bell rebooked a plane flight so he could return to the spot at the early morning moment when the light was right to capture their ephemeral nature. Interestingly, those trees have since been cut down, Bell said.

Bell does have a number of landscapes in his collection, from dramatic Death Valley dunes to stark mountain scenes, some in remote places accessible only by guide. Like his nature work, his urban photographs represent architecture such as Chicago's Marina City and landmarks like the St. Louis Arch in terms of shape, pattern, texture and, most of all, light.

The Ansel Adams Gallery award tops a list of prizes for Bell. Also in 2010, he was awarded two top prizes in a competition held by the Joseph Saxton Gallery of Photography in Canton, Ohio, where he will have a solo show opening June 3. He has frequently taken Best of Show awards in juried art fair shows from Ann Arbor to St. Louis and Chicago. The University of Michigan acquired four of his prints, and his work is displayed in the Argo Hytos Co. corporate office.

To see more of Bell's work, visit <http://www.bellimages.com>

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

> Top Stories

BGSU to celebrate Black History Month

Aspects of African-American life, past and present, will be spotlighted during February as the Bowling Green and Firelands campuses celebrate Black History Month.

The 12th annual Black Issues Conference, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Feb. 12 in the Bowen-Thompson Student Union, will take as its theme "The Content of Our Character: Overcoming Oppression and Moving Forward." Hosted by the Black Student Union and the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the daylong event will include a keynote address by the Rev. Jamie Washington, founder and president of the Washington Consulting Group in Baltimore and former longtime higher education administrator. Among the day's panelists is BGSU Trustee Col. John Moore Jr. (U.S. Air Force Ret.) For more information, call Chad Coates at 2-9645.

The month's events begin on Feb. 3 with a new history of the civil rights movement presented by Dr. Danielle McGuire of Wayne State University. In "At the Dark End of the Street: Sexual Violence and the Civil Rights Movement," McGuire will trace the roots of the movement to the systematic rape of black women by white men in the South, along with economic intimidation, and Rosa Parks' role in the freedom movement as an NAACP investigator. The free talk will be held from 4:30-6 p.m. in 308 Union.

Civil rights activist Cheryl Brown Henderson will explore the legacy of Brown vs. Board of Education, from 6-7:30 p.m. Feb. 8 in the Cedar Point Center auditorium at BGSU Firelands. In a look at a popular culture phenomenon, Dr. Angela Nelson will discuss "It's a Mad, Mad, Madea World!": Tyler Perry, Urban Theater, and Black Popular Culture" from 11 a.m. to noon on Feb. 17 in 207 Union. An expert on black popular culture and media, Nelson will examine the success of Perry's gospel music stage plays as part of black religious culture in the U.S. Nelson is past chair of the popular culture department and acting chair of ethnic studies. Her talk is also part of the Popular Culture Colloquium Series.

On Feb. 26, the College of Musical Arts Festival Series presents "Selections from 'Porgy and Bess,'" at 8 p.m. in Kobacker Hall of the Moore Musical Arts Center. Featuring the Bowling Green Philharmonia and soloists from the College of Musical Arts, the famous musical by George Gershwin combines classical music and popular song, jazz, blues and spirituals. Tickets range from \$12-\$30; call the box office at 2-8171 to order. BGSU students may receive a free ticket in exchange for the donation of a nonperishable canned food item at the Union information desk. For more information, visit <http://www.bgsu.edu/colleges/music/events/festival.html>.

Current concerns will be covered in presentations on the dilemma of infant mortality in the African-American community, at noon Feb. 9 in the Women's Center, 107 Hanna Hall; and the impact of war on girls and women in Sudan, at 7 p.m. Feb. 28 in the Gish Film Theater in Hanna Hall.

For a full listing of the month's activities, visit <http://www.bgsu.edu/blackhistorymonth/page75931.html>.