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- Home
- Contact
- Site Map
- Search
- Help/Info
- Your First Stop



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TV Listings

Restaurant Guide

Shopping Guide

eValues

Bar & Club Guide

Hotel Guide

Attractions



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Stuff

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Newspapers:

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» [MAIN](#)

» [Nightlife](#)

» [Concerts](#)

» [Arts](#)

» [Family outings](#)

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Published Thursday
February 9, 2006

Pushing the limits

BY DANE STICKNEY

WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Two thematic exhibits - one warm and inviting, the other rigid and unsettling - dominate the Bemis Center for Contemporary Art.



For the "Objects of Desire" exhibit, artists created works by using a heart template.

For both "Objects of Desire" and "Bunker Than Thou," curators provided an array of artists with a general objective and told them they could push the limits.

"Objects of Desire" is a collection of 130 aluminum hearts that artists manipulated in a variety of ways. "Bunker Than Thou" features 30 pieces exploring the idea of bunkers or shelters from around 20 international artists.

"Objects of Desire" is the third annual Valentine's Day fundraiser, which is Saturday from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Curator Jeremy Stern sent artists an aluminum heart template and told them they could create whatever they wanted from it. Their creations will be on display in the main gallery and will be sold in a silent auction with proceeds benefiting education programs at the Bemis.

The hearts range from understated to over-the-top ornate. Some are covered in white fuzz, wrapped in brown paper, draped in pantyhose and covered in photos.

"This is always a lot of fun," Stern said. "You send these blank hearts out, and you can never expect what you're going to get back."

Admission to "Objects of Desire" is \$30, or \$20 for Bemis members.

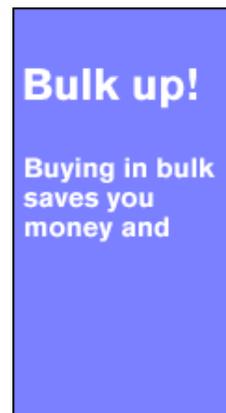
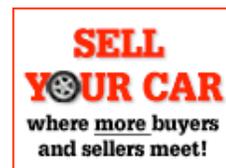
Underneath the party - in the Bemis Underground - is "Bunker Than Thou." The brainchild of a group of graduates from the University of North Carolina, the exhibit

Objects of Desire,
Bunker Than Tho

What: Two art exhibits, the first a fundraising silent auction featuring 130 artistic variations of hearts, the other highlighting 30 artistic interpretations of the idea of shelter.

Where: Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, 724 S. 12th St.

When: "Objects of Desire," Saturday from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.; "Bunker Than Thou" at regular Bemis hours of 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays, through March 4.



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features eclectic interpretations of the idea of shelter - including a cardboard hut, a stack of sandbags and pictures of animals who live in natural bunkers.

Curator Jerstin Crosby and Nicole Jean Hill, a Metropolitan Community College photography teacher, organized the exhibit. It features artists from Britain, Italy and seven states, including work from Omaha photographers Ray Gourley and Matt Rooney.

"It's an interesting exhibit because the work is so diverse," Hill said.

The idea for the exhibit spawned from a makeshift display Crosby and Hill held in their basement apartments while in college. They asked artists they knew to create bunker-related works. When Hill moved to Omaha and saw the underground space at the Bemis, she thought it was perfect to house another bunker exhibit, which runs through March 4.

Also, the "Antarctica: Journey & Destination" photo exhibit by Omahan Larry Ferguson is on display at the Bemis through Sunday.

Contact the Omaha World-Herald [newsroom](#)

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Admission: For "Objects of Desire," \$30, but \$20 for members; for "Bunker Than Thou," free-will donation.

Information: www.bemiscenter.org or (402) 341-7130.



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- Weather
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