

Art show spotlights work of PCC faculty

By **ANDREA CALCANO CRUZ**
News Chief correspondent

WINTER HAVEN — A profusion of art mediums have come together by way of four talented artists at Polk Community College for the annual PCC Faculty Art Show.

In this free event open to the public, works by Gary Baker, David Woods, Richard Joyce, and Vilas Tonape, featuring acrylics, collage, photography, digital art, drawing and more are displayed. The show is in the Fine Arts Gallery on the Winter Haven campus now through March 20.

"Everybody has something different in the show," said Baker, a professor of art, ceramics, and humanities.

Baker, who has been teaching at PCC since 1977, has about 10 pieces in the show. His art includes a series of collages on canvas, which he calls "abstract kimonos."

Creating the elegant Japanese dress with mostly Asian papers on canvas, Baker said the pieces are both male- and female-oriented.

"It's paper on top of paper — it's like painting with paper," Baker said. "I take the kimono, which is somewhat of a cross formation and start to break it up into many different pieces and see how far I can go and still be able to recognize the basic concept."

His art focuses on the obi, which is the sash that holds the kimono together, and four medallions, each tied onto the end of the obi to help keep it together.



GEORGE AYCRIGG / News Chief photo

One of the pieces featured in the PCC Faculty Art Show is "Playing with lArt," by Richard Joyce. It was a photo done in Photoshop.

"And so I've got three rectangular pieces and four circular pieces," Baker said. He added he's been making the kimonos for five to seven years and has probably 500 multi-sized pieces all together.

Baker said he's participated in the show annually with the exception of last year, when a new faculty member, Vilas Tonape, was given the opportunity to exhibit only his work.

"And we broke with tradition and instead of having a group show we had a one-man show," Baker said.

Vilas Tonape, an instructor at PCC for about a year and a half, teaches courses in drawing in painting.

Tonape, a native of India, said his pieces in the show are total abstracts, semi-abstracts, and classical renderings. They include a nude and some from his "Blink" series, which puts

the onlooker behind blinds, looking out.

"So, basically they are stripes of beige or white color, through which you see nature," Tonape said. "That's the concept I have. There is always a conflict between righteousness and something that we try to attain — two forms of life."

Of the 12 pieces in the show, five of Tonape's were exhibited in a group show in a Los Angeles gallery.

A graduate of Sir J.J. School of Art, University of Bombay, in India, Tonape's work is currently represented in galleries in Los Angeles, New York and Canada. Having won many awards for his art, Tonape currently is featured in the April 2009 issue of "Pastel Journal." Examples of Tonape's art and all of his accomplishments can be found on his Web site, www.VilasTonape.com.

With a nearly palpable passion for art and the creation of it, Tonape, who came to the U.S. in 1994 for graduate school, said not only making art, but exhibiting it as well is his round-about way of influencing the students. He said his teaching goes beyond the class projects.

"I try to be a research-



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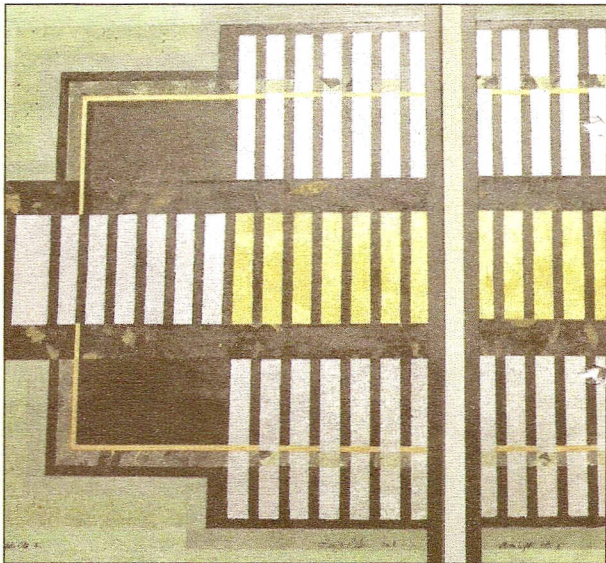
oriented practicing artist," Tonape said. "It's important to me to be an active artist so students can see that I'm not just preaching."

Seeing art class as much more than a way to get an easy, passing grade, Tonape said he encourages his students to exhibit their art as well. They do just that and have won awards at shows hosted by professional art associations such as Ridge Art.

Tonape also helped to form the Visual Art Society of PCC, (www.vasppc.org), which spearheads trips to local art museums and galleries.

"Art has given me so much, art has given me some knowledge about myself, about the universe, about life, about love," Tonape said. "I owe it to art, without art, I'm nobody."

Other artists featured in the show are David Woods, photography instructor, who has created a three-dimensional pho-



GEORGE AYCRIGG / News Chief photo

Above is a detail from Gary Baker's "Moon Light Obi I and II." It is a collage of Asian paper and is part of the exhibit of artworks by PCC faculty.

tography sculpture; and Richard Joyce, a mass communications instructor, whose work includes digital art.

"We are a serious art department," Tonape said. "We in the art department at PCC, we mean business. We are very cutting edge."

The PCC Faculty Art Show continues through March 20 in the Fine Arts Gallery on the Winter Haven campus, located at 999 Ave. H, N.E. Gallery Hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday. For details, visit the Web site www.Polk.edu or call 863-297-1050.