

## Artists' vision wins praise

By Molly Gilmore

Scott Mulholland's painting "Red, White and Blue" was named best in show at the Regional Juried Art Exhibit, opening Friday at the Minnaert Center for the Arts at South Puget Sound Community College.

The painting also won best painting and second place in show at the Proctor Arts Festival's juried competition in 2005.

So it's not surprising that when asked about the work, the Tacoma artist talked about how this was the piece where he felt he really had figured out the techniques of watercolor painting.

"It was a breakthrough painting for me in watercolors," he said. "I'd always felt as a painter that I never had the deftest or most skilled touch. I always felt I could brush up my technical ability and draftsmanship. That painting showed me that if I can be patient and learn my craft, I can paint what I see."

The Minnaert show is the third annual Regional Juried Art Exhibit, a showcase for local artists and for the SPSCC gallery space. This year, Rock Hushka, curator of the Tacoma Art Museum, was the juror.

As the winner of best in show, Mulholland receives the opportunity for a solo show later in the year in the Minnaert's gallery.

Of course, the winning painting has a lot more to it than Mulholland's ability to paint what he saw.

But what he saw and photographed to paint later was a couch that had been left at a gas station in Colorado.

"The abandoned couch talks about the waste of capitalism," he said. "The barrels behind the couch can be seen as oil barrels. There are oil stains so we can talk about the energy crisis.

"That's the beauty of art," he said. "Each person has a feeling or a memory, a connection to the painter's vision, and it's so subjective."

Mulholland, whose parents emigrated from Scotland when he was a teenager, has a lot to talk about - his art, teaching at several locations in Tacoma, art therapy work and family, wife Melinda and twin sons, Aiden and Ryan.

"Watercolor is perfect for a father of twins who are 2 1/2 years old," he said. "If you have a painting with many layers and glazes involved, you need to set a layer and let

it dry. I'll work on two or three paintings at a time to accommodate the layers drying, but if I only have one out, I'll lay out a layer and go play with the twins, then come back and add another layer."

He fell in love with watercolors after starting an art therapy business and getting requests for watercolor workshops. The business, which he maintains along with teaching at several locations in Tacoma, takes art to retirement homes, rehabilitation centers - just about anywhere.

He clearly loves teaching, just as he loves watercolors. And he is modest about it.

"The pupils teach you more than you're teaching them," he said. "Obviously, your patience and your understanding of your subject will be tested, but if you go in there with love, tolerance and compassion, you're going to learn more than they are.

"That's the beauty of teaching."

### **Regional Juried Art Exhibit**

**What:** The third annual exhibit is a showcase for Western Washington artists working in a range of media.

**When:** The opening reception is from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday. The exhibit runs through January. The gallery is open from noon to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

**Where:** Minnaert Center for the Arts at South Puget Sound Community College, 2011 Mottman Road, Olympia

**Tickets:** Free

**Information:** 360-596-5501, [www.spscc.ctc.edu/CFA/](http://www.spscc.ctc.edu/CFA/) or [www.scottmulholland.net](http://www.scottmulholland.net)