

ARTS

Art and commerce

■ New works by Rebecca Hoyer look at conflicting issues of art.

BY CHRIS SHULL
The Wichita Eagle

There's humor and irony in Rebecca Hoyer's newest exhibit, "The Museum Show," opening today at Project gallery.

There's also good art, 12 new paintings that continue Hoyer's exploration of landscapes and cityscapes, trees and buildings of soft pastels abstracted into gentle squares and circles and lines.

Hopefully, folks will notice the paintings as they rush to "The Museum Store" part of the exhibit, which will sell prints, postcards and posters — and refrigerator magnets and T-shirts — of Hoyer's paintings.

That's the irony — that the commercial side of art museums everywhere has found its way into the tiny Project, the most non-commercial art gallery in town.

"The museum you always think of as being very uncommercial, very classical," Hoyer said. "Yet museums now have tickets; they have the museum store. You buy lunch and you buy a scarf and you buy a tote bag and you buy a poster. It's becoming a shopping experience, whereas before it was just a cultural experience."

Hoyer's show asks, does this commercialism detract from the mission of a museum? Does a painting reproduced on a \$1 postcard devalue the real thing hanging 10 feet away?

"It is shtick, but it's not shtick," Hoyer said. "There is a trend, especially in Wichita, where people say, you have to sell your



Mike Hutmacher/The Wichita Eagle

Rebecca Hoyer's "The Museum Show" addresses the idea of whether commercialism detracts from the mission of a museum.

IF YOU GO

What: "The Museum Show," an art exhibit by Rebecca Hoyer

Where: Project, 1712 E. Douglas

When: Through Oct. 23. Gallery hours are 2-6 p.m. Thursday-Friday; 1-4 p.m. Saturday; or by appointment.

Free reception: 7-10 p.m. today

How much: Admission is free.

For more information, call 265-7137.

works cheaper. Nobody will buy them unless it's cheap.

"But I'm thinking you shouldn't make your artwork cheaper. There are other things that people can buy."

Though they are reproductions, the postcards and magnets for sale at "The Museum Show" are at least in a sense original Hoyers. She and her husband, Michael

Dwyer, printed them and put them together themselves, using their own computer and printer.

If there's irony in the blatant commercialism in "The Museum Show," there's sly humor as well. Next to each of Hoyer's paintings are wall cards written by Dwyer, "explanations" of Hoyer's work that mock "art-speak" and veer toward inanity and the surreal.

"I'm the unreliable narrator, the anti-curator," Dwyer said. "Bec's paintings, they are landscapes, they are very simple — they don't mean anything. This is a problem, I think, for the contemporary art world, which wants to talk about them."

A sense of fun pervades "The Museum Show." The humor is never biting, the irony never snide.

"The paintings are pretty happy paintings," Hoyer said. "I'm not being overly serious about anything."

Unless, of course, she's negotiating the naming rights to one of her paintings. Those are available, too, and Hoyer drives a hard bargain.



Chris Shull loves his Venus de Milo magnet. He can be reached at 268-6264 or cshull@wichitaeeagle.com