

## > Pentimenti Gallery

It's the thought that counts, right? For Joseph Hu, it's the gift, too. His show at Pentimenti this month, "By Itself," is a study of gifts he's been given. Not the actual gifts, but painstaking re-creations of them. A self-described "pack rat," especially of things that hold no practical value but that have great personal meaning, Hu makes handcrafted replicas of everyday objects in the vein of Jasper Johns' coffee-can paintbrushes, light bulbs and shoes. But where Johns used sculpt-metal resulting in industrial-strength works, Hu uses acrylic, cardboard, resin, paper, plaster and even his own hair to make personal replicas. "I feel that if I take a lot of time and care creating each object, it becomes more special and this definitely translates to the viewer and adds to the significance of the piece," he says. The re-created gifts include a Calvin Klein shirt, a brush and a matchbox with individual matches. One particularly beautiful gift, a set of colored pencils, is so gorgeously rendered that its artificiality becomes immaterial. Hu's re-gifting, as it were, is remarkable. "I'm not sure if I feel as if I'm being generous making the things that I am," he says. "But I do want to continue the sentiment of the people who originally gave me the gifts. I think of it as

*Reception Fri., May 4, 6-8:30 p.m., through June 16, 145 N. Second St., 215-625-9990.*

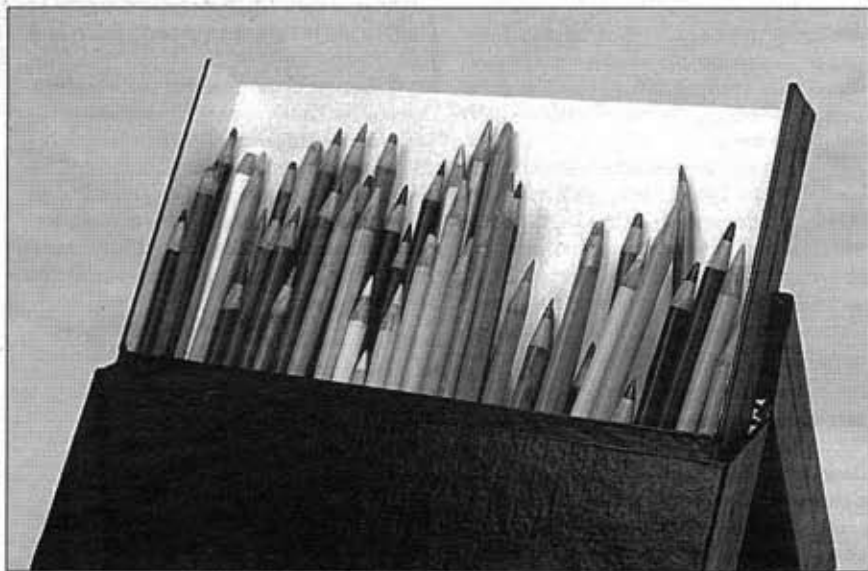
## > Projects Gallery

Speaking of princesses, Orly Cogan explores female stereotypes and myths through one of the most historically feminine mediums: embroidery. Where one would expect to find quaint scenes of country life and inspirational quotes, in Cogan's work there are girls in kneesocks glued to cell phones and young ladies in underwear and heels lounging around (among other things) — with lovely decorative flowers and dainty borders, of course. For her Projects Gallery show "...and don't forget to rescue the princess!" Cogan uses found vintage tablecloths and linens to sew her quasi-trashy tableaux imbued with sex, butterflies and thread.

*Reception Fri., May 4, 5-9 p.m., through May 27, 629 N. Second St., 267-303-9652.*

## > And Then There's ...

**The Clay Studio's "Small Favors II"** called for art that could fit inside a 4-inch Plexiglas cube. From a teapot to a bare-bottomed baby angel, these sweet little works come from the minds and hands of more than 120 artists. *Reception Fri., May*



**Prismacolor by Joseph Hu, acrylic on cardboard, glue**

kind of transferring their generosity through me, on to the viewer."

Anyone who knows any 4-year-old girls can tell you it's all about the princesses. But if it's not a princess, it's a ballerina. Painter Margaret Murphy wanted to know why the ballerina, with her gauzy tutu, graceful figure and impossibly turned feet is so captivating, even well past kindergarten. Her "The Ballerina Project," also at Pentimenti, investigates these dancers, capturing in acrylic and watercolor their utterly feminine allure — except more than not, these ballerinas seems sad, stiff, frozen in poses and shown mostly in profile against gorgeously rendered patterns. Saving the princess? What about the ballerina?

*4, 5-9 p.m., through May 14, 139 N. Second St., 215-925-3453.... Catch the last few weeks of **Tower Gallery's** exhibition of representational painters (and educators), which reads like a who's-who of the field: Sidney Goodman, Jane Irish and Susan Moore among eight others. *Through May 26, 969 N. Second St., 215-253-9874.... Finally, **Nexus** hosts PhotoImage 07, the annual photo competition, judged this year by Philadelphia Museum of Art Curator of Photographs Katharine Ware (no pressure there!). *Artists' reception Thu., May 3, 6-9 p.m., opening reception Thu., May 10, 6-9 p.m., through May 27, The Crane Building, 1400 N. American St., 215-629-1103.***

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