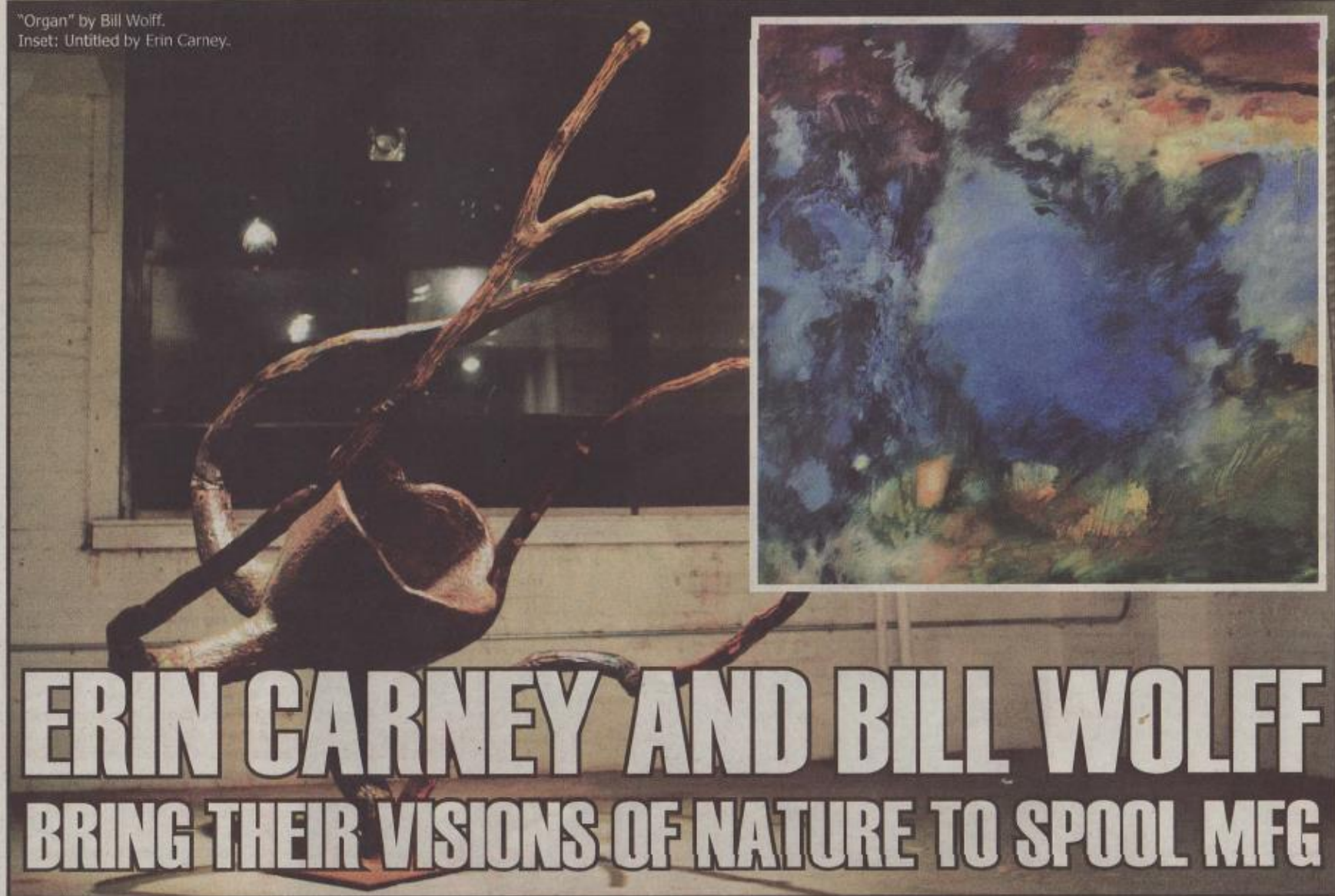


"Organ" by Bill Wolff.
Inset: Untitled by Erin Carney.



ERIN CARNEY AND BILL WOLFF BRING THEIR VISIONS OF NATURE TO SPOOL MFG

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Staff Writer

Sculptor Bill Wolff and painter Erin Carney, who first exhibited together at Spool MFG in 2008, are returning to share some of their new work in an exhibit entitled **Familiarity of the Imagined**.

Wolff and Carney both became acquainted with the experimental art space in Johnson City through their involvement with Binghamton University. Wolff was attending BU while Spool was getting started, and he ended up applying to show there years later. Carney met Spool founder Don Demauro while both were teaching at BU in 2005, leading to an invitation to participate in a 2006 group show. Wolff and Carney were later paired during a 2008 show, titled *Surfaces/Depths*. Due to that exhibit's popularity, curator Andy Stevens contacted the artists six years later, to see if they'd be interested in another joint show.

"Andy thought it would be fun to see what we're doing now in our new work," Carney explains.

Both artists' work is moving in a decided-

ly exciting direction. Carney, an oil painter who uses landscape-based imagery, has been transitioning from representational to more abstract work over the last several years. In her previous series, *At and Just Below*, she used overhead images of bodies of water for inspiration. Though she abstracted the water imagery, the end result was still recognizable. By contrast, Erin refers to her new work as her most abstract to date. "I used a variety of landscape imagery for color and textural inspiration, including aerial landscape photography, microscopic imaging, and earth and mineral surface texture and substrate," she explains. "The literal landscape references end up obscured, leaving only the color and texture feel left. Only a couple of works have recognizable things in them."

Carney also progressed her artwork by working in a new format- a square. "I was interested in doing something different," she says. "The square has different connotations and compositional challenges, and I wanted to explore that and see what it was like." All 40 of the pieces she will be showing- which range in size from 5x5 inches to 4x4 feet- are squares.

Wolff will be taking advantage of Spool's large, open space by showing a variety of work from 3 separate series. He'll be showing pieces from *Flock*, a collection of small, bird-like forms, as well as *Yield*, larger wood carvings

that he produced while living in Japan from 2005-2009. Also on display will be work from *Animalia*, Wolff's new series of human-sized forms inspired by threatened animals. To complement his sculptures, he will be also be showing some loose landscape drawings on aluminum foil, which are inspired by Chinese ink paintings.

Similar to Carney, Wolff is also inspired by natural imagery, including plant and animal forms, which he then abstracts and distorts to his liking. "Organic forms inform the gesture and movement of my work," he explains. "If you look at my sculptures, I rarely use geometric or straight lines."

Wolff's work is also inspired by nature because he uses nature itself as a medium- he sculpts using wood from various trees- including oak, cherry, and basswood. It's a difficult and painstaking process, but the end result is always worth it. "Sculpting in wood is hard physical work and not instantly gratifying, but I like the physicality of making objects," Wolff says. "Also, I like the way wood smells."

Both artists' are integrally influenced by their education. Carney has two Bachelor's degrees from University of Michigan, and she earned her MFA in painting from New York Academy of Art. Her Master's program was focused on representational work, which she feels gave

her a good jumping off point. "I feel indebted to all that I learned working observationally from the figure...I feel all that knowledge is a part of the work I do now, even if the forms and marks within the picture plane are quite different," she says.

Wolff was highly influenced by his experience earning his second Master's Degree at Tokyo University of the Arts. His program focused on wood sculpture, giving him a lot of focused studio time. While there, he studied "yosegi zukuri," a process of sculpting using multiple hollow blocks of wood. It was a logical thing to study, due to his distance from his home country. "I made lots of work, but I knew I'd have to ship it back to the US, so I focused on modular sculptures that I could take apart," he says.

The natural inspiration behind Wolff and Carney's work gives viewers a sense of familiarity, but the ambiguity creates a puzzle for people to figure out, creating a sense of delayed recognition.

Familiarity of the Imagined will be on display from March 21st through April 25th. An opening will take place on March 21st from 7-10pm at Spool MFG, 138 Baldwin Street, Johnson City. For more information on the artists or Spool MFG, visit erincarney.net, billwolff.net, or spoolmfg.org.