

Mapping out an art career

Maryland Hall exhibit features detailed map collages

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Maps point Anna Fine Foer in the right direction - whether it's for travel or for art.



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Eastport artist Anna Fine Foer discusses her exhibit, "Camougraphy in Cartopolis," which runs through Dec. 15 at Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts in Annapolis. The show features 30 works, most incorporating map collages.

The Eastport resident employs pieces from all kinds of maps to make intricate collages. They function as art and social commentary on topics ranging from science and the role of technology to politics and entertainment. There's also a religious component to some of her work.

"I can tell a lot of different stories at the same time (through maps)," Foer said. "It can be about geographical location and conceptual ideas."

Thirty of her works, made over a span of more than 25 years, are on display through Dec. 15 at Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts in Annapolis. The pieces are in the Martino Galley and on the adjacent hallway walls.

Although Foer makes serious points, a sly sense of humor also permeates the exhibit, as in its title, "Camougraphy in Cartopolis."

"It's always wonderful to have an exhibition by a local artist," Maryland Hall Executive Director Linnell Bowen said. "It is very well-executed and shows a degree of skill and craftsmanship."

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Foer has been interested in art most of her life and became enamored of collages in art school. She was drawn to maps as a medium because of her wide-ranging travels.

Foer, a 54-year-old mother of two sons, doesn't just use maps found in a standard atlas, though. She employs topographical maps, maps of the constellations and cellphone connectivity and even distances from the post office.

Recently, she also has been creating collages with images of cellphones, as in her "Tower of Babble," which also incorporates watercolor.

It can take Foer up to a month to finish a single work, since they include hundreds of tiny pieces. And just as her art is multi-layered in construction, she intends them to be multi-layered in meaning. "With each piece, there's something I'm saying, but I also want people to make ... connections I didn't even think about," Foer said.

"She has some unique work," said Joann Vaughan, executive director of the Maryland Federation of Art in Annapolis. "(It's) stuff you don't see everywhere."

Foer had an exhibit at MFA when it operated a Baltimore gallery, as well as pieces in juried shows at the organization's Annapolis gallery. Her work also has appeared in other local shows and galleries, as well as the Indianapolis Museum of Art, the Israeli Embassy and two Israeli museums.

Although not featured in the show, Foer also creates map collages based on the traditional Jewish wedding contract and Torah portion collages. She currently splits time between art and work at a local clothing shop. In the past, she worked in textile conservation.

"She's quite magical," said friend and fellow artist Peter Tasi of Annapolis. "Her work is very imaginative and very original, and it deals with thematic material she's carefully studied."