

Hambidge artists get chance to 'Shine'

By Mat Payne

Staff Writer

Shine: to illuminate.
Shine: an intoxicant.
Shine: to buff away and reveal.

"Shine," The Weave Gallery's latest exhibition, officially opened Saturday night, featuring works from a variety of regional artists, all with themes relating to the various meanings of the word.

"Different people seem to have different responses to darkness and light, emotionally, physically, spiritually," said Dayna Thacker, communications director at Hambidge. "I wanted to put a show together that talked about themes relevant to Hambidge, and darkness is definitely fitting."

The show features works from Wendy DesChene and Jeff Schmuki, Rich Gere and Michele Schuff, all of whom have varying levels of connection with Hambidge. The pottery of Hugh Bridgeford, Colin Gray, Tasha Chemel and Tasha McKelvey is also featured.

Many of the artists used their experience as residents at Hambidge as inspiration for the pieces on display, with some of them displaying works created on site.

Residents are advised before arrival that a flashlight is necessary for almost any travel after dark.

"There were times when I would be walking back from dinner and it would be completely dark around me. I was terrified," Schuff said. "I become so freaked out by the dark that I started drawing lanterns."

All of Schuff's works on display focus on the aspect of revelation. Potentially her most captivating piece is comprised of 102 beeswax figures depicting a woman knelt down on her hands and knees with her head hung, arranged in an inwards spiral.

All artists featured in the show who have previously been Hambidge residents were in attendance, mingling with guests and casually sipping regionally distilled "shine" to stay with the theme of the evening.

Schmuki described the juxtaposed image of disaster and devastation onto the pitch-black woods as a reminder that disaster can occur anywhere at any moment.

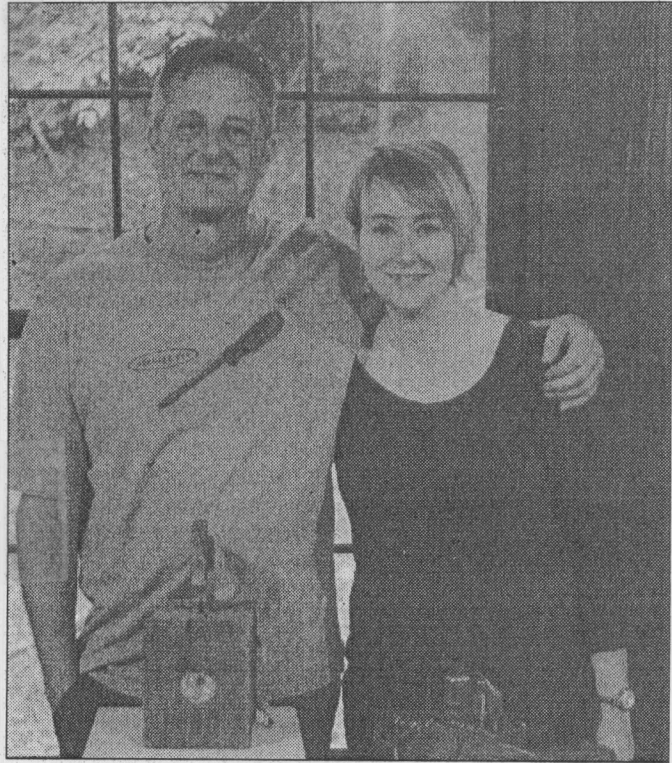
The artists invited guests to walk in front of the projector to become part of the piece, allowing them to experience it from different angles, calling attention to the distortions.

DesChene and Schmuki, consider themselves more than artists, they also describe themselves as activists.

"We're constantly asking what if," DesChene said. "Artists must address the world and then live in it."

Currently the two have focused their energies on works that bridge the gap between the arts and science, one of Hambidge's key missions. The artists' latest works speak to the mysterious decline in bee populations throughout the world and have been exploring the concept of a world without primary pollinators.

The evening concluded with current resident musicians serenading guests as they sat around a bonfire, faces illuminated by its shine.



Mat Payne/The Clayton Tribune

Rich Gere and Michele Schuff pose in front of Gere's flashlights at The Weave Gallery. The new exhibit "Shine" opened Saturday night and will run until September 14.