

Raw Sensibilities

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Coffee Shop Notes

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The mainstream art world has seen a lot of expressive approaches over the last fifty years, from high-end to low-brow art, such as the large garbage-inspired compositions by Robert Rauschenberg, the luminous color fields of Mark Rothko, the quirky appeal of child-like drawings seen in Brian Andreas's *Story People* books, and Laurie Dorrell's whimsical collages.

On the whole, this type of expression isn't largely recognized in art by the deaf, especially De'VIA in America, which tends toward early and middle 20th century styles. There are some notable exceptions such as "Hearing Aids are Not Like Glasses" by Betty Miller, which is remarkably evocative of Rauschenberg, and "ET Wanted to Call Me Too" by Mary Thornley.

Yet the open rawness of line and form and love of asymmetrical balance is beginning to make its mark on artwork by younger Deaf artists, who do not, for the larger part, contribute to the De'VIA canon. Rather, they address more universal themes within a rough urban sensibility.

The works of Christine Kim and Jacob Shamberg demonstrate this grittiness in its most spectacular capacity. "Caffeine Withdrawal" by Shamberg is a digital illustration that was done in fifteen minutes and won the best artwork award in the 2001 edition of *SIGNATURES* magazine (a student art and literary publication at RIT). Kim's untitled painting of teary-faced kids and floating heads is a large composition, done on a piece of wood which, prior to her graduation from RIT's College of Imaging Arts and Sciences in 2002, served as the tabletop for her computer.

<http://www.thetactilemind.com/TTMWeekly/shamkim.html>

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