

THE EXPONENT

New Rueff Gallery exhibition
uses mapping to evoke space
and time

By EMMA FLICK Features Editor



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San Francisco-based artist Val Britton has had her art displayed in places like Facebook's headquarters and the San Francisco International Airport, and now an exhibition of her work is coming to Purdue.

The exhibition, titled “Navigator,” will be on display from Aug. 22 to Sept. 18 in the Patti and Rusty Rueff West Gallery in Yue-Kong Pao Hall. The mixed media pieces are a continuation of an ongoing body of work Britton has been engaged with for the last decade, which uses mapping in a very abstract way to describe physical, psychological and emotional space as well as the mapping of time.

Britton says she began working with mapping metaphors while in grad school in 2004, after being inspired by the cross country road trip she took to move from New York to California.

“I was also kind of drawing on the experience of having a father that was a cross-country truck driver,” Britton explained. “That was part of the kernel of the beginning of this interest. Over time, the work has become more and more abstract. Rather than drawing on actual places, I’m inventing places and using these mapping symbols and structures as a language in which to create new spaces.”

Besides being deeply meaningful, the pieces are also just nice to look at.

“First and foremost, Val’s work is really beautiful,” said Liz Erlewine, the Rueff gallery coordinator. “It’s just lovely the way that she deals with shape and textures and materials. I think that’s honestly what really first drew me to her work ... I think what’s exciting specifically about her work is the way she marries formal elements – the shape, the line, the texture, the mark-making – to create a very personal sense of space.”

Britton hopes that students come check out her exhibition so that they can bring their own meaning to her works.

“I’m hoping people will come because the work spans different media. It’s hard to categorize. It’s work on paper, but it can be very sculptural,” said Britton. “I hope that people come see the show because they’re interested in seeing the work in person and getting a sense of the tactility and the materials and the different connections that can

be made ... This work is kind of personal and I'm constructing these abstract spaces, but I think that it really takes the viewer to complete the work by bringing their own meaning to it and finding their own way through it. I really get something out of that response from the viewer.”

Britton will be coming to Purdue to give artist talks at 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. on Sept. 8 in Stewart Center, Room 206. The talks are free and open to the public.