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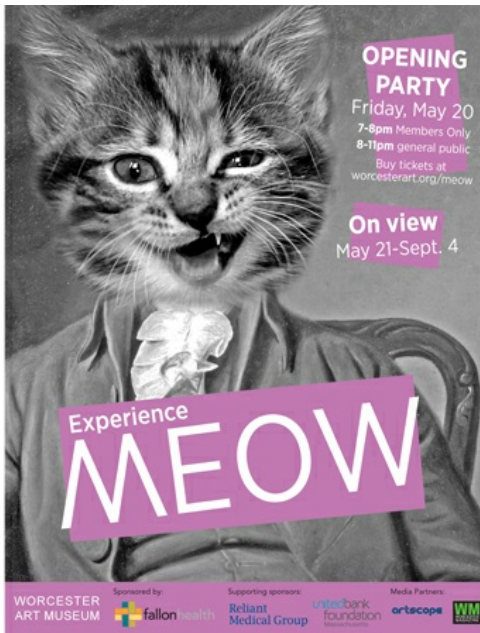
MEOW: A Cat-Inspired Exhibition

Wed, 2016-05-25 20:56 — Robin Olson

MEOW: A Cat-Inspired Exhibition ^[1] at the Worcester Art Museum, now—Sept 4, 2016

“WAM takes the theme of cats by the tail with this one-of-a-kind, multi-faceted project. Meow includes an exhibition exploring the feline as an iconic element of art, a self-guided “cat walk” through the Museum, an interactive installation featuring live cats, a community art show, a naughty kitty take-over of Helmutt’s House, a doggy show curated by Helmutt, and special art classes. From serious art to mischievous fun, Meow promises to tickle the whiskers of museum and cat-lovers alike!”

---from the WAM web site



I was delighted to be a guest of WAM for the Opening Party for Meow: A Cat-Inspired Exhibition just a few nights ago. The building was packed with feline fanciers galore as well as costumed cat-racters (*sorry, had to!*) like Hello Kitty and the Cat in the Hat.



©2016 Robin AF Olson. HELLO KITTY. HELLO ROBIN.

It was the place to fly your furry feline flag meanwhile celebrating artwork from modern day submissions by the community, to an [Albrecht Dürer](#) (2) woodcut from the 15th century. There were also varying cat-centric pieces of art peppered throughout the museum in addition to two special installations featuring a wide range of artistic styles.



©2016 Robin AF Olson. WAM interior courtyard. where we got chastised for almost leaning on the walls (the docent said "everything here is art!").

As an added bonus to the dazzling display of artwork, was a chance to have a poster autographed by [Emily the Strange](#) (3) artist/illustrator, Rob Reger. I jumped at the chance to chat with Mr Reger, being a fan of his work. The line moved painfully slowly, but before I could become annoyed, I realized it was because Mr. Reger was adding artwork to each poster, taking time to speak with each person on line (*most often a child*). He was clearly tired (*a new daddy*), but eager and interested to listen and interact with everyone. He was charming and even seemed to brighten up when I mentioned I ran a non-profit cat rescue. His wife, nearby with their newborn, was equally charming and friendly. Mr. Reger asked if we'd seen his new line of [Kitty Gems](#) (4). They are hand-cast, very limited production run sculptures made of colored polyurethane. They were so pretty it was tough to choose a favorite. He clearly understands how to express the form of a cat without being cutesy or heavy-handed. The moderne-style figures were a true delight and I'm certain most cat art aficionados will be jumping at the chance to add them to their collection.



Emily the Strange goodies.

I was glad to tour the exhibit with my friend and fellow cat-rescuing-blogger, Connie who writes [Tails from the Foster Kittens](#) (5). Though we were disappointed that the cats-in-residence program hadn't opened yet (*it's not set to open until July 13, 2016*), it was very enjoyable to discover so many pieces of art dedicated to cats. The Community Cats section was my favorite. I was so surprised that WAM opened up their space to the general public to submit their own offerings of cat-themed art. This seems out-of-the-norm of what an art museum would do, but then again, why not? **Art is everywhere and cat lovers especially want to share their love for cats by honoring them artistically. It was delightful to see a great range of artistic skills from pieces done by young children to very talented professional artists.**



©2016 Robin AF Olson. Rob Reger signing my poster.

As the music played on and the crowds grew larger, Connie and I headed towards the gift shop, hoping to score some goodies before we called it a night. As a cat-blogger and cat lover I could barely wait to see what I might discover. Though the selection was good **I was very disappointed to find out that there was no exhibition catalog or really much of anything that had artwork from the show on it.** Perhaps they underestimated what cat-fans would want to bring home with them or that there were permission and copyright issues with using any of the community submitted art. I hope they decide to open this exhibit again, but make it bigger and have more goodies available to purchase.



©2016 Robin AF Olson. Me and...?

You know how we cat parents are, we can't get enough goodies for ourselves if there's a cat on it AND heck, where were the artistic cat toys?



If time allows I may travel back to Worcester to scope out the *Cats-in-Residence Program* featuring the [Worcester Animal Rescue League](#) ^[6]. **This exhibit is a human/cat contemporary art installation featuring ADOPTABLE CATS. I LOVE THIS IDEA. It helps take the stigma off shelter cats and for those of us who feel too scared or sad to go to a shelter, they can experience the cats in an art installation. I hope they all get adopted the first day and...when can my rescue take part in this?**



The Hunter, The Hunted, Arlene Skaran, 2014.

Instead of being stuffy and elitist, it's clear that WAM's goal is to be inclusive and light-hearted by taking a chance on a somewhat off-beat subject matter. I applaud their efforts and hope you'll check out this delightful exhibition.



Buster Doesn't Like the Smell of Fabreze, by Heather Meri Stewart, 2013.



Socks by Karen Maust, 2013.

MEOW: A Cat-Inspired Exhibition runs through September 4, 2016.

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Links

[1] <http://www.worcesterart.org/exhibitions/meow/>

[2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albrecht_D%C3%BCrer

[3] <http://www.emilystrange.com/>

[4] <http://www.robregart.com/collections>

[5] <http://www.kittyblog.net/>

[6] <http://worcesterarl.org/>

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