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When the lights go down in the city

Artist displays gritty imagery of urban life in new DCCA show

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"Walkshed"

Written by **GARY SOULSMAN**
The News Journal

A jazzy impression of what it's like to walk through a city at night is a new gallery-sized installation of drawing and collage at the Delaware Center for Contemporary Arts.

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The work at the Wilmington center is "Walkshed" and is reminiscent of a Picasso cubist-cartoon dream of the industrial northeast.

It's from the imagination of emerging Baltimore artist Amanda Burnham, who makes use of her knowledge of the city and the small-scale drawings she's sketched on street corners and in her [car](#).

At the DCCA, she's brought her impressions together in a new way using cardboard, paper, tape, black gesso and lighting to create a

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3-D street scene where stoops and street signs pop into space and buildings peel from the wall.

"Walkshed" was created at the DCCA during its installation at the Beckler Family Members' Gallery for the Dec. 16 opening.

"It's about reconstructing the environments I know in a remembered way that gets at the energy I feel for them," says Burnham, who points out that the images are textured and unstable.

And it's OK to step on the cardboard walkways she's created on the floor, says Sara Monserrat Teixido, director of marketing.

"It's almost like a set design," she says.

For Susan Isaacs, curator of special projects for DCCA, the installation "documents the natural rhythms of the city" and whimsically analyzes its aesthetic history.

The exhibit is one of a series that will come to dominate the museum in the weeks ahead. The theme is "Super Structures: City, Building, Interior and Object."

"We're going from urban exterior to interior in conceptual ways," says Isaacs, who is at work on the exhibits as well as a catalog with Maiza Hixson, the DCCA's Gretchen Hupfel curator of contemporary art.

Another of the exhibits is already in place. Baltimore fiber artist Susie Brandt has created five psychedelic fiber rugs.

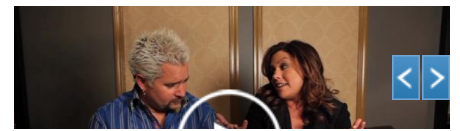
The rugs are shaped like sprawling amoeba with concentric rings, but the rugs are actually based on rubbings taken from tree stumps.

Displayed on the gallery floor, the rugs should not be walked on. But they are so bright and textured they call out to be touched.

"I think it's OK to pet them as long as your hands are clean," jokes Isaacs, adding that they're made from repurposed thrift store clothing.

A fun part of the exhibit is a postcard rack at the rear of the gallery that has photos of tree stumps with Brandt's matching rug atop the appropriate stump. Suddenly nature is psychedelic too.

Visitors can buy the postcards for 25 cents and have a souvenir of the show. (The rugs are for sale for \$1,500.)



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"I think of both of these artists -- Amanda Burnham and Susie Brandt -- as giving us two wonderful walks through a city," says Isaacs.

Contact Gary Soulsman at 324-2893 or gsoulsman@delawareonline.com.

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