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**VISUAL ART REVIEW** 

# Dolphin Gallery's new show is a meditation on the meticulous

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BY ELISABETH KIRSCH
Special to The Star

The works of four very different artists at the Dolphin Gallery offer unexpectedly rapturous turns on themes of loss and absence.

Above the entrance to the gallery, David Ford's movingly simple painting of crows, "We All Die," is an ode to a subject generally avoided in our culture. This work also recalls Vincent van Gogh's haunting last painting, "Crows With Wheatfields," from 1890. Inside Dolphin, Ford's painting "Everybody" depicts a ghostly scene of a ship crossing waters, presumably the River Styx, that famous dividing line between earth and the underworld.

In the same room, three recent, tortured-looking stoneware vessels by Jim Leedy — one of them aptly named "Eruption"— resemble battered human figures as well as funeral urns.





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Five large drawings of landscapes by Michael Krueger are installed in the main gallery. Krueger is rightfully known for his meticulous colored-pencil drawings, and in "Earthly No. 1" and "Earthly No. 2," candy-colored icebergs float in black seascapes that have been completely filled in and drawn by hand. The nihilistic merges with the giddy in these works, and the knowledge that an unseen hand is responsible for the thousands of pencil lines we see adds to the sense of a mysterious, unidentified presence in both pieces.

Krueger adds watercolor and paint to his other works on paper.

In "Needles Highway," a 52-inch-high drawing of what could be a desert or lunarscape, a goldenrod-colored background threatens to engulf the fragile landscape. There is an Asian sensibility to this piece, as the forms outlined also resemble centuries-old Chinese spirit stones.

An even larger drawing, "January (Frozen Falls)," depicts a dreamy, unpopulated water scene that recalls anonymous 19th-century American folk art and also the strange, sinuous landscapes of the deceased Chicago outsider artist Joseph Yoakum. (Another large work in the back room, "Cascade," is similarly compelling.)

Hundreds of hand-stapled yellow and white threads stretch in a wedge-shaped grid from one corner of the gallery across a wall in Anne Lindberg's thrilling new installation, "Shift." M magazine

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"Earthly No. 1" (2013), a work in colored pencil by Michael Kruege, is part of his exhibit, "Michael Krueger: Earthly" at Dolphin Gallery.

### On exhibit

"Anne Lindberg: Shift" and "Michael Krueger: Earthly" continue at Dolphin Gallery. 1600 Liberty St., through March 23. The gallery is also featuring paintings by David Ford and ceramic vessels by Jim Leedy. Hours are 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Friday and noon-5 p.m. Saturday. For more information, call 816-842-4415.

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It's hard to explain in words how something so deceptively simple can also be emotionally charged; the work must be experienced in person.

The shimmering threads, lit perfectly here, rake across the wall and gradually seem to disappear, creating an uncertain depth of field that is unnerving. An inner radiance engulfs this piece, and it mesmerizes.

"Shift" occupies just a small portion of the room, and because it is alone in the space, as it stretches into nothingness there is a genuine sense of loss as it disappears.

One reason the art in these exhibits is affecting is because of the sparseness of the installations. So many shows are overhung. Less is more here, as the viewer is allowed one-on-one encounters without visual noise to distract from the thoughts and feelings possible in a more meditative environment.



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