



Patricia Olynyk's mixed-media collages, from her exhibit at U-M Institute for the Humanities.

## Olynyk's 'Sticks, Pods, Bones' add up to mysteries

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NEWS SPECIAL WRITER

Patricia Olynyk's enigmatic "Sticks, Pods, Bones" at the University of Michigan Institute for the Humanities mingles this local printmaker's interest in mysticism with repetitive icons.

A U-M School of Art and Design professor, Olynyk creates art that is visually stunning in its complex regularity. Each work in her exhibit — seven mixed-media collages, two mixed-media assemblages and a single, custom-designed book — is consistent in its haunting repetition.

### ART REVIEW

Olynyk's gallery statement says she's interested in "the nature of identity and the authentic self in the context of shifting environmental and cultural frameworks. This artistic quest involves what she calls "an ongoing investigation of those primary forces and values that initiate transformation and shape identity."

The heady results of her approach are striking works of art that unite hand-drawn images, schematic geometric diagrams and scripts from esoteric texts with a formidable array of contemporary printmaking techniques.

Mixing mechanical skills such as monoprint and woodblock prints with rich scrubbed persimmon, tannin, and oil textures, Olynyk's compositions have a subtle internal consistency where the icons shift only ever so slightly from composition to composition.

For example, the eight eerie reptile skulls featured in her "Spine III" adorn the pages of her handsome handcrafted book. The crustacean shell of "The Relation of Order" and "Drip" focuses both mixed-media prints through strategic placement. Perhaps the most stunning image of all is the bleached human skull of "Immeasurable Measure." The mysterious texts and graphics in this masterpiece — visually intersecting with other Olynyk art works on display — flank this chilling depiction of fate.

By shifting her graphics only by a slight degree in each composition, Olynyk gives her art the appearance of piecemeal movement. This evolution is so gradual it requires a bit of patience to chart these symbols' change from work to work. But such patience will be well rewarded.

"Patricia Olynyk: Stick, Pods, Bones" will continue through Dec. 15 at the University of Michigan Institute for the Humanities, Room 1512 Rackham Building, 915 E. Washington St. Exhibit hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday. For information, call (734) 936-3519.