

THE WEEK'S BEST



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Art

The exhibit *Suburban Journals: The Sketchbooks, Drawings and Prints of Charles Ritchie*, at University of Maryland, Baltimore County, showcases the intensely detailed work of the artist. **page 14**

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Ritchie gives familiar suburbs an artist's touch

By **GLENN McNATT**
SUN ART CRITIC

The prints, drawings and watercolors of artist and National Gallery of Art curator Charles Ritchie, on view at the Albin O. Kuhn Library Gallery at the University of Maryland Baltimore County, reveal an artist who transforms even the most ordinary subjects into luminous objects of delight.

Technical mastery is evident at UMBC show

Ritchie's art, shown in the exhibit *Suburban Journals: The Sketchbooks, Drawings and Prints of Charles Ritchie*, is inspired mostly by the view from his Montgomery County studio window — trees, streets, flowers and the ephemeral atmospheric effects of season and weather.



From such seemingly simple materials, Ritchie creates works that are beautiful, subtle and incredibly labor-intensive — the artist can work for up to a year on a single image.

His work demonstrates a complete technical mastery of traditional printing processes such as mezzotint, etching and aquatint. The UMBC show presents work spanning 20 years



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Charles Ritchie's "Self Portrait with Oranges IV" and "Daffodils with Astronomical Chart."

and traces the evolution of the artist's creations from pen-and-ink and watercolor sketches in his notebooks through their final realization in a variety of print forms.

Perhaps because of his work as a curator, Ritchie's vision is very much inspired by the art of the past. He works in a time-honored realist style, and his technical proficiency makes him

seem like a contemporary Old Master.

In that sense, his work is traditional and tradition-laden rather than avant-garde. His prints are steeped in the history of art and plumb a familiar visual world with the assurance of one who appreciates the great lessons of the past.

The exhibition runs through March 26. The Kuhn Library is

on the campus of UMBC, 1000 Hilltop Circle in Catonsville. Hours are noon to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Wednesday and Friday, noon to 8 p.m. Thursday and 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Saturday. Admission is free. Call 410-455-2270.

For more arts events, see Page 36.