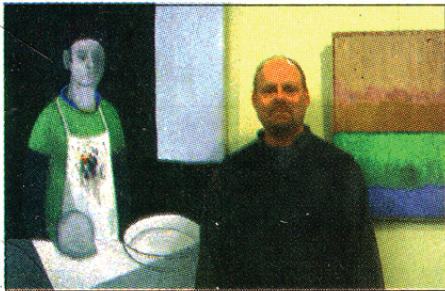


Library hosting Ashburnham artist's work

BY SAM BONACCI
NEWS STAFF WRITER

GARDNER — Justin McGonigle is the latest in a string of talented local artists to showcase their work at the Levi



News staff photo by SAM BONACCI

Justin McGonigle stands with a self portrait that is part of a display at the Levi Heywood Memorial Library.

Heywood Memorial Library.

"You don't have to go to Boston. You don't have to go to Salem," said Mr. McGonigle of the high level of talent among local artists.

"Among other things, your local library has a gallery space where artists show their work."

Mr. McGonigle is a self-taught artist who lives in Ashburnham and has been painting for 20 years. He continues to be impressed with the work that is done by local artists, and feels that venues such as libraries provide important access to those artists' work.

"If you'd like to know more about art and the people that live in your area, I think it is a very important thing," said Mr. McGonigle.

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Levi Heywood Memorial Library showcases local artist

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His work features many different styles, from abstract to portraits. He enjoys all the styles and does not like to be pinned down to any one, he said. Among his inspirations, he counts Jasper Johns, Marc Rothgo, Picasso and the classic impressionists.

When he paints, he aims to bring across a particular feeling. In two pieces that appear in the display, he has put together different abstract interpretations of love. One represents the young, exciting love that happens when

you first have feelings for someone, he said, while the other represents a more mature love that evolves over time.

"As love grows, you don't necessarily have that first feeling, so something more mature," said Mr. McGonigle.

Among the pieces is a painting titled "Racism," in which Mr. McGonigle painted his interpretation of what racism would look like if it were embodied.

Mr. McGonigle paints for himself as a means for self expression. The method could have just as easily been writing

or acting, but it was painting that he chose to use as his creative outlet. He began drawing as a young boy and recalled the feeling that being accepted into his first art show stirred within him.

"I just remember that feeling as being very excited," said Mr. McGonigle. "That something I made be brought to another place and that other people, strangers, could see it."

At a certain point, what you created does not really exist unless others have a chance to experience it, he said

"It's kind of unfair to myself

that it isn't seen because it should be seen and I should share it," said Mr. McGonigle.

He has shown his work at many galleries, including locations in Nashua, N.H. and New Bedford.

The display of his work will be available for viewing through the end of April.

More information about Mr. McGonigle may be obtained by calling him at 978-827-6678 or e-mailing mrpainter@gmail.com.

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