

## VISUAL ARTS

EXHIBIT GUIDE



## EXHIBIT REVIEW

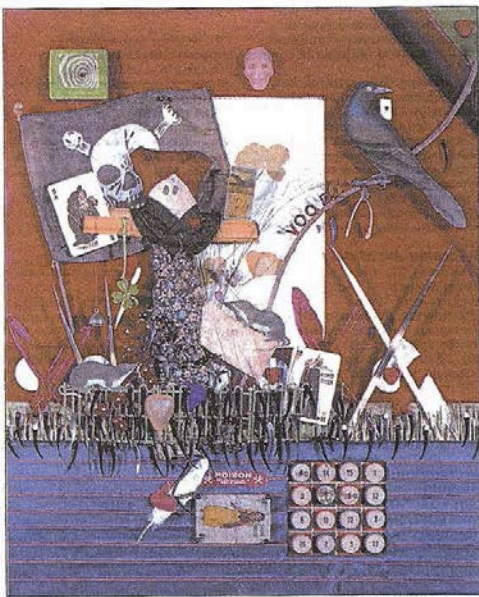
**Maureen McCabe: Shadow Boxes, Assembled Tales of Fate, Magic, and Wit,** "Thomas Mann: Storm Cycle, An Artist Responds to Hurricane Katrina" through May 21; and "Rozome Masters of Japan," "Wrapped in Color: Kimonos by Tim Harding, Jackets by Jon Eric Riis" through June 18, at the Bellevue Arts Museum, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Tuesdays-Saturdays, extended hours until 9 p.m. Fridays, 11 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Sundays. 510 Bellevue Way N.E., Bellevue (425-519-0770 or www.bellevuearts.org).

## Mental flexers and visual refreshers

By Gayle Clemans /  
Special to The Seattle Times

Things are coming together nicely at the Bellevue Arts Museum. The current gathering of exhibitions is a vibrant and effective expression of the museum's recently refined mission — to be a "center for exploring the fine art of craft and design." It could be a sticky task — to blur the boundaries between the categories of "fine art" and "craft," while remaining committed to craft and design — but they've pulled it off here. The choice of objects on display and the beautiful way they are exhibited make such categories accommodating and adaptable.

Exhibitions by Maureen McCabe and Thomas Mann reflect the artists' shared interest in accumulating real-life objects for use in mixed-media, wall-hanging works that offer layers of meaning and fragments of stories. McCabe's beautifully assembled works are elegant, playful, and poetic. They are reminiscent of Joseph Cornell's whimsically surreal constructions of the 1930s but with feminine touches of Victoriana and mischievous allusions to systems of faith and fortune. In "Voo Doo," McCabe combines playing cards, feathers, a miniature skull-and-crossbones flag and various other found objects to create an assemblage that is more flirtatious than frightening. Her works draw you into these elaborate little worlds that don't operate along any single, clear narrative; you are encouraged to fabricate your own



TED HENDRICKSON

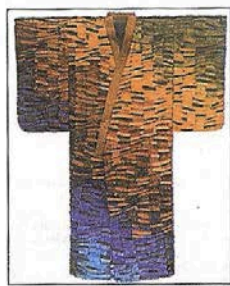
"Voo Doo," a mixed-media work by Maureen McCabe.

meanings, or just to enjoy the fantastic compositions of wonderful materials.

After moving into the exhibition of Mann's works, you might think, at first glance, that these were more of McCabe's assemblages — more found objects, composed into similarly sized panels — but Mann's works soon distinguish themselves. They are more raw and visceral, appropriate effects because they were created in response to, and literally out of

the wreckage of, Hurricane Katrina. The New Orleans-based artist gathered materials and stories from the devastated city and pieced them together to create fragmented but cohesive works that suggest both destruction and reconstruction.

After expending a lot of energy piecing together meaning from the assemblages by McCabe and Mann, seeing the gorgeous textile works in two exhibitions upstairs might



LARRY STESSON

"Spectra Kimono," by Tim Harding, made of cut silk.

seem like welcome mental relief. And it is, in a way — there are few weighty narratives to consider. But the themes of layering and accumulation are also present in these works of fabric and it takes time to grapple with their visual density. In particular, the small exhibition of kimonos by Tim Harding and jackets by Jon Eric Riis packs a huge visual punch. The garments glow in the dark space and demand a close examination of how they were put together.

The large display of textiles by 15 Japanese masters of rozome, or wax-resist dyeing, of