

Tippecanus Rex set to open at Tippecanoe Arts Federation

By Taya Flores • tflores@journalandcourier.com • March 29, 2009

Micah Bowers and his partner in crime Jordan Cleland created a funny tale that masks a bit of horror.

Using a multimedia video installation, the two Purdue University graduate students will illuminate bits and pieces of the story behind the imaginary "Cotton Candy" serial killer, who used to reside in Lafayette during the 1980s and murdered his victims with soft objects, according to the duo's fabricated story.

"We were both interested in doing something with the horror genre," said Bowers, a graduate student in the electronic time-based arts program. "We wanted to do something that wasn't obvious but still scared people."

The video installation will be on display at the Wells Community Cultural Center as part of "Tippecanus Rex," a community project that showcases myths, legends, folklore and tall tales through visual, performing, musical and literary art.

The art exhibit opens on April Fool's Day and continues through May 10 and is a joint project presented by Purdue University Galleries and Tippecanoe Arts Federation.

"The whole theme of April Fool's Day is funny, creative and imaginative," said Tetia Lee, executive director of the Tippecanoe Arts Federation. "The essence of April Fool's Day is articulated through this show."

She said some of the highlights of the project include stories written by students, artwork created by professional artists, original music written by professional musicians and visual interpretations of mythical beasts that have been invented for this show.

"Tippecanus Rex," has a sister exhibit, "Urban Legends and Rural Myths," on display through April 26 in the Stewart Center Gallery at Purdue University. This national exhibition showcases work that explores contemporary mythology.

Both exhibits were supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

And as for the elusive cotton candy killer, he may be out roaming the gritty streets of Lafayette -- still on the prowl, according to the imaginary tale.

"Unfortunately, he was never apprehended," wrote Bowers in an e-mail.