



DAN DALSTRA/The Facts

Artist Kelly Alison sits on a couch in her home in Brazoria Friday afternoon.

Two of her pieces are part of a collection that is headed to China to be displayed in a museum in Shanghai.

Brazoria artist's works are
China-bound

East meets West in first American art exhibition in Shanghai.

By Mary Openshaw
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Long-time Brazoria resident Kelly Alison is one of 39 Houston-area artists whose work will be included in the first exhibition of American art at the Shanghai Art Museum in China.

"The idea is to have a cultural exchange with Shanghai citizens and provide a vision for Houston and Texas artists," said Gus Kopriva, a co-curator of the show.

"The art produced in Houston is on par with what's created anywhere in the world," he said.

The show features approximately 70 works, representing all art mediums.

The two pieces Alison is

sending, called "Wheel" and "Ouch," are about four feet by five feet under Plexiglas. "They are what we decided to call 'mixed media drawings,'" she explained. She photocopied pages from her sketch book and notes she took during a college history course and glued them to the canvas, then drew over them with oil sticks. Some pieces like the ones in the show were on display at 101 Gallery in Houston, as part of the largest solo exhibition of



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Artist Kelly Alison works on one of the pieces in her Brazoria studio Friday afternoon. Two of Alison's works are headed to China along with pieces from other Houston artists.

Alison's career held last September. It was there that Christopher Zhu, co-curator of the Shanghai show, saw her work.

"When Mr. Zhu was interested in my work, they called and

TRAVELING ART

"Contemporary Art Houston" will open in Shanghai Sunday and run through Aug. 8. It features approximately 70 works by 39 contemporary artists with ties to Houston. To hear audio clips about the show, visit <http://64.77.89.39/s/s.html>. Want to see more of Alison's work? Her art is on display at G Gallery, 301 E. 11th St. in Houston. Call (713) 869-4770 for more information.

Art

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asked if I had any more. I'd sold the ones I'd done, so in 48 hours I did 10 of them. All 10 works are the same size."

If that sounds like a lot of work, it was.

"It was one of those tasks that you felt would be impossible, but you set your foot on the path anyway," Alison said. "I worked the solid 48 hours with just a few breaks for food and to drag myself across the bed."

The black and white pieces are very different from the bright colorful oil paintings she usually does. They are also a bit smaller. Most of her works are more than 10 feet long. However, Alison said the pieces like the ones in the show sell very well.

"I've puttered around and never found anything that sold like this," she said. Alison added that the notes attached to the canvas give people a thread from which to tell their own story and affix their own meaning as they look at the pieces. "They sort of become a part of the work," she said.

Alison is one of about 20 artists planning to go to

China for the opening. She's never been to the country before, and said she's looking forward to being inspired by Chinese culture and artistic sensibilities. "They seem so refined," she said.

Additionally, she is looking forward to gathering inspiration from being with the other artists. The show in China is unprecedented. "Supposedly, something like an artistic revolution took place among local artists (in Shanghai) two or three years ago," Alison said.

"It turned fairly successful. But that's real hearsay," she said. "From what I understand, there was a group of what we might term rebel artists in Shanghai that formed a group similar to the impressionist 'salon de refusés.' It was from there that the interest in Houston's artists began."

She said she didn't know what exactly categorized the Chinese artists as rebels, but said she would imagine it would be any art that wasn't government-sanctioned.

Alison has been doing art since she was about 8 years old, and says she never wanted to do anything else. Her parents both painted, and took her to the local art classes when she was grow-

ing up. In the summer, they took art trips to pretty places in Texas.

"When I was in college I was recognized as a neo-expressionist, taking inspiration from the German expressionists in the early 1900s," Alison said. "After that I went through a long period of abstract impressionism, where method and in the moment takes precedent over literary meaning and pushing the paint around in new ways creates the dynamic. Last fall, when both my kids went away to college and the long-awaited 'empty nest' gave me the emotional room to work again, I began to combine the two disciplines in a kind of dance, from meaning to method, from abstract to literal; I found going back to the basics — drawing, a good starting place."

Alison said she is very happy to have her work featured in the show.

"I'm probably the least well-known artist in the show," she said. "Some of the artists are very well-known, nationally and internationally. ... I am so lucky to be in this crowd."

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