

REVIEW | DUBLIN ARTS COUNCIL

Whimsical pieces combine elements with dash of humor

By **Kaizaad Kotwal**
FOR THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Here's a touching look at Elvis, the Wright brothers, Monopoly and more.

The quaint paper show "All Shook Up: Playful Books" invites viewers to pick up and experience its pages.

The exhibit of handmade books by artist Karen Hanmer is on view at the Dublin Arts Council.

The title piece presents photographs of Presley and his Tupelo, Miss., birthplace combined with a list of his top hits. The Presley images are fragmented, which adds to the mystery of the work.

They All Laughed pays homage to the fanciful flights of imagination of the Wright brothers. Hanmer uses archival images and documents related to the first manned flight interlaced with lyrics from the

Gershwin song of her title.

The song presents a litany of inventions and ideas that were initially mocked but proved to be valuable additions to modern society. Their inclusion in Hanmer's work is playful and thought-provoking.

Deal Me In, Mona deconstructs notions of high art versus low art. The foldout book juxtaposes two icons of Western art — the *Mona Lisa* and *Waterloo*, Cassius Coolidge's painting of poker-playing dogs — to make a comment on class and kitsch.

With *Famopily*, Hanmer has created a Monopoly-style board game with archival images from her family scrapbooks. Her game, as much ethnography as art, reveals a slice of personal life from the 1960s.

Another game, the well-conceived *Big River*, refers to pocket games from the past. In this case, participants must

maneuver the box to get each of the silver ball bearings into divots that correspond to locales in *Big River*, a song by Johnny Cash.

As anyone knows who's tried to master such games, the task is difficult. The lyrics to Cash's song concern a lovesick man pursuing his paramour down the Mississippi River. At each port of call, he misses her by the slightest margin, just as those trying to manipulate the game probably miss nailing down those silver balls.

Each work in the show is part of a limited edition. Their interactive nature (some pieces require that gloves be worn) makes the books intimate and viewer-friendly. That, combined with their whimsy, touches visitors on several levels.

Hanmer also has works included in the Newark exhibit "Paperwhite: Paper and Book Arts."



► "All Shook Up: Playful Books" continues through July 23 at the Dublin Arts Council, 7125 Riverside Dr. Hours: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays. Admission is free. Call 614-889-7444.