

## Atlanta's essence captured in art

By DAVID GRAVES  
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution  
Published on: 10/28/2007

You have to hand it to artist Michael McGovern: The man knows art.

At first glance of his "Majestic," "Varsity" and "Georgia Aquarium" oil paintings, you never would guess the painter actually lives in California. His literal, on-point interpretations of photographs are as striking as they are rich in color and depth. Bennett Street Gallery



Vintage photos are embedded in Nancy Youdelman's dress. She has used similar techniques on sculptures.

### • More arts news

McGovern is one of about 60 local and national artists taking part in the "Atlanta Cityscapes" show at Anne Irwin Fine Art gallery in Atlanta through Nov. 16. It's what gallery owner Anne Irwin says is a chance to highlight all Atlanta has to offer as a destination town.

"Everybody paints New York. Everybody paints Boston," she said. "I think Atlanta has a personality, but it has never been defined. What I'm hoping is that this starts a bigger movement to save some of these [historic landmarks] and appreciate them."

When you first enter the smallish space surrounded by antiques shops, there's an immediate sense of locality and old-town Atlanta among the pieces hanging and leaning against the brick walls.

Many works represent icons such as the Coca-Cola sign downtown and the Varsity, but it's Miro Sinovic's take on Piedmont Park, an abstract piece dotted with vibrant colors, that connects with the park's strong sense of nature and calm. Local artist Steve Courchaine paints mostly landscapes, but he was intrigued with creating his own interpretation of the Fox Theatre.

"This was enjoyable because of the architectural lines that posed a challenge, he said. "It was a good play on

perspective."

In his piece, he captures the 1920s feel of the old movie house, but cleverly manipulates the scene to highlight his subject.

Centered in the background, he depicts a growing Atlanta with a modern condominium but doesn't let it take away from the focal point.

"Places like the Fox have sentimental value," Courchaine said.

"It's one of the few places that represent old Atlanta of when I was a kid growing up."

While you're in the vicinity, scoot across the parking lot to Bennett Street Gallery, where California artist Nancy Youdelman goes on a nostalgic trip of her own down memory lane.

She embeds old black-and-white photographs into her metal and wax dress and shoe sculptures to evoke a personal, intimate feeling — despite the fact that her photos come from thrift stores.

"Her pictures could be from the Midwest, but they could be from anywhere," gallery manager Christina Keeney said. "It's her making that connection between the past and the present, taking photographs that have no real importance to anyone anymore and reviving their importance."