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EVENTCALENDAR

### The Makers: Michael Hecht

Article by Liz Tomasetti, southcoast247.com correspondent  
Photos by Dennis Yermoshin, southcoast247.com photographer

"Contemplation of life requires meditation on death."  
- Michael Hecht's artist statement

Stepping into Michael Hecht's studio, one must pass under a taxidermy owl frozen in mid-flight, a present from Michael's wife. Intrigued by its solitary nature and its past as a religious symbol, Michael views the owl as his personal totem.



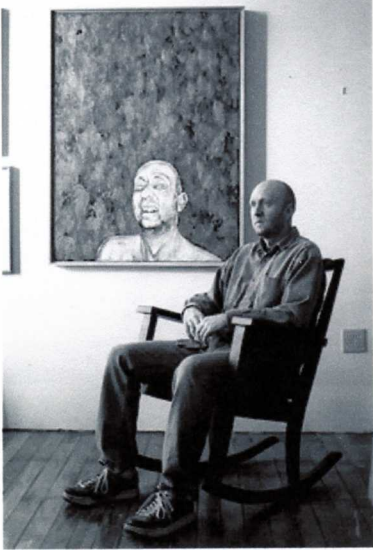
Looking around his studio one sees its image repeatedly...an owl masked with his own face, an owl perched upon his own disembodied head. The owl is a further extension of Michael's self-portraiture as a means of communication.

Michael's work seeks the honesty within himself. He feels that death is what keeps people honest, a means to self-actualization. He believes his work and imagery need to be created without editing and his use of the self-portrait is partially due to his belief that human emotion is a universal truth that people can identify. Michael's paintings and prints illustrate extreme episodic emotional states, striving for a loss of consciousness of the self. He has come to depict this idea with the literal imagery of him losing his head.

A professor of printmaking at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Michael has a solid ability to explain the ideas behind his work. His presence is humble, yet his explanations and illuminations are paralyzingly striking. Having first seen his paintings during an Open Studio day, I was unable to shake the imagery of their distorted beauty.

The texture of his large-scale paintings, as well as the softness of his drawings, lures you in to further examine the content he leaves semi-hidden. Like the owl at his studio's entryway, one might say Michael has mastered the art of visually creating the quiet of death through the action of his life.

Michael has exhibited his work extensively throughout the region. He is currently a part of the show "Science, Art, Religion" a response to Scheuchzer's Physica Sacra at the University Art Gallery in the Star Store through January 10th. Michael prolifically creates his work on the fourth floor of the Hatch Street Studios and can be contacted at [mike.h@verizon.net](mailto:mike.h@verizon.net).



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MYIDEALSOUTHCOAST

Hailing from absolutely nowhere near these parts and having lived in New Bedford for only four months, my ideal SouthCoast has yet to be fully developed. But from what I have garnered so far of this fine city is that there is a bunch of history to be found here as well as a thriving youth population ready for whatever is next, for what is coming around the corner. It seems to me, while I still maintain a somewhat outside perspective, that New Bedford is trying to wake itself up. [Read it all...](#)



WHAT'SGOINGON

Letters to the Community

A couple of weeks back, I invited my staff and a number of peers in our community to write a letter to New Bedford, in the wake of the recent violence. I firmly believe that dialogue and communication both serve as a bridge to understanding and healing. I asked people to write from the heart about their concerns, feelings, and attitudes towards the city of New Bedford, and encouraged them to address any topics or issues that they felt were relevant in conveying their message. Catharsis? Maybe, but I offer up their thoughts to you, our readers, in the hopes that you may find inspiration and solace in what has been

