

Get Real

Three masters explore realism and treat viewers to deceptively simple art at TCC's Visual Arts Center.

BY CATHERINE DORSEY

REALISM HAS BEEN redefined in a current exhibit at Tidewater Community College's Visual Arts Center in Olde Towne Portsmouth. Three artists working in diverse media explore realism from new perspectives, and their seemingly simple approaches yield surprisingly complex results.

Deceptively simplistic, surreal interior scenes by Mimi Verhulst Lanese become increasingly perplexing under continued scrutiny. At first glance, all is well, then the floors begin to plunge maddeningly forward. Tabletops spill their mysterious contents: paper airplanes, eggs, wilting blooms, a row of tiny birds. In *Midnight*, the rumpled bed is enigmatically empty. Have its missing occupants bolted suddenly, been spirited away, or never been there at all? In *Greetings from Paris*, a set of plain white bistro dishes resides dully in their cabinet, fading into the shadows. There is a vividly colored postcard of the Eiffel Tower thumb-tacked to a shelf. The mystique and glamour of travel calls out its temporary promises, gleefully oblivious to the daily reality of the plain white dishes behind.

Challenge your perspective of reality through the diverse works of three top-notch artists. Their refreshing and unexpected interpretations of realism remain on view at the Art Center through March 15. Call 822-6999 for details. ■



The Breakfast Table, by Mimi Verhulst Lanese