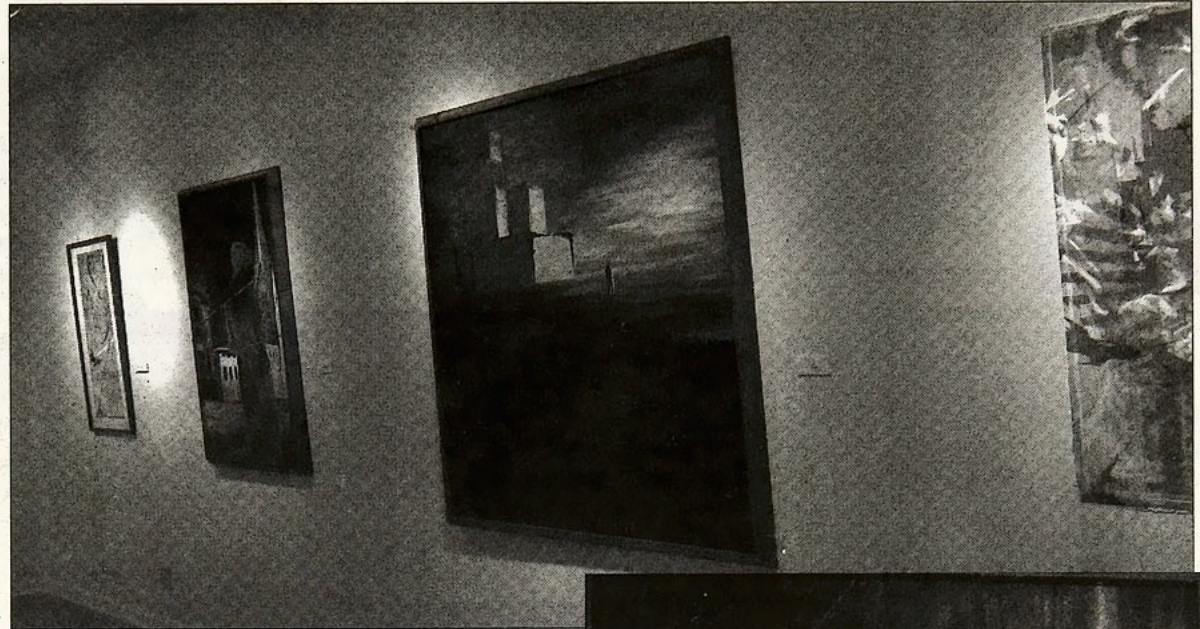


# Artist's Experiences Make For A Successful Senior Show

*Senior Art Major provides intellect, talent and emotion in senior exhibition*  
by Hannah Dorow

Shelter is defined as a structure or building that provides cover from weather or protection against danger. Isaac Bratzel dug into the meaning of the word shelter in his senior exhibition, *Shelter*, on March 8 in the H. Williams Teaching Gallery in the Concordia Art Department building. The gallery was filled with paintings, drawings, digital prints and an installation piece representing Bratzel's interpretation of what "shelter" has been to him.

Bratzel grew up in Saint Paul and attended a nearby Christian school, Christ's Household of Faith. He joined the class of 2007 with the plan to be an Art Education Major, now changed to Studio Art, and to play basketball for Concordia. I met Bratzel in a drawing class freshmen year; he was quiet and a very talented drawer. However, sitting next to him in our painting class that next semester, with a lot of prying and procrastination, allowed us to talk and struggle with our assignments together. Over the years and many semesters of classes together, Bratzel has become a



Above: Bratzel had a variety of mediums presented in his senior show.

Right: *Trapped*, an oil painting.  
photos by Hannah Dorow

very good friend of mine.

Bratzel was involved in basketball for a few years, as well as baseball for Concordia in these past four years. He was involved in Art Club, worked for Concordia's athletic department and has done murals for faculty offices.

He has also participated in off-campus shows including last year's Art Club's exhibitions in Uptown, Minneapolis and Downtown, Saint Paul. He comes from a family of artists; his father is Chair of the Art Department at his high school and one of his sisters even helped him make frames for his exhibition.

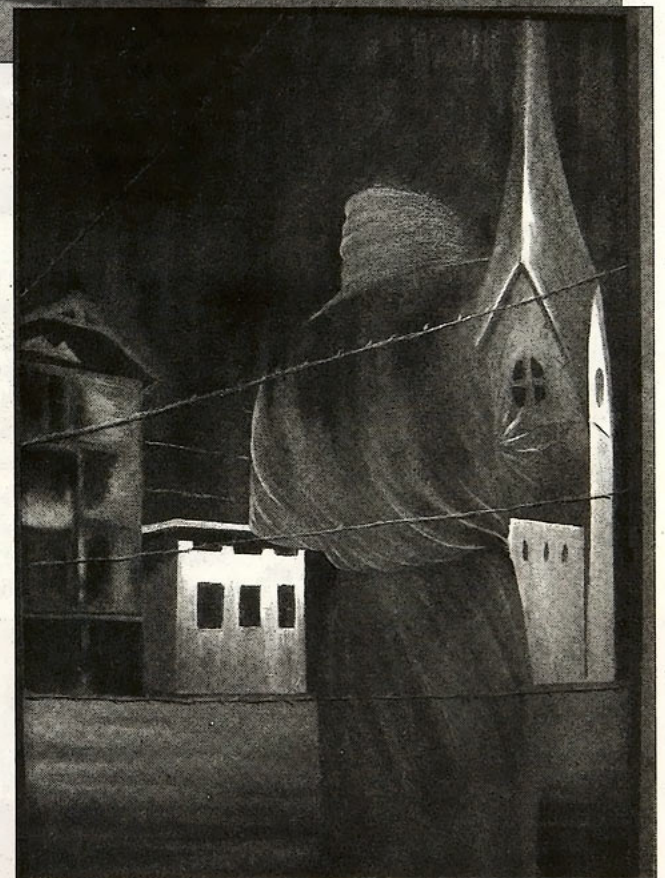
Preparing for his show, being just as much of a procrastinator than I am, Bratzel was awake working for three straight days and finally got the opportunity for a quick nap the day of his show. His only advice for future senior show participants is to "work, work, work," a good mantra for ev-

everyone to keep in mind in the wee hours of the night working in the studio.

Although Bratzel feels his strongest medium is drawing, he says that he "likes the possibilities [that come] with painting." His exhibition consisted of larger paintings, all conveying some sort of shelter or structure with human interaction. His drawings and digital pieces also included structures of all different sorts, expressing the same idea that shelter can become more than just a dwelling. By combining people with the structures in his pieces, Bratzel was showing "how we become a part of our surroundings and how it can be very hard to separate the individual from the society or group."

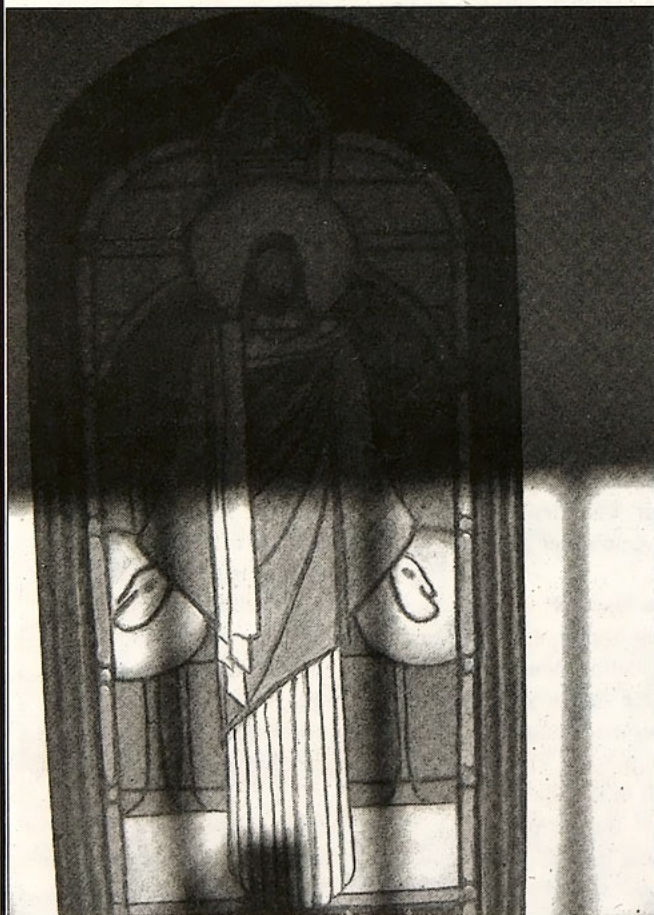
Bratzel based the idea of his show on a lot of his life experiences. Growing up in a Christian-based environment, Bratzel experienced some things that brought on some sheltered feelings which he analyzed and incorporated for his show.

After getting all of his ideas put together, Bratzel starts each piece "conceptually and then works on a way



to convey that concept in an interesting and effective way aesthetically." His subject matter has changed a lot throughout the years. He has done collage paintings of Julia Roberts, to shaped canvases, to the work in his show; he even made a change this year from acrylic to oil paint.

Bratzel sums his show up by saying "shelter, to me, is asking the question about how often 'shelter' comes with a price. In other words, how often we have to give up something: beliefs, freedom... etc. in order to be sheltered." His strong conviction behind his show helped make it that much stronger and successful. He worked hard, and late, to make his ideas and thoughts into a real thing and a successful senior exhibition.



Pastel drawing on wall, a part of Bratzel's installation piece.  
photo by Hannah Dorow