

Sarratt Gallery installation explores 'Pecking Order'

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Babel, mixed-media on paper, by Karen Bondarchuk, is on view in *The Pecking Order* at Vanderbilt's Sarratt Gallery through May 14.

Oversized sculptures of dead crows littered about the floor may not sound particularly pleasing, but Michigan-based artist Karen Bondarchuk's interpretation of the birds is strangely compelling.

Inspired by University of Washington professor John Marzluff's book about the interaction of the birds with humans, the works in *The Pecking Order* remain on view at Sarratt Gallery through May 14.

Bondarchuk's sculptures of the scavenger birds are cleverly constructed from found and reclaimed materials. Her use of layered pieces of tire rubber for the birds' feathers is particularly inspired; the resulting texture surprisingly convincing.

The birds are placed in the center of the gallery floor, some on their backs, others on their sides. All have stiff legs and open beaks.

Complementing the sculptures are close-up charcoal studies of crows and ravens and a series of mixed-media drawings incorporating numbers and letters.

In Defense of a Stolen Golf Ball, for example, pairs a large drawing of a crow and a background of words written in red.

This and the other drawings are like posters presenting the crows' perspective of their problematic behavior; they combine a touch of whimsy with striking graphic design.

Sarratt Gallery is in Vanderbilt's Sarratt Student Center. Hours are 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Friday and 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; there is no admission fee. For information, call 615-322-2471 or go to vanderbilt.edu/sarrattgallery.

— MiChelle Jones, for *The Tennessean*