



Kurt Gohde, *Homes for the Homeless II*, 2006, Digital photography, 8 x 60 x 1".

Over its three incarnations with three different jurors, the exhibition has featured recent work of more than 100 artists from the Commonwealth, and has strived to be an inclusive and diverse representation of Kentucky's contemporary art. The exhibition jurors are selected in part on their substantive and broad perspective on current regional work, as Kentucky's artistic product is as varied as the state's geography, and have included John Begley, gallery director and critical and curatorial studies professor at the University of Louisville (2004), and David Knight, gallery director at Northern Kentucky University (2006).

The 2008 exhibition was juried by Tim Glotzbach, director of student crafts at Berea College and former dean of the Kentucky School of Craft in Hindman. In the juror's statement, he writes of the *Bluegrass Biennial*, "Many regional institutions feel a service obligation to the community of artists within their reach, and this obligation can take the form of various types of outreach, including the occasional gallery show. But, it is far less frequent that we encounter a regional showcase that has at its heart the desire to exhibit the very best of the region and a sincere mission to make a unique and important contribution to the art community."

Jurying and then designing an exhibition with what is a visually disparate selection of work can be challenging. Describing the potentially dissident relationships between a provocative video piece entitled *Lashing* by Kurt Gohde, associate professor of art at Transylvania, and a tranquil



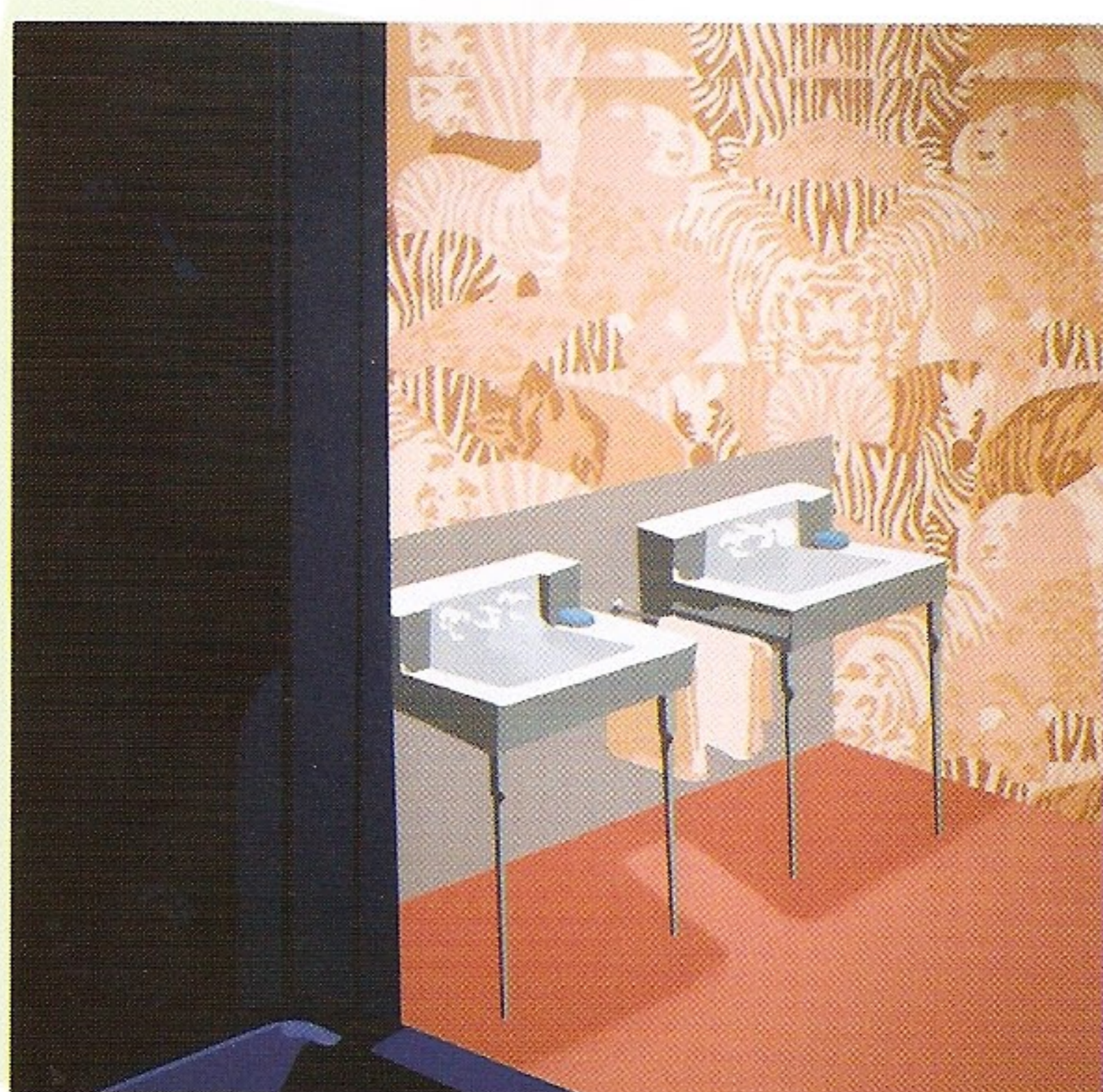
Jeffrey Nichols, *Yellow/Red Still-Life*, 2007, Earthenware, 11.5 x 10 x 10".

winter landscape by Morehead artist Christine Barker, Glotzbach states, "...these works serve to represent the broad spectrum of entries provided this year. To discount either would be to discredit the divergent creative energies present in this state and the importance of this exhibition in its efforts to represent a vibrant regional and state-wide window to the visual arts."

Even though the exhibition is by its very nature eclectic, every *Bluegrass Biennial* has apparent themes. In 2008, landscapes including constructed, organic, and surrealistic, were numerous and included work by Joe Sartor (Morehead), Michael Maydak (Covington),

Louise Halsey (Owensboro), and Diane Deaton-Street (Louisville). Deconstruction of forms or structures and use of repetition patterning was evident in the work of Cathy Vigor (Ashland), Gibbs Rounsavall (Louisville), and Travis Townsend (Lexington). A certain playfulness imbued many pieces, especially in the prints and paintings by Christine Bartsch (Brooks) and Lori Larusso.

The *Bluegrass Biennial* benefits both Kentucky artists and the multi-state audience that visits the gallery during the summer months. The entry fee is low (\$10 compared to the average \$25 - \$40 for juried exhibitions), and that those funds go directly back to the artists in the form of award dollars, the reception, exhibition booklets, and publicity. In 2008, we are proud to announce that Jeffrey Nichols, a ceramist from Morehead, received the Best In Show award of \$300, with Merit Awards of \$100 going to Christina Bartsch, Lee Ann Paynter of Lexington, and Joe Sartor.



Lori Larusso, *Interior Threat*, 2007, Acrylic on panel, 46 x 52 x 1".