

'Landscape of mind' in MCC exhibit

By **Grayce Scholt**

Contributing writer

Brilliant colors, sweeping lines and intriguing textures make up Lansing artist Renee Robbins' exploration of what she calls the "landscape of the mind," a metaphor for how our exterior and interior selves come together.

"Paintings: Exterior/Interior" is on exhibit at Mott Community College's Fine Arts Gallery through Feb. 20.

Review

"Paintings: Exterior/Interior"

- **WHERE:** Mott Community College Visual Arts and Design Center, 1401 E. Court St.
- **WHEN:** Through Feb. 20
- **DETAILS:** (810) 762-0443, www.mcc.edu

Embedded in the paintings are various materials — such as yarn, string, fasteners, tissue paper, bits of fabric, even a zipper — which represent

the sources that inspire the works and create a near-collage effect.

A variety of acrylic paints, from washes to gloss to glazes and gel media, are layered over the surfaces creating hybrid forms that suggest the complexity of the human mind. The paints, sometimes mixed with modeling paste or sand, were brushed on or applied with a palette knife or spoon creating a sculptural effect.

The images in the paintings suggest systems, from the molecular, biological and anatomical to the celestial. Robbins, an MCC art instructor, said she does not have access to an electron microscope, so she bases many of the images on pictures in science books. Other sources are photographs she has taken of grass, flowers, rocks and buildings.



▲ "Substructure" is among the images by Renee Robbins in her exhibit at Mott Community College.

In "Transition," she explores the seasonal change from summer to autumn through fall colors and the suggestion of dying flowers, which represent the movement from one state to another. A large swirl of yellow lines based on a basket she has in her studio is perhaps the most nearly representational image in the exhibit.

Most of the paintings are highly colored, but "Seam" is more muted. Tiny metal fasteners cross the surface of the work, but they are open just enough to allow "the many definitions of life to sneak through," Robbins said.

"Measurement" explores units of measuring through bold areas of blues that are intercepted with spikes of black and elegantly placed points of red-orange in the center of the painting.

All of the paintings are enclosed in simple but beau-

tifully crafted cherry and oak frames, which the artist said she and her father created from trees in the woods of their 200-year old family farm in southwestern Michigan. "Domain" contains bits of wood shavings from these trees.

Artist Renee Robbins will speak on "Paintings: Interior/Exterior" at 10 a.m. Feb. 20 in Room 129 of the MCC Visual Arts and Design Center.