



THEATER:
A thrilling
time at the
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flashes and flame colors," he said, "and then it goes into more of fire-

and purples."

As you walk through, you see that

this elongated space. The imagery is up, forward and in front of you.

urn staffer in describing the stop-motion somersault of Detroit tonnage.

"We were concerned that kids MASSMOCA, Page C8



THE ANGEL

French painter creates glowing layers with pigmented varnish

Opalescent art

By **Jennifer Lord**
NEWS STAFF WRITER

WESTON - The images in Christine Arveil's artwork float just beneath the surface, changing with the light or the position of the viewer.

They glow with jewel tones, the deep reds, yellows and blues that lie suspended in the varnish that is Arveil's life work - layer upon layer of pigment that adds depth yet is less than one millimeter thick.

"Weight of Light," the French artist's show at Regis College's Carney Gallery, is a collection in a style that is both modern

and ancient. Arveil, 46, paints in varnish, using techniques learned from skilled restorers of Chinese lacquer and historic violins.

"There is something magical about working with varnish," Arveil said. "The feeling is different than working with other mediums. It's very tactile to make - what's important to me is the process of making it. I do not use a machine. I sand (the wood canvas) by hand, polish by hand."

Walk through the exhibit and it's clear that Arveil's varnish technique and style REGIS, Page C10



OLD MAN

At Regis, contemporary artist makes old new again

REGIS, *From CI* have evolved from her first efforts. The earliest piece, "One Cannot Sleep Quietly," in copal varnish and pigments in alcohol over gesso on wood, is stylized, with more drawn lines to bring out the image. On later pieces,

Arveil doesn't even use a brush – it's up to the viewer to determine the images within the swirling red turmoil of "The Price of Freedom."

"I'm driven by my strong feelings and very strong impressions," Arveil said. "I work on

one piece at a time and it usually takes me a month to complete."

Arveil is constantly adding layers and rubbing them away, something used to great effect in "Icône," a non-traditional take on images of the Virgin

Mary with infant Jesus. In traditional images, Mary is seen offering up her son. Arveil's Madonna is looking through an opening that seems burned through layers of varnish, protectively clutching the child to her.

"Technically speaking, it's rather complicated and I would almost say once a painting is done, I couldn't tell you all the steps I went through," Arveil said. "I've probably forgotten about them. These are not works that can be reproduced."

Arveil grinds her own pigments and takes pride in using found objects for many of her pieces. In the center of the room, for example, is a log that naturally split in two. Fascinated by the natural puzzle, Arveil painted a vein of varnish spiked with gold inside it, enhancing Mother Nature's work.

"I love recycling materials," Arveil said. "I love the contradiction of using those precious

materials, this gold, over something that would be discarded otherwise.

"This," she said, indicating "Icône Garage," "I just found it on the street, an old garage door. The wood was very old, and it was very interesting. I think working with these old things and applying varnish that is \$70 an ounce – it seems to be closer to real life, to try to make something beautiful out of something that is available out of our hands."

Arveil studied art history and ancient languages before taking on Paris, where she had her first studio in 1984. She studied Chinese calligraphy throughout the '80s and moved on to Arabic calligraphy in the '90s.

But it was her continuing experience in varnish that brought her to the United States in 1997, when she was invited to the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor to restore rare violin finishes. In 2001, she settled in

Charlestown with her husband, master bow maker Benoit Rolland. Her work is now exhibited in both the United States and Europe.

"I think it's so disappointing to have a painting," Arveil said. "You hang it on the wall, you're stuck with it for years. I wanted to make something that would change, that would keep surprising you, that keeps surprising the owner. One day it can be bright green, another day it's dark blue. The image will change with the light, with the positioning."

"*Weight of Light*" runs through Feb. 18 at the Regis College Carney Gallery, 235 Wellesley St., Weston. On Feb. 4, from 6 to 8 p.m., the gallery will hold a reception with artist Christine Arveil. The gallery is open Monday to Friday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and by appointment. Admission to the gallery is free. For information, call 781-768-7084.