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SUNDAY, MARCH 7, 2010 • chron.com/bellaire

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Songbirds flock to canvas for artist's inspiration

■ Acrylic paint replaces computer mouse

By VALERIE SWEETEN
CHRONICLE CORRESPONDENT

Heather Bause began painting seriously last year, after she moved to the Woodland Heights area and chose to stay home with her son, Harrison.

She would create several paintings of 19th-century birds in a contemporary, graphic style.

Those paintings resulted in a one-woman show, *The Birds of Music: North American Songbirds*, at the Bering and James Art Gallery, 805 Rhode Place.

The Englewood, N.J., native, said the songbirds were representative of her afternoons with Harrison.

"This represents a balance of nature and what one tries to find in a domestic setting," Bause said. "I chose the songbirds from when Harrison and I would go outside and be together. I was attracted foremost to prints and wallpaper design. I was inspired by all of this."

She developed the color schemes during her journey of discovery.

"I'm an oil painter, but I'll choose whatever medium to get the job done," said Bause. "Acrylic is easily manipulated. I have 100 jars in my house that I mixed myself. This isn't a hobby anymore. I'm taking art seriously. This is something I wanted to communicate about myself."

Torie Ludwin, who has known Bause since 2006, said she is a "hardworking, driven person."

"I'm a big fan of her work," said Ludwin. "I've seen two different series and they're very well done. She chooses colors that create an inherent tension between the patterns and lines. The contrast is electrifying. It really makes the paintings pop. You can see that art is very important to her."

Bause, the daughter of Karen and Michael Golden, is no stranger to art. At the age of 5, she began painting and copying posters. Throughout high school in New Jersey, Bause studied art.

In 1993, Bause accepted a position in Houston as production designer with Bates Southwest Advertising and



GEORGE WONG: FOR THE CHRONICLE

FINDING HER NICHE: Artist Heather Bause stands with her artwork at Bering and James Gallery.

HEATHER BAUSE

- **AGE:** 34
- **OCCUPATION:** Artist
- **FAST FACT:** Worked in the creative design business from 1993-2008
- **QUICK QUOTE:** "I'm mostly an oil painter, but I'll use any medium to get the job done. I'm taking art more seriously. It's not a hobby anymore. This is something I want to communicate about myself."

Public Relations, which used to be one of the city's largest agencies.

While working, Bause graduated from the University of Houston with a degree in painting in 1999 and built a career in graphic design.

She moved through the ranks from senior designer to creative director over a 10-year period and worked at companies such as Sachnowitz and Co., AIM Mutual Funds, ChevronTexaco, Lockheed Martin, Shell International, and Whiteboard Labs in Houston.

She and husband, Holger Bause, began their own design business, BauseHaus, in 2007.

In 2008, Bause was awarded Best Web site of the Year for her work on www.MarioBatali.com by The Art Directors Club of Houston.

Rodrigo Jimenez, CEO of Whiteboard Labs at 3100

Richmond Ave., worked with Bause, then creative director, from 2003 to 2007.

He said her enthusiasm for creating is evident in her work.

"She was the leading design side of our application development where we do Internet software applications," Jimenez said.

"You can't define her art. It's surprising. She's able to bring out a lot of her own history in some of the pieces I've seen. She combines an emotional side and beauty aspect in her work."

In her free time, Bause continued developing her fine art through the years.

She did private commissions for clients in Washington, D.C., Albuquerque, N.M., Atlanta, Ga., New Jersey, and throughout Houston.

In 2009, her work was seen in group exhibitions at the Holiday Group Show at Poissant Gallery, 5102 Center St.; The BIG Show at Lawndale Art Center, 4912 Main St.; a city hall exhibition, 900 Bagby and Redone and Rescued at DesignWorks Gallery in Galveston.

The shift to do art full time and be well received is a welcome surprise for Bause, she said.

"I finally feel like I'm pouring all my energy into it. I say 'No Fear.' My passion is to paint," said Bause.

Bause is currently working freelance for several clients.

For details, go to www.HeatherBause.com or www.BeringandJames.com.