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# Professor's exhibit explores the way of all flesh

**By JAMES D. WATTS JR.**  
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Glenn Herbert Davis is the newest faculty member of the University of Tulsa's School of Art, and he makes his presence known with an enigmatic, even troubling exhibit called "Uncarnate," on display through Dec. 6 at the Alexandre Hogue Gallery in Phillips Hall on the TU campus, Fifth Street and College Ave.

It's enigmatic because there are few guideposts to direct the viewer as to how to assimilate what is contained in this exhibit. Two small buildings, constructed of rough lumber, plastic and canvas sheeting and strips of wood paneling, dominate the gallery space.

Another wall is given over to three Macintosh-style chairs, also of rough, white wood, fitted into a large panel made of paneling cut and arranged like shin-

gles. The lower floor of the gallery has a wooden rocking chair attached to a large wooden frame that rocks with the chair's movement.

A sign labeled "didactic" is placed over a table containing a looseleaf book, filled with photocopies of old photos, pages from books ranging from philosophical tomes to do-it-yourself manuals. A Clavinova player-piano tinkles out popular songs of the past few decades. Piles of sawdust fill the corners of the short staircase.

Davis described the exhibit as "a story of status and relationship told through furniture, buildings and bodies." All right: we'll take his word for that. Yet what we come away with from this exhibit is a profound sense of loss, of something or someone that should be present in all these things, but is not.

Literally, "uncarnate" means "not fleshy; to divest of flesh."

And what is not flesh is spirit. So perhaps these little buildings — one that is "filled" with the air blowing steadily from an overhead vent, the other "containing" a metal pole that supports the gallery's roof — represent our efforts to retain a memory of someone who has "shuffled off this mortal coil."

Yet that can be like trying to contain the wind in a box. Or the effort to hold on to a memory can ultimately prove fruitless, and we end up with something about as useless as a room filled to the point that nothing else may enter.

Perhaps, instead, it is better to let memory work the way it wants to work, catching us unawares, like a softly played, distantly heard piece of music.

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