



Photos by Madison Simmons

Stay-at-home dad and artist Stuart Wallace investigates one of his collected moss balls. He suggested a pop up art show at the Georgetown Art Center when the planned exhibit wasn't ready Thursday because Peruvian customs had delayed the shipment of works to the art center.

Moss, wasps save the day at art center

By MADISON SIMMONS

After an unexpected stay at Peruvian customs delayed works from the next Georgetown Art Center exhibit, Art Works Board member Stuart Wallace offered up a suggestion — a pop up art show, one night only.

And that is how the white walls came to house ephemera made immortal.

Macro-photography of wasps, shimmering gold with streaks of peacock blue, shared space with painted boards strewn with moss balls.

Mr. Wallace has been into wasps and moss balls for a few years now.

"I lived overseas for a while and when I came back I had never seen these moss balls before," he said.

Many consider them a nuisance, potentially bad for trees. Mr. Wallace began clearing them from neighbors' yards and fashioning them into art pieces. Some he leaves their natural gray-green. Others he hits with black or red or purple paint.

When not caring for his 15-month-old-daughter (he is a stay-at-home dad, his wife is the breadwinner) he makes art. The wasps came about in an unexpected way.

"It was kind of an accident," he said.

He spray painted the wasps, gathered from nests from neighbors, gold and put them in pill boxes, with the idea that the pill boxes would keep them free from dust.

After two days, the brilliant mold sprouted.

Upon seeing the colors, the thought "I have to learn to do macro-photography" entered his mind.

Mr. Wallace is the founder of North Austin Creatives, a nonprofit organization of artists. He recently became a Georgetown Art Works board member.

The Art Center is unclear on why Richard Peralta and Edwin Quispecuro's paintings did not make it through customs. The show was set to open February 10.

The Art Center said the paintings should arrive in Texas and go on the walls in time for the weekend.

The exhibit will be at the Art Center, 816 South Main Street, until March 26; the artist reception is on March 4 from 7 to 9 p.m.



Above, Mr. Wallace explains the blotches of blue paint on the wasp bodies to Laura Sewell, center, and Jane Estes. Ms. Sewell is the manager of Sarofim School of Fine Arts Administration at Southwestern University. Ms. Estes is a writer and columnist for the *Sun*.

Left, Artist Stuart Wallace stands beside one of his macro photographs of wasps at Thursday's pop up show.