

marc barker
Oklahoma Caver-Artist Exhibit
at the Capitol

By Sue Bozeman (NSS 15176)

If you get an opportunity to see the invited artist exhibit at the State Capitol Building in Oklahoma City, do it!

Our long time Central Oklahoma Grotto Caver-Artist in Residence, Marc Barker (NSS 13908), has his show "The Illusion of Mattering" featured in the East Gallery - First Floor through September 14, 2008. Interesting as the images are, the picture's titles make the show fun. That may not be what he wants to hear, but it added a level of interest to every piece.

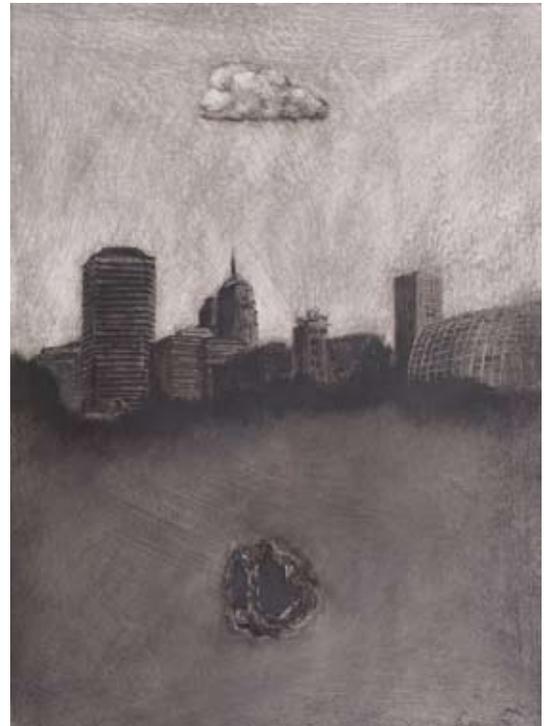
Those of us who attended the Opening Reception on July 25 found ourselves seeing caves even in the images of Marc's shadow forms. The show's signature piece, "Homo cum Deo" (Man together with God) is a good example as seen in the exhibit invitation.

Yes, it is two human images, but we also see cave passages there. It's not much of a stretch in many of his silhouette image pieces to say, as John Bozeman did in the third image of the "The Third Eye" triptych: "That's Gyp Falls!"

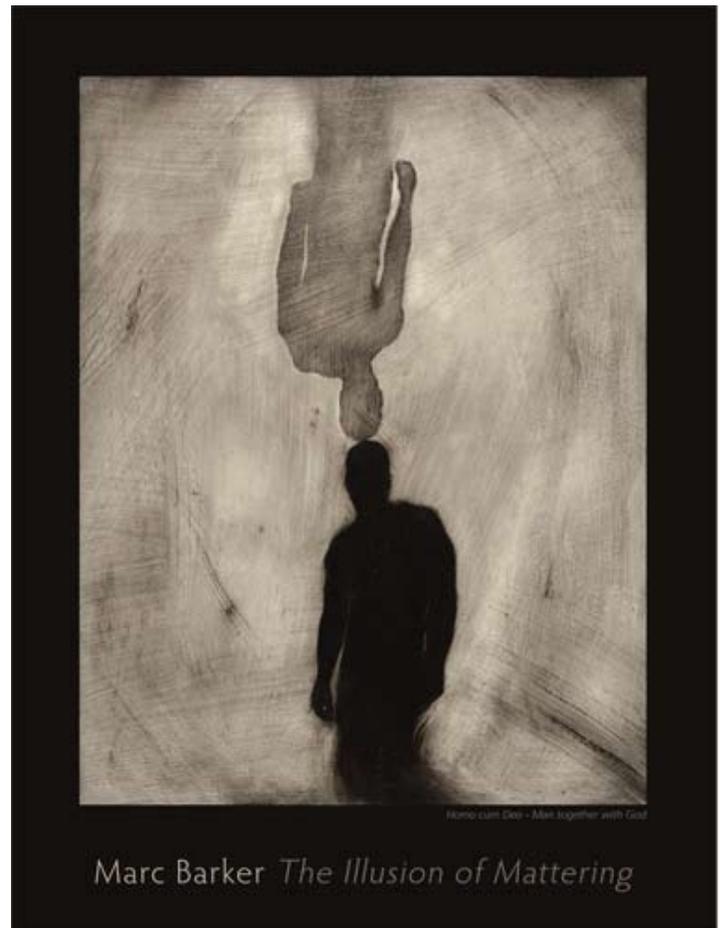
Marc's cave art days were really over awhile ago. His current agents advise him that his human form images are his strength, NOT his cave images as they are hard to sell to the public. Well, so be it – but you can't take the cave out of a caver. This show is wonderful proof.

Favorite cave images are the city skyline with a cave shown way underneath it in "OKCave"; an oil on board image that is the Chinese symbol for a bat, called "Good Luck"; a 12" x 48" piece called "Arbuckle Passage"; and an oil on board piece called, "Subscape".

Favorite non-cave images are not restricted to human-form pieces. There are intriguing images of clouds everywhere. Some pieces have several



OKCave



Marc Barker *The Illusion of Mattering*

Invitation to the exhibition

clouds in a row; another has a single cloud over a flat landscape; and one ("Cloud Array") shows nine clouds, three to a row, hanging in the gallery opposite a piece ("Cave Array") depicting nine cave passages, three to a row. Besides clouds, caves, and human forms, there are bones, snakes, ironwork and twin tower images to ponder.

One interesting feature of all of Marc's artwork is his choice of color. The tones are black and shades of gray, with the exception of one piece, a monotype titled, "The Outcast We All Hold Dear". The outcast figure is a pinkish color and hangs upside down from the top of the picture above a gradation of seven gray-to-black images.

A monochrome approach to color has always been part of Marc's work, be it photography, etchings, recent monotypes and oils. He argues that truth is in black and white; color obfuscates. He remains true to that principle throughout this exhibit.

Wordplay is also a Marc part. A simple listing of the titles should be enough to intrigue the inquiring mind: "I Don't Want What I Deserve, I WANT what I WANT"; "Deconstruction of a Longbone"; "No one is your Friend, No one is your Enemy, Everyone is your Teacher"; "Milk Languages of the Universe"; "How Aren't You?"; "Tree Hugger"; "Nebulus Clouds".

Marc's 'job' has been interactive media in his own business, Aeternitas. That involves computers, images, movement and color – for clients. He has taught Graphic Design at the University of Central Oklahoma, created and then sold a successful media business (Cosus Interactive), created the current Aeternitas and develops Web, CD-ROM and interactive media projects for some internationally known clients.

His weekends are for his own art. Creating his work in the garage of a small home in The Village, Marc is as full of ideas for future works as his home is full of the art of others.

He has exhibited throughout the U.S., contributed to international speleological exhibitions in Sweden and England, is currently treasurer of the Arts & Letters Section of the NSS, has worked as Chairman of the Artful Experience Committee for the Oklahoma City Arts Council, and is an Allied Artist representing the Oklahoma Visual Arts Coalition. His many contributions to art over the years have benefited the art community as well as the caving community, especially the Central Oklahoma Grotto. Marc has created the covers for many of our grotto's publication, Oklahoma Underground.

Marc's work may be seen at www.cosus.com.



Cloud Cave