"BMW Showroom," a lithograph by Don Eddy, is one of the pieces on display in "Contemporary Realism" an exhibit opening tonight at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art.

Art museum gets realistic

"Contemporary Realism" opens at Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art

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Following in the wake of the highly successful "Art of the 60s" exhibit, the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art will open its newest exhibit tonight.

"Contemporary Realism" is an exhibit highlighting the modern artistic movement for realism in art.

In the mid-1950s many modernist artists abandoned illusionism in art to focus on depicting reality in a representational and contemporary way. This was the birth of contemporary realism.

"Artists in (the exhibit) are contemporary and progressive but also depict a visible reality," Eric M. Lee, museum director and exhibit curator said.

Included in "Contemporary Realism" are works by Oklahomans Otto Duecker and Dennis Martin as well as OU graduates Carolyn Brady and Charles Bell. Martin was a nationally respected artist who was living in Oklahoma City until he died of a heart attack in 2001.

Some examples of photorealism are also included in the exhibition. Photorealistic works are paintings that are based on photos and mimic the details of a photograph. Their subject matter focuses on impersonal objects.

"We have a really strong collection," Lee said. He said all the works in the exhibit are from the museum's permanent collection and that the exhibit is a great way to show off the collection since the museum is in the midst of expanding.

Few people have seen some of the paintings in the exhibit, but a select group who have been involved in setting up "Contemporary Realism" have seen it all first hand.

"A lot of the works haven't been viewed before," said Ross Cotts, chief preparator. He and his crew have worked for weeks to prepare the exhibit.

Museum Registrar Susan Squires said there are 56 works on display in the exhibit. "We like it," Cotts said.

There are over 7,000 works in the museum's collection, so what is on display is actually a very small part," Squires said.

"Contemporary Realism" runs from Jan. 18 to Mar. 16. The opening reception is today from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Refreshments will be provided and it is open to the public. Admission is free.