

Neighbors: Elmira College professor Marc Dennis named to '25 Artists to Watch' list

Feb 5, 2014 // Jennifer Kingsley

If the smile on Elmira College art professor Marc Dennis' face is a little broader this week, here's why: He was named one of "25 Artists to Watch" in the December issue of *Modern Painters*, and earlier this week, his work was featured in *TIME* magazine.

Marc, who divides his time between residences in Ithaca and Brooklyn, teaches all levels of drawing and painting at Elmira College. He also continues to lecture on the Holocaust.

His painting featured in *TIME* is called "A Great Big Giant World." Inspired by the popularity of kittens on the Internet, it's an oil-on-linen portrait of hip-hop artist Snoop Lion (formerly known as Snoop Dogg) working as a security guard and watching over a painting of "Biggie Kitty."

"As an artist, I create staged and voyeuristic scenarios of contemporary American culture," Marc said. "I like to push the boundaries of beauty, pleasure and power."

Marc chose Snoop Lion not only because he enjoys his music, but because he is an iconic figure. "In my painting, he serves as a sentry, a guard of sorts, watching over 'Biggie Kitty.' And the Victorian nouveau-style, blue-and-white bandana-pattern background is a tongue-in-cheek reference to the Crips (Snoop's former gang)," Marc said.

The Feb. 3 article in *TIME* called it a "curious juxtaposition of his rough past and the soft, innocent-looking creature."

Marc is always working on a range of projects. "My studio is packed with paintings in various stages," he said.

He also has an exhibit, "An Artist, a Curator and a Rabbi Walk into a Bar," at the Hasted Kraeutler Gallery, at 537 W. 24th St. in New York City on display through Saturday.

