

# Picture-perfect scenes filled with inside jokes

By JERRY CULLUM  
For the Journal-Constitution

Personal flaws have seldom been this funny.

Sarah Hobbs' "Does This Sound Like You?" begins with a "Periodic Table of the Traits" that maps our most annoying defects in an imitation of the periodic table of chemical elements. From Trait No. 1, "C (critical)," to "Unb (undiagnosed)," Hobbs has no trouble coming up with 118 characteristics of our anything-but-perfect individual psychologies. The six large color photographs in the rest of the show are setups illustrating some all-too-familiar phenomena of our private lives.

"Untitled (nosiness)" is the easy one-liner introducing the topic: Drinking glasses are glued to the walls so the presumed occupant can listen to every conversation on the other side. After that, the visual shorthand gets increasingly subtle. Since most personality disorders are commonplace flaws pushed to their limits, Hobbs illustrates them with sheer numerical excess.

"Untitled (ladies' man)," for example, features a wall-size set of shelves holding wine corks, with a female first name below each. That's a simple but inspired variation on the old notches-on-the-bedpost cliché. But by the time we reach "Untitled (sublimation)," which depicts a workshop with an entire wall of bonsai in process, it may take more than a moment to figure out how the Freudian concept relates to the obsessive creation of miniature trees through endless pruning.

That is the beauty of Hobbs' work; the joke provokes a laugh almost immediately, but the impact of the image lingers long after you get the punch line.

"Untitled (short attention span)" is likely to be, for longtime art lovers, the high point. It shows a hobbyist's studio, with the wall hung floor to ceiling with never-finished paint-by-number projects. For anyone not afflicted with the disorder illustrated, Hobbs shows off her ability to put together an interesting picture. You can start by admiring the color arrangement. You may end up speculating why the imaginary amateur started with animals in that painting and trees in this one.

Hobbs is a serious contender in the atricalized photography. It's a time-consuming practice, and her success is worth a moment's thought. Famous practitioners such as Gregory Crewdson make photos that look like movie stills produced by sizable film crews. Hobbs sets up her multi-object scenes with one assistant. It takes obsessiveness of the positive variety to make work this good with such limitations.



Sarah Hobbs

"Untitled (overcompensation)"

## REVIEW

### "Sarah Hobbs: Does This Sound Like You?"

Through July 30. 10 a.m. 6 p.m.  
Tuesdays Saturdays. \$2,500-  
\$5,000+. Solomon Projects, 1037  
Monroe Drive, Atlanta. 404-875-7100,  
solomonprojects.com

**Verdict:** Hobbs shows us brilliant pictures of our inner lives.