

Waterworks Visual Arts Center in Salisbury, NC, Offers Winter Exhibits

The Waterworks Visual Arts Center in Salisbury, NC, is presenting its Winter 2010-2011 Exhibitions, with the theme, *Rethinking the Medium - Challenging the Boundaries*, which includes nine exhibits on view through February 12, 2011. The nine exhibits include: *Acrylic Paintings and Pastels*, featuring works by Walter Stanford of Kannapolis, NC, on view in the Norvell Gallery; *Textile Art/Embroidery*, featuring works by Elizabeth Leal of Greensboro, NC, and *Acrylic Paintings*, featuring works by Cindy Taplin of Clemmons, NC, on view in the Stanback Gallery Hall; *Terra Cotta, Red Earthenware Clay*, featuring works by Beth Tarkington of Marietta, GA, on view in the Osborne Gallery; *Fused Glass Sculpture*, featuring works by Syed Ahmad of Salisbury, NC, on view in the Woodson Gallery; *Acrylic Paintings*, featuring works by C.J. Calvin of Rockingham, NC, *Wood Turnings*, featuring works by Barry Russell of Kannapolis, NC, *Ceramics*, featuring works by Jenny Lou Sherburne of Bakersville, NC, & *Oil Paintings*, featuring work by Jane Woodward of Hickory, NC, on view in the Young People's Gallery; and *Sculptures* by Don Green on view in the Stanback Sensory Garden.

Rethinking the Medium features a wide variety of materials and approaches and is unified by the artists' desire to challenge the boundaries of their mediums.

Walter Stanford from Kannapolis, NC, is a regionally renowned painter and illustrator. His canvases defy conventional ideas of color and form in landscape. He says of his work, "I enjoy seeing things that I never knew were there... going out of one's way, or choosing different paths to follow for a while. The subjects I enjoy painting are usually like this. Whether it is an intimate mountain stream off the beaten path or a simple mundane task of a farmer, my job is to find these subjects and communicate something about them through my work."

"The mediums I presently use are acrylic, pastel, and a ballpoint pen for sketching," adds Stanford. "This allows me to enjoy the quick decisions one must make with acrylic and the softness of pastel. With every painting I work on, I know it is finished when it has that element I refer to as the sparkle, the right amount of detail and simplicity which properly communicates my vision of the subject."

The current exhibition, *Painting North Carolina's Century Farms*, is not just about the farm, but the farmer, his values, and his knowledge of the land and the animals. It is this person who makes the farm both productive and profitable, and truly represents what is good about America.

Syed Ahmad from Salisbury, NC, takes on startling depth and pictorial space in his hand-blown glass sculptures. He states, "In this new body of work, created specifically for Waterworks, I explore landscape as a theme. Distilling familiar landscape objects - mountains, hills, islands, rivers, trees, structures, etc. to abstract planes, I employ horizon and perspective lines as visual reference, color for forms and drama, and distinctive styles of presentation to enhance the experience of the work."

"I utilize the strengths of the glass medium, which are its reflectivity and translucency. Cutting glass sheets into graceful flowing lines and shapes, I create movement. Using different colors enables me to create temperature and mood. I assume the role of a collage artist working with materials at hand, cutting, trimming, and shaping glass sheets, laying, arranging, and overlapping transparent, opaque, and translucent glass."

Ahmad adds, "My method is improvisational. The glass I have at hand and the image in my mind will do their dance back and forth. The medium imposes its will as much as the artist does. Immersed in paradox, I allow for

intentional accidents and planned surprises. The specially coated dichroic glass's interesting properties allow me to stack the glass in many layers to achieve significant visual depth in an essentially two-dimensional piece."

Beth Tarkington from Marietta, GA, creates beautiful, concise ceramic forms that take on new life with her meticulous, intricately woven narrative paints that wind around her surfaces. She says, "This body of work, with all its landscapes and figures, speaks less to any specific scene or person and more to the discovery and recognition of this Place (Kairos) in us and how it connects us to others... common ground. In some way, we all belong to this earth, this common ground, and beyond that to the time and people who intersect it with us."

"In my world, animals like the golden dog and the horse represent the emotional side of life, while birds - the only animal that travels between heaven and earth - represent the soul. Trees are about being centered or grounded while still reaching. The moon is mystery, fireflies are childhood, and dragonflies are joy. The simple house form represents peace or safety and the Starbucks cup, slight indulgence, a little pleasure. And the red wagon is the vehicle for whatever we carry forward from our past!"

"I work with a common ground - terra cotta, red earthenware clay - natural, a little raw, a bit unrefined," adds Tarkington. "My surface work involves layering of slips, stains, underglazes, and glaze through the processes of wax resist, texturing, painting, slip trail drawing, and carving. This requires multiple firings. The words of poets find their way into my work literally and in the titles. There is a freedom, serenity, a sense of clarity that comes from being in the natural world... where I incubate ideas and work through challenges."

The six artists whose work will be on display in both the Young People's Gallery and the Stanback Gallery Hall speak of their artwork: C.J. Calvin offers the following, "My most recent work draws from the color palette and subject matter that the child in all of us can appreciate. I love art in all its forms, from abstract to surreal to realistic. I remember as a boy reading a comic book and wanting to do that kind of art when I grew up. Around that same time I attended my first art museum, marveling at the works of Picasso and Dali. Eventually, I would meld these two strong childhood inspirations into the style you see now."

"My technique is constantly evolving and my approach is often 'tongue-in-cheek'. I paint what makes me happy," says Calvin. "Often times I let the child inside manifest in my paintings of colorful and kind monsters, which has led to the creation of my most popular paintings, collectively entitled the *Monsterpaloosa* series. Sometimes I am inspired to create satirical, surreal or abstract art, but usually with the intention of moving the viewer to smile. In life, I am generally positive, so I tend to paint things in a feel-good motif. I love to celebrate life through my art. I want to capture you with simple joy. My biggest hope is that you enjoy my work, as much as I enjoy creating it."

Elizabeth Leal offers the following, "Art has great power. It is my profound belief that art transcends other human activities and that it is a source of humankind's broader comprehension of its past, present, and near future. Nurturing the senses of viewers and producers of art positively is one of its functions. I consider my work as representations of my experiences... interpretations of events and situations from the past and present, and my idealization of the future. The work also depicts my deepest feelings and emotions."

"In this ongoing series, *Nature and Spirit*, continued above on next column to the right

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I delve into notions of freedom, nostalgia for color, and desire to represent personal interpretations of life's intricacies through textile art/ embroidery," adds Leal. "These pieces are lush, and embody experiences of nature and the natural environment synthesized to their utmost reduction and materialized through thread, color, and shape. Each piece in this series is an homage to my mother, great aunt, and grandmother, who emphasized the pleasure in the aesthetic and the intrinsic value

continued on Page 23

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