

# *In Sight: Visions and Reflections*

## **An Exhibition Review by Loretann Gascard**

On September 2, an exhibition, “In Sight: Visions and Reflections,” opened at the Cunningham Gallery in the Jaffrey Civic Center; 40 Main Street, Jaffrey, NH. The exhibition’s curator, Barbara Danser, has brought together a group of eight artists whose works in her words display a “...combination of concept, creative energy and technical understanding.” As the exhibition’s title suggests, each work was chosen for its visual draw—our reaction to just the sight of it. But, then, there is also the “In.” (In)sight implies that we enter the meta-level of the artworks’ expressions—that place to where we are led; the point to where we are moved beyond the works’ attractiveness and into the place where the expressive core of the artwork resides. This exhibition offers a user-friendly road map for getting us to that place.

Upon entering the exhibition our sights turn to sculptures by James Rappa. In a work such as “Milestone,” we instantly see balance. However, we quickly realize that we are confronted with persistent imbalance as we are caught between the wielded and teetering form. The insight here resonates with the pull between the precariousness and the inevitability of rites of passage, that is, of milestones.



Barbara Danser’s paintings line two walls of this first room. Danser is neither shy in her titles, nor stingy in creating vast spaces into which she beckons us to look. With her diptych, “Third Nebula, Take a Right,” she leads us from a clearly defined picture plane into forever-and-ever spaces of black holes where organic bands dance (no pun within artist’s name intended) to reveal deep, sensual shadows which call out for exploration into the unknown.

In the second exhibition room, Kathleen Brennan’s sculptures dominate the center space. Her objects give us quite literally in-sight into the figures. In “Synthesis,” the bent knee of the figure breaks through the figurative surface, opening the figure to being nude and draped at the same time

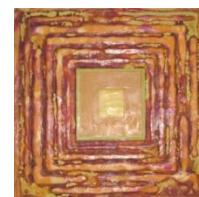


The second room’s wall presents works by Pam Tarbell and Earl Schofield.



Tarbell seems to be taming *Les Fauves*—that early 20<sup>th</sup> century art movement of “wild beasts.” However, we mustn’t be lulled by these seemingly lyrical landscapes. Lurking in their depths we find strikingly dynamic “wild” forms. This is clear in “Red Tree” in which an orange area near the center unabashedly breaks through the guise of serenity.

In his encaustic, “Yellow August Series No. 5,” Earl Schofield slices what he refers to, as “wounds” into the surface. In his own interpretation, he offers that this is “...a metaphor for the Euclidean and fractal geometry in the physical world and the ebb and flow of systems between chaos and order.”





In the third and final room of the exhibition, Bonnie Bennett's objects reveal the ever-growing place of ceramics in the realm of "high art." Although harkening back to primal and ancient roots, Bennett tilts her forms in, for example, "Three Knot Vase" and surprises with "Asymmetrical Lipped Bowl," thus solidifying her place as a modernist.

Jessie Pollock treats us to further examples of encaustic. One panel, "Poppies with Bronze Poppy Pod," offers an intriguing, multi-media twist. Here Pollock translates the patina on the bronze poppy pod into a wax surface which has been scraped into delicately hued planes.



Also in this third room of the exhibition, we encounter works by Maureen Ahern. Among her use of mirrors as fragmented mosaic and thickly textured, sensuously worked surfaces, there is one work here which because of its utter subtlety could be overlooked, and that would be a shame. This is "Tethered Dove." This multi-media work is at once formally exquisite and expressively daunting. In this sense it embodies the thrust of the *In Sight* exhibition. At the sight of it, it is simply beautiful. Yet it holds in its expression insight—the dove in the moment of mutilation caused by control.

It unavoidably follows—not to overdraw the language—that we as beholders gain an outlook from the insight which shifts our perspective. This result is the underpinning which makes this exhibition so well worth a visit.

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