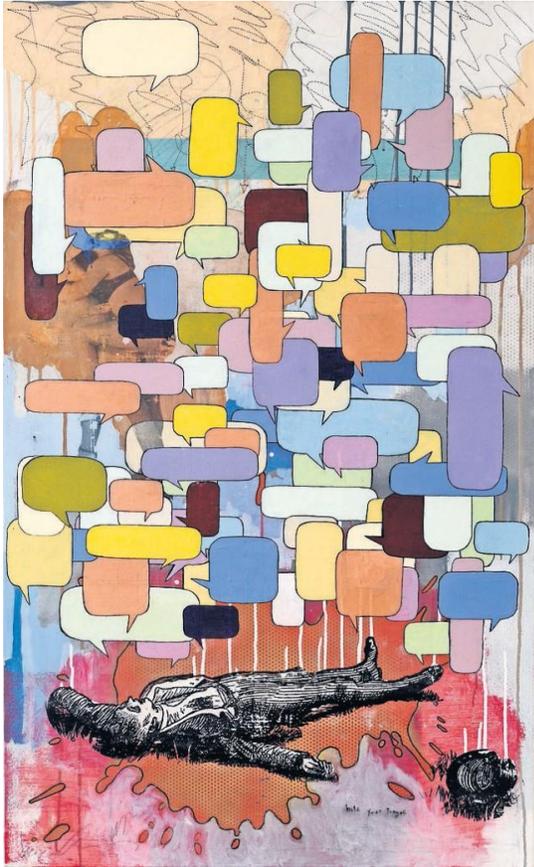


# 'Under Construction': 1 + 1 = 3?

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By Mary Gow



*One of Babelon Williams' pieces on SPA's third floor, "Bite Your Tongue" in acrylic, toner, pencil on paper on canvas. STEFAN HARD / STAFF PHOTO*

Wood bound with steel, a loop of thread almost floating between wood forms, glass and lathe — intriguing combinations of media come together in artwork at Studio Place Arts.

"Under Construction," the new exhibition in the Main Floor Gallery of SPA in Barre, features artwork that joins two or more dissimilar media, such that one plus one equals more than two. Assembled by SPA Executive Director Sue Higby and guest curator Mark Waskow, "Under Construction" continues to April 15.

Two new exhibitions are also featured in SPA's upper-floor galleries, "#nomophobia" and "Station to Station." James Secor's "#nomophobia" explores experiences with our phones. Nomophobia is a term used to describe anxiety from being out of mobile phone contact. "Station to Station" presents artwork by Art2D2 Industries and Babelon Williams. Bold, bright, and with imagery connecting to comic books and material of

popular culture, the show connects nicely to the Green Mountain Comic Expo coming to the Barre Civic Center April 1-2.

"I have always had an interest in collage, assemblage and constructions," said Waskow, an art collector and longtime director of Burlington's South End Art Hop. "There is a synergy when dissimilar media are combined into a single work of art. There is an additive effect — it's not linear but logarithmic. When someone has used media in an exceptional way to create a piece, the impact of that piece is amplified to the viewer."

With the variety of media in "Under Construction," this is a very three-dimensional show, filling the gallery with shapes, figures and color.



*A portion of James Secor's display of about 30 graphite sketches of the artist's own selfies that is part of his "#nomophobia" show on SPA's second floor. STEFAN HARD / STAFF PHOTO*

In "Building Bridges" by Rob Millard-Mendez, the wooden figure of a woman, equipped with a range of tools including a wrench, mallet, hook and pulley, has apparently slain a recumbent figure, lying at her feet — perhaps a demon. An athletic and feminine nude, with truss-like structures holding her wings, she wears fabulous high heels and an iconic pink hat. In Nicole Czaplinski's "Feeling the Void (is Full)," a single loop of thread stretches between two wall-mounted wooden frames. At first glance, it appears to be a sheet of glass, but as its delicate structure becomes clear, it draws the viewer into its space. In all four of Czaplinski's pieces in the show, lines of string create three-dimensional shapes.

"I construct three-dimensional thread drawings that hover between painting and sculpture," explains Czaplinski in her artist's statement, noting that with these lines of string, her work "references digital landscapes and 3D modeling."

“There is a quietness within the work as the sewn shapes levitate, taking on a volume that simultaneously reads as both empty and full.”

Rob Towne uses poplar and oak wood, glass mirror, paint, resin, pumice and assorted hardware in “Excavated Wall with Lacunae.” Two fragments of Roman portraits, seemingly exposed behind a lathe wall, look out at the viewer. The wall offers a multitude of layers, one overwritten in Arabic script, another with Byzantine motifs, a void with brickwork, and a mirror, offering a glimpse of the viewer’s reflection.

“‘Excavated Wall’ delves into what lies behind and beneath, into layers exposed and origins revealed,” Towne notes in his artist’s statement.

In “#nomophobia,” Secor, of Montpelier, considers our relationships with our digital devices through two bodies of work — his “Selfie Series” and paintings inspired by internet-based map perspective.

The pencil drawings in Secor’s “Selfie Series” are mostly self-portraits, drawn on smartphone-shaped and -sized paper, using his turned-off phone screen as a mirror. The thoughtful process of drawing a moment of expression contrasts with the instant images of a phone camera. At a station with pencils and paper, Secor encourages viewers to try their hand at selfie drawings.

In Secor’s paintings, viewers see landscapes inspired by memories or actual locales. Buildings, roads, children at play, trucks, coastlines are seen and imagined from a “Google Earth” perspective.

“‘Nomophobia’ examines our enamored of screens and mobile devices. Just how does this screen time impact how we interact with others, the world and ourselves? This show addresses both real moments in time, from that familiar satellite view, and the idea that we are spending more time on screens and less time admiring anything else,” Secor explains.

Two artists working under the names Art2D2 Industries and Babelon Williams bring a vibrant and sometimes slightly unsettling selection of work to “Station to Station.” With collage, familiar images, and Apophenia (perceiving patterns or connections in meaningless data), “Station to Station” has a comic book-like energy, with a thought-provoking and often witty edge.

#### ■ STUDIO PLACE ARTS

Studio Place Arts presents “Under Construction,” “#nomophobia” and “Station to Station,” March 18-April 15, at its galleries at 201 North Main St., Barre. Hours are: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday – Friday; noon to 4 p.m. Saturday, and March 28 and 29; admission is free; call 802-479-7069, or go online to [www.studioplacearts.com](http://www.studioplacearts.com).