

Mold Makers': SPA explores art from the mold

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A bronze figure with a woman's serene face, a sleeping dove, detailed amulet-like silver jewelry — each of these works of art had a mold in its creation. For many sculptures, the artist's process involves making molds and models as steps toward the final piece.

This week, "Mold Makers," an exhibit with works by 17 artists, opens at Barre's Studio Place Arts. This group show features artwork made from and related to molds.

Two shows also open in SPA's upstairs galleries. On the second floor, works by 30 student artists are presented in "Five Years of Lo-fi — Works by Norwich University Students." The third-floor gallery features "Hidden" — a two-part show of drawings, sculpture and paintings by Theodore Ceraldi.

The range of sculpture in "Mold Makers" is impressive — the shared connection of these diverse pieces to molds makes it informative as well. In the gallery are stone sculptures, castings in media including glass and resin, cast bronze pieces, clay working models, plaster models and foundry photographs. Several molds are also displayed with the finished sculptures.

Mold making has special relevance in Barre because of its role in stonecutting, explained SPA Executive Director Sue Higby. Granite sculptors use clay models, molds and cast plaster models.

In "Mold Makers," clay working models by Barre's Giuliano Cecchinelli show the artistry and technique of this early step. Cecchinelli's "Perry Como" even includes the little metal shims that define lines where the mold, when built around it, divides.

“This is not intended to be a survey course, but the show hopefully will pique curiosity into examining this mold making process,” said Higby.

Jim Sardonis, of Randolph, has four “Sleeping Dove” pieces displayed. From his “Sleeping Dove,” a 1993 marble sculpture, he made a mold; from the mold he went on to make pieces in resin and glass — the same dove, but with the qualities of the different media.

A series of sculptures by Leslie Fry, of Winooski, illustrates how one work leads to others by modifying molds and materials. “Nesting,” a 2010 bronze with silver patina of a figure with a woman’s head and nesting birdlike body of hands, was the first in her series. She made a reinforced rubber mold of that sculpture, then created new pieces, embellishing and redesigning along the way. Her series includes these related pieces in bronze, cast stone, resin and variations of resin.

Kerin Rose, of Burlington, makes silver jewelry made with the lost-wax technique, an ancient process. Accompanying her pieces are materials explaining the process — including samples of the beeswax from her sister’s apiary that she uses to create the detailed carvings for her art.

SPA’s second-floor gallery features photographs, paintings, drawings and computer-designed works by 30 undergraduates in “Five Years of Lo-fi — Works of Norwich University Students.”

Jason Galligan-Baldwin has been teaching art at Norwich for five years. The studio art classes there are mostly introductory level, and Galligan-Baldwin encourages students to experiment with media and techniques. Through their studio work, the undergraduates have created pieces that are “strong, honest and expressive,” Galligan-Baldwin notes.

Kaitlin Esche’s “Poem Tree 2012” comprises two pairs of black-and-white photographs. In them, lines of poetry, cursive words written in wire, hanging like clothesline from a tree.

Emily Mack’s “Self Portrait, 2012,” a compelling composition in black and blue, could be screen or block printed, but was created with Adobe Illustrator.

Justin Pearson’s “Texture Study 2009” is the one oil painting in the show. With complementary colors, oranges and greens, Pearson uses nontraditional application of paint — brush strokes, ridges, cracked glazing and incised lines.

Both parts of Theodore Ceraldi’s show “Hidden” share its theme. One part — drawings, photographs of sculptures, and one spectacular wood and beeswax sculpture — belongs to his “Seven Deadly Sins” series. Landscapes, with their form and mood, make up the other portion of the show.

Part of the “Hidden” quality of the “Seven Deadly Sins” is that, except for the sculpture “Wrath,” they are not labeled. It is up to the viewer to look at the graphite drawings and small photographs to interpret and find the six others. Hint: They are lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, envy and pride.

These landscapes in Ceraldi’s show, Higby said, “correspond with his idea of ‘Hidden’ because

there are things going on within the paintings that a viewer would need to spend some time contemplating as they are looking. For instance, in one landscape painting perhaps they will see ballet dancers, in another perhaps they will see a female nude in repose — and then the viewer might wonder, ‘Why did I think that?’ But perhaps there are strong reasons that the viewer sees that.”

“ I think it’s a beautiful show. I really love the idea that he’s reinforcing the need for any viewer to spend some time thinking, contemplating and maybe reacting to the work,” said Higby.

Studio Place Arts

Studio Place Arts presents “Mold Makers,” a group show including a variety of artwork made from and related to the mold making process, through April 6 at SPA, 201 N. Main St. in Barre. Also on exhibit are: “Five Years of Lo-fi — Works by Norwich University Students” (Second Floor Gallery) and “Hidden” by Theodore Ceraldi (Third Floor Gallery). Hours are: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, noon to 4 p.m. Saturday; for information, call 479-7079 or go online to studioplacearts.com. A public opening reception will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 8; the closing reception is 2:30 to 4 p.m. Saturday, April 6.