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## Studio Place Arts: 'Two by Two' more than the sum of its parts

by Mary Gow



Pairs of people; pairs of animals; a pair of crullers; pairs of paintings; pairs of sculptures; pairs of artists — many pairs, even pairs of pairs, are at the Main Gallery of Studio Place Arts in Barre.

“Pairing is a concept we are all familiar with,” said Sue Higby, SPA’s executive director. “The overall pairing idea is that one plus one is going to be greater than two.”

“Two By Two,” SPA’s spring show, opens this week. The exhibit explores pairs with related objects, double portraits, diptychs, and artist collaborations. SPA’s Third Floor Gallery features two exhibits — “Specimens” by Jason Galligan-Baldwin and “BabyProof” by Jenna Ann Kelly. In the Second Floor Gallery, a selection of artworks is available through SPA’s annual silent auction. Rather than an opening reception, the new exhibits will be celebrated at the Big Arty SPA Happening (BASH), on May 10.

“One way to think about ‘Two By Two’ is to recall that throughout our lifetime we are paired,” said Higby, noting that from playmates, to school and work partners, and romantic partners, two can become more than the sum of the parts.

“As you look around the show, you see that some artists have created diptychs, two related works of art,” said Higby. “Another thing you will see is a pairing of process — a negative paired with a print made from that negative, both works of art in their own right. There are some pairings of artists — two artists working side by side on the same idea.”

The subjects of several works are pairs.

“Two Vermont Couples,” by Braintree photographer Jack Rowell, is a pair of pairs. Each of the photographs portrays a couple — one young couple, the other more senior. In both, the magic of their relationships is evident. Rowell’s portraits give us a glimpse of their closeness in spirit.

Pairs of elephants are subjects of two works by Montpelier artist Douglas Aja. In Aja’s bronze sculpture, “Echo & Calf,” the two stroll close together; in his sepia photograph, a tiny calf snuggles against the mother, reaching out to her with its little trunk.

Twos are explored in several small steel sculptures by Torin Porter of Glover. In “The Space Between,” Glover has two deer, some distance apart, connected through their antlers.

“This is such a dynamic sculpture, where the two pairs of hooves are raised by the force of the antlers meeting between them,” said Higby. “The title refers to that kinetic energy that happens between two living beings. It’s raw — they are in the midst, perhaps, of a battle over a beau.”

Michael Heffernan of Newbury painted “Double Cruller,” two giant fluffy French crullers with chocolate icing and blue sprinkles. “Shadow,” by Heidi Broner of Montpelier, faces a construction worker and his pair, projected on a wall in front of him.

Some pairs in the show deal with process. Matthew Ramada of Essex has two pairs in the show, “Gauge Transform” and “Dismay.” Each pair features a large acrylic negative and a cyanotype print made from it.

“Clippers,” a mixed media installation by Janet Van Fleet of Cabot, comprises pairs of garden clippers and figures inspired by them.

Of the diptychs in the show, some are abstract, others have accompanying narratives.

Damariscotta C. Miller of Barre was inspired by “Imagining what goes on behind the doors of the Victorian houses that surround Currier Park,” for “The East Street Diptych.” “I thought of the warm lights against colorful walls, personal spaces behind curtains and windowpanes turned on to music and conversation. The inner sanctity of these spaces is reminiscent of the devotional diptychs that were once handled for their essential meaning — mindfulness of the inner sanctuary within each of us, personal, warm, safe, and open to thoughts.”

“Two By Two” features many thoughtful, creative, and unexpected pairs. The theme is a wonderful fit with the season of April showers and spring flowers.

Upstairs, two shows are exhibited in SPA’s Third Floor Gallery. “BabyProof” by Jenna Ann Kelly, a personal and thought provoking installation, includes photographs, sculpture, and excerpts from her dream journal relating to childbearing. The photographs in Jason Galligan-Baldwin’s “Specimens” examine very small objects — insects in specimen bottles, tiny toys, a piece of wire that takes on a different presence when seen up close.

“These items, over time, have become source material for my artwork ... they are reminders (to

me) of how things, however slightly mundane, however manufactured (by nature or man), purchased, found or abandoned, are beautiful,” explains Galligan Baldwin in his artist’s statement.

## **Studio Place Arts**

Studio Place Arts presents “Two by Two” (Main Floor Gallery), through May 25; Silent Auction to benefit SPA programs (Second Floor Gallery), through May 10; “Specimens” by Jason Galligan-Baldwin and “BabyProof” by Jenna Ann Kelly (Third Floor Gallery), through May 25, at SPA, 201 N. Main St. in Barre; call 802-479-7069, or go online to [www.studioplacearts.com](http://www.studioplacearts.com).

## **SPA BASH**

Studio Place Arts will present its annual BASH (Big Arty SPA Happening) 7 to 9 p.m. Friday, May 10. Get in the groove with great eats, a great silent auction and great music by The Mellow Yellow Band. Award-winning wines will be served by the Grand View Winery (cash bar). Tickets are \$15 advance. \$25 day of event; call 802-479-7069.