

Encountering Yellow': SPA celebrates spring's optimism

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By Mary Gow



Jeb Wallace-Brodeur / Staff Photo Carolyn Enz Hack: "A Fair to Remember - Tunbridge, Vermont, 2016"

Sunshine, sunflowers, goldfinches, rubber ducks, school buses, a blast of blonde hair — yellow grabs attention. High energy and optimistic, yellow lifts spirits.

Everything's coming up yellow in the Main Floor Gallery at Barre's Studio Place Arts beginning this week. "Encountering Yellow," featuring work by more than 30 artists opened Tuesday and continues through May 29.

This sunny saffron show is accompanied by "Vermont Landscape Through Time," a solo exhibition by Carolyn Enz Hack in the Third Floor Gallery.

Artwork and crafts donated for the annual silent auction to benefit SPA programs are in the Second Floor Gallery. The auction is one of SPA's leading fundraisers — bidding has opened and continues to May 13 at SPA's annual BASH (Big Arty SPA Happening). With the Main Floor

Gallery's xanthic extravaganza, the BASH features live music by The Mellow Yellow Band — a local '60s & '70s tribute group.

"The color yellow is all about verve," said Sue Higby, SPA's executive director. "Whether there's a tiny glimpse of the color in the artwork or a dramatic splash, 'Encountering Yellow' illustrates the energy and positive qualities of my favorite color."

"Our exhibit gives a nod to how refreshed we feel in early spring when the sun shines late in the day and the forsythias, daffodils and other flowers emerge around our neighborhoods," said Higby.

From big bold fields of yellow to soft folds of ivory fabric to unexpected glimpses of gold, the artists have brought an incredible range of artwork to SPA, all featuring the theme color.

Yellow blasts out of SPA onto Main Street with Janet van Fleet's untitled lampshade installation. Van Fleet, of Cabot, has arranged two sets of identical lampshades — shades she collected in New Orleans. One set of the inverted shades is in the SPA front window, the others over the door. The lampshades are like megaphones, beckoning passersby to come in. The truncated cones are pale at the outer edges, almost white, more intensely yellow farther in — shades in shades of yellow. Standing with them is a little yellow wooden house.

Just inside, visitors are greeted with a set of brilliant small artworks. "Three Thoughts" by Ted Ceraldi, of Craftsbury, features blocks of fabulous radiant yellows around a tiny black-and-white square with tightly lettered words. With close examination, the three thoughts emerge. "Yellow Squash Blossom," a three-part photograph by Amalia Alena Veralli, bursts to life. From its tight bud in the first portion of the photograph, it unfurls into full-blossomed splendor.

An acrylic painting on wood by Tom Batey of Chelsea takes yellow in a totally different and witty direction. A young man with a bright shock of blonde hair looks astonished. A cartoon-style speech balloon proclaiming "ow!" comes from his open mouth. The title written beneath him confirms the pun — "They Told Me to Yell ow!"

Sunlight streaming into SPA brings out the texture of collage and encaustic works. "Goldfinch Sunflower," a watercolor collage by Nancy Tomczak of Milton delicately brings together the yellow bird and flower. In "The SPA of RA" she brings the Egyptian sun god out in the midday light.

Several artworks highlight yellow in black and white settings. In "Yellow Shirt" by Heidi Broner of Montpelier the figure wearing a slicker-yellow T-shirt stands out among his companions at the ocean's edge.

The range of yellows in the show is delightful. In "caution" by Michael Smith of Underhill, lemons, rubber ducks, and bright yolks in fried eggs come together in the familiar triangular traffic sign shape beneath a dangling banana peel. "Laundreyem pillowcaseum" by Frederick Rudi, of Marshfield brings out a

soft side of yellow. In the large abstract "Continuum" by Carleen Zimbalatti of Montpelier, yellow and springtime green illuminate the space around them.

On SPA's third floor, "Vermont Landscape Through Time," by Enz Hack of Thetford Center, viewers are drawn into fresh consideration of our surroundings. Enz Hack brings together two-dimensional painting and three-dimensional sculpture in looking at Vermont landscapes from multiple perspectives. The paintings-plus connect to specific places — "Five Bridges, Six Dams – Springfield, Vermont," "A Fair to Remember – Tunbridge, Vermont," "Cellar Holes and High Speed Lines – Vershire, Vermont," and "Confluence, Sidetrack, Interchange – White River Junction, Vermont," among them.

Her paintings have an aerial map-like quality, of looking at land, water and features. Some elements in these abstracted landscapes anchor the paintings to their sites — the White and Connecticut rivers, for example. Enz Hack delves into the energy of change in the landscapes.

Studio Place Arts

Studio Place Arts presents "Encountering Yellow," through May 9, at the gallery, 201 N. Main St. in Barre. Also on exhibit are, on the second floor, a silent auction to benefit SPA programs (April 26-May 13); and, on the third floor, Carolyn Enz Hack's "Vermont Landscape through Time." Hours are: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Friday; noon to 4 p.m. Saturday; call 802-479-7069, or go online to www.studioplacearts.com. BASH (Big Arty Spa Happening) will be held 7 to 9 p.m. Friday, May 13; tickets are \$25 day of event, \$15 in advance