

'Rock Solid XVII': Unique expressiveness, from stone to paper

VISUAL ART REVIEW

By Mary Gow

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Stefan Hard / Staff Photo

Barre sculptor Giuliano Cecchinelli's "Gliding" in Barre granite, 2017.

Rock, scissors, paper – all three are winners at Studio Place Arts this fall.

With rock in Studio Place Arts' Main Floor, beautifully composed scissor-cut collages in the Second Floor Gallery, and intricate paper creations in the Third Floor Gallery, that familiar triad takes on fresh creative form.

"Rock Solid XVII," SPA's outstanding annual exhibition showcasing stone sculptures and assemblages by area artists opens this week. A tradition since 2000, "Rock Solid" offers viewers a look at the stunning and remarkably diverse work being done today in this most durable medium by Barre granite carvers and other artists. A public opening reception will be held 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Friday.

"Rock Solid" is accompanied by two solo exhibitions. "Amended" features stitched collages by Athena Petra Tasiopoulos, recipient of the 2016-2017 SPA Studio Residency. "We're All Fine Here" features contemporary paper-cut artwork by Molly Bosley.

"Barre is heavy in stone this fall," said SPA executive director Sue Higby, noting that along with "Rock Solid XVII," there are two further rock related art experiences in downtown Barre.

"New England Stone Portraits," with paintings and pastels of stones and rock features by René Schall, is presented at the Morse Block Deli. The Art Stroll, a self-guided trek, highlights 11 public sculptures created from granite from 1899's "Robert Burns" to 2016's "Mr. Pickwick," "Jack-in-the-Box Bike Rack," and "Tree of a Kind," and a map is available at SPA.

From subjects inspired by nature to portraits to classical to abstract, and much more, the diversity of artwork in "Rock Solid" is dazzling. A marble caterpillar bridges the gap between two stalks in Kevin Donegan's "Crossing." Persephone's duality is considered in Paul Calter's two-sided "Persephone II." George Kurjanowicz's sensual "Torso" glows in Carrara marble. Don Ramey's "Portrait of Zoë" captures the youth and delicate features of a young girl.

Besides the breadth of subjects and creativity, this year's "Rock Solid" also features an incredibly rich variety of stone. Red Colorado alabaster, a recently discovered blue Danby marble, Barre gray granite, flawlessly white Carrara marble, and river rock are among the materials transformed by the artist.

Sean Williams' "River Spirit" trout emerges from rough block of Florentine Blue Danby marble, thrusting itself up out of the stone. Jeanne Cariati's "Heartspill," an open vessel in deep red alabaster polished to silky smoothness, follows the grain of the stone. The serene face of Cariati's "Dreaming Woman," in Blue Mist alabaster, is peaceful in repose.

With its wings outstretched, the dove in Giuliano Cecchinelli's "Gliding," in Barre Gray Granite, may be lighting on a knob of wood. The dove's position can be changed, suggesting other moments. In John Matusz's "Cascade," a huge striated river rock hangs in the air from a seemingly light steel structure, defying its gravitationally directed path.

Three artists associated with the Carving Studio and Sculpture Center in West Rutland are among the artists exhibiting in "Rock Solid" for the first time. "Navel," an evocative minimalist piece by Carlos Dorrien, who is on the faculty at the Center and at Wellesley College. Evan Morse's "Uncovered," a gracefully arched nude holding a flowing fabric or robe, is cameo-like in its translucence. The surface of Taylor Apostol's deeply carved almost organic "Shrinking Mass/Spreading" of Danby marble is colored with olive oil, pigment, and china marker.

During her year as SPA Studio Residence, Tasiopoulos focused on her "Amended" collages. A longtime collector of found photographs, particularly antique and

anonymous photographs, brings these unknown souls to life in her mixed media work. In her collages, with her pale but warm palette, they have a dreamlike quality.

In this series, Tasiopoulos has taken her work formerly with paper into fabric. Her subjects are mostly women. The fabric and stitching of her work connect to their femininity. Tufts of tiny pompoms and delicate rolls of cloth add texture and whimsy to her pieces.

I want them to feel like little whispers, very calm, like memories from the distant past," said Tasiopoulos.

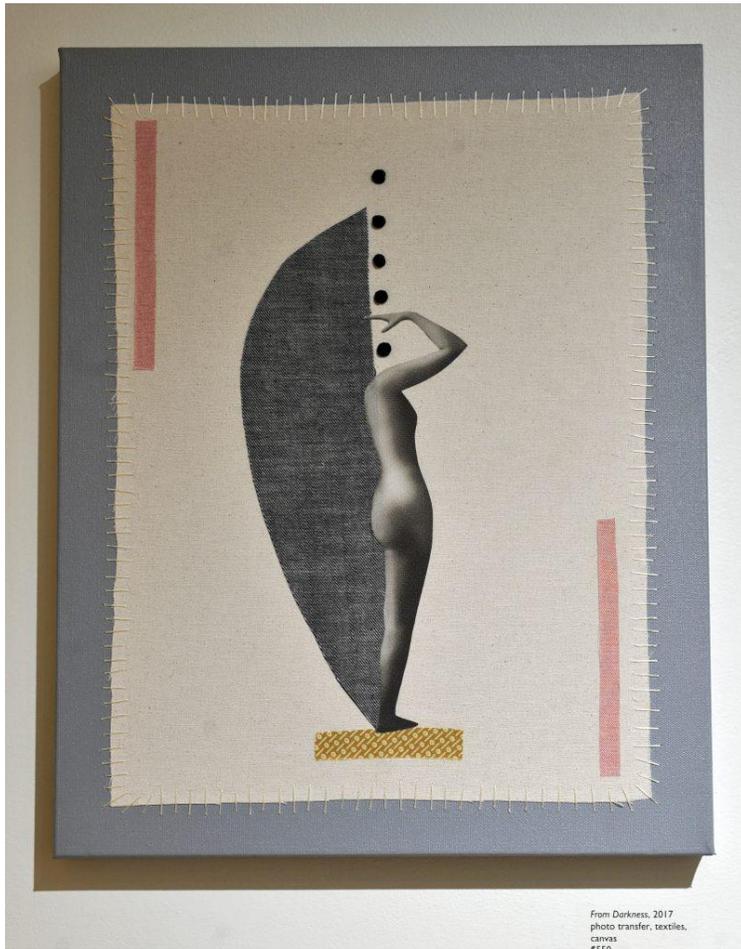
The detail and fabulous composition of Bosley's artwork take paper-cutting to a new level in "We're All Fine Here." Several expansive works stretch across the walls, precisely trimmed from black paper – honeycombs, a cascade of kitchen chairs, tempting desserts and more.

Along with the tiny forms and patterns, figures also people her work – nurses, young men, climbers and others. The details are stunning up close, but the compositions come together from a bit of distance.

"There is a tangible presence of hands in my artwork, meaning, it is very obviously handled, touched, dirtied and stepped on. It contains the imprint of the instrument that crafted it. There is an awareness of the connection to humans and the mementos they possess. I want to create an art that is arresting, yet familiar, like a memento you find tucked away in between the pages of an old book," says Bosley in her artist's statement.

Studio Place Arts

Studio Place Arts presents "Rock Solid XVII," Sept. 19-Nov. 4, its annual exhibit of stone sculptures and assemblages by area artists, at 201 N. Main St., Barre. Also on exhibit are: "Amended," stitched collages by Athena Tetra Tasiopoulos, in the Second Floor Gallery; and "We're All Fine Here," paper-cut artwork by Molly Bosley, in the Third Floor Gallery. 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. An opening reception will be held 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 22.



Stefan Hard / Staff Photo

Barre artist Athena Petra Tasiopoulos' "From Darkness" in photo transfer, textiles, and canvas, 2017. The piece is part of her "Amended" show on the second floor gallery.



Stefan Hard / Staff Photo

Hinesburg sculptor Kevin Donegan's "Crossing" in limestone and Vermont marble, 2012.



*Stefan Hard / Staff Photo
South Randolph sculptor Carlos Dorrien's "Navel" in granite, 2010.*



Stefan Hard / Staff Photo

Molly Bosley's "Atomic City" papercut is one of several of her large-scale papercuts on display on the third floor in her "We're All Fine Here" show.