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Visual Art Review

## ‘Eye Spy’ at SPA: Viewing from both sides of the art

By Mary Gow, Arts Correspondent

*The eyes have it at Studio Place Arts this summer — wide eyes, sly eyes, watching eyes, hidden eyes, eyes of predators and prey.*



Images L to R: *Gaze* by Athena Petra Tasiopoulos, *Argus Ring* by Rob Millard-Mendez (Jeb-Wallace Brodeur / Staff photo).

“Eye Spy,” an exhibition focused on the eye, opened at Studio Place Arts last week and continues in the Main Floor Gallery through Aug. 23.

The show features work of 29 artists.

“Seriality: Artwork by Lisa Myers,” in SPA’s Second Floor Gallery, features mixed media pieces based on old family photographs, exploring sibling relationships. In the Third Floor Gallery, “Orah Moore: Everyday, Someone – 365 Days in Black & White,” Moore’s visual diary of black-and-white

iPhone photographs takes viewers through an entire year with photographs of people Moore is close to and encountered through 2018.

“We have always liked the idea of being visually stimulated, and eyes themselves are beautiful and very expressive. This topic seemed perfect for the summer season here when we tend to have many families visiting,” explained Sue Higby, SPA’s executive director.

“There are surreal works. There are tender works. There are funny pieces. There are a lot of variations that make a very rich show,” she said.

For families visiting SPA, groups of artwork as well as individual pieces may invite intergenerational conversation. Several pieces near the entry have an “I Spy” quality — finding the hidden eye or considering pictographs and abstracted images accompanying eyes.



(Above: *I Think I've Had Enough* by Mark Parent)

In a group of animal paintings, viewers see birds, mammals, amphibians and others close up. Some are so close that it may take a minute or a glance at the label to identify the creature.

Linda Mirabile’s “Brown Pelican” peers out with a beady eye. Rodney Lowe’s “Cheetah” looks straight ahead with the forward eyes of a predator. Lowe’s “Frog” has the eyes of prey, set back to look to the

sides and see who is coming. Nancy Tomczak’s “Untitled Cat,” may have its eye half closed, but the sliver of its pupil reveals its attention.



(Above: *November: A Month of Forgetting* by Cecelia Kane)

In three photographs in her “Zoomorphics” series, Shelby Meyerhoff is model, painter and photographer. With detailed face-paint, Meyerhoff’s face is her canvas, her eye peering out from it.

“I transform my appearance using body paint and photograph myself as different creatures from the natural world. Animals, plants, fungi can be found in my work. I believe that connecting to nature is fundamental to the human experience,” Meyerhoff said in her artist’s statement.

“The role of gender is also central to this project. Women’s bodies have been treated in fine art and advertising as objects onto which different meanings and motives are projected,” she said noting that through her approach as subject and artist, “I take artistic control of how my body and self are projected.”

Torn and cut printed material, magazine images, come together in Arthur Schaller's "Mechanical Eye" series. Look closely and see the mechanics — ropes, pulleys, cables, hitches.



(Above: *Lover's Eye Lockets* by Luciana Frigerio)

In each of Luciana Frigerio's "Lover's Eye Lockets," a single beautifully rendered eye looks out from a watch casing. As one readily recognizes the eyes of those closest to us, there is a lovely intimacy to these tiny artworks, as though their subjects are there and watching out for the bearer.

"Seriality," the title of Lisa Myers solo show in SPA's Second Floor Gallery, refers to sibling relationships, how individuals define themselves amid the group. For "Seriality," Myers looked to old family photographs of her grandmother with her sisters and brother.

"The meaning of subtle body gestures, whose hand is on whose, whose arm encircles whom, the

change in expression it renders, the sudden softening of facial features ..." all express these sibling dynamics, Myers notes.

Myers, who has been an art therapist for 35 years, uses a detailed multi-step process to create these dry-point prints with chin-collé, watercolor and ink.

For Orah Moore's "Everyday, Someone" series, she took black-and-white photographs of people with her iPhone X every day for an entire year. Many started as strangers — a man fishing in Cancun, the owners of a barbecue joint in Texas. Many are friends, family members, neighbors, others in the central Vermont community. The project started as a way for the photographer to get to know her new phone.

Embarking on the project, Moore noted, "My added personal challenge was that I wanted the photos to be as culturally, ethnically, and occupationally diverse as possible. This would become a visual journey of my year. Who would cross my path?"

Every photograph offers a moment in her subjects' lives. There is an openness and ease in all of the images. Not one has a posed quality. Each image tells a story, and to supplement it, as viewers will want to know more of the story, Moore has a notebook with a brief account of her time with each day's subject.

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