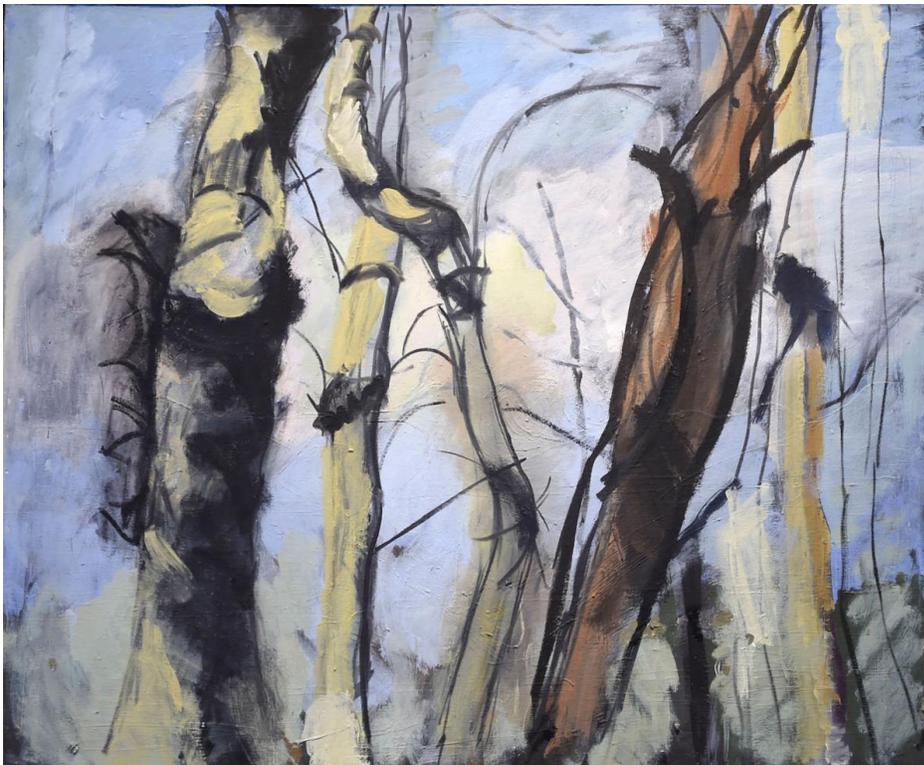


Studio Place Arts' 'Celebrate!'

Top artists offer their best for the holidays

by Mary Gow Arts Correspondent

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"Looking Up" by Juliana Cassino Fechter at the new ARTE at AR Gallery in Barre. Jeb Wallace-Brodeur / Staff photo

As Barre's Studio Place Arts wraps up its 20th-anniversary year, how perfect that 2020 concludes with SPA's annual "Celebrate!" exhibition, the first exhibition of a new partnership ARTE at AR, and a witty tiny transformational show in its telephone booth Quick Change Gallery.

"Celebrate!" SPA's annual members' exhibition, fills all three galleries and the classroom at the art center. Art and craft created by over 80 SPA members are featured in the show, an annual opportunity for one-of-a kind gift shopping. "Celebrate!" runs to Dec. 29, can be viewed in person during open hours, by appointment for private viewing, or online.

ARTE at AR, just down the block at Alimentari Roscini (AR Market), takes viewers outdoors with breathtaking moments in nature and abstracted landscapes. Paintings by Juliana Cassino Fechter, Gabriel Tempesta and Charles Ryerson are exhibited in this inaugural show in Barre's new artisanal market and home of Vermont Salumi. AR Market's airy layout is well suited to showing art — the long gallery wall and effective lighting allow for viewing from a distance or close up.

At "Celebrate!" the SPA galleries burst with color and variety.

"The annual members show at SPA provides everyone with a chance to select the artwork they'd like to share with the world, say, a new direction or different scale," said SPA Executive Director Sue Higby. "The show has always demonstrated the concentration of talent in our region,"

Ornaments to paintings, heirloom rolling pins and ceramics to collage and prints — with 80 participating members, the range is spectacular.



Rolling pins by Daniel Gleason at the Studio Place Arts annual member show. Jeb Wallace-Brodeur / Staff photo

A giant — really giant — fluffy fabric Scott bathroom tissue roll by Mary Jo Krowlewski, and hand-painted silk face masks, lined with cotton or linen, by Maggie Neale, speak to this unusual year.

Austin Furtak-Cole, awarded SPA's 2020-21 Studio Residency, is among the exhibiting painters. A large pink hand, nails painted red, a blue disc held between two fingers, fills the paper in his "Trix."

The SPA Studio Residency Program, Furtak-Cole is the sixth recipient, provides an emerging artist with a small private studio at SPA for eleven months to develop a new body of work for exhibition.

“Quick Changes” at the Quick Change Gallery, an up-cycled phone booth on SPA’s second floor, brings to mind a well-known phone-booth frequenter. Joe John’s painted movable panels in the booth invite viewers in on the change, perhaps from mild-mannered to superhuman.

“ARTE at AR” continues SPA’s tradition of bringing art and viewers together in the community, not only inside its own galleries. These collaborative and innovative initiatives include the Art Stroll and exhibitions at Morse Block Deli.

“We’ve been a catalyst for local artists and other creatives in our region since we opened our doors,” Higby said. “Teaming up with venues like the AR Market and Morse Block Deli is a natural, because their business models are targeted at supporting food producers and makers in our region. It’s a much-needed multiplier effect for our local economy, to be sure.”

ARTE at AR is a beautiful start to this new relationship.

Fechter of Montpelier takes her viewers to the trees. Graceful and rugged lines of their trunks stand out against sky and forest including in her evocative “Old Copper Birch Tree” and “Looking Up.”

Abstracted landscapes including “River Bend” and “Cold Brook” by Ryerson, of Plainfield, convey the quiet but thrilling beauty of a secluded waterway.

In Tempesta’s “Ermine on the Run,” the sleek white subject flies through the air, fluffy meal clenched in its mouth, as a chickadee flies off in the opposite direction. This black-and-white painting, with startling detail of predator and prey against a more impressionistic background, captures the pulse-racing moment of the encounter.



“Ermine on the Run” by Gabriel Tempesta at the new ARTE at AR Gallery in Barre.
Jeb Wallace-Brodeur / Staff photo

“I leave out the color in my paintings in order to focus on composition, form and contrast and to engage in a more simple and direct creative process,” says Tempesta, of Wolcott, in his artist’s statement on his website.

Along with the ermine, Tempesta’s paintings at Alimentari Roscini include another wildlife encounter of bobcat and partridge, “Butterfly View” of wildflowers, and “The Raven’s Yard” with eponymous bird and weathered farmstead.

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