

Visual Art Review

‘One + One Is More than Two’: Vermont artists think in multiples

By Mary Gow Arts Correspondent

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Matthew J. Peake: “Overlook #19 Shadow Play” Jeb Wallace-Brodeur / Staff photo

Tiny blue forget-me-nots, golden black-eyed Susans, bright white daisies — a profusion of flowers festoon the front of Studio Place Arts’ Main Gallery. The flowers, hundreds of photographed blooms, drape down from the ceiling in gentle curves.

The blooms of Marcie Scudder’s “My Mother’s Garden” are two-sided photographs, cut into triangular and semicircular pieces, folded and stitched together in hexagonal patterns — somewhat like a quilt. Just as in the garden, up close the individual blooms are exquisite. Together and abstracted by their rearrangement in Scudder’s work, they’re a summer experience.

“My Mother’s Garden” is among the artworks by 27 artists in the exhibition “One + One Is Greater than Two” at Barre’s Studio Place Arts through June 24. The show features works depicting multiples, patterns and relationships in a variety of media — acrylic and oil painting, resin sculpture, wool yarn needle punch, cyanotype, wood sculpture, collage, artists’ books and more.

Upstairs at SPA, in the Third Floor Gallery, “2nd Tuesday: A 30-Year Conversation About Art” presents work by members of the Art Group, professional and widely exhibited Vermont artists who first came together in 1994. Currently with eight artist members — Cheryl Betz and Alexandra Bottinelli are from the founding group — they meet monthly to share their work in progress and discuss issues in the arts.



Arthur Schaller, “Drones Over Coffee” Jeb Wallace-Brodeur / Staff photo

In the “2nd Tuesday” exhibition, each artist has an older work from early in the group’s history, and a new larger piece, allowing viewers to see some of the artists’ changes through the years. Their next monthly meeting, 12:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 13, is in the SPA classroom and is open to the public.

In the Second Floor Gallery, “Art it Up!” is SPA’s annual silent auction. All proceeds of sales of this donated art benefit SPA programs.



Stephany Komen Hasse: “Art Blocks II”, Jeb Wallace-Brodeur / Staff photo

Artists featured in “One + One Is Greater than Two” are almost all Vermont-based. Sue Higby, executive director of SPA, said, “This is a beautiful show and a fine example of the talents that you see here around our region.”

“This is a show that celebrates unity. The world has more divisiveness today than I can remember. This show celebrates that people can come together and create things that are even more together than they are alone,” said Higby.

“One + One” relationships are central to several artists’ works.

Frederick Rudi, of Marshfield, draws viewers into the curves and shadows of two pieces of unadorned cotton canvas — one pale pink, one light blue — in his diptych “Double Portrait #10 Duck,” acrylic on canvas. In each of the pair, the fabric seems loosely fitted into the frame, light reflecting from its undulation. You can practically feel the surface of the sturdy smooth material. Stand back — even down the SPA hallway — to see the pair from a distance as well as up close.



Leslie Roth: “Cessation”, Jeb Wallace-Brodeur / Staff photo

Jeffrey Cooper, of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, brings together two figures, one perhaps avian, the other bulkier with megafauna-like legs. In pearwood, black locust and walnut, the figures stand close together but separated, in contrasting wood and finish. Their relationship invites consideration in the aptly titled “Conversation or Not 3.”

Multiples are central to many of the artworks.



Amy Schachter: "Party of Twelve", Jeb Wallace-Brodeur / Staff photo

Four eggs — one of each the Southern Brown Kiwi, Great Awk, Mako and Great Bustard — glow in four panels in Berlin artist Linda Mirabile's "Species in Peril." Each has its unique shape and speckles. A strand of red yarn loops around each one, linking them. These eggs, that should have the promise of new chicks, are identified with their species' status noted, together telling of species' endangerment and extinction.

Dominique Gustin, of St. Johnsbury, takes us up close to a daily task — dishwashing — in her 16 images in "Timesheet." In these sequential images, we see hands at work, in an almost meditative way — scrubbing a sauté pan, rinsing a jar, sponging off a plate.

In her artist's statement, Gustin says, "As a whole, the series pays tribute to a sink in time — that sink. Those dishes. That heart beating — through those hands in that half hour. That water — moving through those pipes, at that time and place, over those dishes and utensils, carrying moments of past meals and conversations away. Here at my house, there in your

house — everyone holding, touching, using, washing ... alone and together, backward and forward through time.”

Kristin Dettoni’s four punch needle pieces with wool yarn focus on the word “touch.” The four square pieces, each 9.5 x 9.5 inches, are all white wool, her hooking yielding raised dots of Braille spelling out “Keep in Touch,” “Touch and Go,” “Out of Touch” and “Magic Touch.”

Fascinated by codes and cryptology, Kristen Dettoni, of East Hampstead, New Hampshire, notes in her artist’s statement, “You don’t need to speak the same language to communicate a message, you just need to see the patterns.”

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Studio Place Arts

Studio Place Arts presents, all through June 24, “One + One is Greater than Two,” work by 29 artists that depict multiples, patterns and relationships, First Floor Gallery; “Art It Up! Annual silent auction to benefit SPA programs, Second Floor Gallery; “2nd Tuesday: a 30-Year Conversation About Art,” with eight artists, at SPA, 201 N Main St. in Barre. Hours are: 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday-Friday, 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday; call 802-479-7069 or go on-line to www.studioplacearts.com