

Arts Overview Something For Everyone

by Abby Luby

If you're into sculpture, painting, assemblage, furniture art, check out these three diverse and stimulating art shows that are a must-see for art lovers here in the Hudson Valley. The group shows are at Sharada Gallery in Rhinebeck, the Dorsky Museum at SUNY New Paltz and Maxwell Fine Arts in Peekskill.

SHARADA GALLERY

Sharada Gallery's annual Studio Furniture Exhibit features one-of-a-kind furniture by artists Jeff Johnson, Leonard Bellanca, and Mark DelGuidice. Epitomizing functional art, the work challenges us to see furniture as a special aesthetic, charming our everyday routine. Three square wall cabinets by Jeff Johnson hold small items that are magnified by a large round lens mounted in the door's center. Doors open by pulling, sliding or turning. A simple but ingenious pulley system opens the door in Dimensional Cabinet by using two counter weights, allowing a slow, deliberate sense of gravity to close the door. The perpendicular panel door in Second Sight swings open either clockwise or counter clockwise, casting an imaginary circle that echoes the round, convex lens and contrasts the adroit, exacting symmetry of the cabinet. The intriguing textural surfaces on all the cabinets enhance the moving parts. Johnson, who teaches creative furniture making at SUNY New Paltz, has created elegant, expertly executed cabinets that are lyrical, fun and engaging as we shift from viewer to user.

While Johnson's work is clearly contemporary, Leonard Bellanca's work is more traditional. His two pieces in the show, One Drawer Stand and Two Drawer Stand are highly crafted and redolent of the American Federal period. But Bellanca cleverly incorporates exquisite details that although subtle, place the work in a category of its own. Sleek legs seem to taper down to infinity giving the work an uncanny weightlessness. Beautifully designed edges accent and compliment such woods as cherry, maple and ebony. The stands are meticulous in how they evoke reverence for the wood.

The fan-shaped cabinet by Mark DelGuidice Adornment, is a standing jewel cabinet with seven drawers perched on a solid floor base. Incised into the olive green painted drawers are dark, fanciful, slap-dashed shapes and lines – a crossover between cartoon and hieroglyphics – adding spunk to this formal piece.

MAXWELL FINE ARTS, PEEKSKILL

At Maxwell Fine Arts in Peekskill the show "INSide/OUTside" features six artists whose work is—you guessed it—both inside the gallery and out in the multi-tiered rock sculpture garden. The work reflects the different environments and includes sculpture, sculptural installation, assemblage, paintings, drawings, collages, constructions. The indoor space is small but well lit and the work is pristinely presented. The assemblages by sculptor Jodi Carlson are constructed from recycled metal from old advertisements and street signs. Carlson waltzes the metal around in winds and bends. PTSO is a Stop sign reconfigured, sliced, curled, overlaid and plays with our connection to iconic road signs and dictates. Her outdoor piece CLICK is a tumbled maze of metal glimpsing the American flag swirled around buzz ad-words and images. Simon Draper's use of wood scraps recast as books on shelves in his piece OutTakes, is a faux reorganization of misplaced construction refuse. Envelope by Ruth Hardinger is a folded, opaque (hand made) paper that holds an engrossing shadowy spray of graphite.

The organically elegant airy screen Elevation by C. Michael Norton meshes wood, wire, rope and grape vines congealed with white plaster. His indoor abstract painting Sudden Spring is a bright, slathery work with primary colors popping out of thick yellows. The imaginative collages by Jim Lloyd wittily fuse images that work such as Snake Eyes: a close up of cat's eyes are a landscape growing out of a jigsaw puzzle yielding to twin rattlers centrally rearing up over the cat's nose. The wood pieces by sculptor Lori Nozick are small house-like structures that reference family break ups and the oblique effect on the inner psyche. Little Window is a sparse white painted house that hangs on the wall that crooks eerily to one side, the rough surface adds to its poignancy.

SAMUEL DORSKY MUSEUM, SUNY NEW PALTZ

The annual Hudson Valley Artists 2008 show at the Dorsky Museum of Art at SUNY New Paltz, is a highly competitive, juried show. Juror Denise Markonish, curator at MASS MoCA viewed over 250 artist submissions out of which fourteen were selected.

"The Medium is the Message" includes Kathleen Anderson, Allen Bryan, David Bush, Deb Davidovits, Tasha Depp, Dara Greenwald, Matt Harle, Roman Hrab, Christopher Huan, Tatana Kellner, Iain Machell, Laura Moriarty, Carrie Scanga, and Robert The. The show's title/theme originally written by Marshall McLuhan seeks to reflect the state of the world using various mediums.

Most impressive is Kellner's Iron—an expansive installation including 19 white shirts hanging as a backdrop for an ironing board hosting an invisible hand pressing a shirt. The heat (theoretically) burns words out of the material revealing text about female laborers and immigrants from the 1900s to the present. The piercing "gun-shot" steam connects the domestic appliance to a long history of servitude. Other shirt text morphs the iron into an anti terrorist weapon able to detoxify anthrax. Kellner's adjoining hand-made book is an illustrated history of the iron from 4000 B.C. to present with "iron-on" words for silkscreen.

A "Wow!" piece in the show is Scientific Wild Ass Guess (SWAG) by Laura Moriarty. An alien metropolis of spiraled rolls, oozing globs and lofty "anemones" make a fantasy view of a hidden molecular world. On a low table, five square feet of densely textured surfaces are made from beeswax, tree resin and pigments. Kathleen Anderson's An Other Way to Have a Conversation is a fun and interactive piece where two people separately occupy two silk tubes connected by dryer hose. The work posits an imaginary chat sans facial expressions. Robert The cuts out the binding in the book The World of Marcel Duchamp and encloses it in a glass case—the escaped severed piece is found on a nearby column in the shape of an insect.

Studio Furniture Exhibit: through August 31

Sharada Gallery

45 East Market Street, Rhinebeck

Monday, Thursday and Friday 12.5 PM

Saturday/Sunday from 11 AM to 6 PM

sharadagallery.com

"INSide/OUTside": through September 21

Maxwell Fine Arts

Saturdays and Sundays, 12 noon to 5 PM

1204 Main Street, Peekskill

914.737.8622

Hudson Valley Artists 2008: through September 7

"The Medium is the Message"

Dorsky Museum of Art at SUNY New Paltz,

The Alice and Horace Chandler Gallery & North Gallery

845.257.3872, www.newpaltz.edu/museum

