

VSA Vermont

Engage

Audio Descriptions

Selected Artwork

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Artist: Belle Baker

Described by: Michele Bailey

Title: Deep Blue

Medium: rock, glass, wood

Description: This work, titled “Deep Blue,” is 18 ½ inches wide by 14 inches high and is 2 inches deep. It is made of wood, mirror, painted rock, lights, miscellaneous plastic fish and plant form items.

The work is a rectangular shaped box representing a tropical fish environment, similar to a fish tank. The interior edges of the box have been painted in ocean blues and blacks, and are bordered with tiny blue lights that shine a watery blue light onto the scene.

The viewer’s primary focus is drawn to the largest fish near the center of the box. This pastel colored fish is painted on rock and is facing right. Its belly, sides, and fins are a bright yellow and its sides are orange and blue.

Suspended above the large fish from clear fishing lines are two other smaller fish also made from painted rock. One is a yellow-orange color with thick black vertical stripes extending from its head to tail. The other is much smaller, and has a green belly and top, with a white and yellow dotted side.

On the bottom right side of the box are two tiny orange plastic fish with black tiger-like angled stripes extending from the top of their prominent fins down their sides. These fish are about the size of a quarter, and are swimming in the opposite direction of the central fish. On the bottom of the box one can see a scattering of white, brown and purple sea shells of varying sizes, shapes and varieties.

There is a small yellow and orange plastic turtle in the bottom left corner too, and a gray plastic stingray fish in the right corner. The fish are swimming among various plastic coral plants including lace-like coral and long leafy green plants.

Artist: Beth Barndt

Described by: Janet Van Fleet

Title: Blue Pods

Medium: collage

Description: This small collage by Beth Barndt is 7 inches tall by 5 and a half inches wide.

In the bottom two-thirds of the image, against a dark background, the mottled grey, light blue and tan stems of about twenty plants wriggle upward, with half of the stems terminating in fan-shaped fronds.

Directly above, the upper third of the collage is divided by dark lines, of about the same thickness as the plant stems, into a grid of squares, with two horizontal lines and three upright lines that stop half an inch from the top.

The mottled colors in the top area are continuous with those on the bottom, with the addition of a band of grey-green across the top, above the uppermost horizontal band.

The surface appearance of the entire piece has a crinkly quality, as might occur from balling up a piece of paper and then smoothing it out flat again. Well-camouflaged near the edge of the right side, a black and white caterpillar clings to one of the undulating stems.

Artist: Joel Bertelson

Described by: Janet Van Fleet

Title: Untitled

Medium: Marker on paper

Description: The colors in this piece, which is 15 inches tall and 22 inches wide, are intensely pigmented in clear, jewel-like colors that include turquoise, three different shades of green, a subtle lichen shade, lime green and a deep forest green, along with rust, golden yellow, orange, purple, and violet.

The entire surface is covered with small, precise areas of color in loose, abstract, geometric shapes. The effect is similar to a pieced quilt, with rectangular and square blocks, each containing smaller areas of geometric shapes. For example, in the upper right-hand quadrant we find a tall, rectangular block that is subdivided into 8 squares, each of which has a circle in the center. The squares are gold, rust, turquoise or brown, and the circles inside are turquoise or dark green.

One of the happy opportunities created by such an arrangement of geometric spaces is to produce an optical effect of looking down on, say, a city from an angle, with the circles representing the tops of smokestacks or water towers, and the small parallelograms running underneath some of the larger rectangular blocks appearing as the sides of buildings, in perspective from above, as they descend down to a street.

Artist: Ted Chafee

Described by: Elizabeth Wilcox

Title: Emerald of Ocean

Medium: watercolor

Description: This is a seaside watercolor scene, 18 inches tall by 24 inches wide, entitled "Emerald of the Ocean."

The focal point of this work is a side view of a Puffin bird with wings extended up and behind its body. The wings are formed by shapes of different hues of gray and black assembled in such a way to give the texture and form of ruffled feathers.

The Puffin is standing on a light sandy-like beach at the edge of the ocean atop what seems to be a raised mound of sand. Thin lines of blue with variation of shape give an impression of rocks and gravel mixed in with the soft, light colored sand.

Light watercolors in blue, green, grey, and black define the bird's head, neck and body, and distinct orange and black hues color its beak and feet. Brushstrokes outlined in light hues on the bird's white breast imply feathers.

This setting of ocean, sky, and bird is more of a wash with see thru colors and the atmosphere is bright and sunny. There is no detection of shadows. A slight layering of variation of blues and greens give the background a wave like, beach feeling that extends beyond the bird's figure.

Artist: Steve Chase

Described by: Janet Van Fleet

Title: Dr. John

Medium: oil pastel

Description: "Dr. John," by Steve Chase is an oil pastel, 24 inches tall by 18 inches wide.

This portrait is executed in the style called Cubism, in which the surfaces of objects are depicted as geometrical planes. The artist has applied the oil pastel vigorously and thickly, layering one color over another in many places.

The portrait is of a man, seen from the chest up, wearing a suit jacket and tie. Dr. John's head and shoulders are shown with many small triangular and rectilinear patches, colored in intense shades of red, green, yellow, and blue.

His almond-shaped eyes are light blue and his right eye looks off to the right, while his left eye looks down. His mouth is a thin, straight line curved slightly downwards, and his chin has small, irregular patches of pink and black.

There are two areas in which a bright yellow predominate. One is the right lapel of Dr. John's jacket, where stripes of yellow are mixed with green lines, and the other is his prominent forehead, where the application of pigment is a bit looser and less hard-edged.

The bright yellow over his eyebrows is joined above by a patch of blue and green over his right eye. Over Dr. John's left eye the artist has drawn a green downward-pointing triangle outlined in pink on an irregular red patch, perhaps drawing attention to the downward-cast eye below.

Artist: Alexis Kyriak

Described by: Janet Van Fleet

Title: Rainforest Nude

Medium: acrylic on canvas

Description: Alexis Kyriak's acrylic on canvas painting, "Rainforest Nude," is 36 inches tall and 24 inches wide. There is a soft-edged quality to the paint in this piece, combined with a clarity and intensity of pigment that is reminiscent of pastel. In the upper half of the painting is a female figure, shown from the waist up in Caucasian flesh tones.

Her face, looking left, is rounded but featureless, except for an ear and a mass of frizzy brown hair falling over, and obscuring, her right shoulder and breast. Above, and perhaps intertwined with the hair, hangs a branch with leaves illuminated from behind. On the right, her shoulder and arm suddenly terminate in a rounded black shape.

The breast next to the truncated arm has a red nipple covered by a dark shadow that continues on the underside of the breast. Sweeping up from a forest-green triangle in the lower left half of the painting is a series of lines, each larger at the bottom and narrower at the top, that suggests the trailing edge of a bird's wing or the pleats or gatherings of a skirt, with the smaller ends stopping in a dark space between the shadowed breast and the stump of the figure's left arm.

Artist: Dawn O'Connell

Described by: Elizabeth Wilcox

Title: Life Beyond Fences

Medium: photograph

Description: This is a black and white landscape photograph titled "Life Beyond Fences." The work is 15 ½ inches tall and 19 ½ inches wide. Horizontally slicing through the photo are five lines of barbed wire which are situated in the foreground of the work. Below the bottom line of wire, a grassy ground lies, shaggy and uncut with tall, woody weeds poking up from here and there. A skeleton-like remnant of a Queen Anne's lace flower is in the bottom left hand corner of the frame.

Looming behind the barbed wire is a tall leafless tree. This bare tree is straight, with a matched set of branches on either side. The outline of the tree's shape is somewhat blurred, as though you are at some distance from it.

The background is a solid grey plane and nothing but grey is seen behind the tree.

Artist: Heidi Pfau

Described by: Heidi Pfau

Title: The Morning's Kindness

Medium: Photograph

Description: A thin band of white snow forms the bottom edge of this photograph, titled "The Morning's Kindness," which is 16 ½ inches tall and 20 ½ inches wide. This band of white snow curves along the ground almost undetectably, and gives the photograph a soft but very bright ground covering.

A darker layer of shadows rests like a mist on top of this band of snow, and through the play of light and shadow, a forest appears. As the light's shadows rise toward the top of the photograph, a pale orange and pink sky becomes visible.

Trees are standing in varying heights. Several thin trunks reach beyond the top of the shadows all the way past the top edge of the photograph.

At the bottom left of the photograph, there is a small, dark-green colored shed with a snow-covered roof and a double-paned window. A line of small, blurred prayer flags hangs from the roof's edge. This is the only structure visible in this winter landscape. Its small, square-shape brings a slight form or focus into the scene, which is heavily defined by blends and blurs of light and the imprecise edges of the forest.

Toward the top of the photograph, the light fades into a textured white cap at the top edge, and it is as if the light on the top almost balances the curved layer of snow on the ground.

Without distinct boundaries, the natural images in this photograph, trees, sky, ground, shed, seem as if they were somehow smudged into the fading sunrise colors of the morning sky, as if they were all emerging from the photograph's faint light.

Artist: Gidon Staff

Described by: Janet Van Fleet

Title: Blockhead

Medium: colored pencil and ink

Description: A man stares out from this 10 inch tall and 13 inch wide ink and colored pencil drawing entitled "Blockhead," by Gidon Staff. His thin face is articulated by fine lines that sculpt high cheekbones, a drooping mustache, and a straight, unsmiling mouth. In the center of the drawing are two large, intense eyes. The iris and pupils, colored a pale blue, float above the whites of his eyes.

Over those eyes, his head is filled with many small, sketchy rectangles, some shaded with parallel lines, and others colored delicately with blue, pink, or purple. The area behind the rectangles is green, filled in with vertical strokes, like blades of grass, and creates a roughly oval outline of the top of his head. On either side of the head, suggesting possibly large pieces of jewelry, or the earpieces of a helmet, are shapes created with angular edges and curved claw-like shapes that terminate in sharp points. On the left, this structure extends from his mouth almost to the top of his head, following the contours of his head. By contrast, the structure on the right emerges from just above his eye, where the top of his ear would be.

From a downward-facing purple hook, two clumps of loosely attached geometric shapes dangle down to his sloping shoulder, next to a pink collar and two buttons.

Artist: Mark Utter

Described by: Kerrie Workman

Title: Untitled

Medium: mixed media on paper

Description: Three panes of contrasting colors are set in motion by Mark Utter's lively, repetitive brushwork in this untitled work that is 18 inches tall and 24 inches wide. In this abstract, mixed media work, a bright column of lilac paint bursts up energetically from the bottom center. The intensity of the lilac gets thinner as it moves toward the top, where it begins to lean slightly to the right, conjuring up the sense of a strong wind that eventually dissipates.

The pane of color to the left of the lilac patch starts out thick and rich at the bottom, and is filled with dark blues, black, and deep purples. Brushstrokes of green and turquoise are interspersed at the top of this pane of colors. A few of these turquoise brushstrokes whip across the central column of lilac and then enter into the third pane of color at the right, in which fiery red-orange and dark blue predominate. There is a momentum across each vibrantly colorful third of this work.

Utter's brushwork has patterned the whole work with a repeating overlay of one or two-inch squares, shapes which create a consistent, subtle surface texture. As a final layer of the painting, these squares are like a net that has been grafted onto the overall composition.