

AVA's Eighteenth Annual Juried Summer Exhibition
June 24-July 29, 2011

Juror's Statement

Whittling down four hundred and thirty-nine entries to less than half that number is, as a former juror phrased it, a testament to the "arbitrary nature of taste and the juror's whims." In the process of creating this exhibition, I shaped and assembled groupings of works as much as I judged them. In awarding prizes and honorable mentions to a few of the works and their creators, I was struck by the broad variety and quality of work present in this exhibition and wanted to recognize the diverse nature of artistic practice in the Upper Valley and beyond, throughout Vermont and New Hampshire. The first *Juror's Recognition Award* goes to **Harry Bernard** of Walpole, NH, who entered a painting of complexity and nuance. Spending time looking at this work, one becomes aware of its layers and delicacy, in contrast to the disturbing power of its imagery. The drawn figure just off from center appears suspended in the painted field, hovering on the precipice, not quite falling—but almost. The second prize winner, **Steve Chase**, of Bradford, VT, created a strong graphic rendering of a young man's head. The assurance of his line and ability to combine strong colors in the creation of his portrait marks him as an artist of exceptional ability and expressive power. The third prize winner, **Charles Egbert**, of Quechee, VT, submitted a colored wood abstract sculpture of quiet elegance. The fact that he did not craft the elongated shape and cuts through the wood with mechanical precision is a virtue; one can sense that this sculpture is partially hand crafted, which adds to the work's visual interest.

Honorable Mentions go to Barbara Bartlett, Louise Glass, David Laro, Gail Rickards, and Carole Kitchell Bellew. **Barbara Bartlett's** tea bag bathing suit is certainly appropriate for a summer exhibition as are its satisfyingly simple shape and lightness of material. The shimmering painted surface in **Louise Glass's** monumental work complements the sinuous form of the intertwined shapes. Her technique is flawless and originality of concept mesmerizing. **David Laro's** assembled sculpture exudes a giddy sense of humor; the strong focus and regularity of its composition work as a stable frame for the curvaceous forms of musclemen that dominate the top tier of the assemblage. **Gail Rickards's** gouache is a lyrical abstract work on paper; the white marks delicately shimmer against the dark background, like drops and drips of water at night on a window pane. Lastly, **Carole Kitchell Bellew's** soapstone sculpture's compact and curved shape speak to a fossilized past. The contained profile is defined by carved linear elements and folded-in forms that are almost surreal in nature.

Lastly, I wanted to mention that making decisions of what to cut from this show was tremendously difficult, and I salute all who submitted work. It is so heartening to see the vibrant and widespread activity in the arts of this region. Art sustains and enlivens. Life would be pretty boring without the creators and created. I am especially pleased to be jurying this show during Bente Torjusen's twenty-fifth year at AVA. Her remarkable work in leading this institution is a real cause for celebration. My admiration for her and this wonderful cultural institution is boundless.

---Katherine Hart, 2011