

Midwest Museum of American Art 40th Elkhart Juried Regional 2018

Juror's Statement

It was an honor to be selected as a juror for the 40th Annual Elkhart Regional Exhibition. The opportunity to consider the quality and range of works submitted was a professional pleasure. One unanticipated highlight was to see so many entries that reflected familiar regional themes and characteristics. Additionally, many works explored more universal human themes. Both were captivating approaches and you will see evidence in the exhibition. Art production in the region is strong.

As a juror, professional artist, and arts educator for 40 years, I have witnessed the character and purpose of Art adapts to reflect new contemporary ideas, technologies, and beliefs. Judging any exhibition requires an understanding of Art's changing nature, and considering both the power of traditional forms and work that is reflective of our contemporary world.

A commendable work of art is rooted in method and technique. This skilled understanding of media and process acts as the vehicle to communicate ideas, emotions, and imaginative narrative. Neither technique nor imagination is enough alone. Distinction in the creative process is achieved when learned technical ability joins with the desire to communicate. The works selected for this exhibition, especially the Award Winners and Juror's Recognition Awards, largely hold to this philosophy, a balance between technical prowess and something significant to express.

Dora Natella's bust *Erato*, the Best in Show Award, skillfully combines the classically modeled ideal beauty complete with contemporary trappings. Its pureness and appeal is universal, yet this muse is smartly specific to contemporary life.

Robert Hardt's whirligig titled *Sand Hill Crane Mating Dance* is an amazing hybrid of art and engineering, regional and universal ideas, and folk art combined with high art. Its whimsy is only matched by its attention to detail.

The Painting Award *From the North*, by Mike Yazel is a masterful watercolor that captures both the scene and the emotions of the rainy urban traffic scene. This modest sized painting has the power to transport the viewer to that place.

Earl Vandygriff's large black and white photograph titled Forest Stream, suggests a new way to see a familiar scene. By draining the color, increasing the contrast, we become engaged with the almost unseen wavelengths of light and the forest becomes more fantasy than reality.

Bill Kramer's Sculptural Vessel #1 was awarded the ceramics accolade, and as the title suggests this work balances between a strong formal sculpture and a hand built clay container. Its scale and shape challenges our perception of functional clay work, while the material and process embrace it.

Best in Drawing was awarded to Jerry Ginther for his graphite work titled Table Waitress. Its combination of control and chaos, along with its fragmentation and overlapping images suggests a wonderfully layered narrative.

Randy Horst's sensitive use of materials along with skillful rendering earned his work Ruth the Moabite the Award in Mixed Media. The drawn portraits (of Ruth) and the accompanying iconography create a triptych of spiritual significance.

In addition to the award winners listed above, I have singled out a group of artists doing significant and powerful work. The artists to receive the Juror's Recognition Awards include: Julie Schwarz, Roni Balthas, James F. Cooke, Matthew Payovich, Joel Pisowicz, Cynthia H. Marks, Katharine Taylor, Barbara DeLeu, Ron Monsma, and Linda Freel.

Congratulations to all selected to exhibit in the 40th Elkhart Regional Show.

Yours,

Doug Calisch
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