

‘Barn Art’ at the Compass Music and Arts Center

Artists in Vermont clearly have an affinity with barns. The many barns that dot the Vermont landscape provide inspiration to artists, are a treasured subject matter, and provide reminders of their purpose and history.

The Compass Music and Arts Center’s new exhibit ‘Barn Art’ is a collection of works from 31 different artists in celebration of these functional, yet stunning, architectural gems. The exhibit runs from April 6 through June 16, with an opening reception on Friday, April 6, from 5:00-7:00pm.

The different ways in which these 31 artists see, portray, and feel about barns are inspirations in themselves. When the idea for this juried exhibit was first considered, there was no way of knowing the response, the quality, and the variety of work would be so great.

Watercolorists C. Asheley Kapelewski and Barbara A. Brosnan focus on, perhaps, the not-so-obvious ‘tenants’ of a barn, like the birds who use it to perch on, or the back shed often used by cats as a shelter. Conversely Jeanne Lamoureux-Wood’s mixed-media piece reflects her idea that barns are an “integral part of a highly functional, working unit” and by incorporating photographs of her farm animals confirms that, to her, the “true essence of a barn is derived from its inhabitants, the animals.”

Other work in the exhibit offers an artistic record of barns that sadly no longer exist. Leonard Duffy calls them “icons of time and place” and says that “painting barns, like painting flowers, is an attempt to capture an ephemeral moment for future generations.” Daniel Doyle’s photograph profoundly shares the continual loss of Vermont’s dairy history. Peg Lawrence also shares a similar perspective. Her work titled “The Last Farm” is her response to the fact that, not just in Vermont, but as a nation, we are losing our lovely old barns, due, to a large extent, to urban sprawl.

Some artists, like Hope Wurmfeld, used materials from old barns – in her case – in the form of a window as the ‘canvas’ for photographs, while Lori Pietropaolis took a completely different, more abstract approach. Driving through rural areas, images of farms and homesteads become abstract designs in glass with “the weathered but sturdy barn, peeling red paint revealing the silvering wood” beneath, she says.

Three major resident Vermont artists, Susan Bull Riley, Denise Letendre, and Stephanie Stouffer, were invited to jury the exhibit and select winners. They all agreed that, whilst very rewarding, it was a not an easy task especially when needing to identify the most exceptional pieces from a host of strong entries.

Edna Sutton, Managing Partner for the Compass Music and Arts Center, was pleased the ‘Barn Art’ exhibit attracted the interest of so many talented Vermont artists and acknowledges the generous support of the jurors. “We are so grateful to each of the jurors. We know and value

each of them as talented artists and now, as jurors, we can appreciate further the unique perspective, skill, knowledge, insight and thoughtfulness they brought, as they considered each of the submissions."

According to Stouffer, the 'Barn Art' exhibit will offer a broad appeal: "It will surely be a popular exhibit, as the subject matter is so integral to our life in Vermont."

Other exhibiting artists include: Amanda Amend, Glen Bartolomeo, Terry Boyle, Gayl M. Braisted, Carol Calhoun, Jean Cannon, Susannah Colby, Virginia Creighton, Mary Ann Duffy Godin, Lydia Gatzow, Dan Gilman, Sarah Koehl Sanfilippo, Margaret Lampe Kannenstine, Marie LaPre Grabon, Norton Latourelle, Phil Laughlin, Anne Majusiak, Christina Morris, Julia Purdy, Judith Reilly, Linda Reynolds, Nancy C. Rowe, and Lowell Snowdon Klock.

The Compass Music and Arts Center is located in Park Village at 333 Jones Dr. Brandon VT, 05733 (Park Village used to be the Brandon Training School, located 1.5 miles north of downtown Brandon off Arnold District Rd.). www.cmacvt.org