

Looking at art, from the Art League to the big League



All-Florida Artists @ Boca Museum August 13, 2014

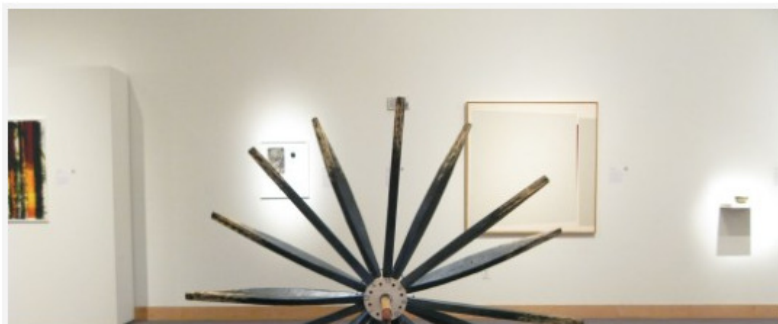


Jack Dowd, (Sarasota) "Camo Sumo Warrior" 2014

It is a delicate task for a curator to formulate an exhibition, selecting from artists whose studio's he has visited, and works that he is familiar with.

It must be a daunting task to select from 1,600 jpegs submitted by some 600 artists, whose art is as diverse as the Florida cities from which they work.

The [Boca Museum of Art](#), invited independent curator, writer and artist, Trong Gia Nguyen to take on this task, for it's 63rd Annual All Florida Exhibition and Competition. Nguyen, who has curated 25 exhibitions over the past 15 years, both in the U.S. and abroad, seemed quite comfortable with this challenge.



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Jack King, (Tampa) "No Fixed Plan for Arriving: Black Swan"

Upon entering the exhibition the first thing you will notice is open space. Nguyen's curatorial decision, to choose only 69 peices from 52 artists for this exhibition, resulted in generous latitude for each work of art, to coexist within the Museums boundaries.

A commanding presence in the room, is Sarasota artist Jack Dowd's "Camo Sumo Warrior". A larger than life Sumo wrestler whose body is painted in military camouflage. He squats in "sonkyo" position with his back to the crowd and his gaze focused forward. The pedestal that holds his weight is marked with text that begins, "I am a warrior who fights the good fight....".



Hanging directly across from the warrior is a large scale painting by Weston Artist Jami Nix Rahn. The painting depicts a volcanic beach with rough ocean and thick clouds. A purposefully stacked formation of rocks, breaks the horizon line as they balance precariously on a concrete pedestal. The artist references a 1960's French cult dialectic of fantastic realism, and the metaphysical in her title for the piece "The Morning of the Magicians"

Modernism permeates the exhibition. Recycled, upcycled, and retooled ingredients, radiate newfound purpose into much of the work on display.



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Clara Varas, (Miami) "Klmbombo (Okra)"

Several pieces by Miami artist Clara Varas demonstrate the most literal of found art. Varas draws from common household items and assembles them to evoke memories of home, time and place. Tampa artist Jack King manipulates basic materials such as wood, plexiglas, nylon and black beans to create an abstract "avianoid" in "No Fixed Plan for Arriving: Black Swan".



Weston artist Gamaliel Herrera's collage on paper is a formal exploration of Jung's concept of "quaternity".



Jim Benedict, (Jacksonville) "Open Range"

Pop art is also evident in this exhibiton. Jacksonville artist Jim Benedict created "Open Range" an eight foot, cowboy boot made from oxidized and stainless steels.

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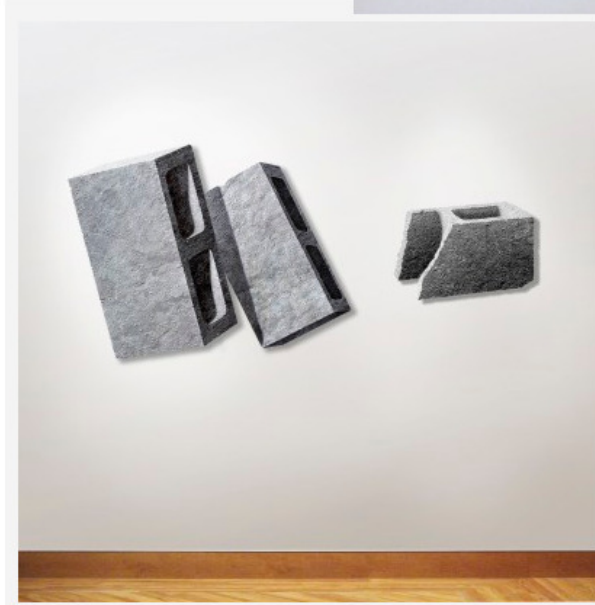
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ART SOUTH FLORIDA

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Naples artist Tara Woods addresses those nasty cigarette butts with a polymer clay pile, titled "Butts" and Fort Lauderdale artist Nolan Haan gives weightlessness to cinder blocks painted on silk.



Nolan Haan, (Fort Lauderdale) "Art of Discrimination"

On the walls, archival inkjet and pigment prints dominate over traditional drawings and paintings, reminding us that we are in the 21st century and artist are essentially experimental beasts, eager to jump on and exhaust, all new technology in search of self expression.



Wayne Thornbrough (Lantana) "Outside Looking In" inkjet print

Still, within this exhibition there is an impressive display of formal painting. Carin Wagner's oil on canvas, titled "Upside Down" is a small gem. The artist depicts the fragility of nature through monochromatic layers of glaze. Coral Gables artist Jena Thomas exhibits compositional prowess in "The Water is Fine", a skewed view of suburban backyard pools.





Carin Wagner, (Palm Beach Gardens) "Upside Down" 2014



Jena Thomas, (Coral Gables) "The Water is Fine" 2014



Henning Haupt, (Fort Lauderdale) Black and Blues lines in white-All Rising" 2014

Fort Lauderdale artist Henning Haupt, shows his finesse for structural design and satisfies a desire for fundamental drawing with his oil on canvas titled "Black and Blue Lines in White – All Rising"



Steve Pennisi, (Fort Myers) "Out to Sea" 2014

Two black and white abstract expressionist paintings by Fort Myers artist Steve Pennisi draw you into imaginary landscapes. Pennisi created these works through a unique form of reverse painting, where the artist peeled dried acrylic paint from a plastic palette, revealing underlying gestural patterns that could then be re-applied to a prepared canvas.

Political works in the exhibition are subtle yet effective. Tony Vasquez-F was awarded Best in Show for his piece "Mene Grande" a commentary on Venezuela's destructive political policies.

Vazquez scaled up an aluminum Moka pot and recreated it using two very different materials.

"Mene Grande" was cast using fiberglass resin and "La Alquitrana" was cast in bitumen otherwise known as asphalt. Bitumen is a highly viscous oil byproduct, if left to the elements, this sculpture will eventually melt to the ground.



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The lone video streaming in this exhibition is titled "Dreaming" by West Palm Beach artist Cheri Mittermaier.



Best in show award winner Tony Vazquez-F (Miami) "Mene Grande" 2014 "La Alquitrana" 2014

Tucked away in a small room with a blue door, this psychosexual dreamlike sequence, plays out in slow motion. Two figures are presented in a tropical outdoor setting, haunted by the presence of a large phallic cannon on wheels. This video raises questions of identity and gender assignment.

Artists receiving merit awards from Juror Nguyen are Brookhart Jonquil (Miami), Vincent Miranda (Fort Lauderdale), José Pacheco Silva (Aventura), Wayne Thornbrough (Lantana), and Clara Varas (Miami)

The 63rd Annual All Florida competition and exhibition runs through October 18, 2014 at the [Boca Museum of Art](#).



Also on view | Boca Museum Artists' Guild Biennial Exhibition. This Biennial exhibition runs in conjunction with the 63rd Annual All Florida Juried Competition and Exhibition and highlights the works of professional artist members of the Artists Guild.

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