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Carriage Barn Arts Center highlights local shutterbugs

JANUARY 18, 2018 BY KEITH LORIA

The Carriage Barn Arts Center will hold its 38th Annual Photography Show from Jan. 20 through Feb. 18, welcoming more than 50 artists from the area, showcasing 110 works.

The show was juried by Allison Brant, director of the Brant Foundation Art Study Center in Greenwich, and Carl Fuldner, photography department fellow at the Yale University Art Gallery in New Haven.



An opening reception will be held on Saturday, Jan. 20, from 4 to 6 p.m. Most of the photographs are for sale, and a portion of sales benefits the Carriage Barn Arts Center.

The exhibiting artists include professional, amateur and student photographers from throughout Connecticut and beyond.

Nancy Breakstone of Westport has painted mostly beach landscapes and waterfowl all of her life, but after noticing the images in the sand five years ago, she decided to start photographing them and knew it was time to switch to photography.

She will be showing two photographs at the show — shots of nature's art left in the sand by the receding tide of the Pacific Ocean on certain dark or volcanic beaches in Costa



“This event is important to show the talents of local photographers and also to raise funds through sales of photographs for the center, which provides so much to the community in the field of the arts,” she said. “My passion is photographing natural sand art, but I never leave the house without my camera, as I never know what interesting person, place or thing I might come across in my travels, locally or around the world.”

Stamford’s Karen Neems will be showing a piece called “Façade,” a new work from her Deconstruction series.

“The work pairs photography with mixed media, wherein the photographic image is literally cut apart and reassembled in an adjacent composition that dialogues with the original,” she said.



This is the sixth time Neems has participated in the exhibition, and she won Best in Show in the 36th Annual Photography Show and Juror's Selection Prize in the 34th annual show.

"This exhibition showcases exciting photographic work that is being made in our area. It is a very selective exhibition, and the jurors that the Carriage Barn procures are always very knowledgeable and thoughtful," she said. "I am most looking forward to seeing the other work that will be exhibited, conversing with other photographers and artists, and sharing my vision."







Torrance York, an artist guild member at Silvermine Arts Center in New Canaan, will be exhibiting two 30- by 30-inch photographs from his project featuring Waveny Park, from her Common Places series. By photographing in Waveny Park, she is able to present a particular, personal perspective recorded on a common ground.

"I shoot on film with a square-format camera and often use a shallow depth of focus," she said. "I title my landscapes with the GPS coordinates from which each image was taken. I am drawn to the systematic nature of the GPS technology. However, the images anchored by the longitude and latitude are my subjective response to that specific place and point in time."

The pieces on view at the Carriage Barn are called $N41^{\circ}07.234'$ $W073^{\circ}29.423'$ 3/21/16 334ft. (Waveny Tracks) and $N41^{\circ}07.057'$ $W073^{\circ}29.460'$ 8/27/17 314ft. (Waveny Path).

"Each photograph captures one of a myriad of possible views from that point — emphasizing the unique experience of person and place," York said. "In turn, both the coordinates and image serve as markers of my journey and call attention to the creative process."

Jeanne McDonagh is a digital photography teacher at New Canaan High School and always tries to exhibit at the show. She said she feels lucky to have two of her works selected this year — "Brooklyn Backyard Party" and "New Hampshire Porch" — both representing a special moment in time she wanted to share.

"These images make you think about people and how they live and experience life," she said. "The exhibit is always interesting and shares the creative voice of so many regional artists. Seeing new works is an opportunity for me to open my eyes and mind to understand the creative ideas of others."



Ruth Raskin, a photographer from Scarsdale, N.Y., will be showing two gelatin silver prints (darkroom prints processed from black-and-white film) from her “Belgium: Pastiche” portfolio — “Belfry of Ghent Window” and “Antwerp Stairs.”

“Belgium: Pastiche takes the viewer a few moments to process. The ornate, ancient window is prominent, leading to a distorted view of beautiful Ghent,” she said. “Antwerp Stairs shows sun-mottled cobblestone steps through a narrow alley leading to a bright, but uncertain, destination.”

The Carriage Barn is one of her favorite galleries, and her work has been included in the 35th Annual Photography Show and last year’s Spectrum show.

Peter Mendelson from Weston started taking photographs when his daughter was born in order to record her childhood, and he quickly became hooked. He’s been shooting consistently for the last 16 years, and has been taking various photography workshops

and making photography-related trips as well.



“Much of my work focuses on areas along the coastline, and in particular, I am drawn to cultural artifacts that are often overlooked but that may have an emotional component to them,” he said. “I will be showing two pieces at the show. One is titled ‘Parachute Jump,’ which is a photograph of the old Coney Island parachute jump which is no longer in operation. The other piece is entitled ‘Skee-Ball,’ and is a photograph of the still-operational skee-ball game located in an arcade in York Beach, Maine.”



Stratford's Sue Benton will be showing a photograph printed on metal, called Autumn Marsh.04.

“There is a marsh near my home that I have always been intrigued by. It is beautiful and teeming with life. The grasses turn blue when the salt of the tides clings to them. The change of seasons causes many more colors to emerge,” she said. “I like to make all my photographs, whether the subject is nature or a factory building, hyper-realistic by playing with the light, clarity, and color saturation. The marsh is constantly changing with the light, seasons, and tides, so I find it a fascinating subject.”

The Carriage Barn Arts Center is open to the public; admission is free. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m.

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