

## New England Collective II: Juror's Comments

Some 243 submissions from 127 artists arrived from all six New England states, representing painting, sculpture, work on paper, collage and assemblage, photography and more. Sizes ranged from a photographic installation the width of an arm span to a pair of stitched mixed-media works each barely larger than a hand span. Since this is a summer show, I opted for the broad view, typically selecting one individual (or multiple-part) work by each of 55 artists. My comments follow. –Joanne Mattera



Rose Olson, *August Morning Mists*, acrylic on baltic birch, diptych, 12 x 25 x 3"

### Selecting the Work

Perhaps because I wrote *The Art of Encaustic Painting* and now direct the International Encaustic Conference each year in Provincetown, there were a large number of entries in encaustic. I assure you that wax was given no preferential attention. While my inclination is for reductive and grid-based abstraction, whether in wax or any other medium, my task as a juror was to venture well beyond my own personal parameters of material and esthetic. I believe that is what I did.

Unlike curating, which starts from a concept and expands, a non-thematic show such as this starts large with submitted works that don't necessarily have a conceptual relationship.

The challenge for me was not just to select interesting and formally resolved works from a diverse pool, but to create a *cohesive exhibition* from them.

Sitting in front of a large-monitor Mac, I viewed images from a prepared program. I began by putting tentative selections into a Yes folder. About 90 images went in. As I looked for those conceptual relationships, categories emerged: abstraction, figuration, sculpture and assemblage, and a large group of organic and biomorphic work in various media. Through elimination each category became less generic and more focused.

Since the gallery is set up with separate viewing areas, the show could be cohesive

yet diverse. At the same time, my selections needed to create a visual narrative fluid enough to accommodate works that did not fit into any defined group but which asserted themselves sufficiently to secure a place in the show.



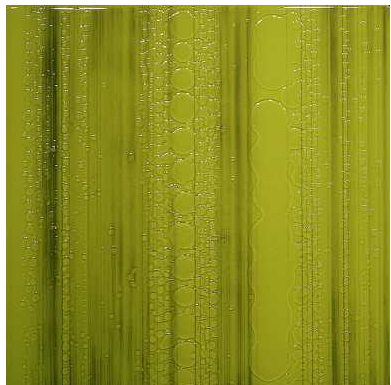
Heather Bentz, *Plaything*, mixed media, 42.5 x 35"

## Abstraction

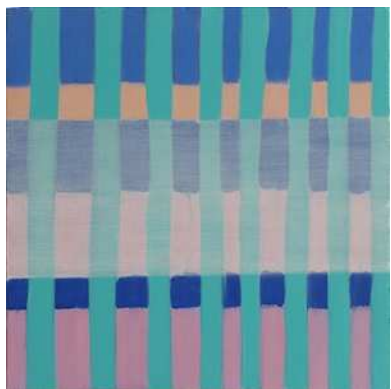
This is the largest category, reflective of the greatest number of submissions. The selected works, small and large, most often feature gesture, geometry or pattern. Saturated color is a unifier, as are materiality and surface.



Laurie Goddard, *Wicked Good*, encaustic, 26 x 26"



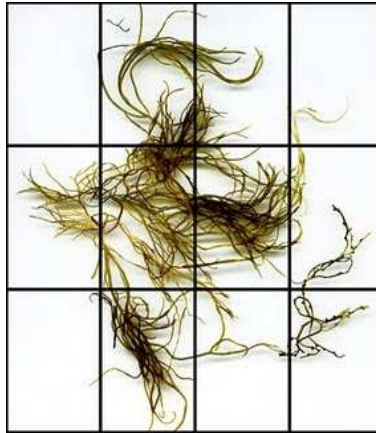
Sand T. Kalloch, *Pear*, resin, acrylic, graphite, app. 14 x 14"



Sue Post, *Whitewash Three*, oil on canvas, 24 x 24"

## Organic and Biomorphic

Perhaps it's the season, but I surprised myself in selecting a large number of works that spoke of lushness, fecundity and growth—and, not incidentally, of the ocean. How refreshing in summer heat!



Terry Gips, *Source*, archival pigment prints, 55 x 49"



John Burkett, *Demosthenes I*, oil on paper, 11 x 14"



Daw na Bemis, *Coral*, mixed media, 16 x 10 x 10"

This essay is adapted from a current post in the Joanne Mattera Art Blog: [www.joanemattera.blogspot.com](http://www.joanemattera.blogspot.com)

## Assemblage

With boxes and personal subject matter the specter of Joseph Cornell hovers, so I love to see artists send that ghost packing. And, of course, not every bit of assemblage has a branch in the Cornell family tree.



Lisa Barthelson, *Family Debris Series*, encaustic/found objects, 24 x 24 x 7"

## Figuration

The relatively small number of figurative works submitted resulted in a correspondingly small grouping. It was surprising, then, to find Jesus several times among the submissions in contexts both iconic and ironic.



Stephanie Angelo, *Vuitton Jesus*, acrylic on canvas, 40 x 30"