



## At the Parrish ‘Artists Choose Artists’

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By [Mark Segal](#) | November 5, 2013 - 11:14am

The Parrish Art Museum’s “Artists Choose Artists” exhibition will open on Sunday, as part of the museum’s weekend-long celebration of its first anniversary in Water Mill.

Initiated in 2009, the biennial shows invite online submissions from East End artists, which are reviewed by a panel of distinguished jurors, each of whom makes two selections. The works of jurors and the artists they selected are then exhibited together. According to Terrie Sultan, director of the museum, “by installing the juror’s work alongside that of the selected artists, we can offer a window into the deliberative process and provide interesting juxtapositions across artistic platforms and generations of working artists.”

This year’s jurors and their selections are Laurie Anderson, who chose Elizabeth Dow and Mary McCormick; Judith Hudson (Don Christensen and Christine Sciulli), Mel Kendrick (Elise Ansel and Eva Faye), David Salle (Carol Hayes and Virva Hinnemo), Ned Smyth (Koichiro Kurita and Rick Liss), Keith Sonnier (Rossa Cole and Brian Gaman), and Robert Wilson (Tucker Marder and Ezra Thompson).

Andrea Grover, organizer of the exhibition, called the review process “eye-opening, because it offers a snapshot of this moment and insight into trends and themes that are developing now.”

Mr. Thompson, Ms. McCormick, and Mr. Salle explore a variety of approaches to portraiture. The anthropomorphizing of animals can be seen in interdisciplinary works by Mr. Marder, Ms. Anderson, Ms. Hudson, and Mr. Wilson, who sometimes use nonhuman subjects in distinctly human situations. Bold geometric abstractions painted on unusual surfaces connect the paintings of Mr. Liss and Mr. Christensen.

The natural world comes into play in Ms. Dow’s paintings, Ms. Hayes’s scroll-like drawings, Mr. Kurita’s platinum-printed landscape photographs, and Mr. Smyth’s monumental photographs. Environmental concerns drive the works of Mr. Cole, whose sculptures explore environmental consciousness.

Mr. Sonnier and Ms. Sciulli, sculptors, use light as a voluminous form. Light also plays an important role in Ms. Faye’s intricately cut and painted vellum drawings. The process of subtracting and simplifying forms manifests quite differently in paintings by Ms. Ansel and Ms. Hinnemo, as well as Mr. Gaman’s large-scale prints and Mr. Kendrick’s sculptures.

Given the 300 submissions to the exhibition, the reviewing process can be daunting. “The quality of the work was high,” said Mr. Sonnier, “but there’s a lot of it. It’s also not easy looking at photographs rather than actual work, since issues related to materials and scale can be difficult to grasp. But I’ve had a lot of experience, serving on panels for the National Endowment for the Arts, among others, which helped.”

Ms. Hudson reviewed all the submissions. “On the one hand, looking at digital imagery is convenient,”

she said. “I was in Rome, and digital images made selection possible. That being said, I am sure I overlooked some submissions that are subtle in ways that don’t work in that format.”

Mr. Smyth observed that in the past, jurors would sit down together and discuss each slide as it was projected on a screen. “With online review you are isolated, but you aren’t influenced by other jurors and you have as much time as you want or need,” he said. He went through all the submissions a number of times, narrowing them down into smaller and smaller groups until he arrived at five. “Then I went to the artist’s Web site,” he explained. “You can get a sense of an artist’s overall body of work from his or her Web site which you can’t get from four or five images.”

There was agreement among the jurors that the exhibition accomplishes its stated purpose, which is “to encourage dialogue and fellowship among the East End’s expanded, multi-generational network of artists.” According to Mr. Sonnier, “I think ‘Artists Choose Artists’ is an excellent idea because it involves artists in a dialogue, which happens all too rarely in the art world. It helps foster a community. I didn’t know either Rossa Cole or Brian Gaman, or their work. They are both quite different, but the work has very interesting investigative properties.”

“I really like what the Parrish has become — a social center as well as a place to look at art — and this exhibition reflects that,” said Mr. Smyth. “Like the PechaKucha programs, the exhibition is a real equalizer, in that it brings together different types of artists, some unknown, some super-successful, some local, some international.” One of Mr. Smyth’s selections, Mr. Kurita, was a commercial photographer in Japan who did not move into fine art photography until the age of 40. Now living in Southold, Mr. Kurita cites Thoreau’s “Walden” as the inspiration for the decision to work with nature. Asked by Mr. Smyth about the response to his work in Japan, he said people in the United States appreciate it more. “In Japan, everything has to be new and Western. They don’t want nature,” the artist said.

Ms. Hudson said narrowing down the selection to two artists was a challenge, but “luckily these two jumped out. Don Christensen moved me because he is an abstract painter who has managed the near-impossible, which is to make the form fresh and alive. As an artist, I also know there is nothing harder than making an abstract painting, much less making one that excites. I responded to Christine Sciulli because she strikes me as someone whose imagination can hardly be contained . . . there is an infectious joy that goes along with the toughness and exactitude.”

For both Mr. Liss, who was selected by Mr. Smyth, and Ms. Sciulli, this was their first submission to “Artists Choose Artists.” Both were impressed by the information sessions conducted for the applicants by Andrea Grover, the museum’s curator of special projects. “It was amazing,” said Ms. Sciulli, “because she was really clear about how to maximize the application.”

“Her seminars were so useful, not only for this exhibition but for any grant application I make in the future,” said Mr. Liss, a lifelong East End resident.

For Ms. Sciulli, who creates installations using projected light, there were challenges. “I had to come up with a way to contain my light and prevent other light from getting in. Since it isn’t possible to build a room in any of the galleries — you can’t anchor anything in the floor or ceiling — I’m going to make a plywood shell that will house the installation. Constraints can usually be turned into something interesting.”

There was general agreement that the exhibition plays an important role in bringing artists together. “Judith Hudson came for a studio visit and gave me great advice for future applications,” said Ms. Sciulli. “Afterward, she invited me to her studio. We’ve developed a great rapport.”

“Artists Choose Artists” will remain on view through Jan. 19.



The Parrish Art Museum's juried exhibition "Artists Choose Artists" features work by 7 jurors and the 14 artists they selected.