

THE/ROCKFORD
MIDWESTERN
BIENNIAL/2016



THE ROCKFORD MIDWESTERN BIENNIAL
JUN 10–SEP 25, 2016 | ROCKFORD ART MUSEUM
SPONSORED BY DEAN ALAN OLSON FOUNDATION
+ NICCOLE RANZ, IN HOME MEDICAL GROUP

RAM
ROCKFORDARTMUSEUM

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INTRODUCTION

The 2016 Rockford Midwestern is the 74th presentation of Rockford Art Museum's juried survey exhibition of new work by contemporary artists from across the Midwest. Juror Sarah Krepp selected 85 photographs, paintings, prints, drawings, sculptures, installations, work in mixed media, and more by 78 artists from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin. More than 600 pieces by 200 artists were submitted for consideration. Best of Show (Bruce Thorn, *Ice Nine*) and two Juror's Choice awards (Zach Mory, *Swell*, and Christina Warzecha, *Reach, Stretch, Droop*) were presented during the June 10 preview – as well as the 2016 Dean Alan Olson Purchase Award (Jeanne Ludeke, *Save Kathy's*), to the artist whose work was selected by RAM for inclusion in the Rockford Art Museum Permanent Collection.

Many thanks to Sarah Krepp—accomplished artist, exhibition curator, and founding director of Dialogue Chicago—for serving as this year's juror. Her thoughtful selections reflect not only the talented artists but also her respected aesthetic, as well as the broader significance of this regional biennial.

Thank you to the Dean Alan Olson Foundation and Niccole Ranz, In Home Medical Group, for their sponsorship. We gratefully acknowledge the foundation for its longtime funding of the purchase award, established in 1994 to support working artists and enhance the museum's collection of contemporary art.

Special thanks to Stacey LaRosa, Dillon Coulahan, Elizabeth Horvath, Lynn Fischer-Carlson, and Nancy von Lugossy for their help preparing and installing this exhibition – and to the Rockford Art Museum Board of Trustees and especially to staff members Linda Dennis, Sarah Axelson, Denise Glasenapp, Miranda Lindvall, Sarah Bursley McNamara, and Nancy Sauer for their enthusiastic support.

And to each artist exhibiting in this year's biennial – congratulations!

Carrie Johnson

Curator, Rockford Art Museum

This exhibition and its related programming are sponsored by Dean Alan Olson Foundation and Niccole Ranz, In Home Medical Group; and partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency and by the Armer Ahlstrand Charitable Foundation. The purchase award is made possible by the Dean Alan Olson Foundation. RAM education programs are supported in part by Women's Art Board. Learn more at rockfordartmuseum.org.

COVER: Steven Elbert, *Statue with Pedestal*, 2014. Watercolor, 30 x 40 in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

RAM

Exhibition Teacher Guide

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JUROR'S STATEMENT

Thank you for the opportunity to look at some very interesting work!

Not only do I look for excellence and originality (no matter how large or small) in the use of the chosen medium, formal elements, content and ideas that are put forth – but also a dynamic 'spark of necessity' that this particular art piece needs to be done at this particular time by this particular artist.

Congratulations, Mid-West, for an exciting show!

Sarah Krepp, Juror

Founding Director, Dialogue Chicago

Sarah Krepp is an accomplished artist, exhibition curator, and founding director of Dialogue Chicago. A professor emeritus and former chair of the painting program at the School of Art and Design at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, she received her BS from Skidmore College in New York and MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Learn more about her at sarahkrepp.com.

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EXHIBITING ARTISTS

Mark Adkins, Oak Park, IL; Esther Aron, Bull Valley, IL; Jay Paul Bell, DeKalb, IL; Sue Berkey, Fairfield, IA; Ann Blaas, Brookfield, IL; David Bower, Naperville, IL; Gloria DeFilipps Brush, Duluth, MN; Patricia Brutchin, Lake in the Hills, IL; Paul K. Burkholder, Rockford, IL; Molly Carter, Rockford, IL; Jodie Chilcote, Spring Arbor, MI; Chris Cicala, Orland Park, IL; Ilene Curts-Thayer, Mason, MI; Diane Rose Dailing, Rockford, IL; Anita Dawson, Columbus, OH; Debra Joyce Dawson, Pataskala, OH; Sherri Denault, Bourbonnais, IL; Ken Dubin, Fairfield, IA; Steven Elbert, Columbus, OH; Bruce Erikson, Maineville, OH; Lorna Filippini, Chicago, IL; Viktoria Ford, Urbana, IL; Maureen Fritchen, Racine, WI; Shelley Gilchrist, Evanston, IL; Mary Anne Goddard, Rockford, IL; Barbara Goldsmith, Morton Grove, IL; Jessica Gondek, Montgomery, IL; Amanda Greive, Edinburg, IL; Carol Hamilton, Harvard, IL; Samantha Haring, Cincinnati, OH; Tom Heflin, Rockford, IL; Leslie Hirshfield, Evanston, IL; Ellen Holtzblatt, Chicago, IL; Kate Ingold, Chicago, IL; Jennifer Johansson, Carbondale, IL; Katsy Johnson, Wilmette, IL; Marian Kane, Prairie du Sac, WI; Mark Keffer, Bedford, OH; JoAnn Kennedy, North Barrington, IL; Keren Kroul, Plymouth, MN; Kimberly Kuba, LaGrange, IL; Roland Kulla, Chicago, IL; John Kurman, Arlington Heights, IL; Judy A. Langston, Park Ridge, IL; Cindy Lesperance, Lakemoor, IL; John Linqvist, Machesney Park, IL; Jeanne Ludeke, Rockford, IL; Jennifer Mannebach, Oak Park, IL; Chandrika Marla, Northbrook, IL; Dianne Martia, Darien, IL; Kim Matthews, Minneapolis, MN; Tom McHale, Rockford, IL; Janice Meister, Crete, IL; Gary Mesa-Gaido, Morehead, KY; Zach Mory, Glen Ellyn, IL; Jack Nixon, Wilmette, IL; Deborah Orloff, Sylvania, OH; Elizabeth Rhoads Read, Cedar Rapids, IA; Nancy Reid, Gilberts, IL; David Reninger, Chicago, IL; Sophia Ruppert, Edwardsville, IL; Deirdre Schanen, Campton Hills, IL; Justin Shaw, Warrensburg, MO; Dan Simoneau, Kenosha, WI; Anne Hayden Stevens, Wilmette, IL; Robert Studzinski, Bexley, OH; Bruce Thorn, Chicago, IL; Michele Thrane, Arlington Heights, IL; Lisa Truax, Winona, MN; Constance Vepstas, Chicago, IL; Cindy Vondran, Rockton, IL; Cara Lee Wade, Fort Wayne, IN; Christina Warzecha, Sycamore, IL; Gail Willert, Burlington, WI; Sigrid Wonsil, Streamwood, IL; Betsy Youngquist, Rockford, IL; Ryan Zoghlin, Chicago, IL.

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EXHIBITION VOCABULARY

ABSTRACTION. The act of obtaining or removing something from a source; a general idea or quality rather than an actual object, person or event.

COMPOSITION. The way something is put together or arranged; the combination of parts or elements that make up something.

OBSERVATIONAL DRAWING. To draw something from life, not from memory, imagination or a photograph.

OBJECTIVE. Not influenced by personal feelings or opinions in considering and representing facts.

FIGURE-GROUND AMBIGUITY. What exists when it is difficult or impossible to determine what would be considered the figure, or subject, and what would be considered the background.

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #1 | WEAVING

While the use of weaving as an art form goes way back in history, artist Viktoria Ford updates this traditional technique by using non-traditional materials. More than meets the eye with this metal wire weaving, making the viewer consider the interconnectivity of all things.

Materials

strips of paper or lengths of yarn
cardboard
thin metal wire
wire cutters

Instructions

Discuss the nature of weaving with your students – consider how woven materials find their strength in balance and connectivity. In weaving, if one thread tears, the entire fabric may come unraveled. Practice the basic technique of weaving using thin strips of paper or lengths of yarn, alternating vertical and horizontal placement. If you choose to use yarn, it may help to connect your vertical pieces to a piece of cardboard for stability.

Once students understand the use of more traditional materials, have them explore weaving with the metal wire. Cut appropriate lengths of wire, connect them to cardboard for stability (make slits in the cardboard and slip the wire through), and have students consider if they want to weave the lengths of wire tightly (very strong) or loosely (less strong).

This artist uses weaving as a metaphor for the co-dependence of humans and the environment – what other parallels can you find with weaving using non-traditional materials?

ISBE Standards: 25.A.1d, 26.A.2f, 26.A.2e, 26.B.1d, 26.B.3d



Viktoria Ford, *Waiting*, 2014. Wire, 11 x 14 in.
Photo courtesy of the artist.

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ACTIVITY #2 | OBSERVATIONAL DRAWING

Artists have long documented their belongings and material possessions. In a time when it's so easy to snap a quick photo, there is something novel about examining something for what makes it special to you.

Materials

paint (e.g., gouache, watercolor, acrylic)
paintbrushes
water
colored pencils
pencils
painting / drawing surface (e.g., canvas, canvas board, paper)

Instructions

Have students pick as a subject an object or piece of clothing that is important to them and bring in the actual object. Take some time to consider what characteristics of this object are distinct to it. By looking closely at the object out of its regular context, students are able to examine its features objectively.

Have students first sketch the object, focusing in on one particular element. It may end up looking abstracted, as the element chosen takes center stage and the rest becomes secondary. Go back in and finish with paint or colored pencils, paying special attention to those features. Crucial to this exercise is considering color choices, the representation of space and proportion of the subject to the background, and the mood and emotion that the composition represents.

ISBE Standards: 25.A.1d, 25.A.3d, 26.A.3e, 26.A.4e, 26.A.1e



Molly Carter, *Blue Print Drawing – Skirt*, 2015.
Colored pencil on paper, 30 x 22 in.
Photo courtesy of the artist.

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WEBSITES

Rockford Art Museum
rockfordartmuseum.org

Juror Sarah Krepp
sarahkrepp.com

Dick Blick Art Materials
dickblick.com

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE Standards)
isbe.state.il.us