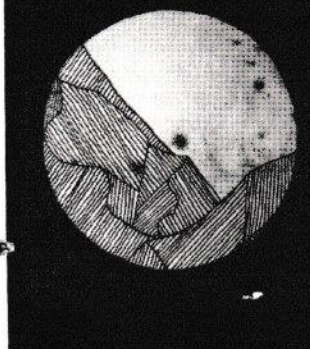
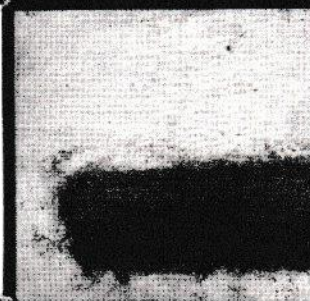


the beauty is in the details

'The Enormous Tiny Art Show' at Nahcotta invites closer inspection

At top, left to right: 'Apron Strings' by Albina Coiden, 'Essex and Monroe Street' by Stacey Durand and 'Railway Two' by Alessandro Viglione

Below, top to bottom: 'Will Follow' by Craig Hood, 'Tony's Return' by Aysen Orhon and 'untitled.1' by Jennifer Hodges



by Rebecca Webb

"The Enormous Tiny Art Show," on display at Nahcotta until March 4, is a valentine to art lovers on a budget. This

review

enormous show includes over 150 works by 26 artists. The size of the show is echoed by its range: the different mediums and genres represented; the varied ages, levels of experience and locales of the artists; and the prices that begin at \$30 and go up to \$600. Tiny are the art works that are 10 by 10 inches or smaller. These are works to spend time looking at, and Nahcotta's modern, spacious feel gives room for this.

You can view a larger painting from a distance and, unless you find it striking, you may not move closer. But in order to really see these pieces, you have to inspect them. From a distance, you will be struck by the color and composition of Bonney Goldstein's work, but up close, you become aware of texture and layering created by collage, encaustic and stitching in a piece like "We All Jumped Over the Moon." You see how the graphite strokes around the whale's tail convey a sense of movement in Aysen A. Orhon's "Lilith" and that the speckled white paint creates a briny feel. You notice a delicate sketched detail of drinking glasses on a table that could easily be overlooked amongst the more obvious shapes, strong lines and overall architectural feel of Sam Faix's "Large Windows and Sculpture."

Because the show is hung alphabetically, the viewing experience is democratic. Three to six pieces by each artist—a number that wouldn't be possible in a group show this size if the pieces were larger—helps give a sense of the artists' style and themes and offers more opportunities to connect with their work. It allows you to see that in Kim Ferreira's tongue-

in-cheek interpretations of canonized paintings, it is the same face (Ferreira's in fact) that looks directly and knowingly at the viewer. Or that Craig Hood's tiny blurred graphite portraits of hard-lived, male faces all feature bulbous noses and half-closed eyes. You experience the importance of strong colors and contrasting texture in Tim Beavis's trees series, where strips of color delineate the flat horizon and scratch marks create texture on the solitary tree in the foreground.

And because the show is hung alphabetically, the element of surprise is inadvertently highlighted. You move from the high gloss swirl of colors in Robert Herdlein's acrylic abstracts to the layered geometrics of Jennifer Hodges's work that creates a porthole into a world of fine lines against dabs and wisps of color. Next to Orhon's muted, hazily atmospheric study of whales is the Japanese feel of Ellen Mullane's abstracts that combine delicacy with splashy vibrancy. From the humorous, panicky Alice-in-Wonderlandesque depictions of motherhood by Amy Palmer, you move to the placid encaustics of Earl Schofield that resemble tiles of jade green marble. These juxtapositions keep the viewing experience fresh and challenging.

While contrasts in the show are marked, some of the art shares thematic connections. A number of pieces reflect an interest in memory and found art. There are Gina Adams's intensely personal meditations on heritage, with milky looking encaustics that encase buttons, tags, lace and writing. And the textured, darkly luminous collages of Michael Deragon, who makes use of masking tape and Aqua Net and incorporates a wedding photo of his parents, images from Max Ernest's work and blueprints from the old Button Factory. Kelly Moore's

book covers from 1899, on which hummingbird prints are overlaid on a print of an old fashioned switchboard, are tacked inside a battered, blue box.

The interest in urban scenes and the effect of perspective is another connection. Stacey Durand's paintings capture an earlier, more working-class Portsmouth, with houses seemingly piled up together in a crazy array of colors. Her subtle use of collage creates a slightly skewed perspective, and because the pictures sometimes wrap around the edge of the panels, you have the sense of looking around a street corner. In Daisy Adams's oil paintings of mar-quees, motel signs and greasy spoons, you get the nostalgic feel of 1950s or '60s Americana as seen looking out a car window on a cross-country trip. A similar sense of movement comes across in the gritty, tired beauty of Alessandro Viglione's blurred cityscapes, in which color seems to be a function of decay. And Amanda Kavanagh's industrial skylines are focused on just the tops of bleak buildings as they are outlined by dramatic skies with billowing clouds.

This is a show to meet or become more familiar with a wide variety of artists, established and emerging. It's also a wonderful gateway show for would-be collectors—the affordable prices contribute to your feeling comfortable spending time with them and may entice you to seriously consider buying a piece. From the number of red stickers along the walls, it's apparent that viewers have grabbed the opportunity.

The Enormous Tiny Art Show
featuring small works by 26
artists from around the Seacoast and
around the world, through March 4.

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