

Jurying a group exhibition is always a gratifying, yet challenging task. This is especially true at Studio Montclair exhibitions due to the rich variety of work submitted, and the sheer number of artists contributing to this annual ViewPoints exhibition. This year I reviewed several hundred artworks. Collectively, they function like a time capsule of the present moment. What at first seemed to be highly dispersed and varied in range, came into focus as I moved further through the process.

Much of the art shares a through line of humor, others champion the banal – and while there are many abstract artworks in the mix – there is a noticeable increase in the number of figurative artworks. This may reflect people’s thirst for connection after years of screens and social distancing. Other artists transmit their concerns about the environment, discrimination, racism, sexism, and war. Many artworks embody a surreal quality that reflects today’s uncertain state of affairs. Yet not everything is fraught with the tensions of our times. Artists will always be curious and there are investigations into the universal and the dotted micro worlds only known to us through a lens. Yet other works proudly demonstrate identity or culture.

The variety of media deployed by these artists, and the ways they use them, always surprises me. Some approach the realm of alchemy with their materials and techniques. There are those that choose humble materials transformed not by chemical reactions, but by artistic vision and the audacity to see something of worth in the discarded. Others continue to use time-honored techniques, while some prefer a more experimental approach.

The show is but a small sampling of the larger pool of submitting artists. As you move through this show, I invite you to enjoy the diversity of such artists. Perhaps take a moment to reflect on the times we live in and the place we presently occupy. The dialogue imbued in each individual work speaks volumes, yet, when put in proximity, the voices grow stronger, louder, and more unified in their desire to speak to the complexities of this moment in time as captured in the art.

– Jeanne Brasile