

COMMUNITY



"A Sufficient End," stoneware and glaze, by Winifred Weiss



"Samara," cast bronze on maple base, by Rory Mahon

NEW HOPE ARTS CENTER

Rare form

The New Hope Arts Center shows work in disparate media during its 16th annual juried sculpture exhibit.

By GWEN SHRIFT
STAFF WRITER

Jurors nodded to a less-is-more aesthetic, populating the New Hope Arts Center with intimately scaled works for "Sculpture 2017," on view through July 15.

This exhibit is full of deep, yet approachable work in metal, clay, paper masquerading as stone, wood, glass, felt and concrete.

The closest the show gets to massive is "Samara," a many-times-life-size bronze maple seed by Rory Mahon, which still evokes the airiness of spiral flight from tree to ground. Even larger metal works such as Justin Long's "Graffiti" and "Body and Soul" seem to soar, the former a frenetic, calligraphic gesture in fabricated steel and granite, and the latter a leap of duality, an abstract winged form held to ground by gleaming granite.

Judith Rosenthal offers slender, graceful plants sprouting from stylized clods of ceramic earth, suggesting an interdependence of opposites in "Irrepressible," "Weeds" and "Poppy Pods II." Meanwhile, Georgette L. Veeder achieves stone-like effects using formed handmade rag paper in works such as "Allure," which seems finely carved rather than molded.

Also expressing delicacy of form are white clay sculptures by Leora Brecher, who shows virtuosic abstracts in the form of spiraling stacks and loosely folded enclosures. Works such as "Windswept" seem to breathe and move by virtue of their ridged, bellows-like construction.

By contrast, John Mathews' "Jazz Hands" in walnut, steel and glass is less dreamlike and more specific, an example of Mathews' uncompromising, fully realized esthetic. "Jazz Hands" may or may not tell a story, but it's very easy to look at.

Some contributors, such as ceramic artist Winifred Weiss, develop themes in characteristic style, in her case rendering small human figures with great sympathy and psychological insight. In "A Sufficient End," the artist studies the extremely beautiful face of a woman enduring a difficult state of being. The viewer connects immediately.

In a related work, emerging artist Angelique Kopacz offers a multilayered installation based on a fictional woman struggling with social constraints and economic insecurity in a coal town. "Grasp & Release" is composed of delicate hands (the artist's own) cast in concrete and holding devotional objects including a rosary, above an array of glasses containing crosses frozen in wax.

Norine Kevolic continues to push the boundaries of her work in bamboo, this time deconstructing a landscape painting and embedding it in "Upheaval," a circular piece with soaring elements reminiscent of protons and electrons in an atom.

Others show work that is a departure from styles seen here in the past. Michael Kehs, known for surreal, meticulously carved wooden pieces that draw on creatures such as bats and lizards, goes almost abstract in this exhibit with "Searching for Peace."



"The Golden Child," mixed media, by Melissa Benzinger McGlynn

NEW HOPE ARTS CENTER

If You Go

What: "Sculpture '17," juried exhibition of contemporary work

Where: New Hope Arts Center, 2 Stockton Ave.

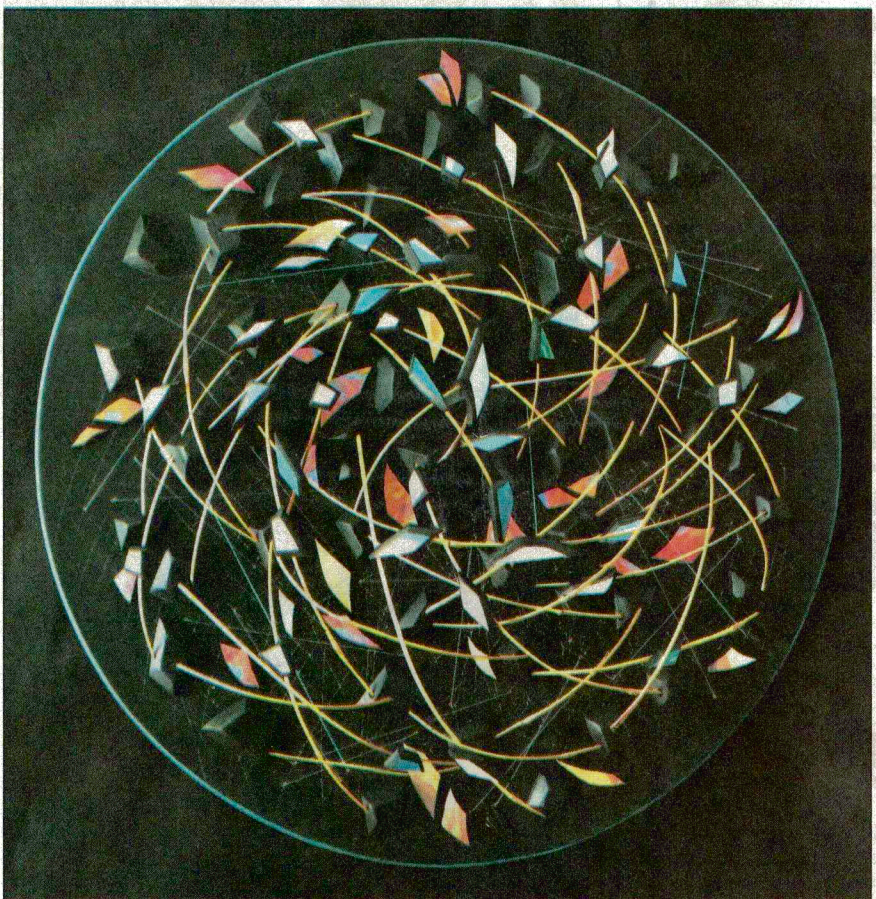
When: noon to 5 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday through July 15

Information: newhopearts.org or 215-862-9606



"Searching for Peace," holly, buckeye burl and acrylic paint, by Michael Kehs

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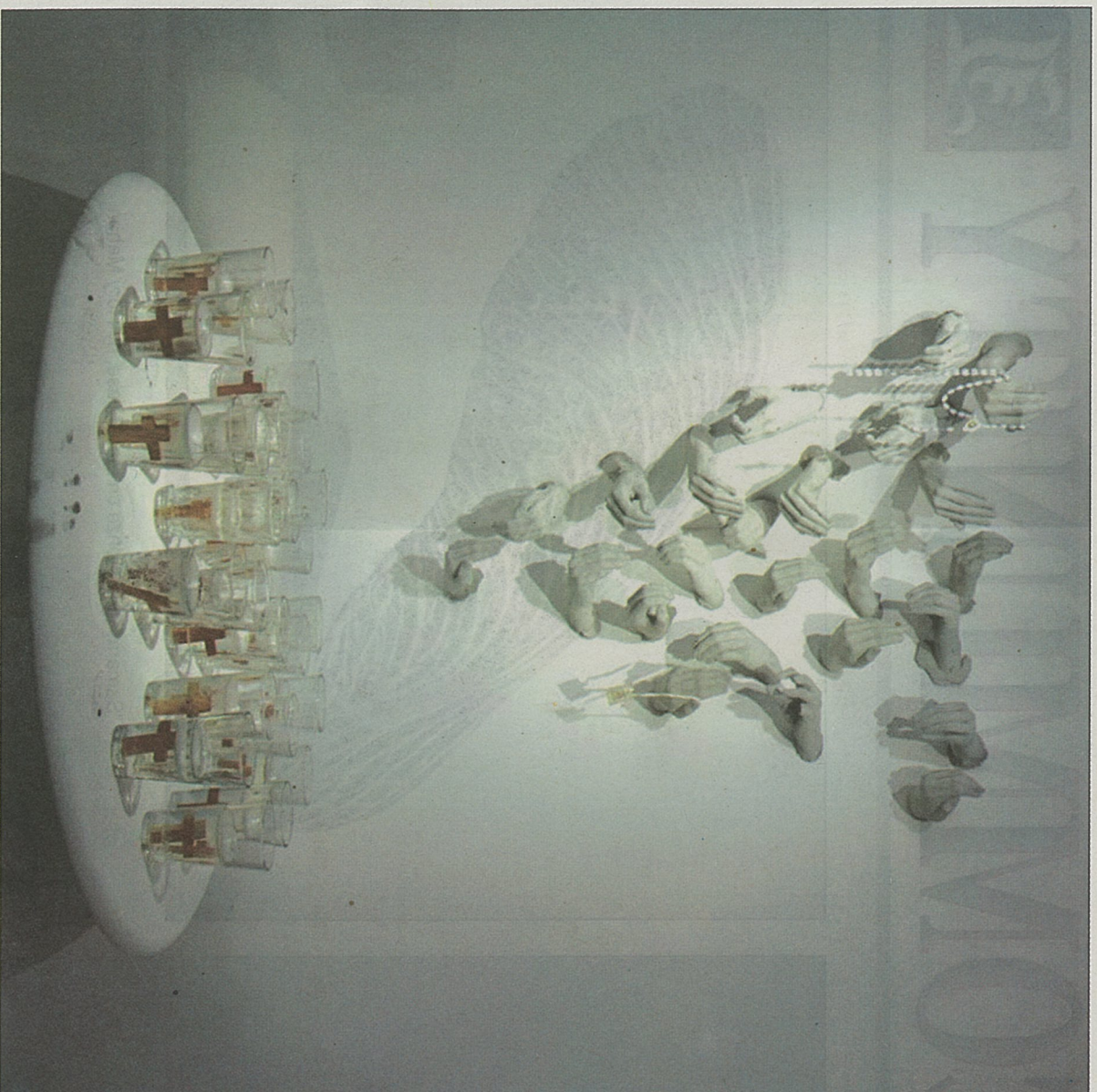
"Upheaval," bamboo, monofilament, poplar and mahogany, by Norine Kevolic

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"Allure," formed handmade rag paper, by Georgette L. Veeder

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"Grasp & Release," concrete, found glass and wax, by Angelique Kopacz

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"Gratitfy," fabricated steel and granite, by Justin Long

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Sculpture

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The work depicts sinuous, gleaming white trumpet-like horns leaping from a pile of bloody ashes, though in view of Keh's past sculptures, his inspiration could well have been strange plants and animals emerging from undensea fires. Either way, this is an essay in the persistence of hope.

Wendy W. Gordon contributes a map of her intent for those who admire her

sculptures of microscopic life forms, or for those new to these quirky shapes.

Amusingly for a sculpture show, "Haeckel" is a large ink-on-paper drawing (with a few small three-dimensional works on the side). "Haeckel" explores interconnectedness and multiplicity in patterns that repeat and evolve and attach themselves to completely different ones.

"Sculpture '17" veers from classic, old-school work such as pit-fired pieces from Connie Bracci-McIndoe to a featherless, felt-bodied mixed-media

nesting by Melissa Benzinger McGlynn.

"Floating World" by Bracci-McIndoe suspends small glass globes between two waters of fired clay, which the artist covered with cuneiform-like indentations. This juxtaposition of fragile, lyrical glass and the indestructible, passionate, primitive earthiness of clay is visually and philosophically compelling.

McGlynn works with textures of the polar opposite, sculpting bird and animal figures of felt. "The Golden Child" takes the form of a wool bird with clay beak

and talons, adorned with a necklace and crowned with a halo-like metal ornament.

Young as it is, the bird wears an imperial expression as if in no doubt of its destiny. On the other clay, it's an anthropomorphic bird, equal parts art and fun.

Equally refreshing are Ruth Jourjine's porcelain clay sculptures, especially "Chameleon II," in which the artist whorls and curls candy-colored strips of clay like taffy. The result is a study in forms that melt, or grow mysteriously. Gwen Stritt: 215-949-4204; email: gstritt@calkins.com



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