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ABSTRACTS AND ARTIFACTS COMING TOGETHER IN TIVERTON

"ab-stracts & art-i-facts," the current exhibition at Gallery 4 in Tiverton, Rhode Island, blends artworks by eight contemporary artists with ancient and classic artifacts. The gallery occupies the main floor of a yellow clapboard building at the town's historic main intersection. Tiverton is an off-the-beaten-path kind of place situated between Boston and Newport on the map, and getting there by land involves driving along some idyllic scenic byways. It's a seaside town that rambles, and its core is an intimate cluster of shops known for antiques and contemporary art. Weathered grey shingles are a staple of the region, so the gallery's yellow façade presents a perk of subtle color in the landscape.

Gallery 4 has a surrounding lawn that it utilizes to exhibit sculpture. A horse and other outdoor sculptures made of welded steel or aluminum

by Brad McDougall welcome patrons and act as a conversation starter while serving as a visual assistant to newcomers in finding the gallery. The sculptures on the grounds also hint at the continuation of the connoisseurship viewers encounter inside.

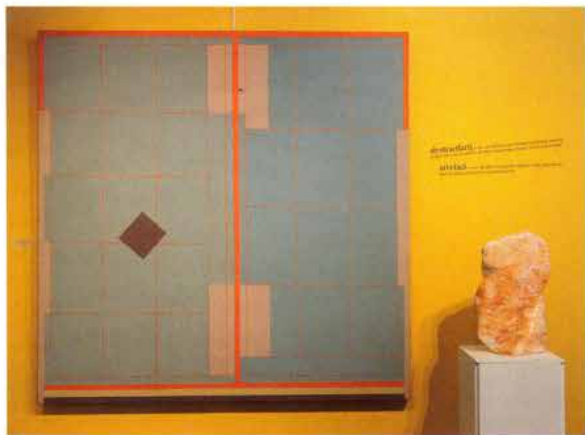
For many years, the pioneering influence in Tiverton for contemporary art was Virginia Lynch Gallery. Despite Lynch's passing, the area's interest in contemporary art has not waned. In fact, it seems that she left behind an indelible footprint of contemporary art acceptance that has stayed with the town and become a platform adding depth to its identity. Tiverton has artists, collectors and a climate conducive to quality finds. It also has the state's economic incentive of no sales tax on art.

Founding partner Bob Smith was the first to organize a contemporary art exhibit at Gallery 4 with a show of works by Chinese artist Yizhou. Elaine Hill then took over as the primary owner, and later Alix Campbell became her business partner. These days Hill and Campbell make joint decisions about developing the gallery. While working as a flight attendant with Delta Airlines,

GALLERY 4
3848 MAIN ROAD
TIVERTON FOUR
CORNERS, RHODE
ISLAND
THROUGH
DECEMBER 23

Joan Jardine, *Men in Black*, oil on cradled board, 24" x 36".

Peter Stroud, *Alphadon II*, 1971, acrylic on canvas, 60" x 60" (photograph by David Hruska).



Hill had the Istanbul route. During those years, she developed a love of the region's rugs, textiles and objet, which she collected and often sold through Silk Road Traders. Beautiful rugs and fabrics from her travels now inform the gallery's ambience. The partners share perspectives collaboratively and co-curate show strategies with Chas Hickey. He handles installation matters for the gallery and he also helps to position the content of the art shown. Hickey personally conceived of and co-curated "ab·stracts & art·i·facts" with Hill, as well as the gallery's previous show, "Nature Preserved."

The eight artists included in "ab·stracts & art·i·facts" reflect a range of aesthetics and social alignments for the gallery. Previously, the gallery had shown the work of Helen Sturges Nadler and developed a friendship with the artist, which led to it representing her late husband Harry Nadler's work. An accomplished abstract painter, Nadler was connected to the New York art scene. Gallery 4 handles Nadler's estate and it shows works by Peter Stroud as well. Paintings by both men are in the current exhibition.

Stroud's work came to the gallery's attention through New Bedford collector Richard Connor. His "Alphadon II" has been installed by Hickey so that it introduces the grid to order abstract visual language, and their work has relevance to the history of abstract art. A writer for the Philadelphia Inquirer once described Stroud as "one of the sages of geometric abstraction." With this genre, bigger is often better, and so it is not surprising that works by Nadler and Stroud are the largest paintings included in "ab·stracts & art·i·facts."

Combining abstract with narrative, Paula Stebbins Becker has made for this show fabric reconstructions inspired by vintage photographs that play on the meaning of art and artifact. She explores issues of



Gay Gilles, *Three Wise Men*, bronze on granite, 13" x 14 1/2" each.

feminism and fuses a sense of contemporary reality with historical context. Susan Freda, like Becker, is a local artist, and her fragile-looking wire crocheted sculptures also connect to narrative construct. Freda's sculptural work is an extension of her jewelry making practice. There is an arresting lyric lightness about her sculptures, which are crocheted from silver and gold wire with glass bits added. Her couture-like sculptures have an exquisite charm. She has in the past received a Pollock-Krasner Award and a scholarship from Dale Chihuly's Pilchuck Glass School.

THANKS FOR THE COMPLEMENT

Cecilia DelGaudio and Gay von Henneberg Gillies also have sculptures in the exhibition. DelGaudio's work includes seven sculptures, all abstractions in either stone or wood. They are installed in various ways to complement paintings by Nadler, Stroud and Joan Jardine. Gillies' "The Traveler" consists of original bronze elements mounted on stone. The contemporary sculpture component of "ab·stracts & art·i·facts" functions like a bridge, allowing for inclusion

of Chinese artifacts from the collection of Michael Byrnes and Olde China Trader of Bristol, R.I. The items from Turkey, Uzbekistan and Iran are from the inventory of Silk Road Traders.

Jardine has 11 oil-on-cradleboard paintings, plus a number of oil-on-

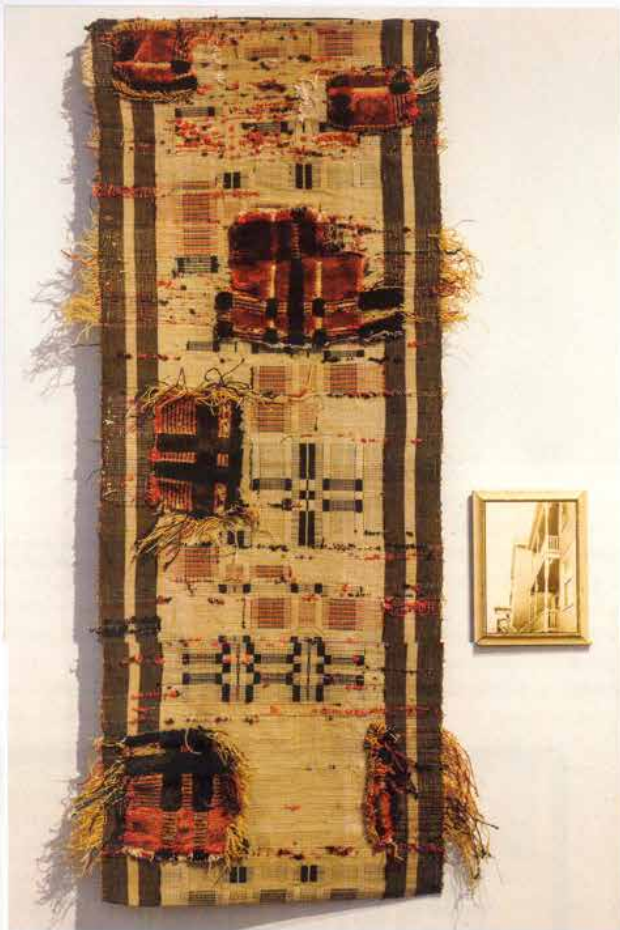
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Paula Stebbins Becker, *Anni*, weaving 10.5" x 21", framed photo 2 3/4" x 3 3/4".

paper works. There is a sophistication and a beautiful sense of color in her paintings, and the installation layout allows Hickey's paintings to harmonize with Stroud's, complementing the work of both artists. Oil-on-paper works in the show by Jardine reflect another dimension of her thinking.

The wonderful thing about Gallery 4's interior is that the organized sensibility of the visual collaboration between Elaine Hill and Chas Hickey allows the art to breathe as if these items were installed in an actual home. The quality of the art and their attention to detail is responsible for maintaining the gallery's art savvy and loyal following.

| Suzanne Volmer

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Family Roots, (detail) Nella Lush

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Nathan Green,
"GSRD Clay Earth
(for the Petways)"
20' x 50', 2015

RE//WOVEN
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11/20, 1 - 5 pm