

Women at Work at Phillips' Mill



"Vines at Canal Water" by Leni Paquet-Morante. (oil on canvas, 48 x 48"). This New Jersey-based painter and sculptor pushes organic shapes toward abstraction to show the harmonies and interrelationships of natural forms.



"Hotel Lafayette, Easton" by Emily Thompson. (oil on panel, 12 x 12") The painter uses an accretion of marks and abrasions to help convey the passage of time that has affected her architectural subjects.



"Space Cadet" by Haley Manchon. (colored pencil and pastel, 18 x 24") This young artist has captured the spirit of our time in her sensitive portrait of one individual.



"Buckingham Soy," by Stacie Speer Scott. (mixed media, 24 x 36") Scott's landscapes feature satisfying compositions, yet their energy makes the viewer feel they are happening before your eyes.

River Road in New Hope whips in a hair-raising turn around Phillips' Mill, a 1754 gristmill that is now a National Historic Site. The road may pass it by, but time has not. Since 1929, Phillips' Mill has offered the area a range of new artworks by notable artists in its annual Fall (originally Spring and Fall) juried exhibitions. Its 92nd Annual Juried Show will take place in the picturesque building and online beginning September 25th and running until October 31st. The exhibition is a benefit for the Mill, and collectors prize the opportunity to acquire new works by favorite and emerging artists.

The Bucks County art tradition began here, in the exhibitions organized by a committee including William Lathrop and John Folinsbee, whose works now hang in The Metropolitan Museum and National Gallery, as well as in our own community's Michener Museum in Doylestown. But the exhibitions were meant to display the work of modern painters, and from the beginning—unusual for the time period—the exhibiting artist list included a fair proportion of women. Of the nearly 206 works on view in the two 1929 exhibitions, at least 20% are by women. (In some cases, artists are listed by initials, making a precise count difficult.)

The Show stays fresh—and sometimes the subject of heated conversations—by having a different jury every year, whose tastes in painting and sculpture vary. Nevertheless, gallery visitors can count on seeing memorable works by accomplished artists that bring credit to our area.

There is another way women have put their distinctive stamp on the event. The art committee responsible for staging the show has included a majority of women for as long as anyone can recall. Committee lists from art shows in the 1950s through the '70s list the members only as Mrs. or occasionally Miss. But these powerhouse women organized significant shows with festive receptions. This included as much physical labor as it did aesthetic considerations.



"Cousin Al" by Robin Crowley. (handmade egg tempera on board, 11 x 14") Despite the difficulty of the medium, the artist has painstakingly rendered details of the weathered face to elicit a compassionate response from viewers.

Laura Womack, this year's Art Committee Chair, says "Typically, about 400 artists might submit paintings or sculptures that have to be catalogued, hauled around the two-story building to be presented to the jurors, and then hung, taken down, and returned safely to artists at the end of the event. It's a sizable undertaking. And this year's task list includes preparing files for uploading to the online exhibition and the coding to make smooth, secure e-commerce transactions. We work!"

In the end, many people would echo James Michener that what is best about the show is the experience it offers the attentive viewer: seeing the world through an artist's eyes can often be revelatory and can teach us something about ourselves. For more information about the show, visit www.phillipsmill.org.

92ND JURIED ART SHOW
AT PHILLIPS' MILL

SEPTEMBER 25TH THROUGH OCTOBER 31ST