



ISSUE 27 DESIGN POETRY
PHOTOGRAPHY ART MUSIC

INTERVIEW WITH MEREDITH FIFE DAY: URBAN SCAPES

The subject has a way of choosing me. I think the relationship between artist and subject is one that should come from a deeper place than intellect and conscious control.



Meredith Fife Day brings Vyü Magazine into the birthplace of James McNeill Whistler to discuss her role as resident artist and her current techniques.

Vyü: *I don't remember seeing your collages in the past. Are they a relatively new medium for you?*

Day: During the past few years I have become more interested in structuring my painting through color, and the studies I would make

with pencil were not satisfying me. Then a couple of years ago, in either impatience or urgency, I began to put colored shapes next to one another, and found myself making collages. The act itself was almost involuntary. I just needed to see how certain color/shape relationships would work.

Can you describe how Whistler House has affected your career as an artist?



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Whistler House has had an enormous effect on me, though I never really thought of taking the studio there as a career move. I saw the space many years ago and fell in love with it.

I am quite drawn to the urban landscape. The views of The Acre from Whistler House are incredible and they began to appear in my paintings immediately. Visitors who come to the museum seem to share my enthusiasm for the space. They see that I work from an environment I have a strong connection with, and often respond to my work because of that.

Can you tell us about the show you have scheduled for the fall?

Soprafina Gallery in Boston's South End will show my new work this November. In May 2005 the gallery exhibited my collages of Whistler House views, and the gallery director is encouraging me to show more collages. At this point I am taking a single subject and working through it in both painting and collage. The two play off one another in the studio. I hope that will happen in the gallery.

What techniques or method did you use when you started as an artist?

I'm afraid my first drawings were on my bedroom wall! During naptime, I took my hair clip and drew an ongoing mural behind the mattress. When my mother discovered this activity, she enrolled me in art classes. In those classes,



which were some of the happiest times of my life, we worked with tempera.

My first attempt at painting with oil was in high school. Since then, I can't tell you how much oil paint I have gone through! As most artists realize, oil is very forgiving. Because I seldom get anything right the first time around, I think I need a forgiving medium.

Do you have a recurring subject in your art or do you always strive for new subject matter?

Certain still life objects seem to show up over and over. I have enormous respect for the Italian artist Giorgio Morandi, who painted the same still life objects all his life. Then there are the rooftops—a subject of longtime fascination to me. Although I can't explain why I love rooftops so, I often wonder if it is their strong and stable shapes against the ever-changing sky. Also, their color reflects natural light while having a slightly artificial impertinence in the natural world.

I really do not strive for new subject matter. The subject has a way of choosing me. I think the relationship between artist and subject is one that should come from a deeper place than intellect and conscious control.

Do you give art lessons?

I taught in the classroom at a university in the Midwest for many years and loved it. Now I am more interested in learning. When people visit my studio at Whistler House, I feel there is a wonderful exchange between us. They teach me and I share with them what I know about painting—my own and others'. To me, these are art lessons and life lessons. What a thrill!

Where did you learn about drawing? When did you realize that art was going to be a big part of your life?

I have been learning about drawing from the



119
GALLERY



Kenneth A. Huff



Mother Earth, Jay Hungate

Work by:

Kenneth A. Huff
Jay Hungate
Gina Kamentsky
Hyun Ju Kim
Kathleen Marsh
Andrew Neumann
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Steve Syverson

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www.119gallery.org
(978) 452-8138

Curator Mary Ann Kearns
artgal@119gallery.org

expanded sculpture

119 Gallery serves up a cornucopia of sculpture in its fifth exhibit since opening last summer. Specializing in electronic media, the gallery embraces traditional and new media in this installation with equal fervor. Featuring a range of sculpture by eight artists from Lowell, Boston and beyond, Expanded Sculpture juxtaposes paper, plaster, stone, and metal sculptures with kinetic sculptures, video sculptures, and virtual sculptures.

Visitors to the gallery will be pleased to see several conventional sculptures on pedestals, and may be amazed to find it on the ceiling, walls and floor. Those familiar with 119 Gallery will not be surprised to discover virtual animations playing on a large flat-panel display, and a start-of-the-art sculpture created with a three-dimensional printer.

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beginning, from those early pre-school days of drawing on the wall. As we all do, I learn about drawing from the masters. I am absolutely awed by the drawing in the work of artists as diverse as Rembrandt and Bonnard, as well as work of other cultures. There is such affection and often such struggle in brilliant drawing—those qualities speak to me.

Art has always been a big part of my life, so I can't pinpoint a moment of realization—a eureka moment. As I grow older, I look for signs that tell me what my life's work is. I think the fact that I am compelled to paint even when things are not going well, even when I have to make material and emotional sacrifices, tells me something about the place of painting in my life.

What did it take to become a well known artist in Lowell?

Time. Lots of time. Although I do not think of myself as well-known in Lowell, I have lived here for 17 years and have been an artist for more than twice that long. If people are learning about my artwork I have to attribute much of that to the exposure at Whistler House and to the generosity of its staff, board, members and visitors who have supported me and taken the time to look at my work. Exhibiting at The Vintage Company and La Boniche introduced my work to many people in the Lowell area—Brian Baraby and Anna Omoyeni are wonderfully supportive of the arts community. Also, back in 1996 I was enormously grateful to have work exhibited in the Brush Gallery. Nancye Tuttle and, earlier, Dave Perry at the Lowell Sun have been so very helpful to me and to many other artists in getting the word out on our endeavors.

Have you been busy with interviews recently?

A high school class interviewed me a few years ago. Nancye interviewed me shortly after I moved to Whistler House. About 18 months ago, an Associated Press writer who was doing a feature on Whistler House interviewed me. I can't think of any other more recent interviews, and am delighted with this opportunity you are giving me through Vyü.

Do you have any comments about modern art and how it may or may not relate to computers? Or how computers affect art?

I have seen some quite interesting and provocative work involving computer generated art. What is missing for me in that work is touch. I think the presence of touch—unique to each individual—gives art something human and timeless.

Tapas & Tangos

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THE BRIDGE REVIEW

The Bridge Review: Merrimack Valley Culture

(community.uml.edu/bridge) is an on-line journal about the culture of the Greater Merrimack Valley of Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. Founded in 1997, the journal explores the interwoven concepts of place, nature, culture, and society. Based at the University of Massachusetts Lowell, the journal includes writing, visual art, music, video clips, and other creative and scholarly works relevant to our bio-region.

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