

CT ART SCENE

Hank Hoffman, blogger

Wednesday, November 07, 2012

CWOS Alternative Space weekend

[Artspace](#)

[City-Wide Open Studios](#)

50 Orange St, New Haven, (203) 772-2709

City-Wide Open Studios 2012

Through Oct. 21, 2012.

Weekend 3 Report: Sunday

Finally getting to wrap up my coverage of this year's "Crystal Anniversary" City-Wide Open Studios. (I missed the middle weekend, focusing on artists in Erector Square, because I was laid up with a cold.)

It was a trip to wander through the former *New Haven Register* building, getting a little lost in the maze of hallways and in the presence of the mammoth—and now silent—presses. There were too many artists for me to comment on more than a few who grabbed my attention. My silence on so many of them should not be construed as critical judgment.

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It was New Canaan artist **Camille Eskell**'s first time participating in City-Wide Open Studios. Her sculptures of the female torso were attention-grabbers and I stopped to chat with her about her work. She said her work "is all about emotional states of being. It's been the core of my work for 20-something years."

"Tattooed Lady: Coming Up Roses" was especially striking, seeing as how the softly curved nude female form—emblazoned with a floral tattoo drape—was rent from collarbone to lower abdomen with a gaping wound studded with yellowing teeth.



Camille Eskell: "Tattooed Lady: Coming Up Roses"

It is powerful sculptural imagery, the beauty of the female form and the decorative roses—Eskell says she uses "a lot of florals and botanicals to represent irrepressible life"—juxtaposed with the torn opening lined with teeth. The sculpture was cast in aqua resin and fiberglass from her original wax sculpture. The "sub-subtext" of the work, according to Eskell, was her sister's struggle at the time with terminal cancer. Eskell said that her sister's battle with cancer wasn't consciously in her mind as she made the work. It was only afterward that she saw intimations of her sister's pain in the mutilated body.

Regarding the teeth, which Eskell told me symbolized a "gnawing anxiety," Eskell said they were leftover dentures given to her some ten years prior by a dentist she knew. Eskell says she hoards lots of outré materials: "You know when you're going to have to use something and just wait until the moment is right." She mixes media but usually tries to incorporate drawing, which she describes as her greatest strength.