

The Day

Gas prices take an upward swing across the Norwich-New London area **Page F1**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2013

VOL. 132 NO. 216 36 PAGES

NEW LONDON www.theday.com \$1.00

C1 The Day www.theday.com Saturday, February 2, 2013

DAYBREAK

Fans catch up thanks to binge TV **Page C3**



< A star is born

For decades, Anheuser-Busch has used its famous Clydesdales in Super Bowl ads for Budweiser. The latest star is barely two weeks old: a foal born Jan. 16 at Anheuser-Busch's Warm Springs Ranch in Missouri. The foal was just a week old when the ad was filmed.

Artists on the same page in Old Lyme exhibit

By AMY J. BARRY
Special to the Day

Writing as a visual art and the places where words and abstract drawing intersect is what interests Karen Schiff, an artist and former English professor.

And so, Schiff brought together a group of artists with a like-minded sensibility—some that she already knew and some she had never met—and created a show at Old Lyme's Diane Birdsall gallery titled "Winter Reading: Lines of Poetry."

Included are the paintings, mixed media and sculptural works of six artists from Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York and California: Jen Bervin, Pablo Manga, Janet Passehl, Zachary Sifuentes, Mariangeles Soto-Diaz and Harvey Tulcensky. A piece by Schiff is also included in the show.

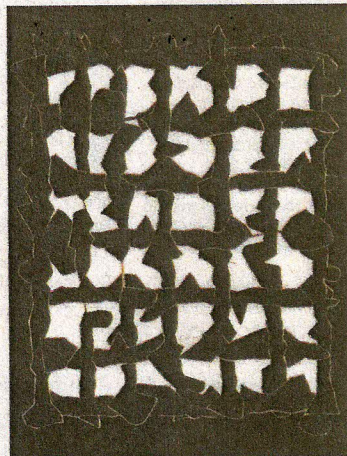
"I'm always looking at folks who are using writing in a visual way," says Schiff, who grew up in Hamden and now lives in New York City.

"My dad's a graphic designer in Guilford (Paul Schiff, who designed the show's print material) and I grew up looking at his books and typography and thought it looked really cool. I'm fascinated by typography, and also handwriting."

Schiff says she's always been interested in the forms of writing and that the subject of her dissertation and articles she's published has been on how novels are laid out.

"We're used to reading left to right, top to bottom, but that doesn't mean that's how it always has to be," Schiff says. "As an author fiddles with that, plays with the layout of the page, it can help convey something about what's happening with the story."

Schiff says this show has been an interesting way to gather work by people who are thinking about things similar to her own interests, but



"Untitled (Crossed Words)"
by Karen Schiff

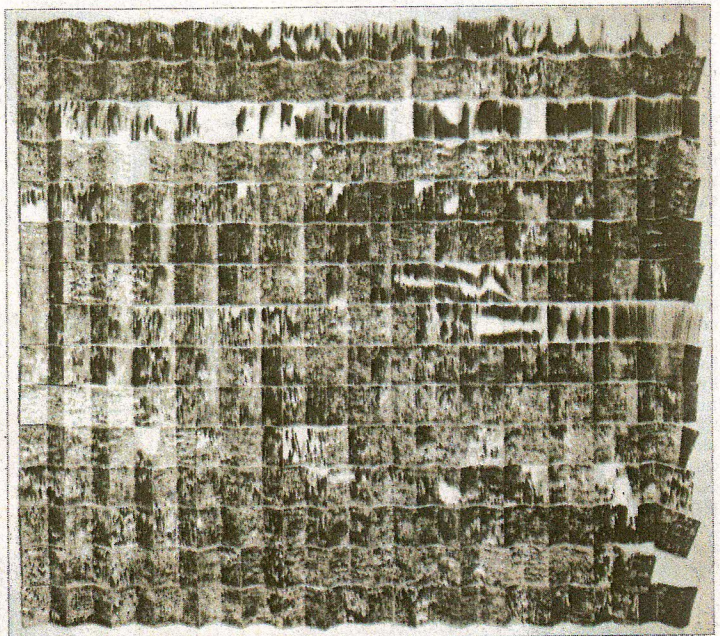
in different ways.

"Sometimes it's not even their primary interest," she says. "But when I look at their work, I see this (idea) percolating in there."

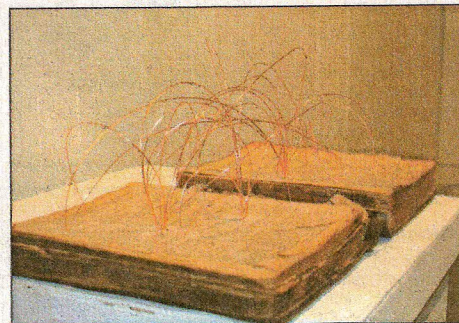
Schiff explains that a lot about language and writing is going on in the various works, even though there's not a lot you can actually read.

"It helps focus your attention on how writing looks," she says. "When I look at artwork with writing in it, I start reading it and get into the habit of reading for the meaning. It's harder to appreciate it as a work of art, instead of as a vehicle for conveying information."

In choosing the work, Schiff says one of her goals was for the viewer to first look at the art and then you read the title and realize there's



"Untitled (Selections from the Notebooks Project, August 2011 - May 2012)"
by Harvey Tulcensky



"Five Definition Poems After Emily Dickinson" by
Zachary Sifuentes

more to it.

"You dig a little further, and uncover another layer. I really like that there's more than one way to relate to the work," she says.

IF YOU GO

What: Winter Reading: Lines of Poetry

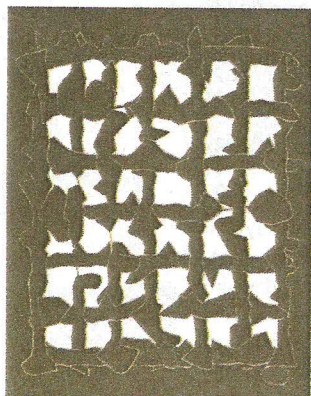
When: Through Feb. 23, with an Artist's Dialogue today (Feb. 2) at 2 p.m. Artists will talk with each other about how they think about "Lines of Poetry" in their work.

Where: Diane Birdsall gallery, 16 Lyme St., Old Lyme

Information: (860) 434-3209 on online www.dianebirdsallgallery.com

SEE POETRY PAGE C2

What does a poem look like?



A new show at Diane Birdsall gallery in Old Lyme examines the relationship between reading, writing, and the visual arts.

See **DAYBREAK**

Poetry from the mind's eye at birdsall gallery

FROM C1

She also likes work where it seems as though the artist wasn't entirely sure of how it was going to turn out.

"There's an undercurrent of exploration that keeps it alive," she says.

In curating the exhibit, Schiff says, "A lot of literary and art studies these days have gotten left brain and I wanted to make this a right brain show."

Artists on writing in their work

The six artists think of "lines of poetry" in their work in different and similar ways.

"I see the language of poetry as an abstract language," says mixed media artist Mariangeles Soto-Diaz. "Within my work what happens as I encourage my own geometric propositions to rebel against predetermined rules and repetition, is a kind of poetic gesture; one often tempered by playfulness."

Harvey Tulcensky uses actual notebooks for his work to underscore the sense that his drawing is a form of abstract writing.

"As a child I used to 'read' books in foreign languages, but running my fingers under the words while reciting made up sounds to myself," he says. "The magic, for me, was in the mystery held by the unreadable text. It could mean whatever I wanted it to mean. The automatic 'writing' of my notebooks holds some of that same magic for me."

Zachary Sifuentes is both an artist and writer, who teaches in the Harvard writing program.

"I could say cooperation and tension are at the heart of multi-media, and that's what we have here: language and art are two media, welded together," Sifuentes says. "But what I get from working in these multiple languages is a way to visualize what intrigues me about poetry, to make visible the questions I ask when I read poetry: 'What does order look like in Whitman? What does sound look like in Dickinson?'"

Jen Bervin's work brings together text and textile in a practice that encompasses poetry, archival research, artist books and large-scale art works.

Literature professor Logan Esdale says of Jen Bervin's

work, "She is a poet and visual artist whose thinking works in and across spaces. She creates images to be read and words to be seen; reading is writing and defacing a text is a creative act — I mean by 'deface' the taking away of a subject's wholeness, its autonomy; I mean removing it and moving it, as in let's go this way, you're coming with me, we're in this together..."

Janet Passhel of Essex is both a poet and an artist.

"The duration and pace of both a poetic line and a drawn line speak to tone and meaning," she says. "My graphite pencil drawings push the idea of making time move slowly, almost glacially, as one's eye follows the extremely subtle alternations that occur along each line."

In Passhel's ironed (fabric) works, she explores the idea of history—or "back story" as it would be called in writing.

"The ironing affords a quality to the cloth by which one knows that something has been done to it," she points out. "Furthermore, lines in the form of thick and thin folds, edges frayed or clean, and ghostly creases, add emotional weight and sensory recognition."