

ART

NEW ENGLAND

Silvermine Guild Arts Center/New Canaan

Contemporary Reflections:
A 75th Anniversary Silvermine
Guild Artist Group Show

For three quarters of a century Silvermine Guild Arts Center has been an integral part of Connecticut culture, offering numerous exhibitions, live events, and educational programs. Contemporary Reflections showcases what has comprised the core of this institution since its inception—its member artists. This show features over 160 pieces, including paintings, prints, drawings, photography, and mixed-media works, as well as cast bronze and welded steel sculptures.

This exhibition's most powerful piece is the mixed-media diptych by Camille Eskell titled *Bloodline*, which makes a direct reference to Kiki Smith's *Train*. Like Smith, Eskell confronts the viewer with raw symbolism: the candy-cone red used for the oral blood transfusion, which winds its way through the feminine lace may imply sisterhood of a sort. The near-fetal position of the lone figure seems to point to centuries-old oppression.

Laurie Fader's painting *Nautilus with Pigeon* is reminiscent of the palette and the narrative quality of Paul Delvaux's work, minus the surrealism and erotica. The slight fish-eye view hinted at by the bowed horizon and the curved iron fencing pushes forward the image of the pigeon. This bird, which is about to light upon an unseen ledge, adds a bit of theatrics to the scene.

Elevator, Joy Floyd's collage made of paper, fabric, and metal, seems timeless. Floyd's selection of materials, the desk blotter riddled with scars from not-so-carefully removed tape and the stained fabric that borders it, gives this piece its intensity. Thomas Mezzanotte gets maximum effect from minimal effort in the portrait *AnDrew*. The stunning appearance of the head, a photo-emulsion portrait on canvas sitting atop a crudely drowned male torso, seems to jump off the surface. This jarring visual effect is intensified by a tinge of pink on the face and the graphite lines that roughly border the picture plane.

Kathryn Frund melds Eastern with western sensibilities in her mixed-media *The Prize*. Intense red rays radiate over a glistening sea; golden clouds inhabit a cadmium sky: this surface the artist has filled with calculations and cryptic messages. A final invader, a small piece of corkscrew metal, appears near the top of the canvas, as if to remind us that none of this is real. All in all, *Contemporary Reflections* easily surpasses most open-member invitationals.

—D. Dominick Lombardi