

BLUE: IT'S MORE THAN A COLOR

Cambridge Art Association, The Kathryn Schultz & University Place Galleries • Cambridge, MA • cambridgeart.org •
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Curator Joseph Thompson (director, MASS MoCA) pared down more than 400 submissions by about eighty percent to create two exhibitions. Association members and nonmembers compete in a show of open-ended concept, untied to restrictive media. Still, speaking broadly, Thompson has chosen bold abstract paintings, and even more moody and somber photographs.

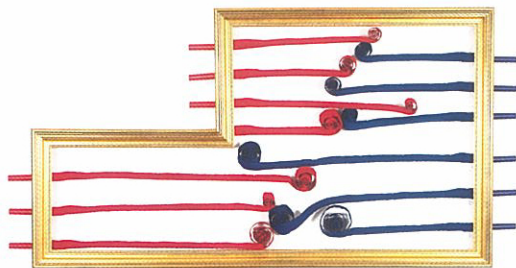
There are also sculptures, assemblages, and other mixed-media works of great variety. The blue concept—"more than a color"—was interpreted very loosely. Walter Kopec's *2 Party System* (best in show) is a kind of quasi-American flag, where the stripes are red and blue unfurling noisemakers, and the stars are absent. Set in a golden frame, there's a subtle political satire in play, one much more bipartisan than our actual politicians these days.

Virginia Fitzgerald's *Lilith* is just as dramatic as the Kopec, but her freestanding white dress (made of plaster) is covered in blue patterns evoking universal aspects of the pre-

Edenic earth mother, and charming bodily references to lungs and a beating heart. Fitzgerald's drawing skills equal her sculptural ones. The whole reads like something between decorated china and an unusual take on the Day of the Dead, substituting affirming optimism for the vanitas warning.

Tim Heavican's large painting *Network 7* is a web of lines like nerve clusters in shades of blue and rust. It differs entirely from Thomas Stocker's *Painting of Caspian Rug*, which replicates in stunning detail every thread of a heavily patterned woven rug with a meticulous application of acrylic paint. Malcolm Davis's *Ship to Shore* is a hard-edged compendium of angles in colors derived from the urban landscape.

Of the photographs, Julie Gorn's *The Puddle* (honorable mention), is an unlikely slice of blue sky found in a smear of water on gray asphalt. The image is simple, succinct, and powerful. So is Richard Lapping's highly tex-



Walter Kopec, *2 Party System*, 2011.

ured *Washbasin*, and Bob Olshansky's *Girl on Her Front Step*, a model with wisdom beyond her years. More mournful and reflective are Tom Diaz's *The Evening*, an industrial scene where decorative garlands don't really raise the mood (first place); and Gail Samuelson's *Monopoly Horse*, where the familiar figurine glistens silently, not in blue, but in battleship gray.

—Shawn Hill