

"Lambertville flea Market,"
oil on linen, by Glenn Harren

Life

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Video online



Getting personal at the New Hope Arts Center

For artists in "Continuum," it's who they know — and what they know.

By GWEN SHRIFT

Staff Writer

Three years ago, the New Hope Arts Center launched "Continuum," an annual invitational exhibit in which established artists bring in newer names whose work they support.

In past years, artists have exhibited intellectual connections — and at least one blood relationship.

This year's show, which runs through March 2, includes all kinds of artistic kinships.

In a tribute to networking at its best, Jay Eisenberg introduced Lauren Rudolph, whom he taught as a child. Glenn Harren and Merle Citron have known Heather Petrosky and Jennifer Finch, respectively, since the latter were kids. Joy Kreves is the mother of Ivia Sky Yavelow.

What matters most is the breadth and quality of the exhibition the connections produced, as well as individual accomplishment recognized by the show's organizers.

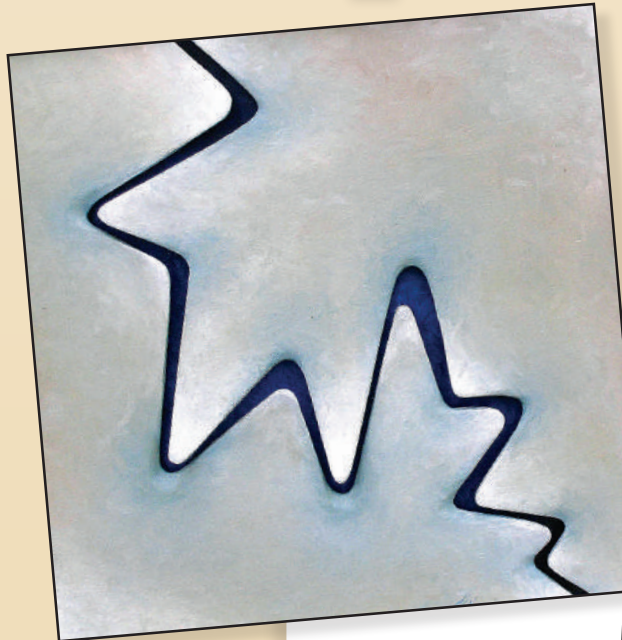
Stacie Speer Scott, for instance, had a remarkable year in 2013, producing works such as "To the Etruscan Mound," a collage-painting on canvas depicting an abstract landscape. The artist, and viewer, seem to fly to the heart of something great; the mood is anticipatory.

In "Etruscan," Scott's composition and technique mesmerizes the eye into a slow recognition of an earthy yet ethereal human form. Her works in this exhibit signal an ever-deeper, more-dimensional and inviting turn in her oeuvre.

I'm familiar with the dynamic abstracts painted by Robert Hansen, and grateful for the introduction to the three-dimensional works of Robert Noonan, whose pieces defy easy categorization.

Are they sculptures that you hang on a wall? Installations in the form of paintings?

"Beautiful Dreamer" by Lauren Rudolph



"resilience II," oil on carved wood, by Robert Noonan (above), "revolution" by Robert Hansen (right) and "Desensitization," mixed media, by Susan Moloney (below)



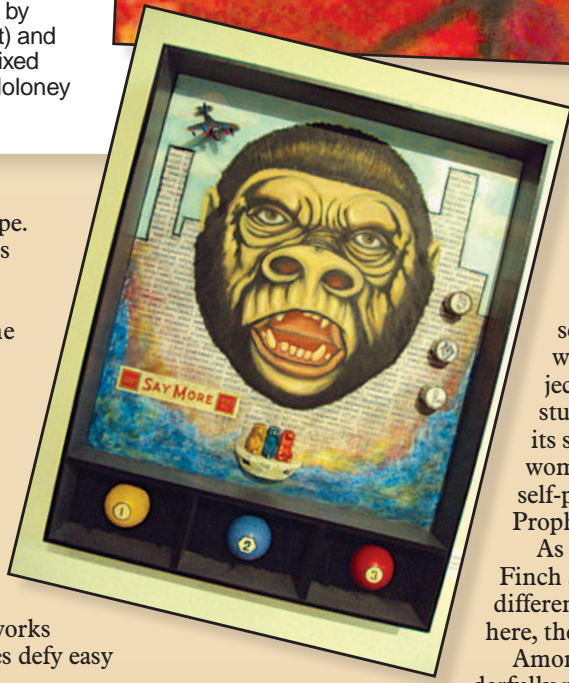
In any case, Noonan's technique produces amazing works such as "Resilience II," a study of smoothly angular jagged edges overlaid with textural brushstrokes.

Eisenberg, represented here by several delicate portraits of musicians with their instruments, shares subject matter with Rudolph, his former student. In "Continuum," she exhibits spirited and mystical pictures of women; Eisenberg also offers a surreal self-portrait entitled "The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy."

As previously mentioned, Citron knew Finch as a child. Their careers developed in different directions, but in at least one case here, they take similar whimsical tangents.

Among Citron's works on view is a wonderfully painted still life with a tongue-in-cheek title: "Onions at Twilight." Nearby is Finch's "Hello Nellie," which captures an exuberant canine personality in the form of a leaping, longhaired dachshund. It's one of several dog portraits distinguished by the painter's sensitivity to each animal,

See CONTINUUM, Page D3



This path to happiness is paved with pleasures, large and small

I once heard a wise and spunky woman say flirting is the art of enjoying one's self in the presence of another.

Now I'm no expert in the art of the coquette, but those words have always stuck with me. We don't flirt to get something — attention, acknowledgment or any other goal — but to savor the pleasure of being fully alive and fully ourselves. And in the moment, we revel in how much fun that is.

The truth of those words was recently affirmed for me when my friend T and I spent a weekend in New York at an event geared toward celebrating the beauty, sisterhood and power of women. For two days,

we shifted our focus from meeting the needs and expectations of others to exploring, among other things, what brings us joy and fulfillment. Luxuriating in a bath or nap or any other type of pampering, playing and dancing to our favorite music, savoring the connections in our intimate relationships, giving into those urges that seem too daring or fanciful — we were encouraged to pursue anything, big or small, that would bring more pleasure into our lives. And in tuning into those desires, we unleashed an infectious brand of magic.

From the cab driver who cut across the city to return T's phone when she realized she'd lost it to

the sumptuous meals that surprised us at restaurants we stumbled into to the men who engaged us in conversation everywhere we went, we wove a spell simply by being ourselves. T and I, along with two of her friends, had dived into this adventure, making plans and arranging logistics with little guarantee of how anything would work out. Even committing to the event seemed a bold, and potentially risky, step.

But almost every moment unfolded with exhilarating ease. And while we certainly weren't looking to attract male attention, what we experienced over and over was the alluring appeal of our joy. The taxi driver who chatted us up as he ferried us to day two of our event and appeared

See LALA, Page D3



Nails Francis

Life in LaLa Land



My friends — (clockwise, from right) T, Kristy, Thomasa — and I were amused by all the attention we received along every step of our New York adventure without even seeking it.



"Etruscan," a mixed media work by Stacie Speer Scott

Continuum

Continued from Page D1

as well as energetic background colors such as coral, golden yellow and sky blue.

"Continuum" also contains work by Harren in the best Pennsylvania Impressionist tradition — a snow scene, "Pine Run Road," redeems recent winter weather all on its own. His "Lambertville Flea Market" is set on a sunny day, showing people browsing among used picture frames and old chairs. It's a definitive rendering scene of a landmark that should be a magnet for painters, if it isn't already.

Harren brought in Petrosky, whose works could not be more different than Harren's poetic representation-alism. Petrosky's lively abstracts include "Big City," a composition executed in a candy-colored, folk-art sensibility.

Artists, by nature, take ideas and forms to new levels in their work at large, as well as in individual expressions.

So by working backward, this critic divines Kreves is a highly accomplished potter who stretched that boundary to devise extremely detailed installations, and Susan Moloney is a talented painter with a knack for three-dimensional shadowbox compositions.

Kreves incorporated numerous elements, including scent, into "Craving Nature," which takes the form of table settings of moss, twigs, faux rocks and other objects in what the artist calls "a feast of non-edible nourishment."

Yavelow, Kreves' daughter and the youngest artist in the exhibit, explores space, form and tension in a series of works wrapped, cocoon-like, in thread and string.

Moloney offers several works, the most vivid of them the mixed-media "Desensitization," which references King Kong against a background of repetitions of the phrase "after repeated exposure, your emotional response will diminish."

Moloney's work, however, has the opposite effect, as does the annual return of "Continuum."

The New Hope Arts Center is on the second floor at 2 Stockton Ave. Information: 215-862-9606; NewHopeArts.org.

"Hello Nellie," acrylic and oil on masonite, by Jennifer Finch

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MOVIE REVIEW: '3 DAYS TO KILL'



Kevin Costner stars as a CIA assassin in "3 days to Kill," a race-against-the-clock adventure from director McG.

This action thriller travels a tired track

Grade: C

Starring: Kevin Costner, Amber Heard, Hailee Steinfeld, Connie Nielsen, Tomas Lemarquis and Richard Sammel; directed by McG

Running time: 113 minutes

Parental guide: PG-13 (intense sequences of violence and action, some sensuality and language)

By **BILL WINE**
Correspondent

If only Ethan Renner was as skilled at handling family business as he is at the killing business.

But, oh, the life of a CIA agent. "3 Days to Kill" is a shallow action thriller with an uneasy mix of brutal fight sequences and sentimental family-reunion scenes.

Kevin Costner stars as Renner, a killing machine of an agent who has long since given up trying to juggle family and work. Once he determined it was impossible, he simply gave up. Eventually, he left his wife and daughter, for which they still resent him bitterly.

Then the trained assassin finds out he has a terminal disease and only months to live.

He is offered an experimental drug that could save his life by a mysterious operative (Amber Heard), who seems to be from another planet, keeps turning up, and with whom he has a hellish relationship.

But in exchange for this medical help, he must agree to that overused

narrative convenience: one last mission.

He has been assigned to hunt down a ruthless terrorist while looking after his daughter — by himself because his wife is out of town — for the first time in a decade.

What Renner wants at this stage of his life, as he nears retirement, is more of an active relationship with his estranged wife (Connie Nielsen) and teenage daughter Zoey (Hailee Steinfeld), whom he has more or less protected over the years by keeping his distance.

But that distance has robbed him of a relationship with his child — one he obviously wishes he had — and with his wife, as well.

His latest issue is the medicine he's taking causes hallucinations at critical times that do not exactly make his work any easier, to say the least.

The one-final-mission thrust — which is so tired, it should be banned from screenplays for a few years — gives the film a been-there-done-that tiredness early on that it occasionally rises above. But not enough.

The director, McG ("This Means War," "Terminator Salvation," "We Are Marshall," "Charlie's Angels") — whose real name is Joseph McGinty Nichol — with his pause-giving résumé, works from a script by Luc Besson (who co-wrote "Taken," which this resembles in outline) and Adi Hasak based on a story by Besson.

McG takes an almost sadistic delight in the fisticuffs and gunplay.

The film and its makers seem enamored of the violence that's never more than a moment or two away. Which is why the film registers as a glorified shoot-'em-up, punctuated by equally obligatory incendiary explosions.

Costner, who handles the fight scenes quite well, is in the midst of what certainly feels like a second-act comeback that aspires to but falls short of what might be called the Matthew McConaughey maneuver — which, in the latter's case, involves quality projects that are artistically embraced.

But it can be said that although Costner hasn't quite reinvented his cinematic self, he has put his star is back in play. This lead role comes on the heels of a couple of effective supporting performances in "Man of Steel" and "Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit."

And Costner's track record travels with him: This is, after all, the star of "Dances with Wolves," "JFK," "The Untouchables," "Bull Durham," "The Bodyguard" and "Field of Dreams," just to name a few.

And his comfort and presence in the lead role remains obvious and effective.

Expect to see a lot of him as he's got a number of high-profile films in the can: five in 2014 alone.

But that's later.

For now, "3 Days to Kill" offers a daze of kills to those with two hours to kill.

Bill Wine is a film critic for KYW Newsradio. His reviews can be read at cbsphilly.com/movies or heard two, three and four times a day on 1060AM.

LaLa

Continued from Page D1

reluctant to have us leave his cab; the waiters at our restaurant in Little Italy who were so solicitous to please and lingered at our table, laughing and bantering with us — especially amusing was the one who saluted my hearty appetite with a high five and an enthusiastic "Now that's the kind of woman I love"; the men on the train ride home who injected themselves into our conversations, eager to share in our giddy, good humor: We did nothing to invite their interest.

Instead, the more immersed we were in our own fun and pleasure, the more irresistible we became.

I needed that reminder — and not because I'm ready to date. Having just ended a long-term relationship, romance is the last thing on my mind. What I do need is time to heal. Then, when the days no longer begin and end and string together with thoughts of him and us, the possibility of anyone else stepping into that space won't seem so unfathomable.

But what I took from all those moments is when I am ready, moving on won't have to be a struggle. Well-meaning friends have tried to buoy my spirits with all kinds of support in recent weeks, but when some of them tell me how difficult it will be to start dating again, how hard it is to find someone decent and how

disappointing and frustrating the entire process can be, I want to turn and walk away. Perhaps that's been their experience and I don't want to discount that. But I'd rather not be daunted by their attitudes and beliefs.

I don't expect dating to be a chore or a challenge, nor do I subscribe to the notion a good man is hard to find. If anything, my work as a wedding officiant has proven otherwise. Every time I'm with a couple who shares how they met — so often in a moment neither expected — and am gifted with a glimpse of the ways love has blessed and expanded their lives, I am reassured this is no elusive fantasy.

Even the relationship I've just ended serves as a reminder of the deep and satisfying love it's possible to find when we give up the hungry, arduous search and commit, instead, to pursuing what lights us up. For he would often say it was how happy I looked dancing in my own world the night we met that drew him to my side.

I will grieve the loss of that partnership, and I know there will be days where sadness and longing are my only companions. But I will also be open to the magic life bestows and the joy that is a natural compass for steering me onward. Sometimes it feels like the only true armor against a world, cruel and chaotic and bent on convincing us we'd do better to settle for less.

Life in LaLa Land appears every other Sunday in the Life section. Naila Francis is a feature writer at Calkins Media. Phone: 215-345-3149. Email: nfrancis@calkins.com. Twitter: @Naila_Francis.



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