



presents

Memento Mori

a juried exhibition of
contemporary still-life

August 11 - November 13, 2016

surrey
art gallery

engaging
contemporary art

President's Message

The concept of *Memento Mori* is to remind an individual of their mortality and both the shortness and fragility of human life. This juried exhibit of 2D artworks explores contemporary ideas about still life. Artists were invited to consider the meanings and symbolism of still life imagery today through a variety of media including painting, drawing, printmaking, and photography.

I extend my sincere appreciation to all the artists that submitted work for this exhibit as it is these events that represent the artistic endeavors of the community of Surrey and beyond.

The basis for selection was sensitive to the diversity of work submitted, in recognition that artists make art for different reasons and from different experiences. The jurors looked for works that conveyed personal creative explorations, artistic commitment, and expression related to the theme of *Memento Mori*. Jurors also considered the execution of work as related to the artist's intention in order to select a balanced representation of styles and subject matter. I would like to express my gratitude to our Jurors who had the difficult task of selection for this competition. Sincere thanks to the staff of the Surrey Art Gallery for their support and to the volunteers who made this opportunity possible.

Carol Girardi, President, Arts Council of Surrey

Jurors' Statement

The artworks presented in this exhibition showcase local artists' exploration of the concept *memento mori* and related 'still life' genre traditions. We chose to make our final choices in order to celebrate the diverse medium and expression. Some artists have chosen to address the *memento mori* tradition head on by including human and animal skulls, time pieces, seashells, a dead bird, a candle, a doll, and photographic portraits. A good portion of the artworks include common still life subject matter such as flowers, fruit (both of which figure strongly in *memento mori* pictures) along with tableware such as teapots, vases, water pitchers, plates, and cutlery. A number of the artists playfully focus on less conventional still life objects such as spools of thread, electronic devices, a museum gift bag, or "found" penitentiary museum display. A number of the artworks exhibit influences from a related approach to *memento mori* known as the *vanitas*, or type of composition and imagery meant to remind the viewer of mankind's eternal vanity and the ultimate emptiness of earthly goods and pursuits. *Vanitas* images commonly depict such subjects as musical instruments and, as seen here wine, books, and perhaps too, electronic devices as smart phones and cameras.

Another remarkable characteristic of the final artworks selected were their creative use and experimentation with materials and historical styles. There are many fine examples of acrylic and oil on canvas and board, the final selections catalogue a range of other media such as ball point pen on paper, embroidered fabric, painted lace, monoprinting. A fair number of the final selections borrow formal elements from European Renaissance and Baroque traditions, while other reference 19th and 20th century post-impressionism, expressionism, and pop art along with pictorial and documentary photography. Also worth noting is the way that a number of works, alluding to more contemporary late twentieth century and early 21st century approaches to still life and *memento mori*, focus on singular objects, along with notions of memorabilia, *memento* and loss.

In all, these artworks are at their best, like all great *memento mori* and still life images, when they allow the tension between the actual material properties of the objects depicted intermingled with the allegorical and mythical resonances of this ancient and still visually impactful genre.

We sincerely thank all of the artists who offered their work for this exhibition, and would like to thank the volunteers who made this opportunity for artists possible.

Lisa Chen & Jordan Strom

Placing Artists

1st Place

Raghavendra Rao K.V

Mending Cracks

watercolour

The central theme of this painting is disability, trauma and the complex process of recovery. I was buried under rubble in the 2001 earthquake in Gujarat, India. Long-term, this resulted in the partial paralysis and atrophy of my left arm. I also found myself faced with a further battle to get over the experience, both psychologically and physically. Through this process, I realized the complex meaning of *mending*.



2nd Place

Melanie Lastoria

Doing Time Standing Still

photographic print

On a recent visit to Idaho, I took a tour of the old state penitentiary which closed in 1973. The site was placed on the National Register of Historic sites and has been left untouched since the closing. The cells are exactly as they were when the inmates were transferred to the new prison. This scene from one of the cells is simply frozen in time, doing time standing still.



3rd Place

Meghan Spence

Family History

acrylic on canvas

Members of a family are all reflections of each other and their entanglement is essential to the overall structure of the family. I have chosen to express this dynamic by using silverware heirlooms that are always present at family get-togethers, reflecting back the interactions and passed on through the generations.



Honourable Mention

Karen Kroeker

A Very Still Life

mixed fibres

Being somewhat of a traditionalist I chose to use traditional symbols and still life style: a skull, flowers; coins, pearls and rich fabrics to express the vanity of worldly pleasures. The bird represents an affirmation of life; a messenger who provides humans with a bridge between the mundane and spiritual life. My "contemporary" contribution is an image completed in fibres. This is a medium that is gaining in recognition as a viable and thought provoking artistic form of expression. It is what I do.



Name	Title	media	price
Afuwa	<i>Orlando Suite I</i>	acrylic	NFS
Adam Back	<i>Still Life</i>	mixed media	\$600
Linda Bickerton-Ross	<i>Orange Crushed</i>	photograph	\$500
Gail Biddle	<i>Whimsical Friends</i>	acrylic	\$175
Elizabeth Carefoot	<i>Kalista's Relic</i>	fibre arts	\$150
Beatrice Cosovanu	<i>Untitled</i>	acrylic	\$350
Sanjoy Das	<i>Battery Critically Low</i>	mixed media	\$2,000
Rowena Dela Peña	<i>Inside</i>	acrylic	\$340
Alanna de la Vega	<i>Dia de Muertos</i>	painting	NFS
Nino Dobrosavljevic	<i>Museum Tour</i>	oil on canvas	\$700
Tom Douglas	<i>Still Life with Dead Birds and Animals</i>	acrylic	\$450
Ernie Faessler	<i>Boots</i>	acrylic	\$200
Eileen Fong	<i>Brighten Up 2</i>	acrylic	\$575
Louise Harding	<i>Purple Bowl</i>	acrylic	\$375
Elizabeth Hollick	<i>Distilled Life</i>	acrylic	\$1,200
Kathleen Gaitt	<i>Searching for the Bigger Picture</i>	photography	\$300
Kathleen Gallagher	<i>Black Pear</i>	watercolour	\$300
Katina Giesbretch	<i>Core Vitale (Vital to the Core)</i>	monotype	\$300
Helmut Gruntorad	<i>Midnight Happy Hour</i>	photograph	\$500
Karen Kroeker	<i>A Very Still Life</i>	fibre arts	\$300
Melanie Lastoria	<i>Doing Time Standing Still</i>	photograph	\$175
Amy Lee	<i>Beauty Amid Ruins</i>	acrylic	\$1,300
Chito Maravilla	<i>My Trusty Red Jacket</i>	acrylic	\$600
George Omorean	<i>Horam Mortis - Hour of Death</i>	photograph	\$300
Lea O'Shea	<i>Threads</i>	photograph	\$750
Raghavendra Rao K.V.	<i>Mending Cracks</i>	watercolour	\$600
Roland Rihela	<i>ADAPT 7805</i>	photograph	\$200
Erik Rissiek	<i>Elements</i>	print	NFS
Meghan Spence	<i>Family History</i>	acrylic	\$700
Paul Stilwell	<i>Coral and Shell: The Ocean Blue</i>	ink on paper	\$400

**If you are interested in purchasing a work in the exhibition,
please contact the Arts Council of Surrey at 604-594-2700.**



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