

MEMBER NEWS

Events that are likely to be available after publication will be marked with a ■.



Elizabeth Vorlicek, *Tea For Two With Duchamp*, ceramic, porcelain, stoneware cone 6, found teacups, found brick
10 x 16 x 10 inches

Solo and Feature Shows (2 or 3 artists), Commissions, Honors

- **Richard Binder**, *Abstract Impressions*, Byrne Gallery, Middleburg, VA, February 1–28.
- **Andrew Christenberry**, *New Work*, curated by Brigitte Reyes, Reyes + Davis, Carroll Square Gallery, Washington, DC, April 10–May 23. Opening reception: April 10. Artist's talk: May 9, 2 pm.
- **Victoria Cowles**, *Interactions*, an installation paired with dances, BlackRock Center for the Arts, Germantown, MD, April 25–June 6. Opening reception: Saturday, April 25, 2–4 pm. Artist talk: Saturday, May 9, 2–4 pm. Both days will include dancers, and guests will be invited to dance also if they wish.
- Mary Early**, *Linea X, 2020*, Freight Gallery, installation in the Freight Elevator at Off the Beaten Track, Washington, DC, January.



Victoria Cowles, *Unexpected Juxtapositions*, installation

WSG Exhibitions & Programs

David Mordini: Technology and Reshaping Art

February 29, 2020

2–4 pm

Otis Street Arts Project

3706 Otis Street, Mt Rainier, MD

RSVP: programs@washingtonsculptors.org

Fleeting, Fled (WSG Exhibition)

March 21–April 26, 2020

7300 MacArthur Boulevard

Glen Echo Park, MD

Application deadline: Friday, February 21

Opening reception: Saturday, March 21,

4–6 pm

Juror and Artist Talks: Sunday, April 26,

4–6 pm

Juror: Laura Roulet

HelpDesk 2020: Planning Your Artist's Estate

With Presenter Robin Moore

Saturday, March 14, 2020

1–2:30 pm

Center for Hellenic Studies

3100 Whitehaven Street, NW

Washington, DC

RSVP: programs@washingtonsculptors.org

WSG Annual Members' Image Show

Saturday, April 18, 2020

4–7 pm

Center for Hellenic Studies

3100 Whitehaven Street, NW

Washington, DC

RSVP: programs@washingtonsculptors.org

International Sculpture Day 2020

With Chas Colburn

Saturday, April 25, 2020

2:30 pm

MakerTech Tuesdays

8401 Good Luck Road

Lanham, MD

RSVP: programs@washingtonsculptors.org

WSG Information

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The Washington Sculptor Publication

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Jeff Chyatte, Judith Pratt, Steve Wanna
Design and Image Management: Stephanie H. Firestone*
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former President, WSG
Joan Weber, Collector

The Washington Sculptors Group, founded in 1984, promotes an awareness and an understanding of sculpture and fosters the exchange of ideas among sculptors, collectors, and the general public through: sponsorship of frequent events, including artists' panels, presentations, workshops, and social gatherings; co-sponsorship of programs with museums and other art groups; and organization of professionally-curated exhibitions in museums and alternative spaces in the Washington, DC area and beyond. The work of WSG is carried out by its Board of Directors, along with its nearly 400 members—sculptors, collectors, curators, and others interested in sculpture—in its working committees. WSG received the Mayor's Arts Award for Excellence in Service to the Arts in 2004.

Membership

WSG. Dues for a calendar year (Jan–Dec) \$45/year, \$15/year to students with ID (scholarships available). Dues for renewing members are payable in Oct., Nov. and Dec. for the following year. Dues paid by new members Jan. through Sept. will be applied to the current year. Current paid-up members have "Member through 2020" above their names on their mailing labels.

To join or renew by mail, print the membership form from the WSG website, fill it out and send it with a check to: Washington Sculptors Group, PO Box 42534, Washington DC 20015. *You may also use the online form. Fill out the form, and when you click the "Submit" button at the bottom of the page, a message will come up with a link to let you return to the Main Membership page and pay using PayPal.* To change your membership address of record and for receiving this WSG periodical, send your name and address by email to membership@washingtonsculptors.org or by regular mail to WSG at the address above.

Receive Reduced Membership Fees

These partnering arts organizations give the following membership discounts to current WSG members:

International Sculpture Center (ISC)–15%

Washington Project for the Arts (WPA/DC)–10%

International Arts & Artists (IA&A)–10%

Sculptors Inc of Baltimore/Baltimore Sculptors–\$10 off the membership fee

Philadelphia Sculptors Group, New England Sculptors Group, and Tri-State Sculptors Group—upon request.

Resources

WSG Website www.washingtonsculptors.org

The WSG website contains information about the organization and its events and activities in the following areas: Programs, Exhibitions, Exhibition Opportunities, Publications, History, Mission, Governance, Membership and Contact Addresses. In the Members Gallery, any visitor to the site can find names, images and biographical information about current members who have entered material into the data base. Current members can sign into the database and upload information about their work by using the Gallery Update Form.

The Washington Sculptor Publication

Issued three times a year. Deadlines January, April, and August. Send information to membernews@washingtonsculptors.org. See the website for information on submitting visual materials.

Yahoo Group

A forum for members, collectors and all those interested in three-dimensional media to share information, get technical advice, and discuss exhibitions at area museums and galleries (including your own). Go to www.yahoo.com, click on 'groups'; search: [washingtonsculptors](http://www.washingtonsculptors.org) (one word) which brings you to: 'Washington Sculptors Group, Washington, DC' where you sign in.

Contact

Washington Sculptors Group
PO Box 42534, Washington DC 20015
email: info@washingtonsculptors.org tel: (202) 686-8696
website: www.washingtonsculptors.org



■ **Helen Glazer**, *Where Art Reaches the Sky at BWI*, organized by the Italian Cultural Center of Maryland, entrance to TSA screening at Concourse D at BWI, two hand-colored photographs.

■ Donated archives of her National Science Foundation Antarctic Artists & Writers Program project to the collection of The Center for Art + Environment, Nevada Museum of Art. On exhibit January–April, 2020.

■ Recipient of a 2019 Rubys Artists Grant for Baltimore-area artists from the Robert W. Deutsch Foundation. The award will fund her next in-depth photography and sculpture project in remote Kangerlussuaq, Greenland.

■ **Artemis Herber**, Carol Barsha, Heather Theresa Clark, *Landscape in an Eroded Field*, curated by Laura Roulet, American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center, Washington, DC, January 25–March 15. Gallery talk: February 29, 4–5:15 pm.

■ **Maria Karametou**, work added to the permanent collection of Freddie Mac, on view at the lobby of the company's new headquarters, McLean, VA, September 2019.

■ **Shana Kohnstamm**, awarded international residency in the Silence Awareness Existence residency program at Arteles Creative Retreat near Hämeenkyro, Finland, March 2020.

■ **Joan Konkell**, *Solo Exhibition*, Harmon-Meek Gallery, Naples, FL, January 12–31.

■ **Liz Lescault**, *Entwined*, commission for private residence in Cabin John, MD.

■ **Dalya Lutwak**, *Woman in Search of Light*, carved from a block of salt for the Biennale Scultura di Salgemma at the Museo Arte Contemporanea SottoSale in Petralia Soprana, Sicily, Italy. It is now on permanent view at the museum.

Carol Morgan published article, “Windows of Hope” in December 2019 *Artist’s Magazine* and published “What I see when I draw on METRO” in the Opinion section of the *Washington Post*, January 5, 2020.

■ **Mary Opasik**, *Conley Award for 3-D*, MFA Winter Members Show, juried by Adah Rose Bitterbaum, MFA Circle Gallery, Annapolis, MD, January 4–25.



Richard Binder, *Inner Strength*, paint, stainless steel, 24 x 12 x 18 inches



Maria Karametou, *Dreaming*, 90 x 24 x 1.5 inches



Carol Morgan, *On the Yellow Line*, drawing



Liz Lescault, *Entwined*, commission, 72 x 16 inches

■ **Jerome Harris Parmet**, *Omnium Gatherum Outdoor Sculpture Project*, curated by Arts Alpharetta, City of Alpharetta, GA, Kim Zane Cultural Services Manager, November 2019–April 2021.



Jerome Harris Parmet, *Coming Together*, welded painted steel, variable sizes

■ **Kristina Penhoet**, *Entanglements*, Mount St. Mary's University, Emmitsburg, MD, January 23–February 22.

■ **Ana Rendich**, Ann Lyne, John McCarthy, juried by Lyn Bolen Warren, Les Yeux du Monde, Charlottesville, VA, January 25–March 4.



Kristina Penhoet, *Out of Bounds*, fiber, 12 x 12 x 6 inches

■ **Brendan Robinson**, awarded *Third Prize*, Art Howard County 2019 Biennial, juried by Robin Holliday (owner and curator of Horse Spirit Arts Gallery), November 1–December 13, 2019.

■ **Jean Sausele-Knodt**, *Recent Work*, Forum and Fisher Galleries, Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, Alexandria, VA, March 21–May 21.



Jean Sausele-Knodt, *Concrete Blues*, oil, embroidery, cast concrete, 14 x 14 x 9 inches

■ **Veronica Szalus**, *Conduit*, Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, Alexandria, VA, October 2019–October 2020.

■ **Diane Szczepaniak**, *Passage*, Bressler Artist-in-Residence, VisArts, Rockville, MD, January 22–March 8, 2020.

■ **David Therriault**, *Carved in Stone, Painted with Light*, Zenith Gallery, 1111 Sculpture Space, Washington, DC, January 21, 2020–April 4, 2020.

■ **Bob Turan**, *Triangle Tango*, previously on loan, was added to the permanent collection of Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, Vienna, VA, in December 2019.

■ **Alice Whealin**, *New Works on Paper*, Passage Way Gallery, Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, Alexandria, VA, March 21–May 21.

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Joyce Zipperer, *Direct Stone Carving*, National Competition. Certificate of Merit from the National Association of Women Artists, Inc. (NAWA), New York, NY, February 2019.



Joyce Zipperer, *Mythical Moon*, direct carved limestone, 12 x 6 x 15 inches



Veronica Szalus, *Conduit*, hex netting wire, galvanized wire, paint, red mirrored balls, 18 x 30 x 84 inches



Bob Turan, *Triangle Tango*, welded Corten® steel, 4 x 4 x 8 feet



Alice Whealin, *Untitled*, watercolor, ink, sea salt, watercolor paper, cradled birch, 12 x 9 x 1 inches



David Theriault, *Circle in Limestone*, 40 x 40 x 8 inches

Group Shows

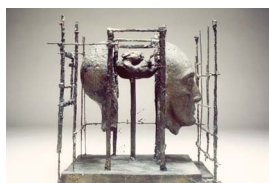
45: An Anniversary Exhibition, Celebration of the opening of the Torpedo Factory in 1974, Target Gallery, featured two pieces of art from each of the fourteen artists who were original members of the Torpedo Factory, November 9–December 8, 2019, including **Joyce Zipperer**.

■ *2020 Cumberland Valley Artists Exhibition*, juried by Amy Eva Raehse (Goya Contemporary Executive Director, Baltimore, MD), Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, Hagerstown, MD, February 2–April 5, including **Sharon Pierce McCullough**.

■ *All Member Show*, Falls Church Arts Gallery, Falls Church, VA, February 8–March 8, including **Stephanie H. Firestone**, **Carol Morgan**.

Altered States, Pleiades Gallery, New York, NY, January 23–February 15, including **Burton Blistein**.

Annual Open Exhibition, curated by Sarah Berry, Bodzin Art Gallery, Pozez JCCNV, Fairfax, VA, December 3, 2019–January 13, 2020, including **Stephanie H. Firestone**, **Joyce Zipperer**.



Burton Blistein, *Self-Portrait*, unique cast bronze, 16 x 16 x 14 inches

■ *Conscious Transitions*, co-curated by Lisa Battle and Nina Kawar in conjunction with NCECA 2020, Uptown Gallery, Richmond, VA, February 7–March 28, including **Lisa Battle**. Reception: March 6, 5–8:30 pm. NCECA Conference reception: March 26, 6–9 pm.

■ *Earthy Works from the Hills of Tuscany*, juried by Michele Brule, Windsor Fine Gallery, New Orleans, LA, January–March, including **Claire McArdle**.

February Invitational Show, Waverly Street Gallery, Bethesda, MD, February 9–March 7, with **Jessica Beels**.

Fibers On Display, Friendship Heights, MD, September 8–October 6, 2019, including **Joyce Zipperer**.

Foodie Fever, Invitational Group Exhibition, curated by D. Dominick Lombardi, Shiva Gallery, New York, NY, September–November 2019, including **Maria Karametou**.

■ *Handcrafted: Fiber Art + Turned Wood*, juried by Barbara Wolanin, BlackRock Center for the Arts, Germantown, MD, February 29–April 11. Reception: March 14, 2–4 pm, including **Lynda Smith-Bügge**.

■ *Hill Center 2020 Regional Exhibition*, Hill Center Gallery, juried by Myrtis Bedolla, Old Naval Hospital, Washington, DC, February 5–April 18, including **Lynda Smith-Bügge**.

HOME: The 29th Annual Strathmore Juried Exhibition, juried by Terence Nicholson and Erwin Timmers, Mansion at Strathmore, North Bethesda, MD, January 11–February 23, including **Michaela Borghese**, **Stephanie H. Firestone**, **Judith Goodman**, **Ruth Lozner**, **Jacqueline Maggi**, **Joan Mayfield**, **Iris Posner**.

■ *Homeward Bound: Juried Triennial*, Taubman Museum of Art, Roanoke, VA, May 1–September 20, including **Judith Pratt**.

Hope is a Thing with Feathers, Joan Hisaoka Gallery at Inova Schar Cancer Institute, Fairfax, VA, December 5, 2019–January 24, 2020, including **Jessica Beels**, **Susan Hostetler**.

■ *Human Condition*, juried by Twig Murray, NVFAA, The Athenaeum Gallery, Alexandria, VA, February 13–March 22, including **Stephanie H. Firestone**.



Claire McArdle, *Venus*, Italian calacatta marble, NM travertine, 82 x 20 x 20 inches



Stephanie H. Firestone, *Exit The Dream*, ceramic, wood, 10 x 6 x 3 inches



Janet Wittenberg, *Krakatoa*, kiln form glass, stone base, 10 x 6 x 7 inches

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- *Immanent Realities*, juried by Sarah Tanguy, The American Center for Physics, College Park, MD, October 29, 2019–April 17, 2020, including **Janet Wittenberg**.

International Juried Ceramics Exhibition, juried by Garth Johnson, Everson Museum of Art Center for Contemporary Art, Bedminster, NJ, November 8–December 21, 2019, including **Elizabeth Vorlicek**.

Invitational 2020, NOMA Gallery, Frederick, MD, January 3–26, including **Donna McCullough**.

- *Janet & Walter Sondheim Prize Semifinalist*, Baltimore, MD, July 2020, including **Judith Pratt**.

Local Color, Artists' Gallery, Ellicott City, MD, January 14–February 23, including **Lisa Battle**.

- *Merkin Dream*, MAP Invitational & Group Show, Maryland Art Place, Baltimore, MD, February 20–March 28, including **Mary Opasik**. Closing reception: MERKIN Fashion Show, March 28, 6–9 pm.

- *Monocacy River Pottery Group: A Conscious Collective*, Caravati's, Richmond, VA, March 24–28, including **Lisa Battle**. Reception: March 26, 5–9 pm.

- *No Fabric: No Rules*, curated by Trudi Van Dyke, Virginia Quilt Museum, Harrisonburg, VA, February 18–July 11, including **Donna McCullough**.

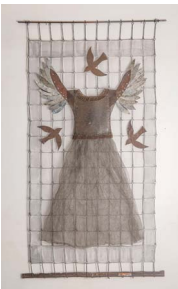
On Thin Ice, juried by Lauren Nye (Director of Exhibition, Susquehanna Museum of Art), Carlisle Arts Center, Carlisle, PA, January 10–February 1, including **Sharon Pierce McCullough**.

- *On view*, Artifacts, Washington, VA, January–May 31, including **Mary Brownstein**.

Paper Complex, Glen Echo Popcorn Gallery, Glen Echo Park, MD, January 11–February 16, including **Jessica Beels**.

- *Perspective: Prince George's*, Maryland House of Delegates Low House Office Building, Delegates Room 150, Annapolis, MD, January 6–April 6, including **Annie Farrar**.

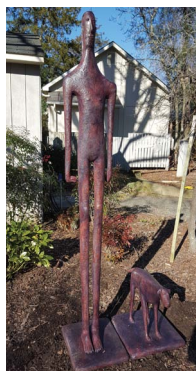
Pieces and Parts, Falls Church Arts Gallery, Falls Church, VA, November 23–December 29, 2019, including **Stephanie H. Firestone**.



Donna McCullough, *In her dreams she could fly*, 63 x 32 x 3 inches



Mary Opasik, *Biceptor Bird*, 33 x 21 x 5 inches



Mary Brownstein, *Tall Man with a Small Dog*, painted cement, 75 x 28 x 16 inches

- *Pinned, Stitched and Glitzed*, Invitational Group Exhibition, curated by T. Vrachopoulos, Art Appel Gallery, Athens, Greece, January–February, including **Maria Karametou**.

Play, Protection, or Peril, curated by Elizabeth Ashe, Zenith Community Arts Foundation, H-Space, Washington, DC, July–August 2019, including **Liz Lescault, Judith Pratt**.

Reclaimed, Reused, Repurposed: Sustainable Art for the Planet, curated by Molly Ruppert, Studio Gallery, Washington, DC, January 3–25, including **Jessica Beels, Julia Bloom, Gloria Chapa, Liz Lescault**.

- *SHE: An Expression of Womanhood*, juried by Camy Clough, Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Art Center, Solomons, MD, February 14–September 27, including **Esperanza Alzona, Shana Kohnstamm**.

- *Suspended*, co-curated by Lisa Battle and Laurel Lukaszewski in conjunction with NCECA 2020, Artspace, Zero E 4th St, Richmond, VA, March 25–April 18, including **Lisa Battle**. Reception: March 26, 6–9 pm.

Teacher and Student, curated by Milly Shott, Friendship Heights Community Center, Chevy Chase, MD, December 15, 2019–January 15, 2020, including **Carol Morgan**.

- *The Group Show, Part 1*, Ruby Projects inaugural exhibition, Fairfax, VA, January 25–March 21, including **Annie Farrar**.

- *Totems*, juried by Lydia Gordon, YoAhn Han, and Christine O'Donnell, Beacon Gallery, Boston MA, February 7–March 14, including **Shana Kohnstamm**.

When Darkness Falls: Night Explorations, Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Art Center, Solomons, MD, October 11, 2019–Jan 26, 2020, including **John Schaffner**.

Winter Member Show, juried by Adah Rose Bitterbaum (Director of Adah Rose Gallery), Maryland Federation of Art, Annapolis, MD, January 4–25, including **Lisa Battle**.



Esperanza Alzona, *Nevertheless She Persisted*, cast aluminum, 5 x 15 x 11 inches



Shana Kohnstamm, *Impostrophe*, hand-dyed wool, wire, 47 x 23 x 12 inches



Annie Farrar, *All of Creation*, found objects, sisal twine, paint, 23 x 19 x 10 inches



John Schaffner, *Deep into the Universe*, painted wood, 32 x 15 x 8 inches

Pushing the Boundaries of Sculpture

by Judith Pratt

The Washington Sculptors Group is always happy to welcome a new member with a unique approach to sculpture. Emerging artist Makeda Smith definitely fits that description. Originally from Florida, Makeda received her undergraduate degree from Stetson University there, and then earned her master's degree in art from Lesley University in Cambridge, MA. After receiving her degree, she moved to DC in 2015 to begin a teaching career. Once she settled in the nation's capital, she began to see possibilities that the DC arts community had to offer, and it rekindled her love of sculpture.



Makeda Smith

As Makeda continued to pursue her own work in ceramic sculpture, she also began collaborating with AJ, a member of the creative team of Andie and AJ, who shared a mutual interest in pushing the boundaries of sculpture and fashion as art. As the project developed, the team grew to include members from Boston, Washington (DC), Miami, and New York, and because of the geographic distances between them, the creative team collaborated almost entirely via email and video chat on the project. They quickly developed an exhibition concept that originated with Makeda's sculpture, which then developed further by applying the shapes, colors, and textures of her sculpture into "wearable art" constructed of "thrifted," or recycled clothing. This sculpture-as-fashion concept with awareness for sustainability echoes similar exhibitions over the past five years mounted by major US museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.



The resulting exhibition and event, titled *Th3funktion*, debuted in November 2019 at Studio 52 in North-east DC. The exhibition and fashion show combined the art of ceramic sculpture with the art of what we wear in our daily lives, emphasizing

the power of sustainability, diversity, identity, and inclusivity. Makeda also learned that by using her initiative as an artist, she could go beyond the challenges of being an emerging artist in the gallery and nonprofit art world. As she rediscovered the importance of her sculptural practice in the DC arts community, she also rediscovered the value of connecting with other artists throughout the country. WSG looks forward to supporting Makeda's efforts in the future, and seeing how she will continue to push the boundaries of sculpture.

Tribute to Elsabé Dixon

by Steve Wanna

Elsabé Dixon served as President of the Washington Sculptors Group (WSG) for two years. In 2019, she resigned in order to accept the prestigious position of Executive Director of the Danville Museum of Fine Arts & History in Danville, VA. In her years as president, she brought tremendous energy and vision to the group, and her leadership will be sorely missed. We thank Elsabé for her service, and wish her continued success in all her endeavors. We look forward to seeing what she will bring forth next.

I've known Elsabé for a number of years, initially as an acquaintance. I mostly saw her at gallery openings and other art-related events. At the time I still wasn't identifying as an "artist" and thought of my work as mostly something I did on the side. I became a member of WSG as a way to connect with the local community. From the very beginning Elsabé was always encouraging, and it's not an exaggeration to say that her support contributed directly to my decision, several years later, to become a full-time artist. About a year ago, Elsabé recruited me to join the board of WSG as the Chair of Exhibitions, and I was very fortunate to have her as a mentor for a few months. Her energy and generosity are contagious, and her can-do attitude about almost anything made the work seem easy and enjoyable. Her natural ability to connect with people and to make them see possibilities made the work seem effortless. Her seemingly boundless energy meant that she was able to fulfill her duties as President of WSG while maintaining a thriving practice, being a successful teacher, writing articles for local and regional publications, and hosting other activities in which she is involved. In the short mentorship I had with her, I learned a lot about how to do this job, but also how being a generous and present human cultivates all kinds of good energy. She taught me that by simply being herself, which is a true gift.

In Memorium: Diane Szczepaniak

Diane Szczepaniak, who was a long-time Board member of the Washington Sculptors Group, died on October 25, 2019. The following article in the East City Art publication was a review of her exhibit in the Freight Gallery, which occurred in December 2019.

East City Artnotes—*Floating Light* by Diane Szczepaniak at Freight Gallery

by Eric Hope, originally published in East City Art on December 11, 2019

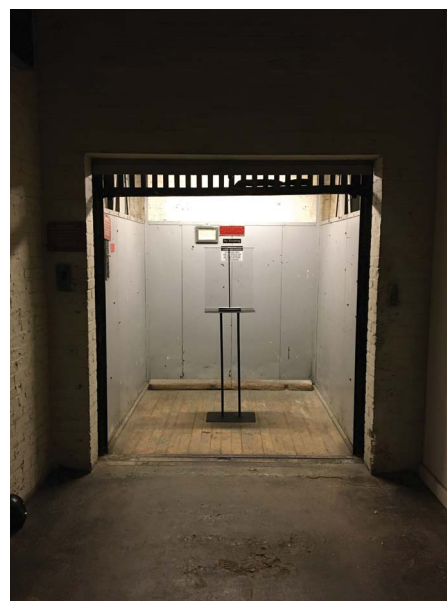
Freight Gallery, a new exhibition space in northeast DC’s Landon neighborhood, creates experiential moments by displaying works in a non-traditional environment. Located deep within an old brick warehouse, it takes the eyes a moment to adjust to the dark hallway leading to the space. When the lights flip on, the “gallery” reveals itself to be a literal freight elevator. While the incongruity of viewing art in an industrial locale could easily tumble into the realm of kitsch, the gallery’s debut exhibition, *Floating Light* featuring a site-specific work by sculptor Diane Szczepaniak, creates a compelling dialogue between the work and the environment it occupies.

Recontextualizing vacant or utilitarian spaces for artistic purposes is certainly not a new phenomenon—artists have long had a knack for creating exhibition opportunities outside the realm of the commercialized gallery environment (Capitol Hill’s short-lived *Porch Projects* is another local example that springs to mind). Yet here Szczepaniak treats the elevator not as a novelty but an integral part of the work itself, creating a multi-sensory experience whose meditative quality is emotionally underscored by the artist’s recent and untimely death in October of this year.

The sculptural component of the work is spare, reflecting a Minimalistic aesthetic that highlights intersecting horizontal and vertical planes. Slender steel rods and a thin sheet of metal create a plinth. On the plinth two additional rods form a ‘T’ shape which in turn support two hanging Lexan polycarbonate plastic rectangles. The plastic shapes are delicately attached to the horizontal bar, allowing them to gently move in response to the airflow through the space. An additional audio component including ethereal sounds such as crickets and finger cymbals gently echoes through the space.

The combination of visual material, aural activity and volumetric space creates a sense of reverence. There is just enough room for the viewer to circle the plinth and view the sculpture from all angles. Walking around the object, one views the slowly moving plastic rectangles, but looking through them exposes the raw, metallic surfaces of the elevator walls. The gallery space is thus an essential part of the installation. The impact of viewing the sculpture is enhanced by its setting and would not have the same sense of power if shown in a more traditional, gallery space.

This unusual installation demonstrates how the concepts of volumetric space and placement added to Szczepaniak’s formal consideration



Floating Light, Installation view. Photo for East City Art by Eric Hope.

of visual movement that was at the heart of her practice. In allowing motion within the work, the artist not only disrupts the hard edges and lines that define the piece, but also fosters serendipitous contemplation of how solid mass (including our own bodies) moves through an empty void.

The design of the installation lends itself well to a formal critique of its visual

components, yet I find it difficult not to also consider the work in response to the artist’s recent demise. Clearly, the Freight Gallery installation represents her final, fully-realized solo exhibition. An exhibition of her work, completed by her colleagues, will open at Visarts in Rockville, MD in January of 2020 (www.eastcityart.com for more information). A reliance on air currents to “finish” the work highlights the unseen forces at play in our daily lives. Coupled with the meandering soundtrack, the installation reads as a call to contemplation—of what exactly, is largely left to the viewer’s imagination. Perhaps serving as a visual clue is the thin sliver of space left between rectangular planes. Viewing the two pieces of Lexan dance within a fraction of an inch to one another, never to touch, might be seen as symbolic of our relationships as we move through the world. In this sense, Szczepaniak gently encourages us to slow down and savor the delicacy of life.

A Visit with Foon Sham

Foon Sham has been a professor in the Art Department of the University of Maryland since 1993 and his work has been prominently shown in the DC region. How he got there is an inspiring story. I went to talk with Foon at his studio in Lorton, VA. The studio is located in a landscape of typical small business buildings, but his door is the only one with a Chinese character. Foon opened the door with a warm greeting.



Foon Sham in his studio

His story begins in Macao, a former Portuguese colony on the southern coast of China, about 10 miles from Hong Kong. Early on, his family moved to Hong Kong, and this is where he grew up. Teachers and friends noticed his talent in drawing but there were no art courses in high school and the universities in Hong Kong emphasized mathematics, science, and business. Art was not considered a career. One could be an artist on weekends but needed to be a doctor, lawyer, engineer, or financier during the rest of the week. He enrolled in a private art course taught by a Chinese master, but was not satisfied because it consisted of learning how to copy traditional Chinese paintings and some western art.

His parents and older siblings helped him apply to the California College of Arts and Crafts (CCAC) in Oakland, CA, and paid his tuition, but he had to support himself otherwise. He was fortunate to find that he was able to stay with a friend of the family. At CCAC he was exposed to many areas of art. He worked in textile design and silk screen printing, but found that sculpture was his greatest interest, and that wood had a special appeal. He loved the atmosphere of the wood shop, sawdust and the smell of wood. There was also the challenge of being independent. He recalls the first course in sculpture. The initial assignment was to make a self-portrait in three weeks, with no guidance. Many of the students dropped out, but Foon used scrap pieces of redwood to construct an image of himself. More importantly he learned that art would give him the opportunity to make his own statement.

After receiving his BFA, the teacher of the advanced sculpture course, Paul Harris, urged him to go east to pursue sculpture. Foon attended

the Rinehart School of Sculpture at the Maryland Institute College of Art for a year and then went to the sculpture department of Virginia Commonwealth University. He was supported by a generous couple, Sam and Clara Lebovitz, while he earned an MFA there. Then he faced the difficulties of earning a living, finding studio space, getting materials, and showing his work. For seven months he worked in his brother-in-law's restaurant, the Hong Kong in Kensington, but the hours spent in the restaurant left him little time for sculpture. His next job was in a framing store and in two years he became the manager, but he needed to find a suitable workplace because the neighbors in his apartment complex complained about the noise of the jigsaw at three in the morning. His first solution was to enroll in an independent study course, arranged by Duncan Tebow, at Northern Virginia Community College, where he got his first teaching job. This gave him access to the wood shop at any time. After cobbling together several part time



Escape in the evening, 62 x 14 x 5 feet

teaching jobs, he obtained a lectureship at the University of Maryland with a heavy teaching load. Eventually he was appointed to a tenure track position and he has remained there, receiving numerous Creative and Performing Arts Awards (CAPAA) from the University.

Although he has worked with Plexiglas, he found the plastic too cold; he much prefers the organic material wood. He does not work directly on logs, but prefers to construct structures from small, brick-like elements. Using this simple building block, he constructs large and small pieces that have fascinating textures. The constructed surfaces often enclose a space that has an organic form like a stalk or a hollow tree trunk. In this way, the wood in the small pieces is given a second life. Pointing to one of these pieces, Foon says, "This is me." His sculptures also remind one of the larger framework of a forest. When the surface of the sculpture has an opening, the viewer is invited to look inside the space, and up to the sky. The goal is to keep the viewer engaged as long as possible. By using several



Sea of Hope, wood, paper, ink, tea leaves, 2 x 20 x 60 feet

different kinds of wood, the constructed surface becomes multicolored in the natural colors of the woods. He uses a variety of woods, some of which are local, such as maple, cherry, walnut, oak, and pine. Other woods are more exotic hardwoods. In some cases, the surface of a smaller sculpture is painted, but with a thin wash that makes it clear that the material is still wood. More generally, the texture and coloring of the surface is not allowed to be so interesting that the eye does not see the larger form. He uses other wood products such as paper and sawdust. Some of his sculptures use thick phone books layered in with layers of wood. In his studio there is a table filled with jars of many different kinds of sawdust that have distinct odors.

A special sculpture, which Foon has exhibited several times, is named *Sea of Hope*. In 2002, his mother died of cancer. Foon found a way to express his feelings in this installation. The central feature is a long boat-like form, supported above the floor by three black metal

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 of the week.*

pipes. It is surrounded by a sea of small folded paper boats that accompany the soul of the dead to a final resting place. At each of the many locations where the sculpture has been shown, viewers have added to the collection of paper boats and inscribed their messages. In the fall of 2019, it was shown at the Julio Fine Arts Gallery of Loyola University in Baltimore, MD.

Of course, Foon’s work does not exist in a vacuum. While in graduate school, Martin Puryear was one of his heroes. The Scottish sculptor Andy Goldsworthy is another one of Foon’s favorites. He especially appreciates the deliberate impermanence of the constructions that Goldsworthy creates. Life is transitory and art should reflect that. Finally, the work of Tara Donovan appeals to Foon because her constructions are built of many, many copies of a basic element, just as his are built of many, many bricks.

Foon’s sculptures have grown in scale as he has received many commissions and grants. One example is the set of sculptures on the four corners of the intersection of 19th and L Streets, NW, in Washington, DC. They are constructed of pine bricks, and from a distance look like very large straw baskets of unusual shapes. Another piece that has a basket-like profile, *Mushroom*, is built with a mixture of light and dark woods and stands on the National Mall at 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW. It is part of the Smithsonian Gardens exhibit “Habitat.” There is also an intriguing branching structure that he was commissioned to build at the corner of Rockville Pike and Rose Avenue in North Bethesda, MD, next to the REI store. The material used there is Kebony wood, a Norwegian product that resists rot and is quite durable.

His largest work to date, *Escape*, was exhibited at the American University Museum in the Katzen Arts Center in 2017. It consists of three parts, the largest of which is a long tunnel through wooden arches constructed of planks from trees from Boyds, MD. Walking through the tunnel, one sees the dates when each section was completed written on the boards. Passage through the tunnel is also a passage in time. The silhouette of the craggy outer surface of the tunnel on the wall of the sculpture court is designed to copy the shape of the US-Mexican border. The large indoor part of *Escape* is a tower, 36 feet tall, erected in the atrium of the museum. It is a dramatic counterpoint to the long horizontal dimension of the tunnel. The visitor can come away with many meanings. The tunnel has been broken into several sections, now called *Arches of Life*, and joins *Mushroom* as part of the “Habitat.” Foon is currently working on a large project called *Maze of Knowledge*, which is to be installed in the Building Museum in downtown, Washington, DC, in November 2020.

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Alex Kasten

Cultural artifacts—the physical manifestations of an ideology, belief, or tradition—have always intrigued sculptor Alex Kasten. Whether observing an object in nature or pondering an ancient symbol, he asks the question: “How can I transform this into something that is unique to me?” The answer lies in his artwork.

Working mainly in three-dimensional wall assemblages that incorporate floating layers of wood, Kasten is guided by a creative process that is equal parts construction and problem solving and spontaneous expression. The integration of shadow is a feature that runs through



Essence, acrylic, wax, cedar, aquabord panels, 34 x 34 x 4 inches

all of his work, giving his sculptures an ephemeral quality. Shadows, created by the raised layering of the wood pieces, allow the work to transform naturally, depending on the light and space they inhabit.

Thematically, his work is rooted in an early love of anthropology, which he studied at Connecticut College. Learning about cultures through ethnography and archaeology led to a great appreciation of what it

means to be human and how we represent our beliefs, mythology, and other cultural attributes through both common and sacred objects. It was there also that Kasten pursued a life-long interest in art, studying sculpture under David Smalley, whose own work and tutelage served as a launch point for exploration in metal, wood, and stone.

A recent series, *Divining the Human Soul*, reflects on that early interest in cultural exploration, particularly totems, spirituality, and archetypes, the universal symbols of characters that we all share. The series, which incorporates archetypal colors, symbols, and motifs, explores the boundless interpretation of our conscious and subconscious selves.

A quadriptych installation, *Essence*, (above) incorporates archetypal colors—tones of red, blue, earth, and black—to express the whole of who we are. Hope, intelligence, innocence, passion, violence, and darkness are assembled in imperfect, organic concentric circles, intentionally lacking symmetry. The circles are fragmented, as if to express that no matter how multifaceted we are or how divergent our ideas may seem, we still share a common core.



Phases, oil, polyurethane, pine, aquabord panels, 20 x 30 x 4 inches

Shadow Self, another work in the series, explores Jungian archetypes—in this instance that part of the unconscious mind that comprises our weaknesses, desires, instincts, and shortcomings. *Shadow Self* focuses on the dichotomy that exists in us all, in that we all possess a tension of assimilating our uncontrolled subconscious with our managed outward consciousness.

An exhibit titled “Ingrained” captured a variety of motifs Kasten has explored over the past several years, including transformation, nature, and the human form. The triptych *Phases* (above) is an abstract, iconic study of the cosmos that is striking in its use of shadows, almost reminding the viewer of an ancient sundial that changes position over time. In *Genesis*, (below) a diptych from the “Ingrained” show, we see the natural evolve into the figurative as it depicts two intertwined bodies that emerge from one another.



Genesis, oil paint, wax, cedar, aquabord panels, 18 x 34 x 4 inches

In Kasten’s art, shadow, color, and texture work in harmony to evoke a sense of impermanence and allusion.

A native of Washington, DC, Kasten lives in Bethesda, MD. His work can be seen at: www.kastenstudios.com.

Summary of Annual Meeting

by Asma Chaundhary, MFA

On a beautiful evening on November 9, 2019, WSG members gathered at Joel D’Orazio’s (joeldorazio.com) home for the annual meeting and dinner. This casual event offered many great opportunities, not only to discuss artist exhibitions and the organization’s initiatives for 2020, but also to reflect back on 2019. Throughout the year, WSG members expanded their reach and impact by participating in several artist-led workshops demonstrating techniques, while exhibiting work in new venues and spaces. WSG



members also celebrated the life of our dear friend and artist, Diane Szczepaniak, by sharing stories of their favorite moments with her. An exhibition at VisArts in Rockville, MD, (January 22–March 8) commemorates Diane’s passion and dedication for sculpture and to our artist community. During the meeting, WSG members offered ideas for future social engagements and connecting with each other. In keeping with the festivities of the holiday season, WSG members enjoyed delicious food and desserts and, of course, the D’Orazios’ warm hospitality and artworks.



REI Smoke, mkebonny wood, 25 x 8 feet

In between larger projects, Foon likes to make some small, beautiful pieces that he refers to as “candy.” You can see some of them in the photo taken in his studio. Among the models of his work in his studio, one looked familiar. In fact, it was a model for the China Town exit in the Gallery Place DC Metro station. In the model, the straight lines converging toward the center of a semi-circle resemble chopsticks.

Foon has contributed to the culture of sculpture in the Washington area. He was an early member of the Washington Sculptors Group and later served on the board for ten years. Currently he is a member of the advisory board. He was the curator of a show at the University of Maryland that brought a wide variety of work in wood and cardboard from artists around world.

In his classes at the University of Maryland, he gives generously of his time and energy, helping students become sculptors, and learn what it means to be an artist. He even lets retired faculty from other departments, like myself, attend his classes. We are indeed fortunate to have an artist of such boundless energy and creativity in our area. You can see much of his work on his website: foonsham.com.

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David Mordini has been exploring the use of innovative technologies with his artwork, including 3D scanning and printing. These technologies have reshaped his artistic process from the concept stage, to crafting, and finally to exhibiting his work. Meet the artist at this informative event.

Fleeting, Fled is an exhibition about the temporal that is open to many possibilities. The cycle of life, death, and rebirth is the underlying theme. Occurring during the spring in Washington, artwork could be inspired by the ephemeral beauty of the cherry blossoms and daffodils that will be in bloom. Environmental themes might also relate to climate change or the climate crisis. The opportunity to halt rising global temperatures is fleeting, or has the window for evoking remediation already closed? The setting of Glen Echo Park, one of our national parks, might also be inspirational. The indoor and outdoor setting allows for a wide range of media, including ephemeral outdoor works. The juror welcomes a broad interpretation of this theme, personal or political.

Presenter Robin Moore will share the key steps that artists at all stages of their careers need to take to ensure that their artistic legacy lives on. Moore's process includes "big picture" legal and financial knowledge, expertise in managing information such as creating databases, as well as empathy for sensitive subjects that are part of caring for the work. This candid and encouraging presentation will leave participants ready to take their first steps in protecting the future of their artwork. There will be ample time for your questions.

Robin Moore was raised in the New York's avant-garde art world with parents who ran several small art businesses. She earned her MBA in

2003. Since 2006, Robin has managed the estate of her late husband, Kevin MacDonald, a renowned Washington, DC, visual artist. In 2013, she founded a business to help creative professionals and their families live well with legacies. Learn more: RobinMooreLegacies.com

Annual Members' Image Show Each year, the Washington Sculptors Group offers its members an opportunity to present their artwork to the public, gallerists, curators, collectors, and other DC-area art representatives. Save the date and look for the upcoming WSG announcement with directions on how to participate.

Chas Colburn, Sculptor, Master Welder, and Robotics Expert will offer an overview of his maker space lab "MakerTech Tuesdays," which embodies his belief in the value of exploration and the celebration of a wide range of sculptural possibilities. Colburn will introduce participants to incorporating welding, electronic soldering, computer-aided design, use of industrial robots, as well as other techniques involved in the tech-related sculpting process. Join Colburn in his lab for this exceptional demonstration followed by a Q & A with participants.

Chas Colburn received a degree in Business Administration from the Gardner School of Business in 1971, and a BFA in Studio Art from the University of Maryland in 1976. In 1979, he founded Chalco Metal Works, a custom metal-working shop in which he creates his own sculpture and also provides fabricating, computer aided design and drafting, consulting, art handling, and installation services to the DC-area arts communities. In 1989, he became a senior member of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers. He lives and works in the Greater Washington, DC, area.

See *The Washington Sculptor* archives at www.washingtonsculptors.org



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