



Carol Zastoupil creates a light-infused, encompassing Eden in paintings such as "Coco de Mer Way."

## “Re: MEMBERS” at Kansas City Artists Coalition

by Dana Self 📅 August 10, 2015 📁 Gallery Reviews , Visual

Members' group exhibitions are typically the most diplomatic of all exhibitions. Jurors usually feel a responsibility to ensure all media and areas are, in general, represented. Jurors of this year's "re:MEMBERS" exhibition at the Kansas City Artists Coalition include Kansas City artists Philomene Bennett and Jim Sajovic; independent curator James Martin, and executive director of the KCAC, Janet Simpson. The 2015 annual members exhibition carries on the coalition's commitment to member artists and acts as a gateway to the 2016 40-year anniversary of the Kansas City Artists Coalition.

No narrative theme carries the exhibition or threads throughout to tie the works together. The show's primary impulse is to see what member artists are thinking about and how they visually and conceptually telegraph their experiences to us.

As is typical, paintings comprise the lion's share of the work in this well-installed exhibition. The gallery's two main rooms are loosely organized around groupings of abstraction, figuration, sculpture, jewelry, landscape imagery, and photography.

Jewelry is soulfully articulated with Genevieve Flynn's copper *Morning Glory* bracelet, and Sydney Pener's cast bronze and silver necklaces featuring cicadas and caterpillars. **Mark Needham's architectural, hard-edged *Citrine Show Stopper Ring* contrasts their organic approaches.**

Despite the predominance of abstraction, the portrait paintings by Rachel Mindrup, Kwanza Humphrey, Rebecca Calhoun and Dean Kube are installed together to demonstrate a variety of approaches. While Humphrey's portrait of gallerist Tom Deatherage and Mindrup's subject are realistically painted, Kube's ethereal and abstract figure appears to emerge from a dreamlike haze, while Calhoun's figure is ghostlike and unstable.

Cynthia Bjorn and Rashelle Stutts's large-scale dynamic abstractions are both assertive and yet reach their goals differently. Bjorn's broad and aggressive strokes in *Mercy* are accompanied by the drips and spills of quick work while Stutts's subtle and lyrical paint passages in *You Keep me Safe I'll Keep You Wild* feel more emotional and introspective. Larry Thomas' mixed media works on canvas layer abstraction, collage, and digital imagery to explore visual and conceptual dimensionality.

"Re: MEMBERS" includes some stellar representations of works on paper. Amy Wright's diminutive ink and acrylic paintings on paper, *Fairy Rings* and *The Mold Eaters*, with their suggestive narrative titles, suggest otherworldly places. The wormy-looking creatures in Karen Steen's *Partnership* speak to the hidden, interconnected organic world seen through a microscope.

Delicate vertical lines dominate photographer Tim Potts' *High Tide*, a monumental black and white image of what appears to be marsh grass. His minimalist nature exists in the spaces between landscape and abstraction.

Cathy Logan's landscape *Early Autumn* shares affinity with the landscapes of Fairfield Porter. Her light-infused backyard with its abstracted shadows, where forms dissolve into color, is an emotional response to the sensations of air, light, and the things of the natural world.

Vickie Trotter's large-scale paintings looking down on Los Angeles capture the claustrophobia and dominance of that city's sprawl. Conversely, Carol Zastoupil's tropical fantasies create a light-infused, encompassing Eden.

Sara Sally LaGrand's small baroque sculptures combine the decorative exuberance of glass, yet are crowned with fur, like an ornamental Tribble hybrid.

Nelson Smith's *Round Tower Cosmic Tea Cup Network*, incorporating found objects, text, and sound, is a solid companion to the smaller scale sculpture in the galleries. The tabletop, covered with mapping coordinates, geometric shapes, and text, perhaps dictates the teacup placement and the confusing sound component.

No one artist's work can sum up or represent such a diverse group of artists and experiences. Yet Jean Wender's stoneware vessel *Calypso* feels summative. It is both sculpture and painting, abstract and representational, familiar, but visually complex. The surface suggests enigmatic landscapes where recognizable natural forms reward the viewer's patient gaze. As is true with this and all of the work in the exhibition, there is more to uncover the longer we look. And fittingly, as she notes in her artist's statement, "Some things endure, and I find comfort in that."

*"Re: MEMBERS" continues at the Kansas City Artists Coalition, 201 Wyandotte St., through Aug. 20. Hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday. For more information, 816-421-5222 or www.kansascityartistscoalition.org.*

**About The Author: Dana Self** ✉

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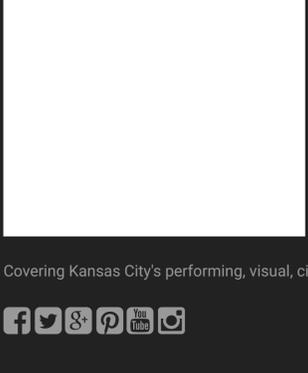
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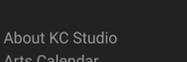
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**Jean Wender**  
August 13, 2015 at 8:50 pm REPLY  
Ms. Self:  
Thank you so much for your kind words – my cheeks are sore from wearing an enormous grin since the moment I read your review.

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