



Push-Pull-Print

March 2021

Carol Strause FitzSimonds – Jurist

In every jury situation I try to approach each artist's work thoughtfully and with an open mind. I have experienced this process as a competing artist seeking acceptance for my art as well as in the capacity of judge or juror making the selections. I empathize with and applaud each artist for having the courage to submit his or her creative vision to this process.

Composition, approach to subject, presentation, technical expertise, and clarity of vision are the key factors I look for when selecting artwork. Being a juror is never easy but it's always rewarding. This was my first experience selecting works for an exhibit using an online slideshow program. Mastering the program wasn't difficult; my two greatest challenges were working with some poorly photographed jpeg files and trying to visualize the actual size of each print in my mind. The value of this online system was the ability to review all the works multiple times over several days. Each artist's work received intense consideration.

To all the artists whose work was selected, and especially to the award winners, I offer my congratulations. There were many prints deserving of an award – selecting only seven was hard.

First: Felicia Touhey's "Deeply Rooted 3" is a beautifully crafted monotype of human figure, tree and house silhouettes that create an intriguing visual drama that captivates the imagination.

Second: Craved with a touch of whimsy and printed in a rich cerulean blue, "Homage to my Brother" by Teri Banas made me smile with its charm.

Third: Each of Elena Obelenus' aquatint still life prints demonstrate her masterful use of the very difficult "a la poupee" color inking technique. Her beautiful imagery follows in the Dutch Masters' tradition of exquisite objects depicted in intricate detail.

Honorable Mention: Elinor Thompson in her monotype "Laundry Day" has transformed the ordinary - an antique washing machine into a rich graphic using a grid pattern and black ink. Basic black ink is anything but in this print. "Bright Bouquet" by Kathleen Morton is just that... a beautiful breath of colorful flower forms.

Judges Award: In "Saucer Magnolia" Sarah Hess demonstrates great skill in carving and inking linoleum to create her vibrant beautiful floral still life. Using deep dark blue ink, Cynthia DiDonato crafted visual drama and mystery in her abstract monotype "The Center of Things."

I also wish to thank, Gallery Director Catherine Gagnon for the opportunity to be the juror for this exhibition. It was truly a pleasure to work with her.

- Carol Strause FitzSimonds

Carol Strause FitzSimonds - Jurist for *Push-Pull-Print*

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I find my inspiration in making ordinary places and common objects meaningful. Because of their natural beauty or intrinsic simplicity, images call to me. I try and tell their stories in line and color, in shadow and light. The emergence of the book as "art" form has added yet another direction in concept and presentation for my work. Suddenly touch is linked to look and see. As a form, a book begs to be touched and opened. Each individual print becomes part of a larger, sculptural work. What I love about printmaking and book arts - is absolutely everything!