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Inaugural Exhibition For Gallery in Beacon

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COLLABORATIVE CONCEPTS is the newest, and perhaps the most compelling, exhibition space to open in the Hudson Valley in years.

Building on the success of two recent exhibitions in an industrial space in Cold Spring, Collaborative Concepts has moved its base of operations to the town of Beacon with a show simply titled "Inaugural Invitational Exhibition."

Entering the gallery, one is confronted with the work of Grace Knowlton, a long-established artist. Various spherical forms with divergent surfaces like patched concrete and painted metal straddle the line between the earthly and the grounded, to the esoteric or otherworldly.

The catalog mentions that Ms. Knowlton places her sculptures outdoors when they are completed, to weather some of the materials naturally. This leads to one curious effect, since fall leaves can collect inside the works that have gaping holes.

The perfect complement to Ms. Knowlton's works are Moses Hoskins's paintings. Using mostly found, discarded house paint, Mr. Hoskins creates tangled compositions that transmit the transient mind of the artist. Recognizable things like masking tape, drips of paint and drawn arabesques only temporarily hold things in place, as the visual effect of these paintings dart through the subconscious mind of the viewer.

Katherine Bradford's figurative oil paintings add a bit of dark humor to the exhibition.

In "Performer" (1999), the subject, seen from the back, hangs his head so low that he appears to be headless. Painted in bold blue lines against a slightly modulated field of yellow, the figure tugs lightly on a thick pink rope.

When first viewing this painting, thoughts of construction workers may come to mind since the only indication of the ground is a heavy rust-colored line that looks like a steel beam. It's obvious that there are many metaphors in play here, and "all the world's a stage" is just the beginning.

Kathleen Sweeney's installation "Maiden USA" (2000) consists of five video monitors displaying a cornucopia of references to gender and body image. Despite the fact that Ms. Sweeney has chosen to tackle one of the most popular subjects for many contemporary artists today, she still manages to add to the debate by cleverly layering her message amid numerous fast-moving vignettes. Using various forms of communication from the written word to body language to the subliminal vocabulary of popular entertainment, Ms. Sweeney builds a memorable commentary.

Ron Rocco's "Works on What Has Been Spoiled" (1994), a mixed media piece comprised of cardboard, Plexiglas, photo-etched copper and artificial light, is the exhibition's most potent piece.

Displayed directly on the floor, the brownish tones of the back-lighted image that covers the central piece of Plexiglas suggests, but does not limit itself to, the dangers of the pursuit of power. The image, which is difficult to decipher, looks like a bald eagle as roadkill. The thick layers of strapped-together, flattened cardboard boxes that frame the image is a stroke of genius, adding to the impermanent feeling of the work.

Barbara Klein's lively abstract paintings "Betty Boop Blush" (2000) and "Bump" (1998) are an example of how biomorphic form and geometry can coexist. Krystyna Borkowska and Don Voisine contribute several

somewhat narrative minimal works. Ms. Borkowska's art is about surface and preciousness. Using metallic leaf and thick, boxy-looking canvases, her paintings infiltrate space instead of defining it. Mr. Voisine layers transparent shades of geometric color to allude to space, mood and sound.

Derek Bernstein's "89 Views of A.S.R." (2000-01) are the exhibition's most poignant images. The installation consists of drawings of his wife as she solemnly sleeps off the effects of her chemotherapy. Each drawing is like a diary, a chronicle of the intricacies of a disturbed sleep. They are lovingly done; and perhaps, the ritualistic approach to the work is an attempt by Mr. Bernstein to give his ailing wife the immortality she needs and deserves for the pain she has endured.

Jenny Lee's steel sculptures are obsessively made, which results in an odd sort of Surrealism.

This is no more apparent than in the work titled "A Dream Deferred: Six Foot Two Nostalgic Picture Mindscape Low Moon" (2000), which consists of a long vertical, steel cabinet that contains one beautiful 34-inch-long braid of hair.

The contrast between the quarter-inch-thick steel and the delicate braid is something that one might encounter in a dream. For the artist, this piece symbolizes the cultural transition that she made by moving from Malaysia to the United States.

"Inaugural Invitational Exhibition" ends May 6. Collaborative Concepts is at 348 Main Street in Beacon. Information: (845) 838-1516