

TRANSCENDENCE

EXPRESSING FREEDOM AT MILLER WHITE



MILLER WHITE FINE ARTS

708 ROUTE 134
SOUTH DENNIS,
MASSACHUSETTS

**THROUGH
JUNE 9**

Anitia Loomis, *The Argument*,
Watercolor, Gouache, Ink and
Gilding, 42" x 65" (courtesy
Miller White Fine Arts).

There is a Chinese curse [that] says "May he live in interesting times." Like it or not, we live in interesting times. They are times of danger and uncertainty; but they are also the most creative of any time in the history of mankind.

– Robert F. Kennedy, 1966

As cultural institutions defend their existence in 2017's political climate, Susan Reid Danton – artist, gallery director and museum show curator – is responding with "Expressing Freedom: Transcendence through Art" at Miller White Fine Arts. The invitational arts show,

with painting, sculpture, interactive installations and poetry, opened on April 28 and runs through June 9. It is one of over 30 events that are part of a new arts festival, ArtSpring Cape Cod.

Miller White Fine Arts is nestled in the back of a commercial building along Route 134 in South Dennis, the middle part of Cape Cod. Upon entering, it's clear that this is no ordinary gallery. Danton is the great-niece of Dorothy Canning Miller, the first curator for the Museum of Modern Art, New York, who is revered for pioneering the work of groundbreaking modern artists

including Frank Stella, Jasper Johns and Louise Nevelson.

"Art has an essential transcendental quality, meaning the work is meant to elevate the consciousness of both artist and viewer," Danton said. "As natural problem-solvers, we artists are challenged to create hope in a world that is increasingly difficult to understand and navigate. So many freedoms are under imminent or actual threat, and there must be a means to spiritually stave off the overwhelm. Art reminds us of our individual and collective gifts, and what is in our power to counter forces that threaten human

and planetary survival, certainly now but often from the time we are born.”

In “Expressing Freedom: Transcendence through Art,” alongside visual works that spoke to her, Danton has constructed two community-based projects; one is her interpretation of the “The Last Word,” a project based on the public art collaborative Illegal Art, which will give people a chance to anonymously say what they really want to say. People can read, write or both on a profusion of intimate little scrolls arranged on a wooden panel.

Wall-size poems, including one by internationally-celebrated novelist Lauren Wolk, bring a distinct essence to the exhibit: that people stand and consider words and their meaning as a call to action toward any and all freedoms we cherish.

The six visual artists are Alan Soffer, Anita Loomis, Cecilia Rossey, Howard Barnes, Jill Hedrick and Wayne Miller. This group spans the globe and generations, yet

they approach the plastic arts with one thing in common: their work starts from a distinct point of view intrinsic to the artist creating it.

Cecilia C. Rossey is formally trained in the fine and performing arts. “As a choreographer, I’m inspired by moving dancers on stage until line and emotions come alive through design,” she said. “As an artist, I move line, forms, stencils and layers of delicate color. My monoprints, etchings and linocuts are the result.” Her black-and-white linocuts, like “Be a Good Boy,” show great technical skill and an interest in text with imaging to create social consciousness. The artist’s paintings are Fauvist in nature with biomorphic forms as in her printmaking.

An esteemed illustrator and studio painter, Howard Barnes’ approach to painting is a synthesis of keen observation of nature, personal experience and immutable love of color. He studied with Paul Reed, an original member of the Washington Color School, Washington, D.C., giving him a true understanding of “color without boundaries” (a tenet of the school) and a muted palette. The artist has a process where ideas are expressed in a series of five, often on a non-rectangular surface.

Constructionist Jill Hedrick speaks about her own work with great grace. “My work is mostly made from photo clippings, gloss gel medium



Cecilia C Rossey, *Be a Good Boy*, Linocut on Paper.

and wood. With just these three components, I have been able to create an abundance of work. The use of photo clippings starts on panels, with a focus on showing pattern and repetition.” The artist continues, “Along with repetition and pattern, I begin exploring my measurements and the measure-



Jill Hedrick, *Was that the Wind*, Mixed media on wood.

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Alan Soffer, *Dreaming*, encaustic on panel 30" x 30".



Wayne Miller, *A Room with a View*.

ments of those close to me. This work is minimal in its aesthetics but carries personal autobiographical information within it."

Wayne Miller is part of the New

York City/Cape connection that brings longtime artists with decades of work to Miller White (no, Susan Danton and Wayne are not related). Based on a person, place, thing or

event, this artist's work is formidable in size, content and mastery of the materials. Miller also shows notes and the background story of his works on his website, created in series. "Room with a View" uses Arabic words to frame a mouth. It is part of a series on experiencing a foreign culture for the first time, typically when young and feeling bulletproof.

Trained as a stained-glass artist, Anita Loomis recently returned to painting and drawing and is now a full-time studio artist, creating with oil on canvas and mixed media on papers. She is an invitational artist for this exhibit with Miller White Fine Art. Loomis' visual language,



BOTTOM LEFT: Susan Reid Danton with her painting, *The Cerulean Gown*, oil on canvas, 36" x 24".
BOTTOM RIGHT: Howard Barnes, *Lines of Expression*, acrylic on canvas 48" x 36".



Poetry Shakes Me

like a maraca freighted with
bones, teeth, and all the
grit and sand and seed I've
swallowed in my life, all the
rocky consonants clattering in
my throat, studding the wet
thump of my unstemmed heart, my
migrant tongue, the amorphous
mumble of all five uncut vowels.

Thus by poetry rearranged,
I ponder with my heart,
grope with my beating brain,
make of the pulleys in my gut a
new means of locomotion,
a way to take me where I've not yet been,
my pulse recalibrated,
my tongue busy with unexpected verse
as the new routes of my nerves fizz toward
places I've only dreamed about,
all of them posted with the
poetry by which I am
constantly, vitally,
shaken.

Lauren Wolk, *Poetry Shakes Me*.

which borrows from the sparse energetic line with flat surfaces of Paul Klee, shows a fearless use of materials in works like "The Argument."

Alan Soffer brings a lifetime of creative expression to paint, encaustic, authorship and teaching. His works are immediate in their visual intensity; there is life in these surfaces. Paintings that use abstraction, meaning the work is defined by shape, color and composition without a representational reference, are dangerous and require great skill. Soffer is successful with abstraction, making the unreal real for the viewer.

These artists, as well as William Allen, Danton, Jane Eccles, Deborah Forman, Kenneth Lockwood, Ulla Neigenfind, Tom Odell, Joyce Pommer, Kate Sidwell, James Wolf and Joyce Zavorskas, who comprise this dynamic show, tell fervent stories with the assistance of Expressing Freedom poets John Bonanni, Mary Ellen Redmond and Albert Starkey, of the promise of a life well-lived through via image and word.

ArtSpring Cape Cod, a week-long celebration of the wealth of arts, entertainment and culture, is to be held on an annual basis in the spring. Originated by Jung-Ho Pak, artistic director of the Cape Symphony Orchestra, and David Kuehn, executive director of Cotuit Center for the Arts, and organized by a select committee of Cape-based arts leaders, ArtSpring Cape Cod events take place through May 7. To learn more of the festival and its goals, please visit artspringcapecod.org.

| Laura Shabott

Co|So
Copley Society of Art

AT SEA NATIONAL MARITIME SHOW MAY 20 - JULY 6, 2017



Dueling at the Start by RJ Houghton



Port Tack by Jim Connelly (detail)



Fighting Constitution by Geoffrey Chalmers

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