



Weather: PITTSFIELD, MA | Now: 65°F | High: 72°F | Low: 44°F | 5-Day Forecast

Mo

# The Berkshire Eagle

This Site  Web Search

Home News Sports Opinion Business Entertainment Obituaries Lifestyles Social News Visitor Info Autos Real Estate

## Gallery Walks

### Masks, rebuses, spouts and skyscrapers

By Keith Shaw, Special to The Eagle  
 Updated: 08/06/2009 10:59:35 AM EDT

Thursday, Aug. 06

PITTSFIELD -- Gallery walking through Cultural Pittsfield encounters a number of new exhibits, more than one review can cover. I will look at two now and return to the others in a couple of weeks.

Ceramics may not be your cup of tea, but the Ferrin Gallery's "Teapots: Interpretations" has brewed up something that should interest everyone. A playful mix of artwork and vessels, the exhibit explores the visual, conceptual and utilitarian definition of teapots.

#### Teapots

Janet Rickus's painting "Teapot Tangle" is a showstopper. One of America's premier still-life artists, her piece sensitively balances two vessels dissimilar in size, shape and color. This simple composition weds the visual economy of Modernism with Old World craftsmanship. As Indiana Jones would say, "It belongs in a museum."

The stars of the show are the ceramic teapots, which divide into two groups: functional and sculptural. It's the latter that makes for a fascinating visit. These potters treat their vessels as sculpture, ingeniously concealing the original utilitarian function. While all these objects retain a spout, lid and some sort of handle, they are artworks, not meant for use.

Kathryn McBride's "Travel-Yixing" depicts a stack of Barbie-sized valises. The title refers to a region of China, where potters traditionally made vessels imitating objects. McBride's skills of mimicry are engrossing, detailing stitching,

leather texture, tiny grips, and so on. It's easy to see why collectors prize such pieces.

These ceramists are remarkable for their imitation of surface qualities. Rollie Younger's "Canned Tea" replicates a riveted, cast iron teakettle. In "Boston Tea Party," Steve Hansen seemingly uses iron brackets to clasp on an old Mass. license plate. With muted colors and coarse texture, Matthew Wilt fashions a metallic abstraction of circles and cylinders in "Server I."

Victor Spinski's "Carving a Teapot Out of a Rock" presents a complete still-life narrative. A smooth, white teapot emerges from a rugged stone matrix. Lying among rock fragments are a mallet and two iron

Advertisement

#### More News

- Fire burns woman's Win...
- Alert: Mass. sales tax hik...
- Rain sets July record -- a...
- Football player collapses...
- Accused killer indicted

#### Most Viewed Most E-M

(From the last 12 hours)

1. Pittsfield city councilor
2. Moving closer toward f
3. Mixing it up in a small t
4. KB Toys logo may live
5. Motorcycle crash victi

**Now Do It Online!**  
 Build your newspaper  
**CLASSIFIED AD on-line!**  
 NOW! POWERED BY

#### TOP CLASSIFIEDS

RENTALS STUFF AUTOS JOBS

chisels. Through his mastery of glazing and color, Spinski casts a spell of illusion over his ceramic medium.

Jim Budde's chimerical "All Aboard" resembles a walking, breathing totem pole as a tortoise carries an assortment of creatures on its back. Karen Portaleo's "The Fat Maries" depicts a corpulent, seated woman, nestling a child and smoking a cigarette. With pieces like these, you'll need to remind yourself that they are teapots -- assimilating spouts, lids, and handles -- and not sculpture.

Richard Notkin, who defines himself as a sculptor, frequently steepes political commentary in his vessels. From his Yixing Series, "Heart Teapot" presents an anatomical heart with arteries serving as spout, lid, and handle -- all armor-plated. Notkin sees the human heart as the source of wars. Clad for conflict and fettered in chains, the vessel is

BUICK 1994 Skylark, 4 doo

JEEP WRANGLER 1997 2<sup>00</sup>

1990 CHRYSLER LeBaron Con

2002 DODGE Neon RT, 97K m

DODGE '98 DAKOTA - extr

1977 MGB white convertibl

HONDA 2008 CIVIC LX AUT

2006 HARLEY Davidson Dyna

1977 MGB white convertibl

TOYOTA PRIUS 2006. Excell

**ALL LISTINGS**

forever  
entangled in its destiny.

### Lichtenstein Center

Fanning the embers of culture, the Lichtenstein Center hosts its second Annual Pittsfield Contemporary Art Show. Opened to artists working or living in the city, a three-person jury oversaw the selection process. As to be expected from a noncommercial gallery, the quality of artwork in this eclectic show varies.

Mike Carty's sassy painting, "True Love," resembles a rebus in the language of street art. Paul Graubard interestingly juxtaposes works depicting masks and portraits. The exhibit includes many photos, and Eric Korenman wins the lion's share. His images of local buildings are studies in geometric abstraction.

Michael McKay, whose paintings I reviewed last year in a one-man show at Zeitgeist, also makes an appearance. His forceful, monolithic images of the urban fabric convey the harsh, unforgiving backdrop of that stage. Resembling serigraphs, these pieces have a nice interplay between perspective and planarity. "Broadway and 9th," albeit unframed, is particularly successful.

Nonrepresentational works include Eduardo Villanes's exotic abstractions in black, heavily-textured oil paint. Their subtle designs swirl and swell hypnotically. Jay Tobin's geometric paintings attract through their simplicity and softness. Unburdened by excessive art criticism, these pleasant pieces hark back to a time when abstraction was more visual than intellectual.

That takes us halfway through the list. What can I say? When it rains in Pittsfield, it pours.

BOOKMARK Print Email Font Resize Return to Top

Comments made here are the sole responsibility of the person posting them, and they are subject to the [terms and conditions](#) of this site. Please note by clicking on "Post Comment" you acknowledge that you have read the [Terms of Service](#) and the comment you are posting is in compliance with such terms. Inappropriate posts may be removed by the moderator. These comments do not reflect the opinion or approval of The Berkshire Eagle. This forum encourages open, honest, respectful and insightful discussions; there is no need to be offensive. If you feel a comment violates the terms and conditions of this site, please bring it to our attention by selecting the "report abuse" link. Send us your [feedback](#).

**POST YOUR COMMENTS:**

Type in your comments to post to the forum

Name  
(appears on  
your post)

Comments

Type the numbers you see in the image on the right:



Post Comment

Please note by clicking on "Post Comment" you acknowledge that you have read the Terms of Service and the comment you are posting is in compliance with such terms. **Be polite.** Inappropriate posts may be removed by the moderator. Send us your feedback .

**[Ceramic Teapots](#)**

Browse our large selection of ceramic teapots.  
[www.Teavana.com/ceramicteapots](http://www.Teavana.com/ceramicteapots)

**[Eagle Auto Insurance - IL](#)**

The real Eagle Chicago insurance co.  
Fast & easy quotes online - low rates.  
[www.theeagleman.com](http://www.theeagleman.com)

**[Porcelain and Ceramic Teapot](#)**

Huge selections of porcelain and ceramic teapots at bargain prices  
[www.enjoyingtea.com](http://www.enjoyingtea.com)

Ads b



Copyright Notice | Privacy Policy | Contact Us | Subscriber Services | Site Map | Advertise | RSS

Town Profiles | Pearl Scholarship | Media Partners: CBS 6 Albany WAMC  
MNGi Corporate Site Map | Weather Data © Copyright 2007 CustomWeather, Inc  
75 South Church Street | P.O.Box 1171 | Pittsfield, MA 01202 | (413) 447-7311