

C E N T E N N I A L

J U R I E D

E X H I B I T I O N

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DELAWARE ART MUSEUM

Centennial Juried Exhibition

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Centennial Juried Exhibition

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Designed by Candice Kearns

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juror's STATEMENT

One thread that ties together the works in the *Centennial Juried Exhibition* is that each appeared vital enough online to make me—and, I presumed, others—want to see it in person. The initial submissions covered a wide spectrum of abilities, media, and styles. There were established artists, emerging talents, and probably some Sunday hobbyists. There was painting, sculpture, installation art, video, drawing, photography, crafts, and objects that defied categorization. Approaches ranged from realism to abstraction, expressionism to minimalism, handmade to machine-made, and retro to cutting edge. After reviewing some 1,300 entries by nearly 450 applicants, I selected 98 works by 97 artists. Above all, I looked for *quality*, regardless of medium or style, and thus the final selection is fittingly eclectic.

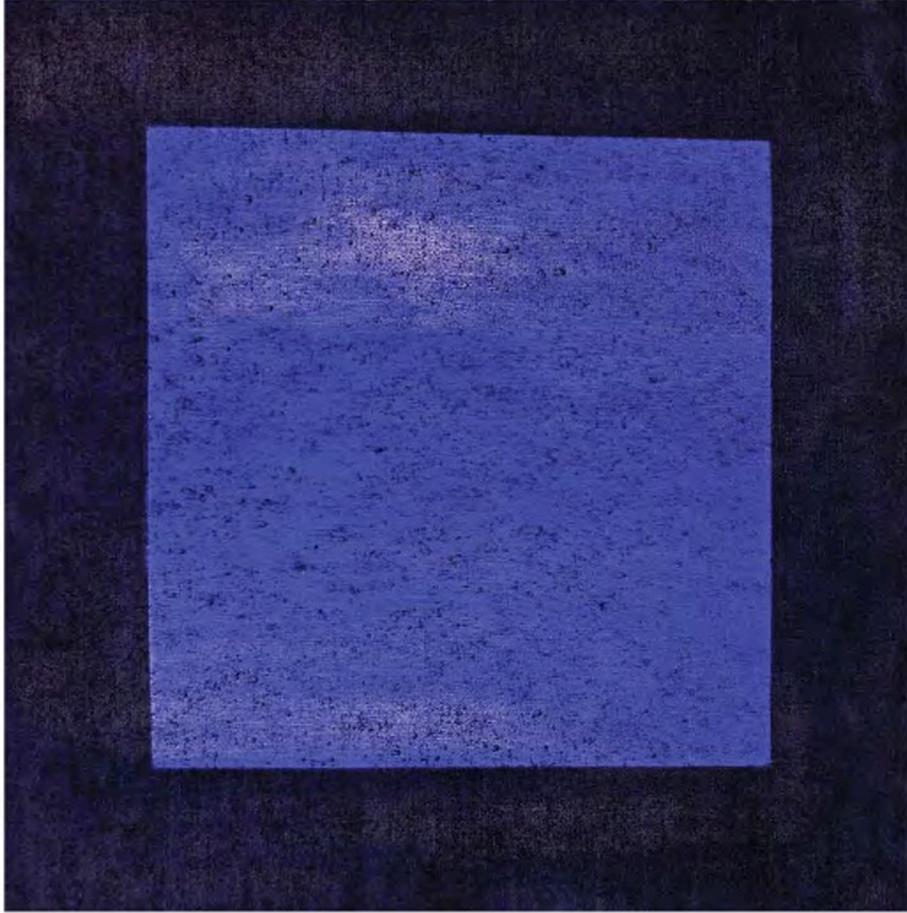
How the applicants selected and sequenced their images, even though limited to just three, also affected my thinking. Do the images reinforce one another? Does each one build further interest in the work? Is it more important to show range than consistency, or vice versa? Is the work all or mostly older, suggesting that the artist is not currently active or confident in his or her recent work? Even the quality of the images had an impact, aiding, or sometimes frustrating, efforts to look more closely, and thus reflecting on the artist. Access to resumes and statements proved helpful and I was glad that these were required, thereby leveling the field. While these materials negate the concept of blind judging, they help to ensure a level of professionalism. Needless to say, no responsible juror privileges a resume over the evidence of the work. But, on occasion, the additional information is useful in confirming or contradicting a hunch.

My selection process involved a balance between taste and judgment. Judging an open call can't be simply a matter of promoting what one likes; in any case, exposure to new art ought to expand one's preferences. I tried to evaluate each submission on its own terms. I asked myself questions. Does the artist stretch the medium, style, or tradition in which he or she works? Is the piece special or just credible? Is the idea interesting but the execution not? Is the work troubling, intriguing, or moving? Is it commercial rather than fine art (an imprecise but still valid distinction that involves evidence of fresh thinking, palpability of the materials or process, and resistance to quick consumption)?

In the end, the elements of online judging that can make for a somewhat artificial process—in which all creative effort and variation in scale, texture, and material are reduced to the homogeneity of pixels on a computer screen—also allow the process to proceed fairly and the results to be of consequence. The final selection offers a vital cross-section of the many valid approaches to contemporary art making. In addition, it presents an exciting, varied, and thought-provoking showcase of the multifaceted talent of artists working today in the region surrounding the Delaware Art Museum.

John B. Ravenal

Sydney and Frances Lewis Family Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts



Kocot and Hatton

Born in 1944 and 1946, live and work in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Interested in “the between,” husband-and-wife team Kocot and Hatton work during waking hours and in the “hypnopompic studio,” the state between sleeping and waking. The artists used this practice to create *The Color of Blue Series* (2008–ongoing), in which they explore not only their own consciousness, but also the representation of blue “through both pattern (the code) and through retinal perception (the pigment).”

Untitled (The Color of Blue Series, sd16Oct08), 2008

Oil paint and oil stick on linen, 24 x 24 inches

Lent by the artists, courtesy of Larry Becker Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania