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Carolyn Shattuck

A life's work ... so far

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By VICTORIA CRAIN

ARTS CORRESPONDENT

Rutland artist Carolyn Shattuck is celebrating with a solo exhibit at Manchester's Southern Vermont Art Center.

A mini-retrospective, Shattuck's exhibit in a second-floor gallery commemorates 37 years of making art. The collection she presents at SVAC samples the progress of her work, her thinking and art choices over the years. The works include silk-screen printing, dry point, oil paintings, collage, and sculpture in the form of book art.

Shattuck is a student of patterns. She observes them, admires them, and remembers them with her art. She has found her patterns everywhere: in plants, on animal skin, in shadow and light, in quilts. Her art journal reflects her interest in observed patterns and her thoughts about how to use them to her artistic advantage.



Carolyn Shattuck: "Plastic & Patsy" PROVIDED PHOTO

collages that have their origins in Florida find their patterns in nature. "Spotted Eagle Ray" is an abstract collage with

occasional figurative drawing. She depicts horseshoe crabs, a linear pattern that might be skate egg casings, fragments of patterns that resemble a surface of rippling water.

The perfect pattern of the sand dollar appears in another Florida-inspired work. These Florida pieces look through water at what is below her kayak as she considers the idea of transparency.

feature transparent objects set on rich, active backgrounds. Shattuck was struck by the effect of glass on stripes and other patterned background fabric. The loud colors, skewed perspective, and patterned activity make for an interesting tension with the genre of still life.

They are still life paintings filled with the potential of motion. She wrote that she thinks of the still life genre as a way of capturing a momentary glimpse of beauty.

In the late 1990s, Shattuck moved to three dimensions to make her art. Book art was her next exploration. Book artists create book-like objects that are sculptural. Artists' books may have a cover, pages and a binding; or they may pop up when opened; they may be a trail of folded pages hinged so that they can be arranged in a zigzag, or in a circular fashion. Artist books can be tunnels of accordion pleats with images on the paper both inside and out. They are three-dimensional sculptures usually made of paper. And sometimes they are word-based and contain text.

At SVAC, Shattuck provides a sampling of book art shapes and methods. The solemn "Urn Book" with continuous hinges, the hectic "Triple Decker" full of human activity and warmth, "The Blame Game" in the form of a tennis ball/Slinky. These pieces are ingenious. They fold up and close, they open like accordions, things pop up as the pages are opened or arranged. One even reinvents itself when you turn it inside out.

While learning to manage her mediums, she was always finding new ways to represent her ideas with art. "The Urn Book" is a meditation on death and permanence. "He Had No Words" is a black and white elegy to her father. "Ms. Catamount" is her newest book, about Vermont's historic mountain lion: a comment on how beings are lost and remembered. The Southern Vermont Art Center was full of visitors last Saturday at the opening. The grounds were alive with people wandering from one building to the other. It's a beautiful campus, a stunning drive, and very well worth a trip. Take a ride down to SVAC in Manchester, and be sure to check out the exhibit by Rutland artist Carolyn Shattuck.

From now until July 9, Shattuck will join Pamela Bennett Ader, Ken Ahlering, Martha Armstrong, Anne Harhay, Pavel Kraus, Ann Scott; each have their own solo shows in the

SOUTHERN VERMONT ARTS CENTER

Southern Vermont Arts Center presents Member Summer Solo Shows, through July 9, in the Yesterhouse Galleries; Vermont Glass Guild, through July 2, in the Wilson Galleries, on the SVAC campus, West Road in Manchester. Hours are: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, noon to 5 p.m. Sunday; call 802-362-1405, or go online to www.svac.org.

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