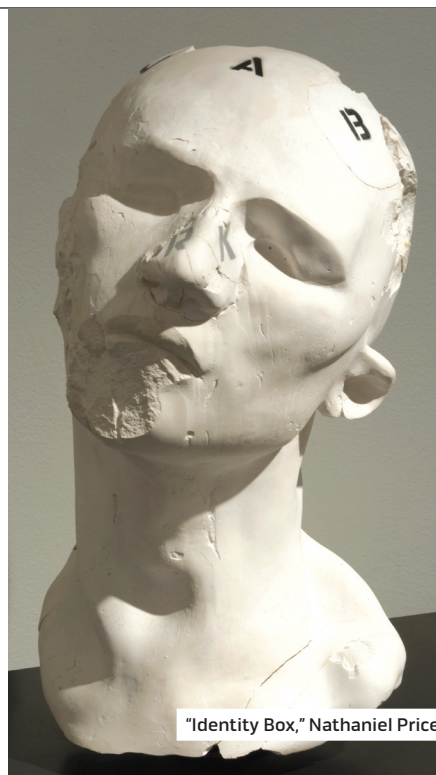


“**M**edicine & Mortality” at Burlington’s Firehouse Gallery is a wonderland of the visceral and grotesque, with a particular bent towards pigmented wax and “medical detritus.” The show’s stated intention is to consider “medical technology’s capacity to modify, preserve and extend life” and our lagging “psychological ability to integrate these advances.” However, it seems more a sensitive critique of medical detachment and its corollary in the physical experience of our own bodies.

Entering the gallery from Church Street, Sasanqua Link’s works in wax, tile and chrome command attention. They have scientific two-word names, such as “Spinal Stele.” In that piece, a wax serving-platter-like object has a subtly protruding spine in its center. The object hangs from a towel bar in a narrow, bathroom-like installation consisting of a narrow floor and wall covered in white ceramic tile. The wax plate suggests the softness of skin; its sensitivity and naked vulnerability. On the other hand, it’s kind of creepy in a Madame Toussaud way.

In Link’s “Corporeal Observatory,” a huge wax egg is fitted with internal gloves and an industrial looking “window” where one could presumably watch the manipulations taking place within. It has the effect of a morbid peep show, yet the work is also womb like, suggesting sci-fi-worthy advances in prenatal medical technology.

Nathaniel Price’s works speak poetically to the conflict between medical detachment and personal physicality. In “Another Matter Redux II,” he has written the scientific names of every human body part in very small, slanted print that collectively forms the shape of a man. The words seem to wrap the figure like a mummy. The man is more than the sum of his (many) parts, yet physically he *is*, in fact, the sum of those parts.



“Identity Box,” Nathaniel Price



“Abdominal Stele,” Sasanqua Link

Picturing Pathology

Art review: “Medicine & Mortality”

Price was recently a resident in internal medicine at UVM/FAHC, and his works straddle the personal and the medical. He seems suspicious of the sterile, detached science of healing while also relishing its potential to preserve life. In a cast bust made of a plaster-like substance called Hydrostone, a larger-than-human-scale head seems to groan with anguish. Brows heavy and mouth

half open, the head turns slightly upward, with pieces cracked or fallen away, the nose broken but pasted in place. Certain fragments of the head are labeled with letters. The figure intersects humanity and science—simultaneously a person and a medical subject.

Linda E. Jones’ works take “visceral” up a notch, using actual “medical detritus”

such as contact lenses, medical tubing, hair, stitches, etc. in her paintings. Creamy layers of pigmented wax obscure and magnify these relics and render them ghoulish. In her major work near the back door of the gallery, Jones suspends a huge, circular canvas across the wall with medical tubing. The canvas is energetically painted with traditional media but also includes hair and medical tubing. X-rayed bones glow eerily through large holes cut in the canvas. Observing the nuts and bolts of another person’s body can feel voyeuristic. Jones’ works offer starkly intimate information, but these bare medical facts seem to draw a physical separation between artist and viewer rather than connect them. Despite the psychological and emotional empathy evoked by this evidence of suffering, these IV tubes and stitches elicit more queasiness than compassion.

Beneath the medical tubing and the wax spines, the lettered vertebrae and the rubbery eggs, “Medicine & Mortality” is about the perilous relationship between medicine — as a science and industry — and the felt physicality of individuals. Medicine can relieve suffering and save lives, and it can reduce human beings to a series of

tests, diagnoses and procedures. *We are not just flesh and bone!* the show seems to cry, and yet we *are* flesh and bone. “Medicine & Mortality” won’t necessarily give you something to write your congressmen — or your doctors — about, but it will make you think. And maybe feel a little sick.

AMY RAHN

ART REVIEW

“Medicine & Mortality,” works by Linda E. Jones, Sasanqua Link and Nathaniel Price. Firehouse Gallery, Burlington. Through December 12.

ONGOING

burlington area

‘CELEBRATE THE SEASON’: A holiday exhibit featuring new oil paintings by the internationally renowned landscapist Carolyn Walton, and introducing the paintings of East Calais artist Helene Amses and Athenia Schinto of Shelburne. Also on view is jewelry by Burlington designer Tineke Russell. Through December 30 at Luxton-Jones Gallery in Shelburne. Info, 985-8223.

‘EGYPTOMANIA’: Art and artifacts resulting from the West’s fascination with all things Egyptian. In the Wilbur Room. Through December 18 at Fleming Museum, UVM, in Burlington. Info, 656-0750.

ESSEX ART LEAGUE GROUP SHOW: Original artworks by Lynn Powers, Joan Smith, Jackie Call and Pat Kennedy. Through December 31 at Essex Town Offices. Info, 862-3014.

‘IN STUDIO/TANGENT’: Works by adult artists with disabilities and autism spectrum disorder who have participated in workshops at the League Treatment Center led by visiting artist Marshall Harmon; also paintings, silk-screen prints and photographs by Harmon and coworkers/artists Matt Murphy and

Susan Metrican. Through December 6 at Jager DiPaola Kemp Design in Burlington. Info, 864-5884.

JUDITH REY & DENIS VERSWEYVELD: “Shelter : Dwelling : House : Home,” painting and sculptures, respectively, that explore the forms which shape our natural and built environment. December 4 through January 31 at TruexCullins Architecture & Interior Design in Burlington. Info, 658-2775.

KAREN DAY-VATH: Recent bold abstract paintings from the St. Albans artist’s “Primary Colors” series, in the Chittenden Bank UVM branch. Through December 31 at Davis Center, UVM, in Burlington. Info, 524-7154.

KAREN M. GEIGER: “Everyday Myths,” mixed-media paintings that explore the fables created in daily life. Through December 20 at CCV Burlington Pearl Gallery. Info, 652-2081.

MATT BROWN: “Simple Gifts: A Show for All Seasons,” wintry scenes from the featured artist, and other works in multiple media by 15 other regional artists. December 4 through January 30

at Furchgott Sourdiffe Gallery in Shelburne. Info, 985-3848.

‘MEDICINE & MORTALITY’: Linda E. Jones, Sasanqua Link and Nathaniel Price contribute works in multiple media that focus on the tools, procedures and detritus of medical interventions on the body. Through December 12 at Firehouse Gallery in Burlington. Info, 865-7165.

‘NAPOLÉON ON THE NILE: SOLDIERS, ARTISTS AND THE REDISCOVERY OF EGYPT’: Thirty large, detailed, engraved illustrations from the 23-volume *Description de l’Égypte*, a study of ancient and modern Egypt initiated under the reign of General Napoléon Bonaparte, this exhibition explores nearly every aspect of the North African country and underscores the resulting passion in the West for all things Egyptian. Also included are paintings and drawings influenced by the book’s publication, letters and documents from the time of Napoléon’s contact with Egypt, and other artifacts. Through December 18 at Fleming Museum, UVM, in Burlington. Info, 656-0750.

NED CASTLE: “Indigenous Expressions,” black-and-white photographs of regional native identities, defined from the perspective of the subjects, with archival pigments on fine-art paper. Through December 31 at ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center/Leahy Center for Lake Champlain in Burlington. Info, 864-1848.

NICOLE KIRCHER: The Newport artist shows her mixed-media works at this brand-new jewelry store. Through December 31 at Vintage Jewelers in Burlington. Info, 862-2233.

RAYCHEL SEVERANCE: “You Rascal, You,” photographs celebrating exuberant youth. Through December 12 at Firehouse Center Community Darkroom in Burlington. Info, 865-7166.

‘SURVEY: 215 COLLEGE GALLERY GROUP EXHIBITION’: The 11 member-artists of the downtown gallery show their works in various media all together. Through December 4 at UVM Living/Learning Center in Burlington. Info, 656-4200.



VISUAL ART IN SEVEN DAYS:

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