

"Striped Brass," stainless steel and gold leaf, by Tom Martin

Artists provide multiple perspectives on their work at New Hope Arts Center.

By **GWEN SHRIFT**
 STAFF WRITER

"New Hope/New York," on view at the New Hope Arts Center, amounts to 10 exhibits in one.

Ten artists each contributed a spectrum of work. Gallery director Carol Cruickshanks calls the assemblages "suites," many of which contain new works.

The exhibit has a curatorial pedigree that reaches to the artsy Manhattan neighborhood of Chelsea, having been juried by Ellen Bradshaw of the Pleiades Gallery on West 25th Street.

For local viewers, the exhibit is a chance to gauge the range of individual artists' work. This is especially dramatic with some of the sculptors, who have literally shifted shapes in outlook, as well as output.

Followers of sculptor John Mathews' work are familiar with his lively compositions of twisted and looping metal bars, twining around and sometimes ending in blown-glass elements.

One of Mathews' wooden works, "New Moon," invests visual energy in a sphere of white elongated shells that he devotes to smooth, sparkling and colorful glass elsewhere. Four other works are in this vein, though "Whirligig" fancifully includes what looks like a flying saucer in highly polished wood.

Tom Martin's sculptures veer from craggy-boned, stylized representations of fish to lyrical exercises in highly polished copper plates, tubes and ribbons.

Of the former, "Striped Brass" gets to the absolute structure of things, describing the bones, head and tail of the fish in an exploration of what lies beneath the skin of an animal or, in the case of metal, the surface of the earth.

At the other end of Martin's suite lies pure form in the shape of "Love," an endless, entwined swirl of polished copper, and "The Kiss," two flat, gleaming slabs of metal that angle toward each other, touching lightly.

Among the most eye-catching ranges is exhibited by Andy DiPietro, known for his virtuoso technique with turned vessels, who offers several works that articulate the whole idea of wood turning. Spiral constructions such as "Charcoal Twist Sculpture" study balance and texture in a poetic encounter with physics.

In some sense, they explode the technique used in DiPietro's vessels, which are enclosed forms. One of these, "Shadow Catcher II," also studies the notion of connection and separation, made by what appears to be a shape that was first turned, then partly deconstructed by slicing.

James Mario, several of whose abstract wooden sculptures are on view, veered into bronze with "Family," in which an

How suite it is

interior zone of empty space elaborates the silhouette of the surrounding metal.

Norine Kevolic, who makes mosaics of wood, shows several pieces that document her use of the internal structure of bamboo as a compositional element. She also uses empty space dramatically in surreal works such as "Gateway to Dreams" and "Passing Through."

Laura Petrovich-Cheney, whose works seem like nothing so much as patchwork quilts made of reclaimed wood, exhibits cheerful compositions in several sizes. Among the standouts is a work that includes wood that once was painted with letters, which the artist disassembles and scrambles to pleasingly chaotic effect.

Artists working in two-dimensional formats contributed paintings such as Tom Chesar's "Edge of Town — Lambertville," and collections of simplified forms executed in impressionist style in the landscapes of Roy Reinard.

Chesar's cityscape is not the fancy, gentrified Lambertville. It is set in a time of his own imagining, in which the town itself seems on the edge, with an old-style storefront and nondescript, stylized cars parked along the street.

There is a purity to this work that qualifies it as a character study of a neighborhood where unadorned row houses stand with their backs to the pale disc of a winter sun, and a lone pedestrian seems to lean into a cold wind as he walks along an otherwise deserted sidewalk.

Reinard offers several works, of which the strongest is "Breaking Light," a riverscape whose visual crux is a foreground of dynamically interleaved water, ice and earth.

Nancy Bentley also exhibits a water painting, "Emerging," a surreal, ghostly depiction of women rising from a river; it's in keeping with Bentley's study of feminine emotion in other works.

In "Wavy Tree Reflections," photographer Natalie Searl takes a philosophical view of another body of water, this one edged by trees.

The upper half of the composition is a black-and-white image of the trees in winter; the reflection in the water, rendered in color, appears to show the trees blossoming.

It's a dizzying and enigmatic work, all the more compelling for going on view in the dead of winter.

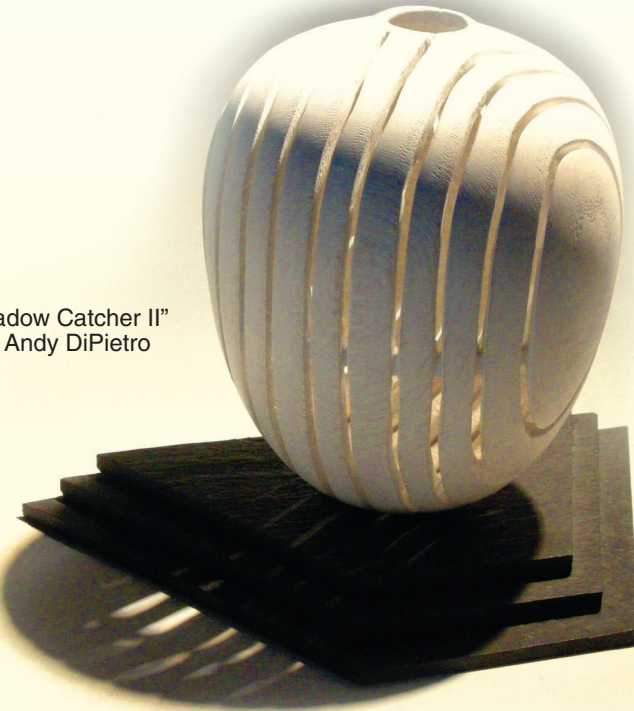
"New Hope/New York Juror's Choice Exhibition" runs through Sunday at the New Hope Arts Center at 2 Stockton Ave., New Hope.

Hours: noon to 5 p.m. Friday through Sunday.

Information: 215-862-9606 or www.newhopearts.org.

Gwen Shrift is a feature writer at Calkins Media. Phone: 215-949-4204. Email: gshrift@calkins.com.

"Shadow Catcher II" by Andy DiPietro



"Love," forged copper on brass rod, by Tom Martin



"Wavy Tree Reflections," mixed-media photography, by Natalie Searl

"Breaking Light" by Roy Reinard

