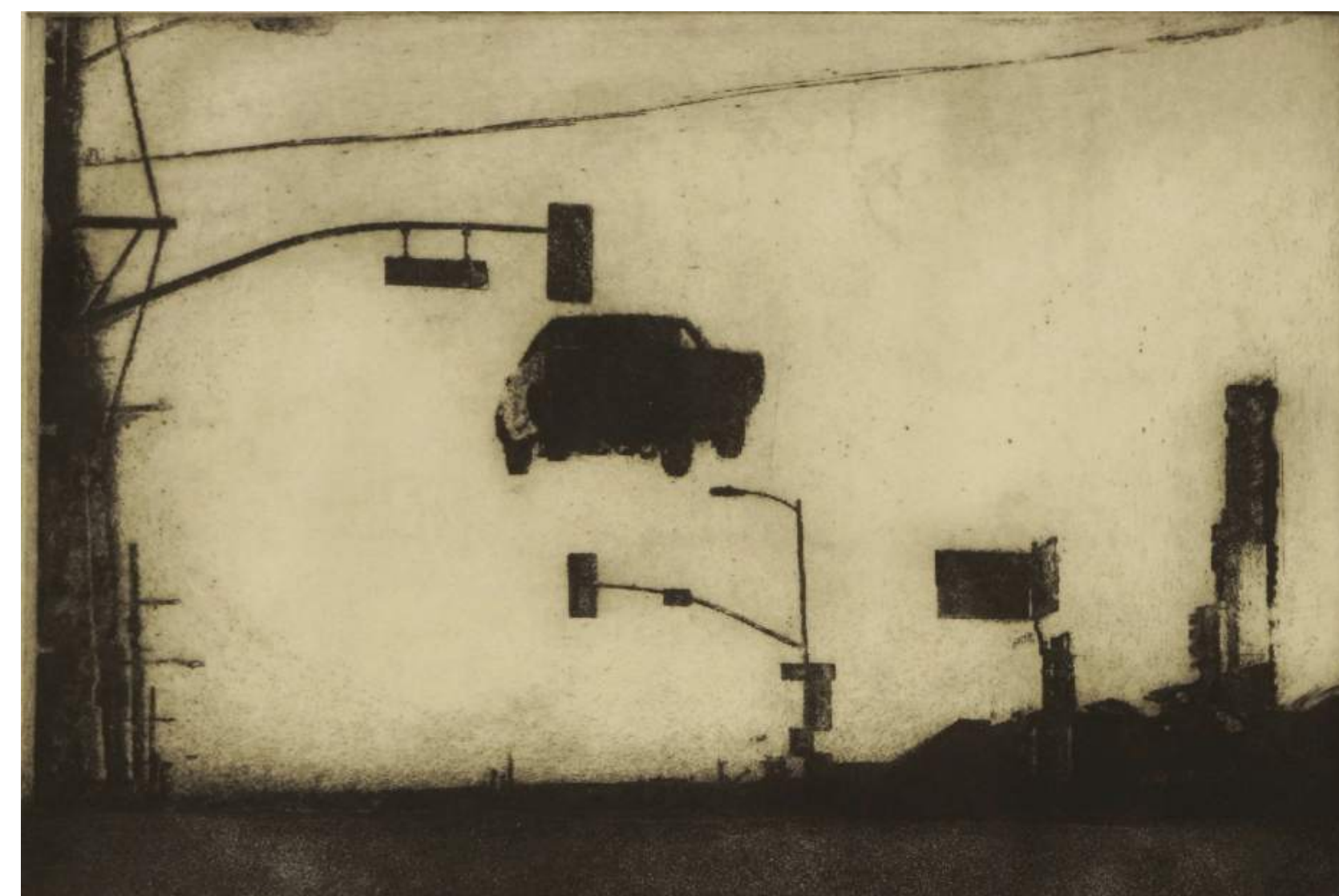


Artists' creative 'Collective' on display in Shadyside



Sharon Wilcox's 'Flying Car 2'

By [Kurt Shaw](#)

Published: Saturday, December 7, 2013 9:00 p.m.

“The New Collective,” an exhibit of works by members of the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts seven resident art guilds, fills both floors of the center's Shadyside gallery space, giving visitors the opportunity to see and experience a whole lot of art in one magnificent place.

“The New Collective” represents works from the Craftsmen's Guild of Pittsburgh, Fiberarts Guild of Pittsburgh, Group A, Pittsburgh Print Group, Pittsburgh Society of Artists, Society of Sculptors and Women of Visions, Inc. Of the 340 works submitted, more than 70 were selected, utilizing a variety of mediums, elements and styles.

The original purpose of the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts (formerly the Arts and Crafts Center of Pittsburgh), when it was founded in 1945 by a dedicated group

About Kurt Shaw



Kurt Shaw
Art Critic
[Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [Video](#) | [Photo Reprints](#)

Details

'The New Collective, an All-Guild Exhibition'

When: Through Jan. 19 from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesdays-Saturdays; until 7 p.m. Thursdays; noon-5 p.m. Sundays.

Admission: \$5 suggested donation

Where: Pittsburgh Center for the Arts,
6300 Fifth Ave., Shadyside
Details: 412-361-0873 or
www.pittsburgharts.org

of artists and civic leaders, was to provide a home for the various and diverse Pittsburgh artist guilds that existed at the time.

According to its website, the center was organized to take possession of the mansion of industrialist Charles D. Marshall “to provide a public place where the people of Pittsburgh could enjoy participating in the arts.” In 1946, the center expanded its footprint to the next-door mansion of another Pittsburgh industrialist, A.M. Scaife. Both mansions were donated to the city and leased to the center for \$1.

Many of the guilds still house their offices at the center. And, occasionally, they show their works in large group exhibitions, as is the case currently.

The oldest among them, Pittsburgh Society of Sculptors, was founded in 1935. Among its works on display, “Drawing Strength From Art and Ancestors (Self Portrait With Sun Totem Woman and Primal Animals),” a terra-cotta sculpture by the late Cydra Vaux, is a real standout for its totem-like appearance and allegorical content.

Alternatively titled “Self Portrait With Totem to Protect Life and Ward Off Cancer,” the piece was created in the tradition of using grotesque beings to evict evil as found in a multitude of cultures, according to accompanying text. Vaux was a prolific sculptor and active in the Pittsburgh Society of Sculptors for several years. She passed away from cancer on July 13.

Another totem-like piece, Jeffrey Moyer's glass “Ascent to Light” also has a story behind it. A member of both the Craftsmen's Guild of Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh Society of Artists, the Greene County resident from just outside of Wind Ridge says the piece is from a series that he has collectively titled “Voices of the Ancestors.”

“I mean for the visual imprint of this piece to send a message that is timeless and spiritually universal,” Moyer says. “In certain respects, it is contemporary, in that the overall imagery suggests a theme that is typically Buddhist, but is not strictly limited thereto.”

In other respects, the imagery is archaic, specifically ancient Celtic. Moyer says the cauldron, for example, symbolizes rebirth and is associated iconically with the Celtic Great Goddess.

“It also represents the ritual act of making an offering, in this case, the restrictive baggage of attachment and fear,” Moyer says. “The ‘Guardian’ figure is an adaptation of an Iron Age carving of a Celtic God, one who looks both ways and can be invoked to watch over both beginnings and endings of journeys.”

Like Moyer, Butler artist Christy Culp is a member of the Craftsmen's Guild of Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh Society of Artists. Her two-part ceramic piece “Pair” is a delightful play on words, as it's two ceramic pears. However, Culp says, “Pair” is one sculpture from a series of three different sculptures based on the “journey of relationships.”

Based on more contemporary themes, “Whispers From the Other Side” by another Pittsburgh Society of Artists member, Martha Hopkins Skarlinski of Cranberry, was inspired by something she heard on television “or possibly something I read,” she says. “I tend to carry around certain words and phrases with me for a while. Interesting words. Odd phrases. Funny sounds. Sometimes the words or phrases become paintings, and, sometimes, they fade away. Painting is a form of meditation for me.”

Also inspired by the world around her is Martha Ressler of Lawrenceville, who is a member of Pittsburgh Society of Artists and Fiberarts Guild of Pittsburgh.

Her quilt “The Detritus of Working Class Lives” contains everything from crushed bottle caps to a hair pick.

“I walk a lot (10,000 steps a day with a pedometer) and absorb the shapes, colors and textures of my aging industrial neighborhood,” Ressler says. “The quilt is inspired by these walks. I pick up found objects as I go, and these often make their way into my work.”

Another piece by a member of the Fiberarts Guild, Jane Ogren of Pleasant Hills, is purely abstract. A diptych titled “Jefo 638” is made of sheer polyester, dyed and stretched over a sheet of curved metal.

“I liked the juxtaposition of the soft, transparent fabric over the hard, shiny, opaque metal,” Ogren says. Having subtle gradation in color from orange to burnt umber, it holds its own among the more allegorical works on display.

Then, there is the Pittsburgh Print Group, represented in the work of its current president, Sharon Wilcox of Highland Park.

“‘Flying Cars 1 and 2’ is a visualization of my phobia,” Wilcox says of the pieces that depict just that. “I have been terrified at the prospect of riding as a passenger in anyone's car for many years now. This has been accompanied by a plague of dreams in which the car I'm driving launches itself off the curve of a high, inclining access ramp leading nowhere.”

Wilcox has captured what she calls a “Thelma and Louise” moment, “replete with the sensation of falling but without the empowerment.”

Of course, there are many more compelling works on display, making for an engaging experience that could easily fill an afternoon.

It's also worth noting that the exhibit is open in conjunction with the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts annual Holiday Shop, which has extended shop and gallery hours (pca.pittsburgharts.org/pca-holiday-shop). The shop features art and crafts from more than 200 regional artists, with everything from ceramics to glass, jewelry, fiber art and prints.

