

‘Surrounded with power’ — The Story of Women art exhibit opens in Milford

By Sandra Diamond Fox Updated 10:10 am EDT, Wednesday, October 21, 2020



Photo: Ned Gerard / Hearst Connecticut Media

Executive director Paige Miglio poses with part of the Story of Women exhibit currently on display at the Milford Art Council.

MILFORD — The watercolor and charcoal drawing portrays a scene from another century, but the message speaks powerfully to the modern era.

The work is titled *Ready to Vote* and was created by Milford artist Vilma Oritz-Dillon for the Milford Arts Council’s 2020 *The Story of Women* exhibit. It depicts women 100 years ago standing in line to vote. The women are wearing clothing that was fashionable during that time, such as a large white hat tied under the chin.

“For me, it was the topic and the time period and the fact that 100 years later, the story of this spoke to me in the era that we are in right now,” MAC Marketing Director Lorie Lewis said. “I am looking at these women from 100 years ago wanting the right to vote and seeing where we are now and where we are headed.”

Women of the past, present and future, drawn in about a dozen different mediums, are portrayed in the exhibit, which will be on display through Nov. 19. The exhibit contains about 90 works of art, most of which are for sale with proceeds supporting the council. All are viewable online at milfordarts.org. The exhibit is also open for limited in-person viewing at the MAC, 40 Railroad Ave. South. The exhibit is free although donations are accepted.

For the exhibit, artists were asked to create a piece that showed the many ways women express themselves. The works feature women in multiple roles they serve in society such as teacher, sister, mother, nurturer, and innovator. Aside from capturing the theme, the rest of the piece of art was left up to the artists’ imagination.

Clothing plays a large role in some, while in others, the women are nude. Women are drawn alone, or surrounded by many other women. Color, light and shading play large factors in the works also. Mediums include acrylic, photography, wax, watercolor and ink. There are also maker, textile, oil and charcoal pieces.

Each piece has a name, sending out its own, unique message such as United we Stand, The Great Matriarch, Tea with the Devil and In Love with Motherhood. Most are of unnamed women. However, there are two of the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Theme of women

The theme of the exhibit came about as a result of the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, giving women the right to vote. While many of the MAC’s planned events for 2020 had to be canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic, the staff realized the exhibit was one event that could still be safely held. “At the start of the pandemic, we got together to recreate our entire programming,” said Lewis.

The art

One of Lewis' favorite pieces in the show is Grace, a mixed media drawing of a woman sitting in the fetal position, created by Westport resident Mary Pat Pino. Multi-colored patterns and textures surround her body.

"I was drawn to it because of the color and that it has a lot of swirl and movement to it, which gives it a lot of energy," she said. "I'm very much drawn to circular movement because, to me, it connotes energy, and my lifelong goal as a person has always been about drawing energy in. It speaks to me." Unlike most MAC programs, which feature mostly local artists, The Story of Women drew artists across the country and Canada, although five pieces are by Milford artists.

"This is the first exhibit where we have drawn like this," Lewis said. That has a lot to do with the topic, she added.

"The pandemic has opened up a whole new world for us," she said. "We were forced to open up to new technologies and new ways to think about who we are and what we are. It opened our minds to completely recreate and use different ways to reach out." As a result, the MAC's programming is heading toward more virtual events.

"It's everything we're doing now," she said, adding the MAC is now showing online performances. "It's kind of happening across the board."

Online or in person, Lewis said the exhibit had a powerful effect on her.

"I've never felt so empowered as I have when I walked into this exhibit," she said. "It surrounded me with power. I felt like I was surrounded by every facet about what women mean to society and relationships. It blew my mind."

sfox@milfordmirror.com.



Photo: Ned Gerard / Hearst Connecticut Media

The Story of Women exhibit currently on display at the Milford Art Council.



Photo: Ned Gerard / Hearst Connecticut Media

The Story of Women exhibit currently on display at the Milford Art Council.



Photo: Ned Gerard / Hearst Connecticut Media



Photo: Ned Gerard / Hearst Connecticut Media

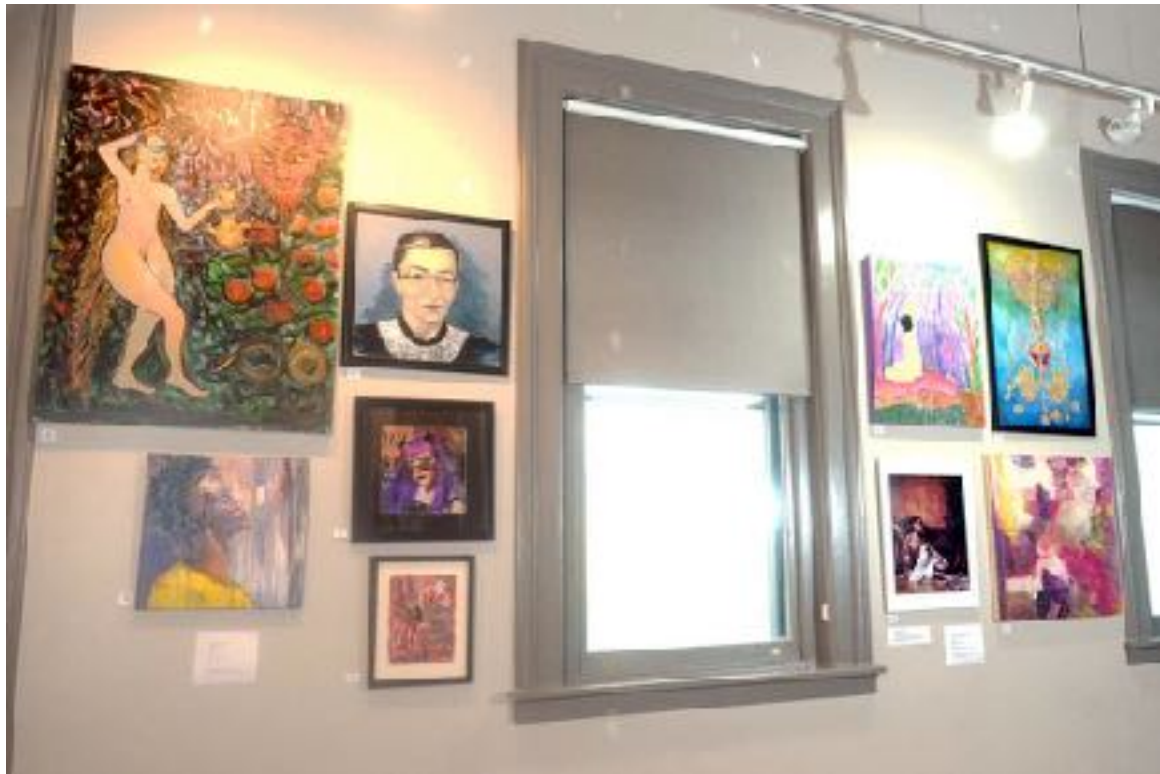


Photo: Ned Gerard / Hearst Connecticut Media