

Juror Statement

I was delighted and honored to serve as juror for the exhibition “Cold Wax International: A Juried Exhibition”, sponsored by Cold Wax Academy. Thank you to Rebecca Crowell, Jerry McLaughlin, and Mary Shaw for facilitating the exhibition. I enjoyed the jurying process which included selecting the top three awards and honorable mentions.

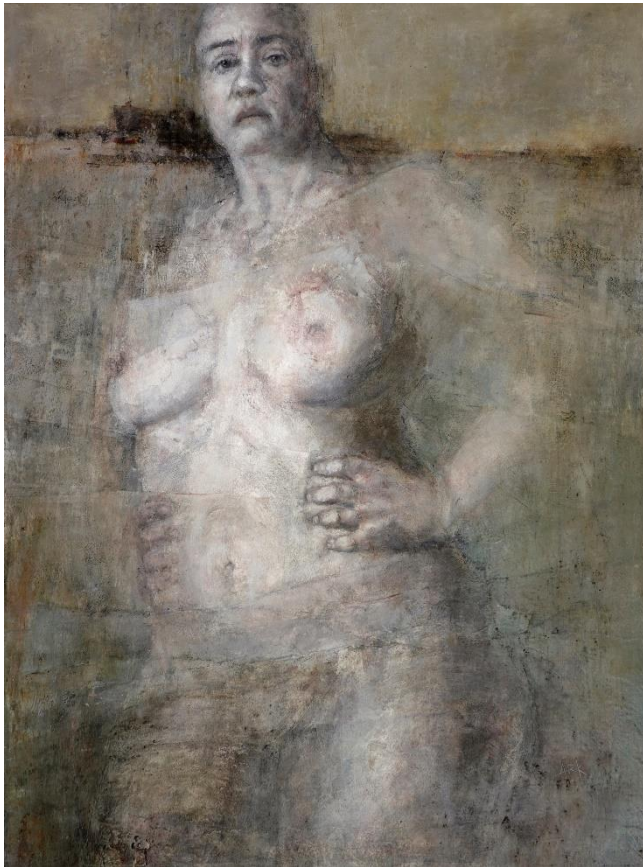
To all the artists who submitted images: Thank you for the opportunity to view and consider so many intriguing and accomplished works. To those selected, congratulations! 839 submissions were received, and of those, 79 works were chosen to be included. Thank you to ALL the artists for sharing your work with us!

Experience as both artist and curator has made me keenly aware that the digital representation of a physical work of art is reductive by nature, and in the case of a medium such as cold wax, many of the textural elements and tactile qualities of the artwork can be lost in translation. We all say it, “The photos don’t do the work justice!”. Often, our only comforts are that it is equally so with each entrant and that the juror is familiar enough with the medium to compensate for photography’s limitations with their own understanding of the medium’s physicality. The quality of the entrants’ photography was high across the board, which truly helped facilitate the process.

When a show is based on creative work done in a specific medium, one would reasonably expect to see a significant amount of visual commonality in the submissions. While there were indeed visual threads that began to appear immediately as the jurying process began, I was pleased to discover a broad range of technique, subject, and content represented within this large group of submissions. I found this both surprising and exciting.

I believe any juror could have approached such a large group of accomplished entries and curated a number of different shows from the available options, because the work entered was of such a high quality. As a curator, and even as an

interested art viewer, I long to be surprised and transported by the works I encounter. When moving through this large group of paintings, I looked for pieces that were either taking me somewhere new, or taking me to a familiar place, but transporting me via a surprising new route. I responded to work that expressed a unique point of view, and work that evoked a sense of mystery. I responded to work that felt innovative and stretched the medium, and I responded to work that showed the struggle of wrestling an idea from fleeting thought to powerful, even monumental incarnation.



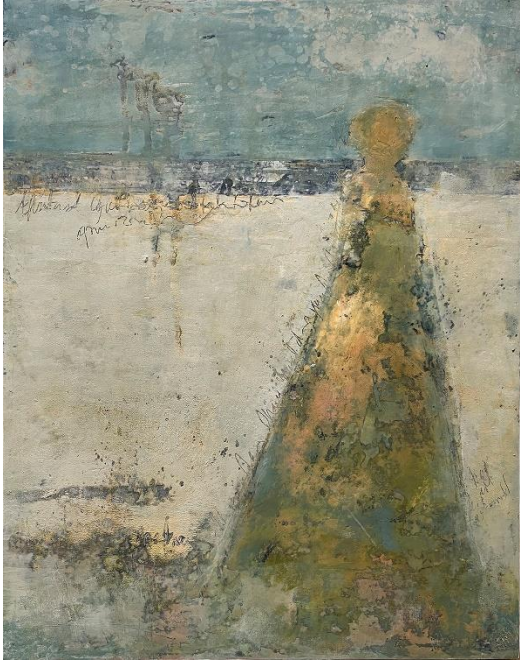
“Monumental” is, in fact, the first word that comes to mind when encountering 1st place winner Ann Kearney’s piece “Head on Again”. The sense of solidity that the figure evokes is belied by the almost complete obliteration of contour. It’s as if the surface that so strongly suggests the presence of the body is transferred to the negative space of the painting, imbuing the whole piece with a tactile strength. Adding to the work’s complexity is the suggestion of a distant horizon, grounding the figure and defining the space. We are at once aware of the beautifully articulated surface and the deep space that the figure occupies.



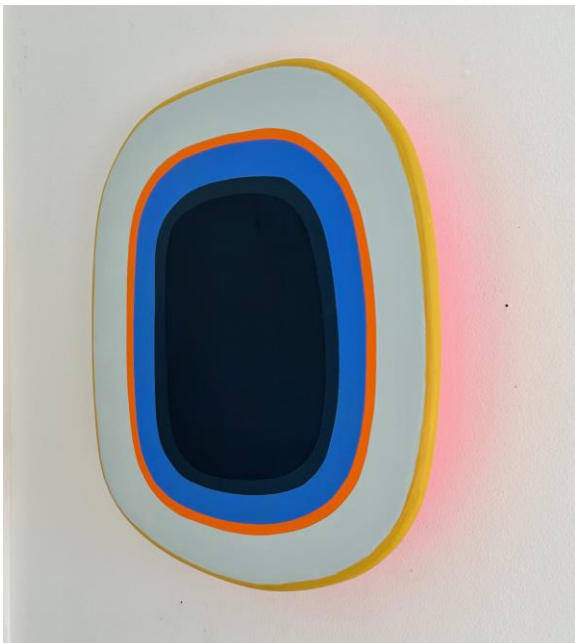
Second place work “Torso 2” by Julia Martin, while suggesting a figurative painting in the title, offers instead a collaged construction of fragments, each a beautifully stated phrase of painterly incident. These phrases are then stitched together to create a sculptural, shaped work that suggests the human form while remaining an overtly abstract object. It’s a strong metaphor for the attributes of the body, each having its own unique role and character, working in concert to become a sum greater than the parts.

While these first two pieces so powerfully suggest a sense of presence, third place award winner “Blue Chair” by Linda Nickell poignantly and emotionally evokes a sense of absence of the human figure. I found this piece to be such a skillfully made and psychologically moving painting, expertly composed and thoughtfully painted. The sensitive rendering and the convincing use of light make it a beautifully stated work about silence and longing.





There is an odd, quiet poetry present in “Afoot and Lighthearted” by Robyn Martins. This Honorable Mention painting presents itself as a dreamy, atmospheric landscape. The figure, if that is indeed what it is, (ironically revealing no feet and feeling anything but lighthearted to me) emerges up from the lower, darker tones of the composition. Delicate textures and suggestively scrawled writings invite the viewer to come in close and, with the figure, dwell in the intimate mystery of this piece.



Lori Skantzios' Honorable Mention piece “Portal - Midnight Sunset” stands unique as perhaps the most overtly sculptural piece in the exhibition. Skantzios presents a work sculpted from wood and painted with rings of vibrant colors that seem to move forward and back in the space between work and viewer. Adding to this effect is the artist's novel use of reflected light and color, involving the wall behind the painting into the work itself, and imbuing it with an ethereal presence that speaks of the questions, qualities and mysteries of physics, time, space, and perception.



Counterpointing this ethereal presentation is the structural, architectural quality of Jeff Horton's Honorable Mention piece "Coming Together". Working in a way completely distinct from Skantzos' shaped work, Horton nevertheless seems to address big questions of time and space. The surfaces of Horton's works are beautifully articulated, allowing the quality of the paint to assert itself equally with the drawn quality of the lattice-like structural imagery. This balance of spatial rendering and attention to the abstract elements of color and surface reveal the hand of an artist confident in the languages of abstraction, spoken with a personally developed vocabulary.

From intimate exploration of the body to the grand evocation of space, six artists, and the artists responsible for all the accomplished pieces in this show move us through a range of viewing experiences. They address our private longings, explore our physical surroundings, and celebrate our desire to look past ourselves and give voice to the invisible. All they require is our time and attention.

Dan Addington