



SAT, JUL 16, 2016 | 25 °C  
Sunny

Full Text Archive

NEWS TIPS  
DELIVERY QUESTIONS  
PRINT EDITIONS  
WELLNESS

What can we find for you?

Brantford-Brant

☒ Search All Articles  
☐ Search Entire Site

search

HOME NEWS SPORTS **WHAT'S ON** OPINION COMMUNITY OBITUARIES AUTOS CLASSIFIEDS REAL ESTATE



Home > WhatsOn > More than meets the eye

Like 0 Tweet G+ 1

Mar 19, 2012 | Vote 0 0

## More than meets the eye

Brant News

J.P. Antonacci BRANT NEWS Four artists whose work is now on display at the Glenhyrst Art Gallery of Brant prove that a paintbrush, a camera or a bit of silicone can alter one's perception of reality. Though varied in media and subject matter, the artwork in Narrative Transformations: A Series of Exhibitions succeeds in subverting viewers' expectations and challenging how we think about seemingly safe topics, like nature and children's toys. It bothered Cambridge sculptor Jane Hook that Mattel's iconic Barbie doll wasn't allowed to grow up, so to celebrate the eternally 17-year-old toy's 50th birthday, she created a wrinkled, midriff-baring Barbie, still rocking short shorts well past retirement age. "It's a piece about consumption – about what Barbie misses out on if she doesn't age," Hook

explained at the exhibit's opening reception on Sunday. The elderly Barbie is sealed in an hourglass, much like a figure resembling God from Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel in another of Hook's pieces. The figure sits hunched inside a glass church, his body filling the structure such that he seems to be trapped by its walls. The point, Hook said, is that human words and institutions sometimes serve to limit God's power. However, some more religious viewers interpret the sculpture as illustrating God's all-encompassing presence within the church. Either reaction makes Hook happy, because it means viewers are really paying attention. "My hope is that the works will just make people think – and not necessarily in my way," she said. Elizabeth Barrett Milner's brightly coloured landscapes depicting her native Norfolk are cheerful, but a painting of prairie wilbers in flight near Long Point Lighthouse loses its shine when the viewer learns that the birds abandoned the area years ago. Not all of Milner's works have a gloomy backstory. In her painting Tom, Elizabeth, Adelaide, Pauline, Margaret and Mary, the viewer soars into the clouds with a group of peregrine falcons raised – and named, hence the title – by students at Mohawk College. The veteran artist says she loves the outdoors but isn't often found sitting by the water's edge, paintbrush in hand. "Usually I go outside and enjoy the day, and then come back with a sketch or a memory," she said. Fausta Facciponte is most often found at garage sales and thrift stores, searching through toy bins for children's dolls that will appear in her larger-than-life photographs. The Mississauga-based artist digitally stitched together dozens of minute photographs of each doll to create the mammoth pictures that dominate the gallery walls. "They're so creepy," remarked one visitor as he and several friends eyeballed the giant dolls. That's the point, Facciponte said. The viewer is meant to be put ill at ease – almost as if the doll's kaleidoscope eyes are watching them. The scale of the photographs brings out the tiniest details – cracked plastic, loose threads, even bits of dirt and mold that jarringly obscure a doll's eyeballs. "There's a sense of terminated love and abandonment about these objects," Facciponte said. By blowing up the photographs, she tries to create a similar experience for the viewer. "It's inviting, but it keeps a bit of distance," she said. "It's not really about the dolls. It's rooted in that, but it's really about the relationship between viewer and object." The viewer can get up close and personal with the subjects of Brantford artist Kim DiFrancesco's work. DiFrancesco didn't think she would end up painting over a dozen dog portraits when she took a commission to create a large dog to hang inside Blue Dog Coffee Roasters on Brant Avenue, but friends and neighbours saw her work and asked her to paint their dogs too. Many of those dog owners came by the gallery on Sunday to see their furry friends on display. "That's one of the best parts, when they walk into the room and see them," DiFrancesco said. The canine-loving artist is glad that, in her case, the tail really did wag the dog. "I used to say I didn't want to be a painter of dogs, but now I've embraced it," she said. "When these kinds of things come your way, you have to go with it." Narrative Transformations, curated by Marcia Lee, closes on May 6. To learn more about the artists and artwork, visit [www.glenhyrst.ca](http://www.glenhyrst.ca).



### GLENHYRST

Photo by J.P. Antonacci

Artists Jane Hook, Fausta Facciponte, Elizabeth Barrett Milner and Kim DiFrancesco pose for a photo on Sunday outside Glenhyrst Art Gallery of Brant.