

ART

TIME TO PLAY

Silvermine show highlights the fun side of Susan Sharp



"Hindsight."

Contributed photos



"Four Square."

By Abby Luby

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

With a title of "Four/Play" for works by artist Susan Sharp, the accent is on the word "play." The artist's solo exhibit, now at the Silvermine Gallery, has a real time fun factor with vivacious, dancing shapes and colors floating on the canvases.

Most of the highly organic, biomorphic work is divided into four separate, but not always equal, canvases and presents as one connective piece. In "Four Square," a yellow sea offers unfurling ribbons of red and turquoise lacing through a viscous dream space of primordial ooze.

The general composition of the work obliquely speaks to the inner synapses of the brain, where the neural surge of information is replete with spaces for minute breaks in the flow.

The process question for multiple panel paintings is always: "Are blank panels lined up and then painted or were they painted separately with the same colors four different times then hung next to each other?" Although only the artist knows for sure, mentally separating the paintings is part of the fun in this show.

But in Sharp's work, "Primal 22," there is no doubt how the panels were put together. Twenty-two small, square wood panels randomly span the length of one wall in the gallery. These small oils on wood yield visceral elements that reappear differently on other squares. Dazzling fragments, including raised ceramic circles, are staccato popouts from one square to the next, bolstered by the hodge-podge puzzle effect, amazingly cohesive. Miniature landscapes and seascapes "talk" to one another from their separate

panels; small corners of deep, dark, wooded forests double as underwater microbial worlds — one a macrocosm of the other. Sharp indeed had fun creating this one.

Key geometric shapes appear in "Path of Echoes." A seaside theme redolent of windswept sand bearing green footprints of thick, rippled paint lingers as if an imprint was freshly made. A splayed flat umbrella with distinct geometric shapes hovers in the upper corner with a thin,

curling crimson trail bridging to a patch of water. Here, wavy brush strokes invoke the sea, pressing up from the bottom. The "echoes" in this work are subtle: The slats of an orange ladder jaggging off to the side reverberate somehow to the umbrella panels, each with its own geometric tension; pale pink water marks of fleeting surf replay in other places on the canvas.

"Force of Gravity" appears as a large diptych; a pointillist study on one side and a languid

reprieve on the other. On the left, a muted background of light grays and purples recede behind scintillating confetti of dangling wiry-lined diamonds and red dots. The theme tangentially traverses to the right canvas with meandering rivers and scant geological formations pushed to the sides, allowing for an exhaling space in the center.

The exhibit is aptly placed in Silvermine's

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REVIEW



"Primal 22."

MAKING THE ART SEEN

ADMISSION TO EVENTS FREE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

Museums & Nonprofit Venues

THE ALDRICH CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM No Reservations: Native American History and Culture in Contemporary Art Works by Native and non-Native artists, including "Dwelling," a collection of blankets in a pile more than 6 feet high. Through Feb. 25. Free for members, \$5 for nonmembers. Tuesday-Sunday, noon-5 p.m. 258 Main St., Ridgefield. 438-4519 or www.aldrichart.org.

BRUCE MUSEUM Zip, Bop and Whir: Toys of the 20th Century Favorite toys from the 1900s. Through July 8. In Response to Place Photographs of nature taken at conservatories. Through Jan. 28. Black and White Since 1960 Prints from the collection of Reba and Dave Williams. Through Feb. 25. Paintings by more than 20 artists, including William Merritt Chase, Joseph DeCamp, Daniel Garber, Childe Hassam, Willard Metcalf, Theodore Robinson, John Singer Sargent, Robert Spencer, John H. Twachtman and J. Alden Weir. \$7, \$6 for seniors and children 5-12; free to children younger than 5. Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, 1-5 p.m. 1 Museum Drive, Greenwich. 869-0376 or www.brucemuseum.org.

THE DISCOVERY MUSEUM Imagination Paintings by Ed Rath. Through Jan. 31. \$8.50; \$7 for children, seniors and students; free for children younger than 5 and members. Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, noon-5 p.m. 4450 Park Ave., Bridgeport. 372-3521 or www.discoverymuseum.org.

HOUSATONIC MUSEUM OF ART Abstractions and Figures Works by Matthias Alfen. Through Feb. 21. Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; open Thursday until 7 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; Sunday, noon-4 p.m.; closed all state and major holidays. 900 Lafayette Blvd., Bridgeport. 332-5052 or www.htcmuseum.edu.

KATONAH MUSEUM Michael Kronld: Rising Water, Falling Water An outdoor,

site-specific installation along the museum's low retaining wall facing Route 22. Through April 8. Michael Steiner Sculptures and paintings by Steiner. Through April 22. Changing exhibitions and educational programs, featuring six major exhibitions a year. Free, 10 a.m.-noon; \$3, noon-5 p.m. Always free to members and children younger than 12. Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, noon-5 p.m. Route 22 at Jay Street, Katonah, N.Y. 914-232-9555 or www.katonahmuseum.org.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS MUSEUM Crosses and Crucifixes Exhibit being shown through June 17 as a celebration of the Christian faith. Wednesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. 1 State St., New Haven. 865-0400.

NEUBERGER MUSEUM OF ART — PURCHASE COLLEGE Transitional Objects: Contemporary Still Life Examines the phenomenon of still life as a genre recast in recent years. Through Jan. 21. Renée Green: Wavelinks, 1999-2002 Video-installation series exploring the interactions people have with sound. Through Jan. 21. \$6, \$4 for seniors and students with ID, free to members and children younger than 12. Tuesday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase College, 735 Anderson Hill Road, Purchase, N.Y. 914-251-6100 or www.neuberger.org.

STAMFORD MUSEUM & NATURE CENTER A Life in Quilts A series by Teresa Barkley portraying contemporary life in her quilts. Through April 1. \$8; \$6 for seniors and students; \$4 for children ages 4-17; free for children 3 or younger, members and Stamford residents on Wednesdays. Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. 39 Scofieldtown Road, Stamford. 322-1646 or www.stamfordmuseum.org.

WADSWORTH ATHENEUM MUSEUM OF ART Picasso to Pop: Aspects of Modern Please see **ART SEEN**, Page D7

OPENINGS

ADMISSION TO EVENTS FREE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

Openings

KATONAH MUSEUM OF ART Tools as Art Works by John Hechinger. Today through April 8. Interactive Tools Works by Stephen T. Johnson. Today through April 8. Video: The Way Things Go A video documentary of artists Peter Fischli and David Weiss building a 100-footlong structure from common household items, then adding fire water, setting off a chain reaction of destruction. Today through April 8. Free, 10 a.m.-noon; \$5, \$3 for seniors and students, noon-5 p.m.; free for members and children. Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, noon-5 p.m. Route 22 at Jay Street, Katonah, N.Y. 914-232-9555 or www.katonahmuseum.org.

ROWAYTON ARTS CENTER Student/Faculty Exhibit Work by students and teachers. Today through Feb. 4. Opening reception today, 4-6 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, noon-5 p.m.; Sunday, 1-4 p.m. 145 Rowayton Ave. 866-2744.

STAMFORD ART ASSOCIATION Faces and Figures Show Juried exhibit that celebrates and interprets the human form through sculpture, drawings, prints and photography. Today through Feb. 15. Opening reception today, 4-6 p.m. Thursday and Friday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, noon-3 p.m. 39 Franklin St., Stamford. 325-1139 or www.stamfordartassociation.org.

WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY Art and the Good Earth: As Seen

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Movie clock

Any inaccuracies in these listings may be the result of last-minute changes by the movie theaters.
SUNDAY, JAN. 14

BEDFORD, N.Y.

Clearview's Bedford Playhouse, Route 22, 914-234-7300
Night at the Museum: 11:45, 2:15, 4:30, 7, 9:30
Unaccompanied Minors: 1, 3:45, 6:45, 9:45

BETHEL

Bethel Cinema, 269 Greenwood Ave., 778-2100
Notes on a Scandal: 12:10, 2:30 4:50, 7:10, 9:25
The Painted Veil: 1:20, 4:05, 6:50, 9:30
Pan's Labyrinth: 1:30, 4, 7, 9:35
Volver: 1:15, 3:55, 6:40, 9:15

BRIDGEPORT

Showcase Cinemas, 286 Canfield Ave., 339-7171
Alpha Dog: 1:15, 4:15, 7:20, 10
Arthur and the Invisibles: 12:45, 3, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
Blood Diamond: 3:40, 6:40
Casino Royale: 9:15
Charlotte's Web: Noon, 2:20, 4:40, 6:55
Code Name: The Cleaner: 1:25, 9:55
Eragon: 1:20
Freedom Writers: 1, 4, 7, 9:45
Guru: 12:20, 3:25, 6:35, 9:40
Happily N'Ever After: 12:25, 2:40, 4:50, 7:10
Night at the Museum: 12:15, 2:45, 5:15, 7:45, 10:20
Primeval: 12:50, 3:05, 5:25, 7:55, 10:10
The Queen: 1:20, 4:10, 7:05, 9:30
Stomp the Yard: 12:30, 1:30, 3:30, 4:30, 6:50, 7:40, 9:25, 10:15
We Are Marshall: 9:20

DARIEN

Darien Playhouse, 1077 Post Road, 655-7655
Night at the Museum: 1:30, 4, 6:30, 8:45
Pan's Labyrinth: 1, 3:30, 6, 8:15

FAIRFIELD

Community Theatre, 1424 Post Road, 255-6255
Call theater for schedule.
Fairfield Cinemas, 41 Black Rock Turnpike, 339-7151
Children of Men: 1:10, 4:20, 7:30, 10:05
Curse of the Golden Flower: 1, 4, 7:05, 9:45
Dreamgirls: 12:40, 3:35, 7, 10
The Good Shepherd: 12:50, 4:30, 8
Happy Feet: 12:05, 2:15
Notes on a Scandal: 12:20, 2:35, 4:50, 7:15, 9:30
The Painted Veil: 12:30, 3:30 6:40, 9:40
Pan's Labyrinth: 1:30, 4:05, 6:50, 7:45, 9:35, 10:15
Perfume: The Story of a Murderer: 4:35
The Pursuit of Happiness: 1:20, 4:10, 7:20, 10:10

GREENWICH

Clearview's Greenwich Twin, 356 Greenwich Ave., 869-6030
Happy Feet: 1:15
The Pursuit of Happiness: 1, 4, 7, 10
The Queen: 3:30, 6:30, 9:30



© Fox Searchlight Pictures
Cate Blanchett and Judi Dench star in "Notes on a Scandal."

Row Tie Cinemas Plaza 3, 2 Railroad Ave., 869-4030
Letters From Iwo Jima: 1, 4, 7, 10
Little Children: 12:30, 3:30, 7:30, 10:20
Night at the Museum: 12:15, 4:15, 7:20, 9:45

NEW CANAAN

Row Tie Cinemas New Canaan Playhouse, 89 Elm St., 966-0600
The Good Shepherd: 12:30, 4, 7:30
Night at the Museum: 12:45, 3:45, 6:30, 9

NORWALK

Row Tie Cinemas Royale 6, 542 Westport Ave., 846-8797
Arthur and the Invisibles: 1, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 9:50
Blood Diamond: 9:30
Charlotte's Web: 1:15
Children of Men: 2, 5, 7:30, 10
Curse of the Golden Flower: 1:45, 4:15, 7, 9:40
The Good Shepherd: 1, 4:30, 8
Happy Feet: 12:05, 2:15
Notes on a Scandal: 12:20, 2:35, 4:50, 7:15, 9:30
The Painted Veil: 12:30, 3:30 6:40, 9:40
Pan's Labyrinth: 1:30, 4:05, 6:50, 7:45, 9:35, 10:15
Perfume: The Story of a Murderer: 4:35
The Pursuit of Happiness: 1:20, 4:10, 7:20, 10:10

Row Tie Cinemas SoNo Regent, 64 N. Main St., 899-7979
Call theater for schedule.

Garden Cinemas, 26 Isaac St., 838-4504
Notes on a Scandal: 2:30, 4:40, 7, 9
The Painted Veil: 1:15, 3:45, 6:20, 8:50
Pan's Labyrinth: 1:30, 4, 6:40, 9
Perfume: The Story of a Murderer: 1:10
Volver: 4, 6:30, 9
IMAX Theater at Maritime Aquarium, 10 N. Water St., 852-0700
Hurricane on the Bayou: 11, 1, 3, 4, 7:30
Ocean Wonderland: 2
Whales: Noon

PLEASANTVILLE, N.Y.

Jacob Burns Film Center, 364 Manville

Road, 914-747-5555
The Painted Veil: 12:10, 2:40, 5:10, 7:45, 10:15
Pan's Labyrinth: 12:05, 2:30, 5, 7:30, 9:55
The Rules of the Game: 2:15, 4:30, 7:30, 9:45
The Three Lives of Thomasina: Noon

PORT CHESTER, N.Y.

Loews The Waterfront at Port Chester, 40 Westchester Ave., 914-510-1000
Alpha Dog: 10:35, 1:40, 4:45, 7:30, 10:35
Arthur and the Invisibles: 11:15, 1:45, 4:10, 7:05, 9:30
Blood Diamond: 7
Charlotte's Web: 11:20, 2:05, 4:35
The Children of Men: 11:10, 1:50, 4:40, 7:35, 10:25
Code Name: The Cleaner: 10:20
Curse of the Golden Flower: Fri/Sat/Sun: 10:45, 1:20, 4, 6:55, 9:45
Dreamgirls: 10:30, 1:30, 4:30, 7:45, 10:45
Eragon: 9:55
Freedom Writers: 10:50, 1:45, 4:15, 7:10, 10:10
The Good Shepherd: 11, 2:45, 6:30, 10:05
Happily N'Ever After: 11:55, 2:35, 5:05, 7:40
Night at the Museum: 10:55, 1:35, 4:20, 7:15, 9:50
Primeval: 12:30, 3, 5:45, 8:15, 10:50
The Pursuit of Happiness: 10:35, 1:25, 4:25, 7:25, 10:15
Rocky Balboa: 11:50, 2:30, 5:15, 8:05, 10:30
Stomp the Yard: 11:30, 2:15, 5, 8, 10:40

RYE BROOK, N.Y.

Clearview's Rye Ridge Cinemas, Rye Ridge Shopping Center, 914-939-8177
Babel: 4:45, 8:30
Perfume: The Story of a Murderer: 1:30
The Queen: 12, 2:30, 5, 7:30, 9:50

STAMFORD

Avon Theatre, 272 Bedford St., 967-3660
Notes on a Scandal: 12:50, 3, 5:10, 7:20
The Painted Veil: 1:45, 4:30, 7:05
Row Tie Cinemas Landmark 9, 5 Landmark Square, 324-3100
Alpha Dog: 1, 4:30, 7:30, 10:05
Arthur and the Invisibles: 12:40, 2:50, 5, 7:10, 9:15
Casino Royale: 9:20
Code Name: The Cleaner: 12:35, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15
Dreamgirls: 1:10, 4:10, 7, 9:50
Happily N'Ever After: 12:30, 2:35, 4:35, 6:50
Happy Feet: 1:40
Perfume: The Story of a Murderer: 9:30

Primeval: 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10
The Pursuit of Happiness: 1:30, 4:20, 7:20, 9:55
Rocky Balboa: 4, 6:30, 9
Stomp the Yard: 2, 4:40, 7:40, 10:10
Row Tie Cinemas Majestic, 118 Summer St., 323-1690
Blood Diamond: 7, 10:15
Charlotte's Web: 1, 4
Children of Men: 1:45, 4:45, 7:45, 10:10
Curse of the Golden Flower: 1:30, 4:15, 7:15, 9:55
Freedom Writers: 1:15, 4:30, 7:30, 10
The Good Shepherd: 12:45, 4:30, 8
Night at the Museum: 12:30, 3:45, 6:45, 9:15
State Cinema, 990 Hope St., 325-0250
Babel: 1:30, 8:30
The Departed: 4:45, 7:45
The Holiday: 2
The Queen: 4:20, 6:30

TRUMBULL

Row Tie Cinemas Marquis 16, 100 Quarry Road, 365-6500
Alpha Dog: 1:20, 4, 7:20, 10:20
Arthur and the Invisibles: Noon, 2:30, 5, 7:20, 9:30
Blood Diamond: 3:10, 9:10
Charlotte's Web: 1:20
Children of Men: 1:30, 4:20, 7, 9:30
Code Name: The Cleaner: 4:45, 8, 10:20
Curse of the Golden Flower: 1, 3:45, 7, 9:40
Dreamgirls: 12:45, 4, 7:10, 10
Eragon: 12:45, 3:20, 6:30
Freedom Writers: 1:10, 4:10, 7:10, 9:50
The Good Shepherd: 1, 4:30, 8
Happily N'Ever After: 12:10, 2:20, 4:30, 6:45
Happy Feet: 1:40
The Holiday: 9
Night at the Museum: Noon, 2:40, 5:10, 7:40, 10:10
Perfume: The Story of a Murderer: 9
Primeval: 12:20, 2:40, 5:10, 7:30, 9:45
The Pursuit of Happiness: 1:10, 3:40, 6:50, 9:20
Rocky Balboa: 4:10, 6:40, 9:10
Stomp the Yard: 1:30, 4:20, 7:20, 10:10
We Are Marshall: 12:30, 6:30

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y.

City Center 15 Cinema de Lux, 19 Mamaroneck Ave., 914-747-6000
Alpha Dog: 1:05, 3:55, 6:45, 9:25, 12:25
Arthur and the Invisibles: 12:05, 2:15, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10, 11:20
Blood Diamond: 9:05, 12:05
Charlotte's Web: 12:20
Children of Men: 1:30, 4:20, 6:55, 9:50, 12:20
Code Name: The Cleaner: 12:15
Dreamgirls: 12:50, 4:05, 7:15, 10:10

Freedom Writers: 1:15, 4:10, 7:10, 10, 12:40
The Good Shepherd: 2:35, 6:30, 10:15
Happily N'Ever After: 12, 2:10, 4:25, 7
My Little Pony: A Very Pony Place: 10
Night at the Museum: 3, 5:25, 7:50, 10:20, 12:45
Notes on a Scandal: 12:10, 2:20, 4:40, 7:05, 9:20, 11:30
Pan's Labyrinth: 1, 4, 6:40, 9:40, 12:15
Primeval: 12:30, 2:45, 5:05, 7:30, 9:55, 12:05
The Pursuit of Happiness: 12:45, 3:45, 6:35, 9:15, 11:50
Rocky Balboa: 12:05, 2:25, 4:45, 7:40, 10:20, 12:30
Stomp the Yard: 1:40, 4:35, 7:20, 10:05, 12:35

WILTON

Row Tie Cinemas Wilton 4, 21 River Road, 761-0767
Casino Royal: 8:30
Charlotte's Web: 11:55 a.m.
Happily N'Ever After: Noon, 2, 4:10, 6:15
Night at the Museum: 12:10, 3:45, 6:45, 9:30
The Pursuit of Happiness: 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 9:45
The Queen: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9

Faces

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As juror of the "Faces and Figures" exhibit, she steps from wall to wall, up the stairs and down again, occasionally handling a frame, deciding which of the submitted works will remain as finalists in the fourth annual show, opening today.

"In the early sorting, I'm looking for technical ability," says Portell. "After that, I like originality, a fresh voice. If I can recognize an artist's hand, I like to see a little stretch, something new, with a little daring. If it's (by) someone older and more established, I like to see a little growth."

A handful of gallery volunteers and board members watch Portell as she turns selected frames toward the wall, apparently rejecting them from the competition. They whisper among themselves about the works that remain.

"Capturing the human figure is a rewarding experience," says SAA president Christine Irvin. "No two figures are alike and no face an unchanging subject."

"It requires an equal measure of creative energy and technical skills. The slightest change in posture or expression inspires a new artistic creation." After more than hour, during what Portell calls her "final walk-through," she changes her mind and turns back a painting she had earlier rejected and includes it among the 57 pieces that ultimately make the show.

"Jurors are instructed to pick high-quality work, what is believed the most excellent and still fits the theme," explains Irvin.

Because the theme is purposefully literal, artists are allowed to interpret the face and the figure any way they like. What results is a rich and varied collection of mostly representational works that pay tribute to the human form.

"Artists and visitors alike should remember that an exhibition is more than a sum of individual artworks," says Portell in her juror's statement. "It is supposed to be well-rounded. If the pursuit of and appreciation of multiple art forms is to be encouraged, an exhibition should at least include several of them."

Irvin says the collective impact of the works shown today through Feb. 15 is legitimized further by hiding artist information from Portell until she has completed her judging.

"The anonymity provides her the freedom to pick works, not artists," she adds.

Before Portell decides the show's winners, she voices concern that her decision to reject any given work will discour-

age the artist to whom the piece belongs.

"Every juror has his or her own biases," she begins. "Reviewers and critics are invested with this magical authority that unfortunately discourages what could be great work."

To Portell, the best criticism should come from trusted and respected fellow artists who know an artist's body of work and value it as a collection.

"Only that can offer true insight into an artist's strengths and weaknesses," she says.

Accordingly, failure to make it into the show is not a reflection of poor work, she adds, only her biases as a judge under specific instructions from the SAA.

"Art is for self-expression and that small painting, sculpture, photograph or mixed-media work that 'did not make it' may turn out to be the gem that best signals who you are, eclipsing all others," she says later in her statement.

"I am ready to announce Best in Show," says Portell to the waiting group, a couple with cell phones in hand.

Among the first calls was one to Stamford's Heidi Lewis Coleman, who screamed when she heard that her "Self-Portrait Diptych," acrylic and shredded paper on canvas, had won this year's "Face and Figures" competition.

"The quality of this piece is extraordinary, a very original technique," says Sary Backer, an SAA member and sculptor whose "Torso" received third place. "By shredding the paper in the second portrait, she has deconstructed her image but held it together at the same time. Very avant-garde."

In Coleman's piece, the two portraits, one intact, the other meticulously shredded and re-assembled, serve to give contrasting impressions of the artist, one more unforgetting yet intimate, the other more distant, emotionless. Side by side, the impressions are effectively emphasized further.

"The shredding technique I used in this piece, I've used for years, but in the abstract," says Coleman. "The shredding, I think, introduces this energy and vibrancy. So I started to consider the possibility of using it in a self-portrait."

To step away from her abstract approach, Coleman says, was a risky artistic move, but she liked the idea of trying.

"I was going through a difficult personal time and the idea of taking my face, shredding it and reassembling it was interesting because it was indicative of some of the personal transformation I was going through," she explains. "It was almost like breaking down the old me and reassembling the pieces into a

Play

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Vassos Gallery, a large, light airy space that brings the paintings alive and lets them reverberate with their own music. Sharp, no stranger to Silvermine, is a longtime Guild member and teacher in the Silvermine School of Art. Her paintings have been exhibited in museums and galleries throughout the country. In 2001, she received a top grant in painting from the Connecticut Commission on the Arts and participated in a winners' exhibition at the Connecticut Commission Gallery in Hartford. That same year, she had a solo exhibition

at the Housatonic Museum, and her painting "Merge," a key piece in the exhibition, is now in the permanent collection of the state Superior Courthouse in Stamford.

"Four/Play," works by artist Susan Sharp, will be on view at the Silvermine Guild Arts Center, 1037 Silvermine Road, New Canaan, through Feb. 4. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m. Sharp will discuss work in her exhibition in the Luncheon at Silvermine program Jan. 24 at noon. 966-9700, www.silvermineart.org.