

Mixed-media sculpture takes 1st place in Silvermine competition

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Three artists have won top billing in the Art of the Northeast regional art competition run by the [Silvermine Art Guild](#) in New Canaan. For 61 years, the competition has been attracting artists in states across the Northeast.



Best in show: Joseph Saccio from North Haven, CT for "*Flowers for Duchamp*" mixed media 6' x 5' x 28"

A mixed-media sculpture by [Joseph Saccio](#), a guild member living in North Haven, won first place for "Best in Show." Titled "Flowers for Duchamp," the piece pays homage to [Marcel Duchamp](#) (1887 -1968), the French-American surrealist. Saccio says his piece was inspired by Duchamp's paintings of a Chocolate Grinder. This fun, 6-foot work sports mocha-colored, pleated cylinders, incongruently wrapped around a large tree branch. The cylinders are precariously angled and play off one another, with green sprigs "sprouting" from joints between cylinders and branches.

The "2nd Place Trustee Award" was awarded to Sergio Gonzalez-Tornero, from Mahopac, N.Y., for his oil painting "Tasuu." This abstract red-and-white painting is sharp-edged and reverberates off the canvas, like a musical chord punched out by orchestral brass. While the masses of red and white clash over their respective places on the canvas, within their borders is a gritty, hectic textural conversation creating a dense ooze.

Winning third place is an abstract expressionist monotype print, "Prized Blade," by [Tom Bennet](#) from Brooklyn, N.Y. The dark, somber print shows a man



2nd Place Trustee Award: Sergio Gonzalez-Tornero from Mahopac, NY for "*Tasuu*" oil on canvas 46.5" x 46.5"

fallen back in repose, looking off to the side, away from the viewer. A startlingly white leg is propped up amid a rush of dark, watery surfaces floating over his torso. The



3rd Place: Tom Bennett from Brooklyn, NY with "Prized Blade" monotype, 27" x 33"

dominance of black and white is broken up by small organic wells of fleshy pinks and maroons. Bennet says that the medium of the monotype "lends itself to spontaneity and an intuitive approach to art-making." A total of 392 artists entered some 846 pieces into the competition. The works were mixed media, drawing, painting, photography, sculpture and printing. Forty-seven artists were accepted into the competition and 64 pieces are in the Art of the Northeast exhibit (some artists have two pieces in the show).

Most entries were paintings and mixed media. Eight cash awards ranged from \$200 to \$1,600. Of the 249 Connecticut artists that submitted work, 28 were accepted and 92 New York artists submitted work, of which 13 were accepted. Artist submissions also came from Vermont, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont.

The competition was juried by [Katie Rashid](#), director of the Jack Shainman Gallery in New York City. Rashid is known for curating many high-profile exhibitions at the Jack Shainman Gallery, as well as for Documenta, the Venice Biennale, and the Whitney Biennale. Gallery director [Jeffrey Mueller](#) says Rashid selected work for Silvermine's competition that reflects the diverse range of today's art.

"In a time where there are truly no dominating trends, Ms. Rashid has done a great job of distilling some of the trends we are seeing artists engaging with today: geometric abstraction, a return/exploration of craft arts, and surrealist influenced imagery." Rashid chose semi-finalists first after reviewing digital images for about 10 days. Artists making the first cut had to bring their actual work to the Silvermine Gallery so Rashid could make her final selection.

The juried competition/exhibition will run through June 11. Silvermine Galleries, 1037 Silvermine Road, New Canaan, are open Wednesday through Saturday, noon to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. For more information, visit www.silvermineart.org