



CANCER NEVER HAD ME

VIEWS BY ARTISTS

September 14 through November 8, 2020



Hillstrom Museum of Art



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ON THE COVER

Kory Kolis

The Woman with the Golden Blood: A Portrait of My Mother, 2020

Watercolor, tissue paper, and beeswax on plywood, 20 x 24 inches

gustavus.edu/finearts/hillstrom

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CANCER NEVER HAD ME

JUROR'S STATEMENT

It was my great pleasure, indeed honor, to be asked to judge the Hillstrom Museum of Art's exhibition *Cancer Never Had Me: Views by Artists*. The reviewing of the 45 submitted works by 33 artists was a most moving experience in which to see the ways contemporary artists interpret their fears and hopes associated with this dreaded disease.

Cancer is a universal human experience. It touches almost everyone, either personally, or a loved one: a spouse, family, and friends. For many, cancer is one of the most dreaded diagnoses in their lifetime. And for good reason—often you don't feel it, you don't see it, and life changes forever. Cancer also produces universal human emotions: shock and denial, fear and anxiety, guilt and anger. Art, and the various creative processes, can help make sense of these many mixed emotions. It can also assist in the progress of healing, and provide needed hope.

The submitted works display a wide range of creative techniques: painting, printmaking, photography, collage, mixed media, fiber work; and use an array of materials: acrylic and oil paints, inks, watercolor, handmade papers, found objects, and textiles. All of the artists in this exhibition have been affected profoundly by cancer, but out of the excruciating ordeal is born incredible beauty and the affirmation of hope and life. Cancer never had these artists.

I wish to thank Donald Myers, Director, Hillstrom Museum of Art, Gustavus Adolphus College, for inviting me to be the juror for this exhibition.

Gregory Jecmen

Former Associate Curator of Old Master Prints and Drawings and Print Room Supervisor
National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The Hillstrom Museum of Art is pleased to present this moving exhibition, *Cancer Never Had Me: Views by Artists*. Any artist 18 years or older affected directly or indirectly by cancer was welcome to submit one or two artworks dating from 2000 or later that address cancer in some meaningful way, for consideration by exhibition juror Gregory Jecmen.

As Jecmen notes in his Juror's Statement, cancer affects nearly everyone. The multivalent and highly-prevalent disease is the subject of the 2020 Nobel Conference at Gustavus Adolphus College, "Cancer in the Age of Biotechnology." *Cancer Never Had Me*, and a concurrent exhibit titled *Artists Who Had Cancer: Works from the Hillstrom and Shogren-Meyer Collections*, are presented in conjunction with the Nobel Conference.

As juror, Jecmen was asked to award a First, Second, Third, and Fourth Prize. Jecmen's comments on these four works are included adjacent to the texts by their artists. First Prize was awarded to artist Sandra Menefee Taylor for her 2015 work *The Artist and the Surgeon*; Second Prize was awarded to artist Jane Savage Horton for her 2020 work *Mammogram*; Third Prize was awarded to artist Mary Gitter-Zehnder for her 2018 work *Altered Suns*; Fourth Prize was awarded to artist Toni Bennett Easterson for her 2020 work *When*.

Four Honorable Mentions were also selected by Jecmen. These, in alphabetical order by artist surname, were awarded to Paula Eickman Kennedy for her 2020 work *What Gets Us Through*; Kory Kolis for his 2020 work *The Woman with the Golden Blood: A Portrait of My Mother*; Joni D. Myers for her 2010 work *It's one of three things and all of them are terrible*; and James Quentin Young for his 2017 work *Good as Gold*.

The Museum congratulates all the artists whose works were selected for *Cancer Never Had Me*, including those whose works were singled out for special recognition. We thank all the artists for their participation, and for sharing their works and their experiences, which they had the opportunity to describe in their individual artist statements and in the object texts associated with their particular artworks.

We thank juror Gregory Jecmen for his professional, painstaking, and sensitive consideration of all the works submitted, and for his careful process of selecting works for prizes and honorable mention. We also thank him for his willingness to come to campus for an opening reception of the exhibit had it not been canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This exhibit, and the related concurrent exhibit *Artists Who Had Cancer: Works from the Hillstrom and Shogren-Meyer Collections*, is presented in support of all who are currently facing cancer and in memory of those who succumbed to the disease, and in honor of all of them. Personally, I dedicate my work for the exhibits in honor of my wife Joni and in memory of my sister Kaycee.

Donald Myers
Director
Hillstrom Museum of Art

CANCER NEVER HAD ME

SHRADHA TAILOR AHMED

My current work focuses on the meditative and therapeutic process of art specifically as a means of enhancing personal emotional well-being. Departing from elaborate creative endeavors requiring large amounts of time, space, or material, experiences are created with items that are easily available as well as portable.

Shradha Tailor Ahmed
Hodgkin's 238: The Quest for Serenity and Order, 2020
Mixed media, 42 x 51 inches

Early in 2020, I was diagnosed with stage-two Hodgkin's Lymphoma. *Hodgkin's 238: The Quest for Serenity and Order* represents the culmination of 238 days of my journey from diagnosis through treatment on many levels. Whether at home or at chemotherapy, my therapeutic drawing was my unwavering companion when my mind and body needed to quell the chaos it constantly felt. 238 squares come together. Each square is different as each day, yet, when combined, interweave moments of strength, weakness, being overwhelmed, boredom, exasperation, the need for vitality... The fluidity of the ink as well as the repetitive designs were a source of great soothing and much-needed grounding.



PATRICIA BECKMANN

I have been doing multi-media two-dimensional works for years, beginning with simple paper constructions and moving to complex abstract arrangements. A few years ago, I began incorporating collage skills with various paints and ink for more semi-realistic imagery on the theme of Eden. Eden, not as a desired haven, but rather a mixed garden of good and evil. It has been an interesting and very personal adventure.

Patricia Beckmann
In the Valley of Eden, 2018
Watercolor and acrylic paint, ink, paper collage, 21 x 26 inches

Cancer has deeply affected my life. Some years ago, the Mayo Clinic in Rochester removed an un-ulcerated melanoma from me, but my younger brother was not as fortunate. Besides being a professional psychologist and author, he was a world class Ironman and athlete. Although he wore sunscreen and protective clothing, he forgot the small space of skin on the back of his neck, below his hairline. His journey after diagnosis was heroic but eventually he lost his final race. In *In the Valley of Eden* I have attempted to illustrate the runner, still erect, still moving forward, when others have lost their way.



SHELLEY BEAUMONT

Childhood memories of living in the mountains of Colorado, astrology, tarot, quantum energy, sacred geometry, a love of rocks, and an interest in the mysteries of ancient civilizations swirl together to create the playing ground for my inspirations. I adore working with crystals and gemstones, both for their beauty and their energetic properties. I create art that has an energy field that interacts with the energy field of the viewer. I create all of my work by starting with a color or vibration/energy I want to explore, then work the design and materials into a voice and energy field. I incorporate mirror, either as an obvious reflecting element, or as a hidden reflective quality. The color, design, and materials of each piece are infused with metaphysical intent to weave layers of meaning and function into each piece.



Shelley Beaumont
I am Radiant, Beautiful, and Strong, 2018
 Glass, mirror, gemstones, and copper, 22 x 22 inches

I adore the chakra system as a tool to create affirmation mirrors. In this mirror, I use the energy of orange (sacral chakra) and blue (throat chakra). The sacral chakra is the second energy center of the body and is the center of feeling, emotion, pleasure, sensuality, and intimacy. The throat chakra is the center for communicating, and listening. I like the balance of speaking your truth when affirming your emotions, your pleasures, your sensuality, etc. The metaphysical properties weaved into this piece are surrounded by copper, a wonderful conduit of positive energy. Enjoy the protection, vitality, and stability of carnelian; the intuition, harmony, and problem solving of apatite; and the self-expression, attunement, and balance of kyanite. These energies all work together for powerful grounding on oneself and will remind the viewer that they are radiant, beautiful, and strong.

Shelley Beaumont
Life Loves Me, 2019
 Glass, mirror, gemstones, and copper, 18 x 18 inches

Louise Hay, a motivational author, was fond of saying “Life loves me!” I took her amazing affirmation and created a mirror to represent the heart chakra, the center of the body and most important energy center for life and love. Green, the color of the heart energy center, represents growth, life, and balance. The pink is to remind you to love yourself, and represents love. The lotus flower has many spiritual meanings, but for this mirror, it is to represent beauty of self-love. Enjoy the love radiating from the rose quartz, the green tourmaline to heal and strengthen the heart, and copper, my favorite conduit of positive energy. When looking into the mirror, it is easy to remember that “Life Loves Me.”



CANCER NEVER HAD ME

SUSAN BOECHER

For over 40 years, I have created photographs that examine the nuances and complexities of personal, social, and political issues in a way that enables me to understand self, my role as an artist, and how I fit into the world. With an interest to explore the intersection between photography, psychology, and social research, I create photographs that prompt questions, weave narratives, investigate complex issues, and foster dialogue. Vacillating between an exploration of inner personal challenges and investigations into the nuances of social constructs, my photography examines perception, race, inequity, biases, and human interaction using love, loss, hope, despair, and contradiction as themes.

Susan Boecher
The Mask, 2017

Archival digital color print on DiBond paper, 30 x 40 inches

In November 2017 after my husband's unexpected death and a series of declining health issues, I was diagnosed with small-cell lung cancer, a value-laden cancer that accounts for approximately one in four cancer deaths annually. Because social issues and personal experience have always guided my creative work, I knew I had to use my diagnosis as inspiration and create to a new body of work. Using my cancer diagnosis as inspiration I created *NOW*, a body of work that uses photography and three-dimensional pieces to present a perspective on cancer that is direct, investigative, and confrontational, and that can also be viewed as contemporary, playful, and humorous. *The Mask* is a large-scale color self-portrait taken after a radiation treatment.



Susan Boecher
Who Am I?, 2017

Archival digital color print on DiBond paper, 20 x 24 inches

Who Am I? is a digital color print taken from a series of self-portraits I created to examine the physical encounters after a cancer diagnosis in 2017. As an artist, I used the diagnosis to create a series of self-portraits that examined the changes and challenges I encountered during a series of chemotherapy and radiation therapies. The prints were a means to confront, analyze, and challenge the physical changes encountered during treatment. Culled from a series of 20 photographs, these self-portraits were an attempt to help me more fully understand the physical and emotional challenges I experienced while in treatment.



VIENNA (VIN) BRANOM

I am a 20-year-old artist from the Twin Cities and am a sophomore majoring in art and communication studies at Gustavus Adolphus College. I create art in order to share how I experience my thoughts and memories as someone with autism and aphantasia (the inability of the brain to create visual images). My preferred medium is painting (any kind) and digital drawing. I am inspired greatly by the Fauvist Movement and love working with color to express the way I feel and perceive the world around me. One of my favorite things to experiment with using color is the intricacies of the human form and expression, since I cannot process expressions with thoughts alone. I hope to make work that is not only visually appealing but also thought-provoking about different types of cognition like memory and perception.

Vienna (Vin) Branom
i stopped recognizing my mirror a few months ago, 2020

Acrylic on canvas, 14 x 11 inches

This painting is inspired by a conversation I had. When I talked to my aunt who is currently fighting cancer, I remembered something she said that stuck out to me. She told me she stopped recognizing her mirror a few months ago. She also went on to explain how weird of a process it was to watch yourself morph into someone or something else, and how she felt like she was almost becoming a part of nature. This stuck out to me because, from my perspective, she looked exactly the same. I wonder what she saw.



Vienna (Vin) Branom
i used to connect my moles with sharpie like connect the dots, 2020

Acrylic on canvas, 22 x 16 inches

This painting is linked to my childhood activity and what I know now. When I was younger I used to connect my many, many moles with a Sharpie, like playing connect the dots. I had no idea what moles were or what they meant, but I knew that they were fun to play with when I was bored. Now that I'm older and I have found out I have Familial Atypical Multiple Mole Melanoma Syndrome (FAMMM), the moles are actually kind of scary. I think it's kind of interesting to look back on when I would connect them with markers and imagine I was drawing a little lifeline for myself despite a scary situation.



CANCER NEVER HAD ME

MADELINE CAMPBELL

Using paint allowed for a more fluid and ever-changing approach to this topic. Just like with facing the struggles of cancer or watching someone else go through it, there are emotional ups and downs. Through paint emotion is born.

Madeline Campbell
Breast Cancer Beast, 2020
Acrylic and pencil on canvas,
12 x 16 inches

My piece titled *Breast Cancer Beast* is dedicated to my grandmother, who went through the battle of breast cancer. I made cancer a beast defeated by the chemotherapy the nurse uses to take cancer down.



Madeline Campbell
I Can Still Do It, 2020
Acrylic and watercolor on canvas,
24 x 20 inches

I Can Still Do It suggests that even with cancer, we can still have our strength and courage to get through the fight. This piece is for self-positivity, as shown with the woman's confident stature.



MANUEL DIONISIO CASTILLO

Lately my photography explores the abstraction I can extract or add to one or more simple objects. A key path to such an image is its experience as an altered state. My goal is to usher the viewer towards wonder. Visual training for the last decade has been through critiques, informal mentoring, and suggested readings offered by Minneapolis College of Art and Design professors and several seasoned photographers.

Manuel Dionisio Castillo

***Resolve*, 2019**

Digital photography printed on Hannemuhler fine art paper, 25 x 17 inches

There have been four cancer diagnoses in my family. My wife's stage-three breast cancer, my father's two times of throat cancer, and my skin cancer. Receiving the diagnosis of cancer is a punch to the solar plexus. Your breath is gone. The photograph not only represents the pain of the diagnosis but the resolve of cancer patients to be cured. After six months of attending my wife's chemotherapy treatment, this resolve was evident.



GINA DABROWSKI

From 2007 to present, I have created portraits at women-only music festivals throughout the U.S. Created as a communal space for women only, there is a broad diversity of age, class, and race inside this temporary community where individuality is played out at the various campsites throughout the land. I document my subjects surrounded by the collection of things they have brought to build a temporary home in a shared environment. Women feel safe and comfortable with their bodies and eager to talk about their personal experiences, like cancer, body reconstruction, or the personal challenges they face outside of an all-female environment. Using a large format camera to capture the details within the frame, I carefully consider my subjects and the objects that surround them. The resulting photographs provide the viewer an opportunity to experience these intimate moments that are devoid of male authority.



Gina Dabrowski

***Three Friends*, 2018**

Type C photograph, 14 ½ x 18 inches

Three friends hang out at a pop-up camper during the Savanna Moon Celebration in Pepin, Wisconsin. Kathy is a four-time cancer survivor. She and her friends Joni and Gale attended the Michigan Women's Music Festival together and continue to meet up at music festivals throughout the United States.

CANCER NEVER HAD ME

GIGI DEGROOD

I paint to shatter reality. To make viewers question everything they know. As a society, our health and well-being continues to suffer from over consumption, stress, and resource depletion. We are addicted to media, fast food, and fossil fuels. We share a sense of unease that perhaps our way of life is neither sustainable or fulfilling. However, at the same time, we are under the impression that a healthier reality is unrealistic. My paintings exist in this realm between society, imagination, and perception. In my work, I employ highly-saturated colors in swirling motions to create a sense of rhythm and direction. The bright, intense hues put the viewers in a hypnotic state as colors dance before their eyes. I want viewers to question if our perception of life has more potential than we thought and wonder if change can ever happen. Our society is in a constant state of war to make the world a better place. We advocate for peace and justice, yet authorities don't listen to our cries. I paint to answer a question: is change realistic, or merely symbolic?

Gigi deGrood

No Cause to Mourn, 2020

Acrylic on Canvas, 48 x 36 inches

Cancer is a disease caused by abnormal cell growth. There are many types of cancer, and while there is still no cure, there are many ways to treat it. Cancer is not something people enjoy discussing. Perhaps because it is the thing some of us fear the most. However, this is not how I see it. Cancer has affected many people that I know, and among those people is my father. He has stage-four bladder cancer, and despite it all, he never complains. What I've learned from my dad is the secret to beating cancer is to not fear cancer. Many people that have been affected by cancer will tell you it's taught them to become a better version of themselves with a better outlook on life. In this painting, I employ a distorted illustration of cells. I randomly dispersed shapes and textures to create a feeling of chaos. Contrasting with the chaotic energy is a lively color palette that creates a sense of innocence and whimsy. This painting depicts every aspect of cancer: messy, uncomfortable, overwhelming, confusing, yet happy. I want viewers to view cancer like they do this painting. *No Cause to Mourn* is just a jumbled up, playful array of shapes, textures, and colors.



MARTIN DEWITT

My studio practice continues to evolve with exploration of the synesthetic potential of abstraction in painting. Inspired by the collective energies of nature and its molecular syncopation with the human condition, for me the painting process is a form of expression that has the potential to generate a formidable intellectual, physical, and emotional response to a shared experience. Also, I am exploring the visual potential of digitally created and altered imagery, scrambled, layered, printed, and painted directly into—repurposing new and previously-created paintings, photographs, and art installations as visual resources to explore hybrid and multi-generational expressions. I hope to develop an orchestration of visual elements of color, light, space, texture, and surface evolution. This work is informed by place, a precious moment in time that offers a reconnection power—like a haiku or a Wassily Kandinsky painting. For more info, please see www.martindewittfinearts.com.



Martin DeWitt

Common Origins - color spatial refraction, 2020
Mixed media with altered digital image, latex enamel, and acrylic on stretched canvas, 48 x 36 inches

Martin DeWitt

Common Origins II - color spatial refraction, 2020
Mixed media with altered digital image, latex enamel, and acrylic on stretched canvas, 48 x 36 inches

We share an incredibly complicated physiological network, internal and external forces, seen and unseen energies essential to our common origins and vital for well-being as well as for our collective and resilient human condition. This series of paintings, *Common Origins*, is inspired by my traumatic cancer experience, extraordinary cancer care at Mayo Clinic, successful surgery, chemo/radiation treatments, and my recovery process...today I am cancer free to date, a survivor of both HPV1 and prostate cancers diagnosed concurrently in 2018. Celebrating each day, I remain steadfast in my focus for optimal health and well-being driven by family and friends' love and support, the wonders of Western and Eastern medicine, yoga/hiking, anti-inflammatory foods, and the creative process as a form of meditation. In these paintings titled *Common Origins*, the physical and emotional art-making process embody a holistic approach to healing, the essence of which begins at the molecular and archetypal levels, body and soul.



CANCER NEVER HAD ME

TONI BENNETT EASTERSON

Trained as a graphic designer and working at an advertising/design studio in Connecticut for many years, I became interested in fiber and textile work only after moving to Minnesota and visiting the Textile Center in Minneapolis. It was that visit which opened my eyes to the unappreciated work of my Native American grandmother and my paternal aunts. It gave legitimacy, and power, to the needle and thread that felt so easy in my hands. I still paint and draw, make collages and prints, but stitching has found its way to my painted surfaces and among my drawn lines. It changes colors for me, it ties images together. It allows me to think with my hands. A cancer diagnosis creates huge anxiety for an individual, and anxiety for those who love that individual, an anxiety that for me was, and still is, eased by working with my hands.



Toni Bennett Easterson

When, 2020

Fiber mixed media, 26 ¾ x 20 ¾ inches

Below are the first few lines of the poem called Yellow Sweater, written when I was in graduate school, writing that explains this piece.

When my mother was diagnosed
I purchased yarn to knit a sweater,
yellow, like the filling sweet beneath meringue
but tart enough to hold my restless hands.
And if, I reasoned with an adolescent heart,
things could be reversed, controlled,
I would be forgiven by a sweater knit so fine...

This piece relates to my mother's cancer in a very personal way: my Swedish mother loved the colors yellow and blue, and she loved birds and gardens. And she, and my maternal grandmother, kept button boxes, which I played with as a small girl. On a broader, more universal level, there is mystery and foreboding in the print background. As there is white space without stitching, those empty areas might represent questions that are not answered. Also, in Native art, birds represent both life and death. In flight, they represent freedom and the impossible. My mom was diagnosed with cancer when I was in college. The poem about the sweater was written a few years later when I was in graduate school and the fiber piece completed only weeks ago with years of knowledge, love and artistic growth incorporated into its making. All stitching and beading was hand-done on an old print. All the bits and pieces of fabric once had other uses.

JUROR'S FOURTH PRIZE AWARD

Easterson adroitly interweaves an abundance of personal references in this mixed media work which memorializes her mother's cancer. I find the work a masterful compilation of multiple references to the artist's family history and ancestry, from the predominant colors of yellow and blue (her mother's favorite), to the beading and stitch work referring to the handiwork of the artist's Native American maternal grandmother.

— Gregory Jecmen, Juror

Toni Bennett Easterson

Molly, Peggy, Mo, Kirsten, Holly, etc, 2020

Mixed media, including fiber and empty thread spools, 15 inches maximum height and width

In the early 1990s women started wearing pink bracelets to support family and friends who were struggling with breast cancer. Wearing a pink bracelet was a badge of love and caring. Having various empty thread spools, and left over pink fabric, on hand, and using armature wire from another project, I created a "necklace" as opposed to a bracelet to represent some of the women I know well who have been diagnosed with breast cancer. Each spool being a different fabric and quilted, adorned with beads etc. As to how this piece represents cancer, the spools are all individual. As each woman and her illness are all individual. Although controversial, pink, like the various pinks used in this work, has become the color of breast cancer awareness. The piece can also be bent and arranged into many different attitudes. Like cancer, it can change and change our way of looking at things.



JUDITH FORSTER

I am best known for whimsical acrylics on canvas with accompanying smile-inducing titles. The human condition of women and men interacting is rendered in gentle humor. Occasional abstracts, sculptures made from found objects, and mirthful clay figures are part of the mix. My focus is creating interesting, engaging, colorful art.

Judith Forster

Kathleen, 2020

Acrylic on canvas, 16 x 20 inches

A dear friend's beloved wife (quilter extraordinaire) of 50 years died from blood cancer in April 2016, with her body being donated to the U of M Medical School. When the healing widower was periodically asked if the ashes had been returned by the school, he would reply, "She's still teaching."



GRACE ELAINE GALVIN

My love of art began at age three while supposedly taking a nap. I found a nail on the floor and discovered I could scratch a design on the dark stained dresser in the hall, and I was an artist from that day on. I have graduated from nail designs on the dresser to developing a love for any medium that I can use to produce art, but I especially love watercolor. My love of art, plus my artist friends, were an encouragement to me after I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2000. I went through surgery, chemo, and radiation, and after meeting several other breast cancer survivors, I decided we needed a name: BREAST FRIENDS. I am pleased that I can be here 20 years later to submit my work depicting *BREAST FRIENDS*.

Grace Elaine Galvin

BREAST FRIENDS, 2020

Acrylic and marker on canvas, 12 x 12 inches

Breast Cancer is no respecter of persons regardless of age, color, gender, size, or status. Its cruel fingers creep into your life when you are unaware then manifests itself suddenly like a massive explosion. How wonderful it is to live at a time with good treatments that may leave you with one breast, no breasts, smaller breast, lopsided breasts, or artificial breasts. I have chosen to use acrylic in my painting because it makes a bold statement. I use orange as a background to express my triumph over this disease; it makes me feel both anger and victory. Please notice I have assigned a treatment/outcome for each breast friend in my painting. LIFE IS SO GOOD.



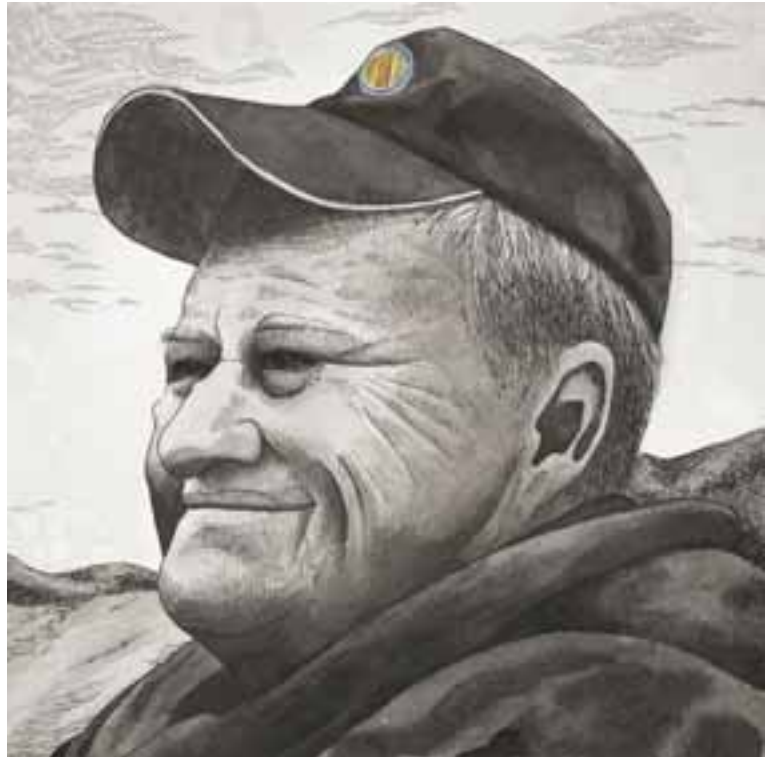
CANCER NEVER HAD ME

BRENDA GILL

One of the things that connects us all as humans is the pursuit of happiness. My watercolor illustrations and pen and ink drawings try to find the harmony between grief and joy, chaos and peace. Ultimately, I hope they communicate the balance between the reality of life and the romantic ideal we strive for. When someone looks at my paintings, I hope they feel understood. I hope they see their own lives, their own pain, their own dreams. We are all doing our best not just to survive, but to find joy in our one life. The human pursuit of happiness is the bridge between my paintings and the viewer.

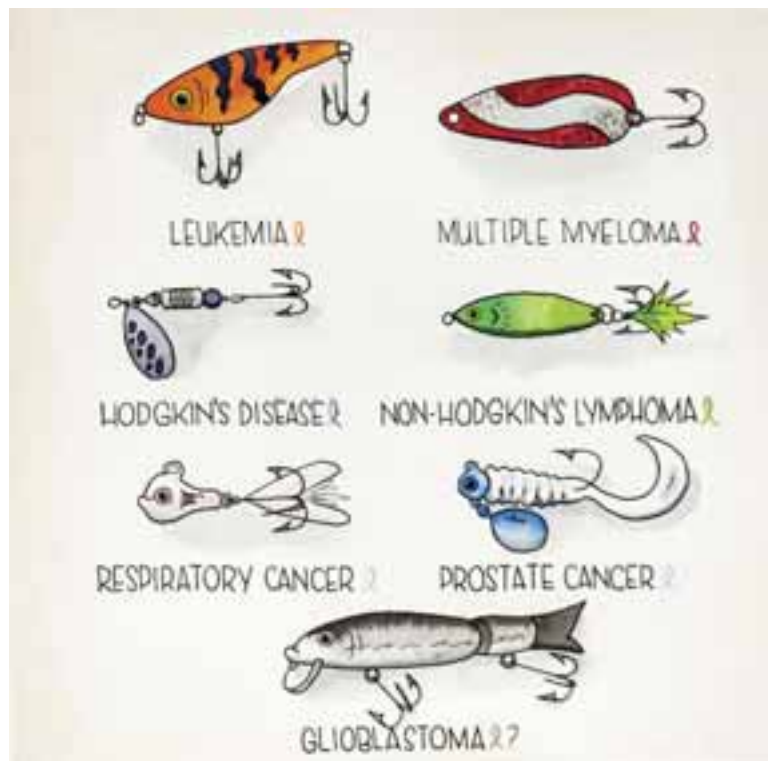
Brenda Gill
The One That Got Away, 2020
Pen and ink on paper, 8 x 8 inches

This portrait of my dad, John Westerbur, could be the profile of any one of thousands of veterans who returned from Vietnam. The ones who got away. He rarely spoke about his year as an infantry track gunner, but he was never without a cap that communicated his military service. Fishing for walleye along the creeks of southern Minnesota was his greatest form of therapy for the PTSD he carried. His life was full of people who loved him and rich with the healing solitude of the lakes. His life ended too soon from an aggressive brain cancer we believe to be linked to his exposure to Agent Orange during the war in Vietnam. However, we are at peace knowing that because of his faith, his battle is won. He's one who got away.



Brenda Gill
Setting the Hook, 2020
Watercolor on paper, 8 x 8 inches

Thousands of veterans returned home from Vietnam not knowing that their wartime service would still be their cause of death. Decades later, cancers linked to their exposure to the deforesting herbicide Agent Orange, which was liberally deployed by the U.S. military over the forests of southeast Asia, would claim their lives. The listed cancers are those proven by Veteran's Affairs to be caused by Agent Orange exposure. Presently, brain cancers such as glioblastoma, which recently took the lives of my father and the late Senator John McCain among others, are not among the Agent Orange presumptive diseases. However, many believe that their hooks were set 50 years ago along with thousands of other veterans. Cancer has been slowly reeling them in.



MARY GITTER-ZEHNDER

I have been working with various art techniques for many years but returned to printmaking eight years ago with the help of classes offered by Hope Cook at the Carnegie Art Center in Mankato. This has led me to a new and exciting method of artistic expression. My abstract monotype prints have bold, rich color, rhythmic movement, and geometric shapes. I manipulate ink and place shapes to narrate my emotional attachment to remembered landscapes. No two views of a landscape are alike and similarly each monotype is unique.

Mary Gitter-Zehnder
Altered Suns, 2018
 Monotype, 14 x 11 inches

I am a cancer survivor. In 2017, I was diagnosed with invasive ductal carcinoma breast cancer. Surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation followed. After my last round of radiation, I created *Altered Suns*. The bold, rich, desert tones recall memories of traveling throughout the arid regions of the southwest. The colors are robust, the plants are sturdy, the rains are intense, but water is scarce. The desert is a tough place for life but with the proper preparation, plants, animals, and even people can thrive under harsh conditions. Those of us who have traveled through the cancer desert, and been lucky enough to survive, come out stronger and more capable of facing what comes next. Cancer may have taken part of my body but it never took me.



JUROR'S THIRD PRIZE AWARD

A survivor of breast cancer, the artist has interpreted her physical and emotional struggles with the disease in an abstract landscape of memory. The bold, earth-tone colors evoke deserts of the Southwest, a region which has deep personal meaning for the artist. As she compares cancer with this unrelenting environment, I find the artist's message to be positive: Life can survive both the harshness of the desert and the hardships of cancer.

— Gregory Jecmen, Juror

CANCER NEVER HAD ME

RUTHANN GODOLLEI

Ruthann Godollei is the Wallace Professor of Art, Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota. Her internationally-exhibited prints incorporate pointed social commentary. Text-based prints, printed objects, and installations draw attention to power, its languages, and its abuse. Topics include social justice, race, class and gender, the environment, the medical system, the environment, and equity. Recent exhibits include *Multiple Ones: Contemporary Perspectives in Printmedia*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Jacksonville, Florida, 2020; *Water: a Minnesota Biennial*, Minnesota Museum of American Art, St. Paul, Minnesota, postponed, 2020; *Pacific States Printmaking Biennial*, University of Hawai'i, 2018; *The Big Crash*, Biblioteca Central de Cantabria, Santander, Spain, 2018; the *14th International Print Triennial*, Tallinn, Estonia; and the *9th Biennale internationale d'estampe contemporaine de Trois-Rivières*, Québec, Canada. Her work is in many international collections, including the Kumu Art Museum, Tallinn, Estonia; the Centre For Fine Print Research, Bristol, United Kingdom; Minneapolis Institute of Art; and the Polish National Museum of Art, Poznań. She received a 2019 Fulbright Canada Research Chair in Printmaking at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.

Ruthann Godollei

Anatomical Sequence, 2011

Monoprint gytaku breast print with Letterpress,
15 x 24 inches

This print is an extremely limited edition. It documents a sequence of medical procedures. When I learned I was to undergo a mastectomy, I decided to chronicle the event by making prints of that breast before it was excised. I inked up my flesh in red and relief printed it on rice paper, saving the print for a future work of art should I survive. The idea came from gytaku, when Japanese fishermen ink and print actual fish to show the form, size and shape of their catch. I am still here, the print marks a moment in time, in the cycle of life. The skin matrix for this print is definitely gone, along with other less drastic parts anyone can lose over time. Ephemera is one name for printed matter lost after use, but the cancer process reminded me that our bodies are, after all, quite temporary.



ROSEMARY LANGE GUTTORMSSON

I graduated from Gustavus Adolphus College in 1969. I majored in biology and was in the medical technology program. After marrying a classmate and having children, I started painting. I am primarily a watercolor painter, but have recently been using collage and assorted water media in my work. I appreciate the love of life, color, and light. I believe that being an observer of one's surroundings is an important part of being an artist. In my paintings I attempt to put the feeling or essence of what I have seen into forms that others may enjoy.

Rosemary Lange Guttormsson

Embraced by the Bear, 2006

Watercolor and mixed media, 20 x 16 inches

I am a cancer survivor. I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2005. After undergoing surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation, and before starting a year-long treatment using Herceptin, I decided to try paint my feelings about my cancer. One day I started painting and the bear emerged as my protector. I had started painting bears a few years before, because I live in Duluth and we have bears. I was also inspired by the writings of Terry Tempest Williams. I am most grateful to be a 15-year survivor.



VIEWS BY ARTISTS

KAY HERBST HELMS

I have been seriously making photographs for about 10 years now and have found “developing” and printing my own work to be as fulfilling as making the photograph itself. My art centers primarily on hands, lands, and water. As an immigrant from the state of Illinois, I have found Minnesota to be very generous to the arts and have been encouraged by the support I have received.

Kay Herbst Helms
Joanne’s Hand, 2018
Photography, 11 x 14 inches

She did not want a picture of her face. My dearest friend Joanne was beautiful. She treated everyone with an equal amount of grace and respect. She took special care of herself and, no matter how ill, she made the effort to have a manicure. The last time I saw Joanne, she did not want any photos taken of her. The emesis basin was now always by her side. I asked if I could photograph just her hands.



JANE SAVAGE HORTON

One responsibility of an artist is to bring attention to how the work complements the larger conversation. *Cancer Never Had Me: Views by Artists* provides an opportunity for me to share my mother’s journey. My objective is to draw the viewer into this image that hovers between abstraction and representation. I work in a variety of mediums and enjoy the challenges of each. Working with fibers is especially satisfying as I must touch and create in a way that does not employ a brush, roller, knife, or other tools.

Jane Savage Horton
Mammogram, 2020
Mixed media including fibers, fabric, and beads, 28 x 21 inches

“They tattooed my chest.” This is how my mother began five weeks of radiation treatments following a lumpectomy over 25 years ago. I have selected fabrics, beads, and threads that suggest femininity for this interpretation of a mammogram, although it is to be noted that breast cancer can occur in males. There is a small, suspicious calcification at a five o’clock orientation. I have taken liberties with this fiber art piece. It refers to a mammogram but it is art, not a radiological test result. With this submission, I honor my mother who is a breast cancer survivor at the age of 95.

JUROR’S SECOND PRIZE AWARD

Combining materials traditionally defined as feminine—fabric, beads, and thread—the artist ingeniously interprets her mother’s mammogram. The work, an abstraction based on a representational image, conveys much movement and dynamism. I particularly find very effective the three-dimensional elements which come forth from the picture plane.

— Gregory Jecmen, Juror



CANCER NEVER HAD ME

PAULA EICKMAN KENNEDY

I was diagnosed with breast cancer in August 2008 at the age of 51. Cancer is very real physical and emotional pain. Through the kindness and generosity of human “gems” who reached beyond themselves to lend help and support, however, I learned that the human spirit and God are stronger; living with cancer and its treatments was not devoid of silver linings. Striving for normalcy for our two young daughters was my goal; my painting is a commentary on how I got through my treatments and tried to give them a solid, full life. Holiday traditions, as well as quiet hours together with art projects and books, are therefore featured prominently. My eyesight was poor during my chemotherapy and so I used Surrealist concepts to illustrate my view of the world at that time: double, distorted, and incomplete images, dreamlike at times. It has been a journey that has forever changed how I see myself, others and the world.

Paula Eickman Kennedy
What Gets Us Through, 2020
Mixed media and acrylic on
canvas, triptych,
each 24 x 58 inches

JUROR'S
HONORABLE MENTION
AWARD



What Gets Us Through was created using five heavy-body acrylic pigments: Titanium White, Primary Red, Cadmium Yellow Light, Cobalt Blue, and Ultramarine Violet. I wanted the color to be rich and vibrant—representing my “hoped-for” life, not my life with cancer—so my color choices and decision to avoid black was clear (inspired by the Impressionists) The layering of translucent pigment was helpful in creating those rich color areas, although some sections needed more mystery, more heaviness. In those places, the paint was layered to the degree of opaqueness. As a whole, everything, including brushwork, is more expressive than naturalistic which fits my emotional state during cancer treatment. I rendered images that were recognizable, but not clear and realistic. My idea was expressed with images floating within other images, experimenting with placement, size, and juxtaposition...using the concepts of Surrealism. My purpose in repeating colors, shapes, and techniques within each panel was to connect the individual canvases into one work, as a triptych. I could not achieve my goal of expressing my personal cancer experience without the use of partial photographs and actual words. I typed my feelings about my cancer struggles and placed torn pieces of those papers throughout the painting...to help me remember, to help me let go of the pain, and to help me heal now that the words had been released from within me.

Paula Eickman Kennedy
“You have always been a good friend”, 2020
Mixed media and acrylic on canvas, 35 x 24 ¼ inches

“You were always a good friend, Paula”—my friend Cindy’s parting words to me at a high school reunion. She spoke these words with her usual grace and *joie de vivre* but my heart sank because I knew that she was saying goodbye. She died months later of breast cancer. Her words had a powerful impact on me...so much so that I knew that I needed to express my feelings of loss and yet joy in having her in my life. As the painting took shape, I added another friend’s image. She, too, had died of cancer. She, too, had been a bright light in my life, giving me hope, encouragement, support, and love. Orange is the undertone to most of the painting, to represent the powerful joy experienced from making a true friend connection. Because that happiness is tainted with the sadness of death’s separation, most of the painting’s orange-ness is muted with overlaying hues. The composition is a surreal mix of overlapping faces within a skyscape and landscape. My face is represented three times, showing conflicting stages of acceptance: a partially obscured neutral self-image, an abstracted self with side lighting, and as the dominant face in the work. Images of my friends who lost their lives to cancer swirl around my face along with portions of the phrase, “you were always a good friend, Paula”—the phrase that has haunted me for several years. The upper background skyscape is a depiction of heaven and the lower New Mexican landscape is a place with deep emotional memories of beauty and love, a fitting heaven-on-earth place for me. The loss of loved ones is a great sadness, but I feel as though my life has been forever changed by these people and the love they showed me and allowed me to feel.



KORY KOLIS

I have always been fascinated with the incomprehensibility of nature. I often get overwhelmed when looking across a landscape and thinking about how every creature, each plant is striving and fighting to grow and reproduce, striving to build the leaves, branches, flowers necessary for survival. My artwork seeks to explain a sliver of that vastness of nature. What does it mean to grow and construct? To answer this question, I explore the dichotomous but interdependent relationship of the infrastructure produced by humans versus the organic production and reproduction of flora and fauna. My work is a contemplative process where I make, transform, and alter materials, distorting and blurring their original context to bring together and make anew. By combining and layering materials and symbols of man-made and natural products, each work explores the tension between us and the living world around and within.



Kory Kolis

***The Woman with the Golden Blood: A Portrait of My Mother*, 2020**

Watercolor, tissue paper, and beeswax on plywood, 20 x 24 inches

During my sophomore year at Gustavus Adolphus College my mother was diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukemia. Luckily, recently-developed drugs have changed this cancer from a three-to-five-years prognosis to the expectation of a normal lifespan. However, the drug price for the treatment of this chronic cancer is between \$70,000 and \$120,000 annually. When my mother was diagnosed, there was a week and a half where her insurance company was processing the claim. On the real chance of insurance not covering the treatment, my mother sincerely considered foregoing this life-saving drug so as not to bankrupt my family. While she ended up being covered, and is in remission currently, I cannot imagine the misery my mother endured contemplating that choice. This painting depicts my mother with her golden (>\$70,000) blood.

JUROR'S HONORABLE MENTION AWARD

CANCER NEVER HAD ME

JILL DUBBELDEE KUHN

In the summer of 2015, the series *Radiate: Sixteen Days of Radiation* was born from the daily recordings and drawings of any particular idea, image, or experience I encountered during 16 radiation treatments following the removal of a walnut-sized cancerous tumor in my right breast. Drawing and reflection calmed my spirit from the bizarre news of my body having the “C” word. My sketchbook was a distraction and safe place to process this new world. This self-applied therapy became the inspiration for final pieces of 16 free-standing sketchbook page sculptures, large digital photographs, and acrylic paintings. A 2016 exhibition of this work at the Gorecki Gallery in the Benedicta Arts Center at the College of Saint Benedict, St. Joseph, Minnesota provided educational and candid dialogues and good reason for celebration of a positive cancer outcome.

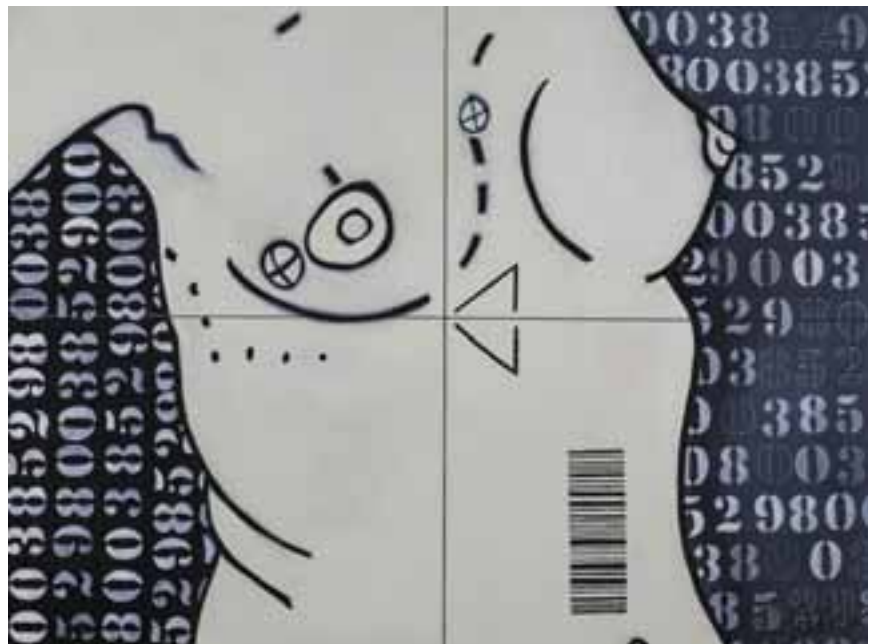
Jill Dubbeldee Kuhn
IT sounds like a cicada, 2016
Acrylic on canvas, 18 x 24 inches

Day nine of my cancer treatment will always stand out. I finally freely associated the sound of the radiation. That continuous high-pitch buzzing became a singing cicada serenading my exposed breast and me. Cicadas are masters of transformation. The insect discards its useless shell and moves into a newly acquired set of wings and way of life. Short course radiation or what I now think of as cicadation transformed me from a woman with breast cancer to one without.



Jill Dubbeldee Kuhn
Scan Me In, 2015
Acrylic on canvas, 18 x 24 inches

This painting reflects day four and the cold clinical side of receiving radiation. I was assigned an eight-digit Patient Number ID card, complete with bar code. Permanent green dots were inked into my breast for accurate placement of the dosage. A wing board and blue foam toe ring locked my feet and body into the same awkward position every appointment. On bad days I felt exposed, nameless, naked...a victim. Other days, I owned my bad-assness, sporting green tattoos, exposed breasts, and a toe ring for all the room to see.



AVIGAIL MANNEBERG

I'm a Minneapolis-based artist. Questions about "home" and identity are recurring themes in my work. Moving between homes and navigating life-changing events have shaped my path of inquiry. Becoming a mother added another layer of complexity as I have to consider the repercussions for my children. I held my mother's hand while she was dying of cancer and breathed with her on her final breath. In that transformative moment both worlds of motherhood merged in me: the paced breathing of giving birth and final attempts for air before death. Mother and motherhood are concepts beyond a physical place and in this series of paintings I'm juxtaposing the two in relation to the idea of birth and death.

Avigail Manneberg



Loss, 2020
Acrylic on canvas, diptych, each 16 x 20 inches

At sun-down
I clung to you
Stripped bare
Your hand afloat

Uncovered
I whispered to you
The dark of your lips my
Mother tongue

Your clear-eyed gaze
Embodied me
The beating cord
Left me Knowing

Your scent ebbs
Labor growing
Only the breathing to
Let go of your voice

* In memory of my mother Ruth Manneberg

CANCER NEVER HAD ME

NICOLE MEYER

I am an interdisciplinary artist from Minnesota. My artwork is representative of emotions. My process begins by identifying an emotion as the foundation for a concept. That concept then drives the form, and I decide on the medium with which to work according to what mode of working and materials will communicate the concept best. I work with many media, including photography, sculpture, painting, drawing, and mixed media. I think very spatially—my two-dimensional works imply space and depth, and my three-dimensional works play with form and dimension. I have been inspired by nature, other artists, personal experiences, and my recent travels in Italy studying the human form. I am very drawn to the curves of the body and this is reflected in my drawings. Dynamic movement and balance are evident throughout my work. In my art, I focus on movement through line and form. My work is process oriented. I begin with an emotion I want to convey and imagine the big picture of what I want to create, then use experimentation and refinement to achieve an overall aesthetic goal.

Nicole Meyer
The Will to Live, 2020
Pen on paper, 14 x 11 inches

My art is often based on emotion. When I create my work, it helps me work through emotions that I am focusing on in the piece. This drawing is of my mother right after having a major surgery for her cancer. She had a 21-inch incision, where the doctors scraped out the lining of her stomach, took out her appendix, and poured hot chemo into the opening and swished it around inside of her to try and clear out any more cancer. This was a major surgery and it was not clear if she would live through it. My mother has had cancer on and off my entire life. She was first diagnosed when I was in elementary school and went into remission a few years later. She was re-diagnosed right before Christmas my freshman year of college. I am now 22 years old, and a recent graduate from college, and my mother is still fighting her cancer. Her cancer cannot be summed up neatly into a category of cancer. She has “mystery cancer,” as we call it. What that means we still are unsure. She has a kind of cancer that is not visible in most tests or scans, is not easily identifiable. She has had six different oncologists from all over the world look at her cancer and they all disagree on what kind it is. There have been less than one hundred cases of this type of cancer ever recorded. Dealing with cancer is already scary and hard enough, but this cancer you cannot identify clearly or see. So how do you fight it? With a lot of doctors, test, surgeries, guessing, and the will to live. My mother has outlived all the odds, and I believe that is because of her strong will to live. I have watched my mother fight her cancer ever since I can remember. But what I will remember from her is her strength and will to live.



JONI D. MYERS

Interacting with others is part of my goal when making art. Interaction happens when people view the things I've made. I also interact with other artists by re-using things they have discarded. Surviving cancer has made it easier and more natural for me to relate to other people. I'm gentler. I have greater awareness and understanding of myself and my fragility as well as my strength. And I respond to the fragile spirit in others.

Joni D. Myers
Harlequin's lymphoma, 2009
 Acrylic and mixed media, 27 ¾ x 22 inches

This painting is about the lymph system attacked by cancer and about long-term effects of the treatment on my heart. It also celebrates the joy of being cancer-free. The painting is about at least two things.



Joni D. Myers
It's one of three things and all of them are terrible, 2010
 Acrylic, mixed media and collage, 14 ¾ x 20 inches

"It's one of three things, and all of them are terrible." This is what the attending physician said to me after he viewed my chest CT scan. It's a phrase that has shaped my life. A few days later, I found out it was the worst of the three things. All were terrible things, yes, but all were treatable.



JUROR'S HONORABLE MENTION AWARD

CANCER NEVER HAD ME

LARA NGUYEN

Un-Broken: Self-Portrait with Uterine Leiomyosarcoma Cancer (uLMS) is the first of a series of painting performances captured by digital photography. *Un-Broken*, the ongoing body of work, is an homage to Kintsugi, a Japanese art form of repairing broken pottery with lacquers and powdered precious metals. This “golden joinery” proposes that the holder embrace the vessel’s flaws and see them as beautiful. It asks us to commemorate and celebrate imperfection. The artist lavishes attention on the broken parts, and the whole is made new again.



Lara Nguyen

***Un-Broken: Self-Portrait with Uterine Leiomyosarcoma Cancer (uLMS)*, 2020**

Digital photographic evidence of painting performance, 19 x 13 inches

Just because I am broken, doesn’t mean I am not useful. It was June 2018 when I first knew something was wrong. On a flight home from Prague after teaching a study away course, I was unable to urinate normally. In the tiny airplane bathroom, the interruption was as abrupt as a bowling ball dropped on a running garden hose. A couple weeks later I was in the emergency room. An ultrasound showed my bladder had grown more than twice the size of any adult bladder filled to capacity. The tumor they found, which took an estimated year to grow in my uterus, was the bowling ball I had envisioned. I underwent a radical hysterectomy. Then, recovering at home, my husband and I got the call. My best friend played with our kids upstairs and we went into our office where we got the most reliable cell phone reception. Over speaker phone, we were given the diagnosis: uterine leiomyosarcoma cancer (uLMS), stage 1B with a 36% chance of recurrence. January 10, 2020, it reappeared, collapsing my lung and requiring lobectomy lung surgery. On April 27, I had a clean scan, but the day after Father’s Day, June 22, I found myself gasping for air doing jumping jacks. In less than two months nothing grew into something, and a 10 x 10-centimeter tumor hangs from my top left pleural lining and presses up against my aorta and nerves causing constant numbness in my left hand. Lucky for me I am right handed. I have started chemotherapy. My cancer diagnosis is terminal.

ANNALISE SCHAAF

At a young age, I was adopted by my grandparents. My grandmother has been diagnosed twice with ovarian cancer. She still battles it to this day. In my piece *Colors of Cancer*, I include all people who have suffered from cancer by painting the colors that represent each type. The shards, constricting ribbon, and teardrop that make up my work shows the devastation cancer can have on body, mind, and soul. I shed many tears and poured my heart out onto the canvas while creating this piece. I want others to look at *Colors of Cancer* and understand deeper the hardships that cancer has but also the beauty that can come out of strength. My grandmother is the strongest person I know and this piece is dedicated to her and others who refuse to let cancer define them.

Annalise Schaaf

***Colors of Cancer*, 2020**

Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 26 inches

My piece *Colors of Cancer* is best described in how it relates to cancer in a poem that I wrote in connection with the work. I struggled to convey these deeper emotions in a paragraph form. The poem tells a story and is important to the narrative of my piece. It represents my perspective and journey that is both personal and symbolic of the greater struggles of cancer.

She has cancer.
But her soul is never fully shattered.
Her mind battered and her body prodded.
She will fight to live.

The disease comes in many colors.
She will not be smothered.
She fosters the hope to fight another day.
Rendering cancer the imposter.

My mom has cancer.
She smiles amid the turmoil in her soul.
She is strong.
Cancer still prolongs.
She is radiant.
She fights on.

She shed a single teardrop.



ANNE SPOONER

The work submitted for this exhibition directly relates to the death of my mother from cancer. She was age 54 and I was 17, with six weeks left of high school. It was decades ago but it still affects me today. In the last two years, I've been confronting the tragic loss of my mother through my artistic practice. The sometimes confusing and surprising experiences surrounding her death that I awkwardly tried to navigate are depicted here. This artistic process has been positive and I hope that viewers receive some therapeutic benefits from it also.

Anne Spooner
Pity Party, 2019
 Mixed media, 8 x 8 inches

There were social situations to navigate. Her death was announced to my class. I thought, "Is that what you do, tell everyone?" I went back to school fully expecting looks and yes, I did get them, and it made me cringe.



Anne Spooner
She's Not Here, She Died, 2019
 Mixed media, 10 x 10 inches

The phone rang, someone asking for my mom. I felt I had to be honest otherwise they would call back. Get it over with quickly. An awkward pause from the lady on the other end and then, I quickly hung up. Saying it aloud was shocking to me.



CANCER NEVER HAD ME

SANDRA MENEFEE TAYLOR

An important element of my artistic practice is the creation of handmade artists books. The use of book forms is particularly appealing to me as a maker when I can use it as a vessel or container. Often my work has been quite large or project-based, but the loss of body parts called for a container which can be made by the hand as well as held by the viewer's hand.

Sandra Menefee Taylor

Dx, 2020

Handmade bookform with watercolor and ink on Japanese paper, 8 x 42 inches (open)

One day I happened to be reading one of the many sheets of paper my desk has accumulated from the medical side of my two trips into breast cancer. Doing so I uncovered this label—"Dx: acquired absence of breasts." I asked my friend what "Dx:" meant, she explained that is the abbreviation for "diagnosis." This phrase caught me by surprise, it had the lilt of poetry. A short hand for the very non-lethal, it sounded easy, it implied quick magic. As an artist, I then knew that I needed to make an artist's book as the counterpoint to the simplicity of words like "acquired absence" indicating bi-lateral mastectomy.



Sandra Menefee Taylor

The Artists and The Surgeon, 2015

Handmade accordion book with constructed digital photography on Japanese paper, 3 ¾ x 48 inches (open)

After my first surgery, as an act of recovery and healing, my caregiver and I created a ritual. Each day, we made two photographs documenting the changes in a vase of cut flowers and the marks on my body left by the act of surgery, including the markings left by the surgeon's pen—the most eloquent one being "SEED." We ended the ritual with the act of creating, giving back to the surgeon this beautiful little book.

JUROR'S FIRST PRIZE AWARD

In the days following cancer surgery, the artist passionately documented her recovery and healing by taking two photographs, one of a vase of flowers and the other of her surgical scars. I find the resulting diary brilliantly alternates the changing images of the healing powers of the human body and the slow decay of the flowers, portraying the age-old juxtaposition of Life and Death.

— Gregory Jecmen, Juror

HAL WALBERG

During 37 years as professor of philosophy at Minnesota State University, Mankato, one of the specialty courses I most enjoyed teaching was Philosophy of the Arts, studying art works of many historic periods and cultures, seeking their unique qualities and universal significance. After retirement I turned to directly exploring various creative processes, finding papermaking inviting to a wide range of fluid expression. This led to collage with papers, and then various mixed media, developing a body of works that have been exhibited at many regional galleries and juried exhibitions. *Inside Unknown* is comprised primarily of paper, layered, painted, folded and shaped over underlying forms:

- delicate tissue paper, floating like water;
- handmade paper, like cement, gravel, stone
- strong industrial paper, like marble, like bone

Hal Walberg
Inside Unknown, 2017
 Paper collage, 36 x 60 inches

Cancer has been a frequent companion in my life, first taking away my beloved wife of 30 years, then attacking the health of my sister, and piercing even into my own body. In this work, I feel the visceral pulsing of organs and inner processes, forms coming into being and diminishing away, areas of activity and layered space. Earth elements, body elements, ever mysterious, creating and consuming life.



KENNETH WENZEL

“A work of art opens a void, a moment of silence, a question without an answer, provokes a breach without reconciliation where the world is forced to question itself.” — Michel Foucault

There is a strong formal aspect to my paintings and drawings. They locate forms on a plane in the two-dimensional space of the picture. I want these pictures to be beautiful to behold. The idea of locating a readable form in implied space on the flat plane is fascinating. The pictures start in the sketchbook and the forms come from life and imagination. As I compose them in the design, I am concerned about the relationships between the forms and spaces. Some forms are biomorphic, others mechanical/geometric, and many combine the two. They are specific and abstract, and simple and complex. They create a world that is evocative. Reflecting something deeper than formalism alone, they contain evidence of our culture. My interest is in presenting them in a neutral manner. A description that is direct without interpretation. Merging realism and abstraction to open a void or silence, as Foucault states above, for the viewer to enter into.

Kenneth Wenzel
Clean Margin Biopsy, 2020
 Oil on wood, 11 x 19 inches

I am a 15-year survivor of prostate cancer. Getting the confirmation of cancer was a gut punch I can still feel today. There were no discernable symptoms before the diagnosis. I am thankful for the PSA tests that indicated possible cancer. The levels were alarmingly high. One learns a lot when one’s health is in question, as we see now in the pandemic we face. We learn about our character, as well as facts about the disease we are confronting. “Clean margins” is a term used in the analysis of the prostate after removal. It indicates that the cancer is confined to the gland only and has not spread to the bones or body. It is the greatest news one can get after surgery. Hearing it made me cry. This painting is a visualization of a prostate with cancer and clean margins. I hope it moves you.



CANCER NEVER HAD ME

GREGORY T. WILKINS

I strive to make art that inspires critical thinking and encourages inward reflection. I am committed to using my art as a platform for viewers to consider how life impacts societal norms.

Gregory T. Wilkins
Within Cancer, 2019
Mixed media, 11 x 17 inches

Within Cancer amplifies the color and beauty inside a potentially life-threatening disease when magnified under a microscope



JAMES QUENTIN YOUNG

I create my art from old metal, wood, and other found objects, which I assemble into landscapes, crosses, celestial themes, and abstractions. I have been an early advocate for recycling and renovating discarded items. My MFA in painting, combined with furniture restoration and jewelry making, have enabled me to make beautiful and provocative works of art. They may tell a Biblical story or simply be unique artworks.

James Quentin Young
Good as Gold, 2017
Mixed media on wood panel, 10 x13 inches

The material is a discarded board. I slashed it with a knife and added red paint and imitation gold leaf. Finally, I burned the work with a small torch. This artwork symbolizes cancer treatment. The red represents the cutting during an operation to remove cancer cells. The slashing dark brown is the burning of radiation which fades as the cancer recedes. Gold is the purifying effect of clean new cells taking over. I was in my 50s when I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. Aggressive treatment has helped me survive for over 30 years cancer free.



JUROR'S HONORABLE MENTION AWARD





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