

Jamestown Community College's Weeks Gallery will present the annual winter ArtParty for *Material/Ethereal Constructs: Judith Olson Gregory and Dianne Baker* on February 4, 2012.

The gallery will open at 6:15 p.m. A brief artist talk begins at 6:30.

Scythian (sith-ee-yin) performs Celtic rock at 7:00 in the Scharmann Theatre (doors open at 6:30). While waiting for the concert, William Disbro's *Priority Facade* will be projected on stage.

The ArtParty reception, which begins at 8:15 (or immediately after the concert) in the Scharmann lobby and Weeks Reception Hall, features music by local favorites Amanda Barton and Bill Ward, hors d'oeuvres, and wine and beer tasting.

Tickets for the exhibition, concert, and ArtParty are available through JCC's FSA bookstore box office, 716.338.1187, or at the door. Prices: general admission, \$15; area students and senior citizens, \$10; JCC Faculty Student Association members, \$8; and children 12 and under, \$5.

The exhibition runs from February 6 to March 22 and gallery hours are Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursday, 11 to 7; and Friday, 11 to 3 (closed on college holidays).

Sponsors: Jamestown Community College, JCC Faculty Student Association, JCC Foundation, JCC/FSA College Program Committee, FSA Campus Life, Katharine Jackson Carnahan Endowment for the Humanities, Sarita Hopkins Weeks JCC Concert Fund/Chautauqua Region Community Foundation, Arthur R. Gren Company, and Southern Tier Brewing Company.

Scythian, described as rousing and raucous, plays kicked-up Celtic and world music with hints of gypsy, klezmer, and a touch of punk-rock sensibility. Take a pair of classically trained dueling fiddlers, a rhythm guitar and funky accordion, then power it up with the driving rhythm of a jazz percussionist, and you've got the ingredients for a show you won't forget. Fans of Flogging Molly, Gaelic Storm, and Urban Trad will like their music.

Curators like to bridge gaps between art and life by shedding light on universal experiences.

Last fall, I walked outside on a dull, sleepless night and was awestruck by the bright stars in the clear sky. The sun's rays reflected from the full moon and refracted from earth's mist; the beauty penetrated my eyes and imagination. This minimal, monochromatic variation of van Gogh's *The Starry Night* was Zen-like (physical, ethereal, and interconnected).

Standing barefoot on cold, wet concrete, I paused, absorbed the moment, and suddenly felt warm and calm. Worries dissolved and sleep came fast.

What transpired? Can mind-shifts be scientifically explained or is this just another artist/curator's psychodrama or imagination at play?

Research suggests that meditating, practicing yoga, or imagining sparks theta and alfa waves that evoke calm, balance perspectives, and enhance awareness. Simultaneously, reduced beta wave activity shuts down troubling analysis.

Do you recall relaxing or dissolving worries while viewing nature's beauty, making or observing art, walking quietly, reading, or meditating?

Gregory and Baker construct with conventional and quirky materials; their eccentric visions reflect art process-meditations that engage the body, mind, and spirit. Baker used an ironing board as a panel for a collage (see inside photo) and Gregory lines a vestment with tea bags (front cover). By fabricating, imagining, and manifesting they construct reflections of Eastern and Western ideals.

Gregory's *The Vestment Series* caught my eye while viewing her show last spring. I was intrigued by her manipulation of materials in a fashion that heightens visual and tactile experiences. The lines and edges are sharp or soft; the surfaces are rough and smooth. While observing, my mind drifted to other realms.

The title of this Weeks Gallery exhibition, *Material/Ethereal Constructs*, reflects the immediate sensations and dualities that came to mind as I rose from absorbing the physical forms to admiring the beauty and to contemplating.

Gregory describes the vestment on the front cover: "A tactile work inspired by classical Buddhism's concept of Sunya (void/empty)." In Eastern art, empty spaces refer to mystical, spirit realms.

Many dualities (like positive/negative space) come to mind: pain/suffering, good/evil, and heaven/hell. Opposites and complements are fundamental to Eastern and Western religions or philosophies: light and dark or yin and yang are ever-present symbols.

Clergy, who traditionally wear vestments, lead the way in searching for meaning, peace, healing, and fulfillment. Gregory's vestments offer reflections on joy and sorrow, good and evil, compliance and defiance, pure and tainted, etc.

One unusual vestment with a needle-like crown, tiny spiral hands, and translucent, elongated dress is a prime example. Gregory explains, "Sweetness, fragility, innocence ... a christening gown hanging chastely with its crown-of-thorns halo. What is being tendered here? Is there a bargain about to be

struck? Who might exploit this innocent? Who will save it?"

Do Gregory's constructions open windows to her soul, mirror a worldview, and/or radiate healing visions and meditations?

Baker invited me to her Buffalo home to select works. As I viewed her furnishings, studio, and artwork, her vision was revealed. The furniture, carpets, and decorations reflected the unique worn surfaces, colors, and nuances in her artwork. She breathes refined sensibilities into her home to share an ambience that is reverent, balanced, proportionate, and harmonious, and she fashions an ideal place to dream, make art, find comfort, and enjoy everyday life.

The Greek terms symmetria (harmony, balance, proportion) and rhythmos (movement, repetition, rhythm) are echoed in her home, art, and nature. She reverently weighs the relationships between design elements and the whole. The Classical Greeks believed that contemplating beauty could manifest excellence in all of life.

Art critics applaud Baker's green aesthetic, a vision she embraced before it became trendy. She constructs and transforms junk (visual treasures to her) into refined abstractions.

ARTVOICE, Buffalo's weekly arts tabloid, describes the mundane objects Baker transforms: "The sculptures are found materials you might stumble upon (literally) in an urban vacant lot. Rusty metal in various forms of known and unknown functions ... From heavy-gauge riveted

or welded remnants of old industrial apparatus to ancient bedding box springs ... old chunks of lumber, fabric, textiles, paper towels, and decomposing piano wire."

From this full assortment of trash-artifact, she fashions sculptures that are whimsical, intelligent, and reflect art-meditation.

Years ago, her husband learned to appreciate her scavenger ways and retrieves artifacts scattered throughout their Elmwood neighborhood.

The Albright-Knox Gallery, close to their home, presents a world class collection of abstract expressionist masterpieces. Baker has studied and meditated on these works. The lessons and impressions she appropriates were given new energy and expanded life.

Gregory and Baker construct more than artworks; they develop mindsets and relationships, discover and engage nature (in the broader sense), and design living and working environments. Making, viewing, and absorbing art and related experiences draws people and visions together, multiplies critical thinking and imagining, and increases understanding.

What we make, create, think, and dream (or view and hold on to) determines who we are, where we are going, and what we will experience and become; moreover, we see and touch with our psyche as well as our hands and eyes.

—James Colby, Director of Exhibitions/Galleries

weeksgallery.sunyjcc.edu



***Dianne
Baker***

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Scythian

Larry Groce recently presented Scythian on NPR's Mountain Sage



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Judith Olson Gregory and Dianne Baker