

# Taber Art Gallery at HCC reopens after pandemic hiatus

HOLYOKE – After being closed for 18 months due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Taber Art Gallery at Holyoke Community College (HCC) is pleased to welcome an exhibition of paintings and drawings by Northampton artist Anna Bayles Arthur.

“Cosmology of the Body” opened Sept. 20 and runs through Dec. 9. The gallery had been closed since March 2020, though it did showcase the work of HCC’s visual arts students and faculty in a series of online exhibitions.

“I’m so excited to have the Taber Gallery back in the flesh,” said Gallery Director Amy Johnquest. “Like much of the rest of the world, our steps back into sharing a physical space are cautious and considerate. Online exhibitions are a fine alternative when forced to stay in, but there is nothing like seeing the art in person. I am so grateful to be able to welcome folks back and into the power and beauty of

Anna Bayles Arthur’s paintings and to provide the campus an amazing place for respite and meditation.”

Arthur’s exhibit includes 27 works, many with titles that illustrate her theme, such as “Redemption of Breath,” “Left Hand Portal,” “Held,” “Each of Us, A Phenomenon,” and “Cosmology of the Body.”

In a statement about the exhibit Arthur shared, “Each painting is a glimpse into a contained world, a microcosmic surrogate for all of the mystery that is a body, a system, an environment. Grief and longing can likely be found in each painting, as well as the inescapable tug of one’s own mortality.”

Arthur holds an MFA from the University of Massachusetts and BFA from Kutztown University in Pennsylvania.

“From the time that my tiny hand could grip a cheap #2 pencil, I have been compelled to the blank page,” she said. “The blank page

was full of possibility, a window through which a child could invent her world.”

Arthur created all of the pieces in “Cosmology of the Body” during the last few years, about half since 2020.

“Within the context of a global pandemic, state-sponsored terror, climate catastrophe, corporate coup’s and the looming spectacle of mass destruction, I am perpetually questioning the utility of art,” she said. “We live in a media-saturated culture, are daily bombarded by images, sounds, symbols, and stories. Yet somehow, the ancient drive to create remains, the impulse to channel whatever it is, and to reveal it to the world.”

The Taber Art Gallery, located off the lobby of the HCC Library on the second floor of the HCC Donahue Building, is free and open to the public Monday through Thursday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. during regular school sessions.



“Redemption of Breath” by Anna Bayles Arthur.

*Reminder Publishing submitted photo*

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10/14/24