

HOLYOKE

Artists answer call for ‘Thrive’ exhibit at HCC



Ben Ostiguy, left, Thrive Center special programs director, and Rachel Rushing, Taber Art Gallery director, unpackage submissions for a new exhibit, “Thrive: Beyond Surviving.” They are holding a piece from Norwegian artist Heimir Bjorgulfsson titled “Waiting to Make the Most of It,” created in 2021. (SUBMITTED)

Artists from as far away as Florida and Ukraine answered the call for submissions for the latest exhibition at the Taber Art Gallery at Holyoke Community College — “Thrive: Beyond Surviving.”

The show, which runs through Dec. 20, is a collaboration between the Taber Art Gallery and the Thrive Center, which operates the college’s food pantry and provides other student support services focused on basic needs.

The show includes about 60 submissions from artists in the Pioneer Valley, across the United States, and around the world.

Gallery director Rachel Rushing said the theme sprang from conversations she had with Ben Ostiguy, the Thrive Center special programs director.

“Thrive supports HCC students struggling to meet basic needs by focusing primarily on three areas: housing, hunger, and healthcare,” Rushing said. “One of the Taber gallery’s values is collaboration. Working

with Thrive is a great way to amplify their program while featuring work from artists who have concerns in these same areas.”

Through an open call for submissions, artists were encouraged to enter work that considers the systemic, communal, or individual obstacles and barriers to survival, what surviving means, how we as humans can continue to dream, push, and hope for more than the minimum, and the struggle of exhaustion versus the ability to rest.

“I was impressed by the diversity of media,” Ostiguy said. “Some of the pieces were surprising to me. One is a card catalog, with video inside the drawers. There’s some traditional painting, and a lot of photography. The whole idea of Thrive, and overcoming struggle, there’s a certain vocabulary that we use. But when you bridge that up with the visual arts, it can be nonverbal and interpreted in many ways.”

For example, Zac Benson, an artist from Anderson, South Carolina, sent in a life preserver made with fabric salvaged from pews of an old church that was being renovated as a safe haven for the town.

“The life jacket, the life preserver, I won’t say it’s a universal item, but it’s pretty commonly understood across cultures,” said Ostiguy.

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Artists in the exhibition include: Hannah Eve Osinoff, Jules Jones, Jeanne Ciravolo, Çağrı Saray, Steven Labadesa, Katerie Gladdys, Michiel Teeuw, Sava Harris, Nishchay Thakur, Maria Golosnaya, Lauren Packard, Sumin Kim, Delnara El, Yan Paul Dubbelman, Katrina Slavik, Diren Demir, Eva Pushkova, Joan Green, Sergey Melnitchenko, Polina Shumacher, Oksana Kami, Nick Gladkiy, Jose Trejo Maya, Yurii Naumovych, Oleksandra Mykhailova, Anastasiia Dekhtiaruk, Hemant Rao, Adam Burton, Sarah Hussein, Conrad Valone, Rhi Stanton, Ilya Fedotov-Fedorov,

Tara Austin, Seth Guy, Wayne Friedrich, Peyton Sachs, Iris M. Kirkwood, Kira Somerset, Julia Śmiarowska, Mathijs Hunfeld, Aileen Bassis, Beth Krensky, Anna Kavehmehr, Jordan Holms, Jason Thomas Haynes, Alexa Wright, Mols Slom, Shannon Farley, Megan Du, Heimir Bjorgulfsson, Shabnam Piryaeei, Camila Bernardo, Ziyao Lin, Wendell Smith, Zac Benson, Chandler Cheng, Frederick Ingoldby, Jinson Joseph, Lisa DeLoria Weinblatt, Frank Magnotta.

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.
