

Thinking Big Blue Mountain Gallery Artists at Westbeth Nov 2 – 25, 2017

Artist Statements

www.bluemountaingallery.org/Thinking-big-2017

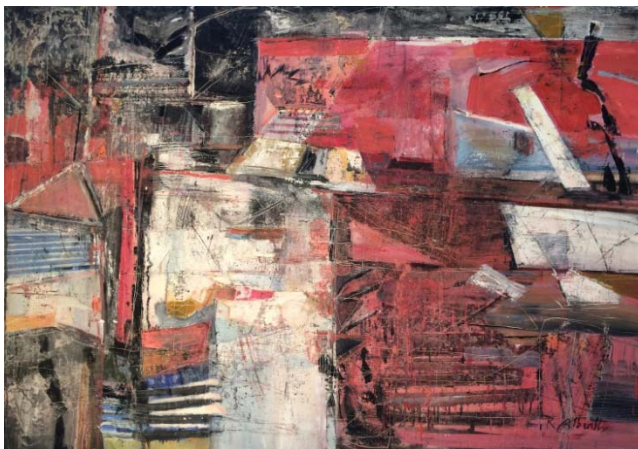
Mary Lou Alberetti *Locorotondo Dusk*

36 x 48" oil on canvas 2017

My recent work has been small, ranging from 18 to 36 inches. With the topic "Thinking Big," I took one of my smaller collages and transitioned it into a much larger painting. Despite the size of my previous work, I've always tried to capture a sense of monumentality. Architectural references from on-site sketches and photographs of a small building in Locorotondo, Italy inform this piece.



Robert Alberetti *The Site* 42 x 60" oil on canvas 2008



This painting was created with the exploration and incorporation of various printmaking techniques - sgraffito, incising and mono printing. I used various instruments including ice picks, nails, palette knives and razors. These were combined with the intention of exploring and responding to the evolving large picture plane, as one technique reacted and affected another.

Gulgun Aliriza *Last Canto* 68 x 67" oil on canvas 2016-17



Last Canto is part of a series of large works painted from direct observation. The intimacy of staying in the presence of a complex group of objects for a long time gives me the opportunity to discover and express both small and large relationships. The scale allows me to get lost in the challenge of battling with countless details that pull together in unexpected and energetic ways. The cumulative effect surpasses the individual elements and invites the viewer to enter into this world of disquiet.

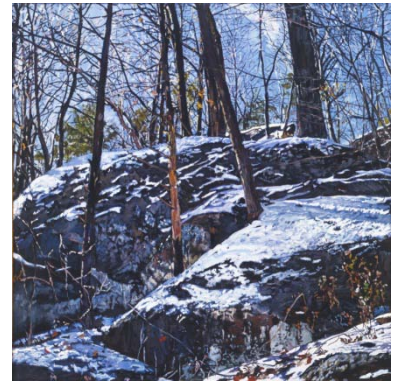


Douglas Anderson *Quarry* 27 x 27" ink on paper

For an artist like me, who does not work with large gestures or large surfaces, the idea of Thinking Big means thinking beyond what is usual, of thinking outside of the box. I do this by pushing the medium I work in, ink and paper, towards greater complexity and depth.

Theresa Bartol *Willow's Back Yard* 36 x 36" oil on canvas

To me being in nature is like being connected to BOUNDLESS ENERGY in a HUGE UNIVERSE where -- hidden in the leaves, trees, and landscape -- LIGHT energy is the creative force. Light from the SUN and its Universal companions is responsible for the patterns of light, colors and shapes in nature, and is the nurturing source of the landscapes I paint. Imagine a world where LIGHT doesn't exist....



Nancy Beal *First Gladiolas* 42 x 46" oil on canvas

"Million dollar view" they said as we purchased our country property in 1982. The land rolled down into the valley then up in the distance to the farmed fields and the Taconic Mountains. I planted many gardens. Being on the academic calendar, I especially treasured my summer months to paint landscape. I wanted to show all of it--life size in the foreground and then off to the receding distance. The paintings got bigger than the canvas was wide. Over the years, trees grew up covering the view. My passion for large vistas continues and I enjoy the challenge of painting a big expanse on a small format.

Pamela Berkeley *The Subterranean* 48 x 72" oil on canvas



My earlier paintings were of small, delicate things: lace; goldfish; pea vine tendrils, painted with 000 sable brushes. A dog bite crippled my hand for several years. "Thinking Big" saved my sanity. I could hold large size brushes. The canvases were 6' x 8'. The whole scale changed to very big. The subjects were life size portraits of friends, some of whom had big lifestyles and big names. The portrait of John Malkovich is somewhat smaller than others done at that time.

Pamela Boily *Lakeside* 24 x 24" oil on canvas

I use images of the destruction from hurricanes as the source for my paintings. Most are found images, but some are photos of my former home in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. I edit, shuffle and recombine images into photographic collages. I choose images that speak to me and need to be expressed in some way. My intent is not to capture reality but to filter my personal experiences into the paintings. Although my work is based on images of the destruction from hurricanes, it is my hope that the work will describe a more universal, large scale message. Perhaps the meaning of my work is expanding to reflect the fragility of the human condition and how nature can disrupt an ordered life in an instant.



Leslie K Brill *Torso #1 (in dialogue with Francis Woodman)* 43 x 53" acrylic on paper

I like working in life size. I don't do it all the time but when I do it's often a joyous and liberating process. All the advice about "working from the shoulder and not the wrist" comes into play. I'm barely 5'2" and making this work was like embracing a friend.



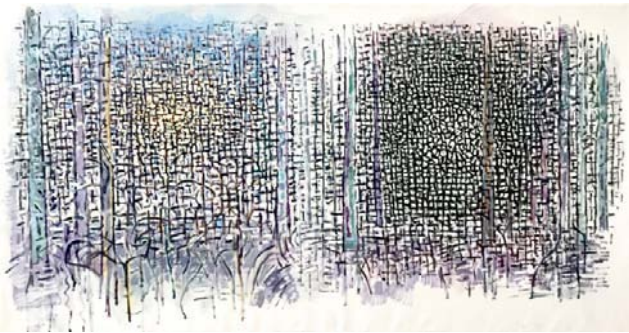
Richard Castellana *Self Portrait* 48 x 40" oil on canvas
1997

This over life-sized "Self Portrait" is based on a dream. I was taking an exam (in economics) the question was BIG, "what is the meaning of the universe"? Although shocked, in a moment I had the (feeling of an) answer. "But wait," the examiner then handed me a chocolate cake, "the answer must be in code, in how you slice up the cake." Again startled, I found the way to an answer, carved the cake, and proudly handed it to him. "But why," he asked, "are you handing me a chocolate cake?" I woke up laughing.



Michael Chelminski *Forest Diptych* 36 x 72" oil on linen

To fictionalize nature is to understand it.



Marcia Clark *Panorama with Shipping Container, Uummannaq* acrylic on 48 x 16" panels 2016

Beginning by jotting down something that caught my attention in a small sketchbook, I often realize that the subject is too big to be caught within the rectangle. Drawings that follow my initial notes are pieced together to capture the rhythm of what I have seen. The paintings, too, are often done on separate panels, although I attempt to maintain a flow throughout that allows eye and mind to linger on some elements, and pass lightly over others. My underlying desire is to capture that initial response one has when scanning or moving through the landscape.





Anne Diggory *Overture* 56 x 56" hybrid on canvas 2017

The large scale of this work allows me to combine multiple angles of vision within a broad space. The viewer is then engaged in the experience of shifting perceptions of space and shifting ways of describing forms. This hybrid work uses details from digital versions of small paintings and photographs that are manipulated, printed together and then painted upon. At this location on Lake Durant in the Adirondacks of New York I was attracted to how small details tentatively anchored the energy of the wide scene which kept grabbing my attention.

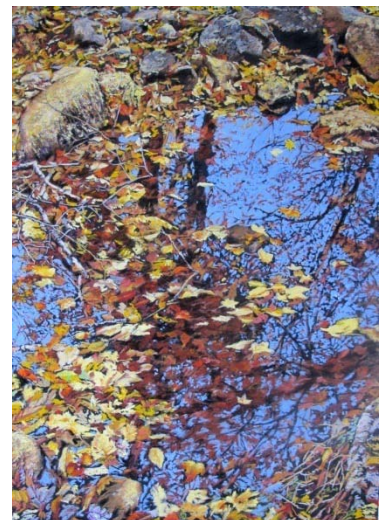


Ken Ecker *1/2/17 1,2,3,4 Md.* 29 x 23" watercolor 2017

Thinking Big implies scale. While painting around a thousand 4 1/2 x 6" watercolors I'd often think some of them could be 4 1/2 x 6' which led me to feel just how slippery scale is. Post Cartesian thought points out just how anthropomorphic our sense of scale is and in turn, William Blake's description of "a universe in a grain of sand," no longer seems such a big mystery.

Judith Evans *What the Rains Brought Down* 34 x 25" pastel

Thinking big in art does not always mean actually being big. A small Cezanne or Vermeer can knock your socks off just as much as a huge Diego Rivera wall full of figures. There are no rules. Size is an intuitive decision. A "big" painting has a big heart regardless of its dimensions.



Sharyn Finnegan *Winter Night* 48 x 72" oil on linen 2014

This painting deals with the presence of the new World Trade Center being built in NYC in relation to the rooftops of Greenwich Village from the windows of my family's apartment. I had painted the first WTC being built in the 1970s, watched them going down from that window, and wanted to complete what felt like a cycle in my life. I also wanted to allow myself real ambition with this project and paint on a scale I had not painted since the 70s. I was freer from family obligations than I had been in a long time and was taking advantage of it, so scale of subject and canvas felt appropriate to what I wanted to do. The series was seven paintings, four on the larger size canvas and three smaller, but with the exact same composition. *Winter Night* shows it as a very bright beacon on the horizon, dominating all around it



Owen Gray *Blue and White Balloon among Turbulence* 28 x 27.625" oil on paper 2014

There is a world of light and an emphasis on the vast sunlit world where the open blue sky is inhabited by a dazzling array of winged creatures twirling and whirling every which way, up and down. My paintings have a Rococo panache and are influenced and inspired by the ceilings of the Italian painter Tiepolo, as well as Pieter Brueghel and Hieronymus Bosch.



Margaret Grimes *White Light* 82 x 48" oil on linen 2017

Although my paintings are primarily considered large, the subject matter of trees is so very much larger. So therefore, my paintings are actually very small.

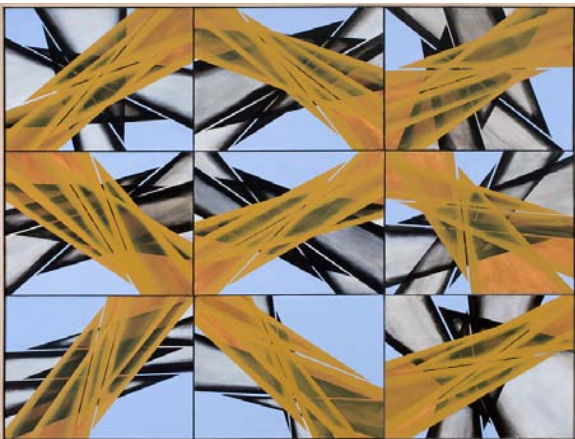


Carol Heft *Figure Drawing I*, 42 x 36" charcoal on paper

The scale of the drawing in this exhibition influences the viewer's experience of the work. It is not only the size of the piece that creates intimacy (or power, in this case) but the scale of the mark, figures or forms in relation to the person viewing them, and the space in which they are exhibited. My recent figurative drawings represent the human struggle for freedom. They are both a personal and political statement about the shifting understanding of how much or little control we have over ourselves and our environment.

Marilyn Honigman *Holocaust I* 40x27" oil on canvas

"Thinking Big" means considering impressions I have of my past history, the life I live and the future I imagine. Paint is the means by which I make my thoughts and feelings visible.



Sam Jungkurth *Black & Ochre #1*, 54 x 72", acrylic on canvas

I consider my paintings a marriage of forms, combining and mixing canvases or leaving them as single compositions. The abstract world can be enormous. Imagination and the ability to think big are like pieces in a puzzle. They fit together: a web of images somehow familiar.

Charles Kaiman *Black & White* 18x12" oil on canvas 2017

My still-lives deal with relative scale and the unusual juxtaposition of small and large.



Joan Marie Kelly *Performing Puja's without Monetary Gain* 45 x 72" oil on linen 2014



In a world motivated by promoting brands that move markets, what does it mean to "Think Big?" Is "Thinking Big" revolutionary? Are actions independent of markets revolutionary? I bear witness to traditions surviving the assault of "progress." The painting celebrates a re-definition of Thinking Big. Women make "puja's, a ritual prayer, bathing on the River Ganges. Thinking Big celebrates the gumption of communities not willing to live a life driven by markets.

Marjorie Kramer *Vermont Valley* 40x52" oil on canvas 1987



This is an older work. Beginners Luck. Sharyn Finnegan saw a watercolor I did of the same subject, before I spilled coffee on it and wrecked it. She liked the open angle of the valley. That openness probably expressed my optimism and my exhilaration while looking at that space which is rather a lot of space for northern Vermont. A good view may be a universal human pleasure. That could be because nobody can sneak up on you and eat you, a feeling going way back. I do own almost all the view. This painting, although old, perfectly expresses the Thinking Big theme.

John Leavey

In 1980 I made a sketch of a figure upside down being flayed or tied by 2 figures. Then in 1982 I made several oil sketches on the theme of Marsyas flayed, or in this case tied. He knew full well what was to come next. Given that the subject calls to mind a famous late work by Titian, one might say that I was thinking big, or thinking too big for one's britches, if I may use a Victorian term. The final work was in acrylic 5' 4 H x 7'5 W, finished in 2015, while begun earlier.



Margaret Leveson *Young's Winter View* 38 x 50" oil on canvas

As someone whose growth was said to have been measured by "the running foot," I can attest to the drawbacks of physical size. "Thinking big," to me, has to be metaphoric. It has to be an image that stretches the viewer's imagination. It has to suggest a world larger than our daily life. What I love about the act of painting is that it breaks through what I think I see. It opens my eyes to the light, color, shapes and space of the world around me. It is this act of discovery I try to bring to the viewer.



Helene K. Manzo *Shadows Hold Their Breath* 50 x 37" oil on canvas 2013

"Big" is not necessarily about size, rather it is the power of an image to attach itself to a larger meaning. My work references the natural world. However, during the process of painting, I rearrange objects, change color and scale...searching for the portal that enables the image to transcend size and reality.

Richard Kirk Mills *GWB I and GWB II* diptych 38x67" Screenprint with hand coloring, edition of 10 with 5 variants



A bridge provides a platform for looking. Thinking big in a smallish scale inevitably involves proportion. Relationships of internal size are given emphasis in these works through radical cropping and contrasts of near and far. Drawings for *GWB I and II* were done on the George Washington Bridge, pre 9/11. The Hudson recedes, buildings diminish, evaporating in light and I only have the massive superstructure to cling to as my palms sweat and knees go weak.

Alakananda Mukerji *Madam Vita I* 52 x 48" oil on canvas

The use of bright colors in my composition has become one of the most important parts of my paintings. The idea of thinking big has been influencing my paintings throughout this series. Thinking big, however, does not always translate to large forms or massive shapes and figures in artwork. My series is about street performers and musicians that I have noticed throughout the years, and in all the different places I have traveled to. Although their musical styles and melodies are drastically different, in many ways all street musicians are the same. All street musicians can create that almost magical atmosphere where you feel compelled to listen, no matter what you're doing, and forget your worries for a while. In my compositions, the musician is usually the emphasis of the piece, while the crowd becomes the background.





Janie Paul *Still Here* 16x19"
charcoal and oil pastel on paper

I am drawn to the immensity of imaginative space and the evocative quality of fundamental shapes. *Still Here* is about the coexistence of confinement and expansion, constraints and freedom, limits and possibilities. It is dedicated to the incarcerated artists I have been working with for the past twenty-two years, men and women who enlarge their spirits while confined in inhumanely small spaces.

Erica Child Prud'homme *Morning/Evening* two-sided screen 67x75" oil on canvas



Bigness is always relative. We humans feel big compared to most insects, small relative to giant oaks. It's all about scale. We are at the smaller end of a scale going from atoms to planets to the universe. Human beings are an integral part of nature and it is a comforting thought that the shapes of our human hills and valleys are repeated throughout the natural world. Shoulders and backs, hips and breasts, are duplicated by mountain ranges, repeating the curves and planes we see around us. It's a joy to make these connections in some of my work.

Nancy Prusinowski *Jonah and the Whale* 6"x24"x2" mixed media 2017

Over the years through painting figuratively and collaging abstractly, my strongest work always been small in scale. I like to think of my most effective artworks as big fish in little ponds.



Tim Ross *Green Bird* 64x27" mixed media

The scale of a figure about 6 feet tall is translated in the large mixed media GREEN BIRD



Victoria Salzman *Are you OK?* 9 ½x25" etching

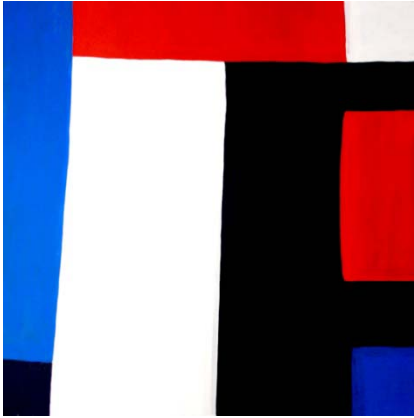
I am a printmaker. I like to work with multiple plates. In the beginning, I am not sure how many plates or how big the piece will be. Before I figure out what the piece will say, I play around with the different size plates and how they fit together. The piece grows as I start drawing on the plates.



Gina Sawin *Migration*, oil on canvas 50x45" 2017

In the vast infinity of sky, flocks of shorebirds are minute, yet powerful. I try to capture that relationship of scale, where avian forms define an otherwise limitless space. This motif could work in a mural format, but easel painting allows me to see each bird's individuality as a part of the unity of the flock. Also relevant to "bigness" is how the patterns of wings, the shifts of lights and darks, and the balance between substance and ephemeral capture a micro-moment in the earth's life cycles.

Janet Sawyer *Marais* acrylic on canvas 48 x 48" 2014



Bigness to be sure
is a relative perception

Often a painting's grandeur
depends on its reception

Though paintings can be any size
we do think bigger bolder

Yet big ideas seen with the eyes
loom large to the beholder

Linda Smith *Solitude* 40x 32" oil on linen



It is not the scale of a painting but the power of the image that makes it a big idea. A great work of art is both of its time and timeless. It is a visual language that communicates deeply, without need of words or doctrine. My best ideas come to me in a flash...an image charged with beauty and passion which must be realized. The precise meaning is a mystery, rich with possibilities. It is always a struggle to translate this inner vision to canvass with paint. It evolves during the process of making art. Perfection is illusive.



Jennifer Toth *Out of Water* 44 x 36" oil on canvas

Thinking Big can be thinking about small first.

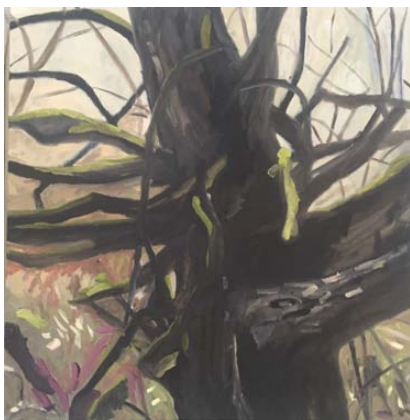
I am painting small scale transportation: a model boat and toy trucks, cars, and planes into larger compositions that become much bigger than the sum of its small parts. In *Out of Water* the model boat sits on a windowsill, landlocked and caged and yet all around it are pieces of larger views: landscapes, a mirror reflecting another part of the room, pieces of the interior of the porch, a glimpse the artist. The space is compressed but also suggests infinite reflections and space that stretches beyond the edges of the painting.

Sam Thurston *Two Figures* 14" x 9" x 6" cherrywood 2017

I would rather fail attempting something big than succeed at something small, but I do not think of physical size as the best definition of 'big'. Big to me means attempting something no one else is doing. Something that pushes into the future, not just mimics the past. My work, *Two Figures*, whatever its failures, has taken on as its content human action, a depiction of movement from which I have only little from the past to guide me. For that reason I consider it 'big'.



Marie Van Elder *Forest Bathing* 24x24" oil on linen



Part of my art practice is translating nature-based observations into a personal painted contemplation of life, its cycles, fragility, resilience and beauty.

The wild Northern Pacific coast, with its giant fire scarred redwood and other ancient trees, provides endless opportunities for ways to explore unpredictable shapes, make meaningful marks, establish color relationships, organize space and find inner metaphors. In a place of chaos where the whimsical can rapidly transform into the catastrophic, the exuberance of art making as well as the responsibility for our land is a celebration of Nature's grandeur and its impermanence as well as ours.



Rose Weinstock *Cast Iron Column* 52 x 26" oil on linen

As the size of a representational painting of architectural elements grows, its effect on the viewer changes from being just a picture of a door, window, etc, to suggesting that the element is a real item with which the viewer can interact. The usual door in a home is about 75 inches high. This painting in which the door is 26 inches tall begins to suggest that effect. "Cast Iron Column" is a view of a building in the SoHo neighborhood of New York City. The door is framed by the decorative column on one side and pattern of leaf shadows on a traditional round column on the other. In between is the entry which beckons us to enter the dark void beyond.

Jeanie Wing *Ferns and Arrowhead Leaves* 30 x 22" acrylic on canvas

My artwork addresses a big theme: the celebration of nature's grandeur by focusing attention on a small part of the environment that suggests a much larger universe. How does Mother Nature continually create so many beautiful and natural complex compositions that we may see and then select to represent. The ferns and arrowhead leaves in this painting are drawn smaller than in real life. In looking more carefully there are other smaller and minute plants that find their own spaces that allow them to thrive. I recently saw a statement by Rachel Carson that to me is inspirational: "Those who dwell among the beauties and the mysteries of the Earth are never alone or weary of life."

