

THE SPACE BETWEEN

Questions of Place in Times of Uncertainty

I was honored when asked by the Women's Caucus for Art to jury this exhibition. I firmly believe in their mission which is catalyzed by art, education and activism to create an equitable community for all, while supporting women and recognizing their contributions in the arts. Their mission may be more important than ever considering the present moment. When planning for this show began in the summer of 2019, we were all in a very different place. In light of current events, the economic uncertainties, contested cultural spaces and environmental themes mentioned in the prospectus have taken on new resonance and magnitude. There was no knowing the 'spaces between' would be not 'overlooked' as noted in the open call for art but would become center stage in the summer of 2020. In the interstitial gap between when the artwork was solicited and selected - civil unrest, a health care crisis spun out of control and wide-spread economic uncertainty would be the order of the day.

As the Covid-19 crisis took hold in March and George Floyd was murdered by law enforcement officers in May, we became both more socially distant and yet, in some ways, more connected by our desire for healing and social justice. And so, the spaces between became yet more amplified, inflamed, and visible as the nation struggled to cope from its socially distant positions. Much of the artwork in this exhibition, not surprisingly then, addresses these very difficult topics in the wake of what we understand will be historical events. In the spirit of activism supported by the WCA, the art responds, elicits, addresses, provokes, questions, honors, reflects and challenges ideologies, ideas, cultural positions, identities, prejudices and politics.

While much of the artwork confronts heavy external truths, some artists reflect inwardly on their concerns. Their work considers the natural world - whether a back yard, a slice of sky visible from a high-rise balcony or the 'great outdoors.' Notions of home and family are addressed in this exhibit, as is life at the molecular and cellular levels. Solitary states and feelings of isolation are also negotiated, as are other psychological states of mind. This show at once hopeful and despairing, as the artists navigate current events and the possibilities for creative discourse, while reflecting honestly on their fears, hopes and desires in this indeterminate, but pivotal, moment in history. In some respects, this show might be considered a time capsule. How would we view ourselves at this instant if we could move into the future and look back?

Jeanne Brasile