

# The Star-Ledger

## Working small but thinking big

There's plenty of talent on the walls

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ART



A prize winner at Metro 25, the annual CWOW juried exhibition of small works, is "Vigilance II 3/50," a digital print and glass transfer image by Jo Bradney of Morris Plains.

**Metro 25.** *Where: City Without Walls, 6 Crawford St. at Halsey Street, Newark. When: Through Dec. 20. Noon-6 p.m. Wednesdays-Fridays; 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturdays. How much: Free. Call (973) 622-1188 or visit [www.cwow.org](http://www.cwow.org).*

What's smaller than a bread box but tours the whole state? The annual Metro Show at City Without Walls.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the alternative gallery's yearly Metro Show, a juried exhibition of small works (nothing larger than 13 by 13 by 13 inches) that tours the state for the next year. The show is nearly as old as the gallery, a now venerable institution in Newark devoted to emerging artists, and a quarter of a century is about as old as any annual art exhibition gets in this state, so this is a special occasion.

But CWOW (the gallery is now known by its acronym) has not changed the rules in any way for this show -- it's still art not much bigger than a laptop, juried by artworld types. This year the jury included Heather Darcy of Mixed Greens Gallery, Erin Donnelly of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, and Carlo McCormick from Paper magazine. They've chosen some 70 examples, ranging from simple charcoal drawings to videos shown on hand-held monitors and even a wonderful acrylic box that casts blue shadows over a collection of candy-colored pills and capsules (New Yorker Kentaro Hiramatsu's "Parkbox").

This year's Best in Show for Painting went to New Yorker Amy Hill for "Zoe," a tiny, exquisitely realized oil on wood that mimics 15th-century northern European painting perfectly but depicts a mohawked New Yorker. It really is one of the more amazing things to see in any show right now, and a marker for the amazing talents out there among emerging artists.

Best in Show for Photography went to Patricia Bender of Somerset, for a diptych in which branches echo a human figure, and Best for Mixed Media went to Morris Plains artist Jo Bradney for "Vigilance II 3/50," a digital print and glass transfer image.

But the wittiest pieces here only got honorable mentions, and both mock the media world: New Yorker Francine LeClercq's press transfer letters on fabric spelling out "THIS WORK HAS BEEN MODIFIED

FROM ITS ORIGINAL VERSION, IT HAS BEEN FORMATTED TO FIT THIS FRAME," and Brooklyn artist Carlo Vialu's "Casts of Thousands," an ArtNews magazine cover that has been X-actored out so Vialu can stick photos of all sorts of people on the cover. Jersey City's Beth Gilfilen was also cited for her acrylic paper cut-outs, which look like paper patterns for protractors or for auto chrome detailing, as was Elizabeth photographer Gina Bellando for "Daphne," a tantalizingly distorted image that appears to come from a TV monitor.

Simplicity itself is Gillette artist Danielle Auriemma-D'Amico's "Mother," a lovely charcoal drawing, or Brooklyn Rachel Beach's "Wedgewood," a wall sculpture that seems to comically illustrate tectonic uplift.

Among contemporary art strategies, Bayonne's Joe Waks stands out. Waks takes small accent pictures -- the kind folks hang in powder rooms, little pictures with frames you can buy at Kmart that show alpine meadows or sunny Southern landscapes, most of them mass-produced in China -- and paints little mementos of modern America into them, like a McDonald's Golden Arches rising out of the forest background.

In art school we used to say if you can't make it bigger, make it red, but these 70 artists show that small can be very beautiful.

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