



Cade Tompkins Projects

SouthCoastTODAY

Exhibit demonstrates two roads to the same destination



Max Van Pelt, *FORAGER (ode to scarpa)*
2015, mixed media, 71 x 42 inches

By Keith Powers / Contributing Writer
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Excerpt about Van Pelt's work:

Bold-and-expressive can cancel out delicate-and-nuanced, or complement it perfectly.

In the current exhibition at Grimshaw-Gudewicz Art Gallery on the campus of Bristol Community College, Catherine Bertulli's explosive sculptural canvases dramatically attract, but Maxwell van Pelt's quietly articulated wire installations state their own ideas just as effectively.

Maxwell van Pelt shows about two dozen works, wire-and-wood sculptures, and colored drawings with a similar aesthetic. Where Bertulli shouts, van Pelt whispers. Both get heard.

Invoking [sculptor Alexander] Calder gives an idea of what van Pelt's sculptures look like, but the works create a much different atmosphere than Calder's antic mobiles and stabiles. It's not that they seem more serious, just more intentional.

Most of the "sculptures" hang on the wall — or rather, emerge from the surface. The delicate shadows that the works cast on the white wall also

form part of the installation.

Although they are deliberately fabricated from wood, wires, yarn, and plastic, they could just as easily been drawn by hand (the drawings that accompany the sculptures emphasize that point.)

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In his materials list for each of the sculptures, van Pelt lists “music” along with wire, yarn, and the others. He undoubtedly means musical wire, like guitar or violin strings, but the allusion is telling. Swirling, occupying space, and following line, these works are quite lyrical.

Van Pelt’s delicate effect is mesmerizing, faint (the sculptures are barely visible from the opposite side of the small gallery), but articulate. The juxtaposition of the two artists makes for an intriguing show of alternate but energetic approaches.