



# Small Paintings for ‘The Big Show’

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by Pat Rogers

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## **BRIDGEHAMPTON, NY**

A sublime row of small paintings dwarfed by a cavernous space may be the first impression of “The Big Show.” After all, the Silas Marder Gallery is housed in a renovated barn. The building retains the shape and flavor of its practical roots while channeling the traditional white-walled gallery. When all the paintings are 8 x 10 inches, it can be difficult to see them from across the room.

“The Big Show” presents over 150 paintings that are each 8 x 10 inches. Most of the work is installed along a single horizon line. The towering walls make the artwork seen even smaller. This usually means viewers draw close to each piece and spend some time there.

The concept for annual exhibition is simple: artists are selected by gallery owner Silas Marder and provided with three canvases. The artist makes his or her art and sends it to the gallery. The only restriction is that the work must retain its 8 x 10 inch parameter. The gallery installs every artwork returned to them, said Marder. Up until this year, triptychs were not allowed.

Different artists are selected every year to keep the show fresh, said Marder. There are some exceptions—a few artists have participated in several years throughout the show’s seven-year history, he said. Unique for this year is a move away from painting. Some artists choose to use ceramic, metal, ball chain and barn wood. The use of materials can mean a sculptural element becomes part of the work.



“Curtain Call” by Alice Moore Hope, 2012. Ball chain and Neodymium magnets, 8 x 10 inches.



“Roller Roller Skate Skate” by Christian Little, 2012. Mixed media, 8 x 10 inches.

One reason the show remains a popular one is because of the connections between artists and

communities from across the nation and the world, said Marder. Since all the paintings are the same size, the differences between artists and art's potential is easy to see. While the art is diverse, the pieces appear comfortable and engaged in imagined silence conversations taking place among them.

"From painting to painting, there's a dialogue of texture and form," said Marder. "Even the ones that don't relate to each other play a part in the overall presentation...It's like a lively dinner party where the guests might have conflicting opinions, but they all express themselves very politely at exactly the same volume."

My favorite way to begin viewing the show is to stand before a grid of paintings mounted on a tall wooden board near the gallery's entrance. The installation creates a tower of art that gives a mini version of the diverse show. The work in the annual exhibition takes up the entire gallery and its three exhibition spaces.



"Traffic Cam Gold Mountain" by Keke Vilabelda, 2012. Mixed media, 8 x 10 inches.

This year's exhibition also includes works by Nathan Slate Joseph, Gavin Zeigler, Jill Musnicki, Carol Hunt, Perry Burns, Jeff Muhs, Rex Lau, Cornelia Foss, Janet Culbertson, Brett Eberhardt and others.

**BASIC FACTS:** "The Big Show" remains on view through June 24, 2012 at Silas Marder Gallery, 120 Snake Hollow Rd, Bridgehampton, NY. The gallery is open Thursday to Monday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. [www.silasmarder.com](http://www.silasmarder.com)

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