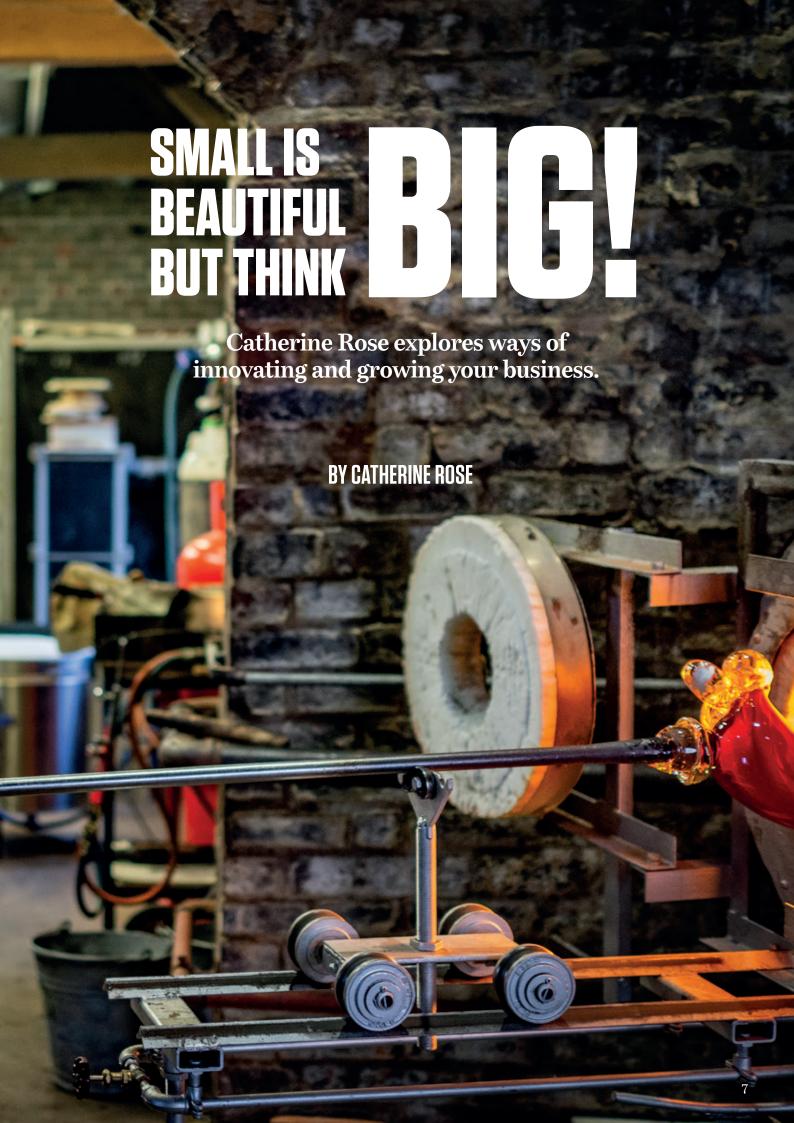
Sharon Louden

Selected Press

MOSAIC & GLASS

THE MAGAZINE FOR CREATORS & ENTREPRENEURS





lass and multi-media artist
Jahday Ford has described
contemporary glassmaking
as "shockingly challenging" with
its high cost of materials, hot
shop/studio hire, equipment, travel
and shipping. So how can artists
find a foothold when climbing
such rocky terrain?

Innovation

As a post-graduate, Jahday had access to studio space and storage at Manchester University. However, as a freelance glass artist he has found it a challenge, having to venture further for his practice.

"It's hard to find affordable studio space," he explains. "And there are no other glass facilities in Manchester. The cost of materials and overheads make it very daunting. You have to cover your energy bills and rent so you can't put yourself in debt. Glassmaking isn't accessible and it's a tricky process."

Sharon agrees. "Glass is expensive, so are clay and mosaic making. To work with them takes space and material," she acknowledges.

Sharon's first book, Living and Sustaining a Creative Life: Essays by 40 Working Artists was conceived from her desire to make space for other artists to share their lives in a transparent way in order to 'start a conversation' – something she didn't see happening. She has negotiated her way through substantial debt in the past and wanted to shine a light on the reality of how to juggle a creative life with the everyday needs of making a living.

Prerana believes that innovation is often misunderstood. "It's not just for large organisations," she explains. "In fact, small businesses have an advantage because they are more flexible." She thinks that many young artists don't ask enough money for their work, pointing out that "underselling doesn't help anyone".

To reduce production costs, she advises being resourceful. "You don't always have to buy the most expensive materials. Mosaic artist Francesca Busca is passionate about recycling so she uses rubbish to make her mosaics and they're beautiful."

"People don't realise that artists are great thinkers."

Prerana suggests applying the Ansoff Matrix, which is a strategic tool that can help entrepreneurs to grow their businesses. It asserts that, once you've penetrated and saturated your chosen market, you can either look at branching into other markets (market development), make new products for the same

market (product development), or diversify (develop a new product for a new market). Any size business can apply this matrix to increase profit.

Because she can approach ideas from a creative perspective, Prerana has been able to successfully transfer her skills in art and design to problem solving within business. "People don't realise that artists are great thinkers," says Sharon. "There is a field called 'design thinking' where companies hire artists to lend a creative voice, giving product insight and different ways to be objective."

Diversification

Despite it being a lifelong passion, Jahday has found he can't solely rely on glass for all of his income,



so he diversifies to "keep his creative journey intact". Between glass commissions, he works on other creative projects to boost both his finances and portfolio.

Keen to dispel the belief that there is only one way to chart a path into a sustainable life as an artist, Sharon doesn't define art by media. Her forthcoming book *Last Artist Standing*, which is due to be published next year, focuses on older artists from minority groups and features a glass and ceramic artist. However, it is "less about the work and more about the person and their journey".

"In my mind, an artist isn't wedded to their media. It simply assists with the artist's language," says Sharon.

"An artist isn't wedded to their media. It simply assists with the artist's language."

Prerana believes that seeing how your skills might fit into another sector can foster personal growth. Her authorship has added what she describes as all-important credibility for her "brand". Sometimes adverse circumstances can be the springboard to creativity and change. Prerana cites the example that during the pandemic, people had

ABOUT JAHDAY FORD

Jahday Ford is an award-winning glass and multimedia artist originally from Bermuda. Now based in the UK, he graduated from the Manchester School of Art in 2017, following which he completed a post-graduate programme in glass-making. Exhibited internationally, he was the recipient of the Jerwood Arts Makers Open competition award in 2022. He received a Manchester Artist Residency for Emerging Artists in 2020-2021.

to rethink their skills and many artists began online workshops to generate increased income.

"The biggest magic is that we, as artists, can pivot very easily because we're used to taking risks," adds Sharon.

Differentiation

Jahday focuses on experimenting with different forces to shape molten glass beyond what he calls "its decorative normality". First featured in New Glass Now at the Corning Museum of Glass, his collection *Breathe* is a set of conceptual pieces exploring how glass is affected by digital sound waves.

"I wanted to fuse the digital world with the physical; it was well-received," he says. For *Breathe*, Jahday worked with digital designer Joseph Hilary. "It brought our practices together in a unique fashion and boosted my career," he says. *Breathe* has since been showcased around the world and has set Jahday apart as a name to watch out for

The term USP (unique selling point) is often talked about in business and artists should embrace it. "Whichever market you're in, it's important to find your niche," advises Prerana. "It must be something you're really passionate about. From there, you can brainstorm to develop a compelling story for your brand – very important when you are in front of a client. Differentiation puts you ahead of the competition."

Prerana's passion is for community projects and she is currently in discussions with the NHS on how to use mosaic in therapy.

Meanwhile, Sharon's second book The Artist as Culture Producer: Living and Sustaining a Creative Life explores how artists extend their practices outside the studio for impactful change within their communities.

"Whenever there are economic

ONE OF PRERANA PHADNIS'S MOSAICS



shifts, artists are affected. We are small businesses," says Sharon.
"But what I love about glass artists is that there are so many ways for them to use glass within different economies and situations. I find this very optimistic."

"Sometimes adverse circumstances can be the springboard to creativity and change."

Collaboration

Hoping to collaborate in the near future with well-known Swedish glass artist Lena Bergstrom whom he describes as a "big inspiration", Jahday sees working with other artists as an affordable way to investigate, design and create in unique environments.

Likewise, Prerana believes that collaboration and teamwork enable emerging artists to maximise their potential while minimising their costs by breaking out of the "small sphere". "There are lots of people out there with complementary skills to yours," she says. "You don't have to let being small stop you from working on a large project."

Jahday has found that undertaking commissions alongside other



artists, or through different platforms that have budget access, is an even better alternative when peer-led collaborations can have tight margins.

Finding organisations and outreach programmes that offer financial backing, or applying for placements and arts residencies, provide invaluable opportunities for young artists. The Jerwood Arts Fund has given Jahday support with travel, accommodation and transporting his work. Through them, he was able to create highly technical pieces working alongside other professionals in larger facilities: an experience which he found incredibly rewarding.



ABOUT PRERANA PHADNIS

Creative business development consultant and mosaic artist Prerana Phadnis chairs the Board of Trustees at the London School of Mosaic. She is a former architect and industrial product designer with longstanding design, branding and marketing experience. She has just published a book on creative thinking entitled A Different Life, Piece by Piece.

"Often, you may not want to focus on massive pieces or master-level techniques – this spurs exciting room for collaboration or working with more experienced makers in other mediums. If I didn't jump to investigate my practice or challenge my knowledge by working with other like-minded creatives, I never would have discovered the areas of glass I work in: designing moulds, creating digital methods and using unusual techniques," explains Jahday.

Sharon believes that it's easy for glass artists to become insular, but that connecting with other artists and organisations is very important for development. "It's much more freeing when artists can meet others. I feel privileged to be a part of my artistic community. Being an artist has a common thread."

Community Building

Jahday started networking early in his post-graduate year. "I looked at placements, open calls and available facilities, so that I had ideas before I jumped in," he says.

"There are programmes out there, you just have to be relentless [in applying]."

This summer, he's working with the Newlyn Exchange programme in Penzance exhibiting his digitally and hand-sculpted works Axle and Axle 2.0, which explore how engineered manufacturing processes can create colourful rotational forms in glass. "There are programmes out there," says Jahday. "You just have to be relentless [in applying]."

Sharon was able to start working in glass when she received a residency at Urban Glass in Brooklyn in 2004. She was also a recipient of the Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program Award, which gave her a year's rent-free studio space in Dumbo, Brooklyn, New York, where she welcomed and collaborated with

ABOUT SHARON LOUDEN

Based in New York, Sharon Louden is a multimedia artist, educator. artist advocate, and artistic director of the Chautauqua Visual Arts at Chautauqua Institution. Widely exhibited, her most recent glass sculptures were shown at Chicago's Engage-Projects Gallery in Autumn 2021. Sharon uses her entrepreneurial teaching skills to serve on boards and committees of various art organisations and volunteers her time to further artists' careers. She is editor of the *Living and Sustaining* a Creative Life book series that addresses real life experiences of artists succeeding in today's world.



other artists. Sharon's current studio is part of Two Trees' Cultural Space Subsidy Program.

Signing up to newsletters and

magazines is an invaluable way to keep abreast of opportunities. Jahday has three subscriptions with monthly listings of paid commissions, competitions and open calls.

"I think 60% of my recent opportunities have come from applications I found in newsletter applications," he says.

Although he has had to scale down when financing his own work, such as projects for the London Design Junction and Islington's Business Design Centre, they have provided him with valuable sales and networking opportunities.

Outsourcing

Prerana believes investing in a well-designed website with effective SEO is worth its weight in gold as it can do a lot of the hard work in your absence. "I've seen company exports increase just by having a good website," she says.

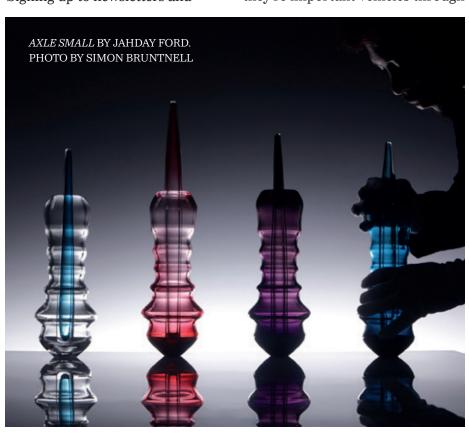
Jahday also exploits free social media platforms like Instagram to promote himself and he believes they're important vehicles through which to view your work critically, make sales and survive. To free up more creative time, Prerana recommends delegating. "You can outsource online product sales, for example, as you don't necessarily have to be present once you've finished designing," she says.

"Small is beautiful but think big!"

Despite the difficulties, Jahday remains positive. "It's been a great journey so far – scary, but great. In a creative industry, you are your own maker. It's easy to lose your passion so patience and determination are essential – it takes a while to gain momentum. You have to do your research. Trust yourself."

"Be mindful of goals," Sharon advises. "The bravery of making art in a studio should be applied outside the studio too."

"If you find yourself stuck, step back to move forward," says Prerana. "Small is beautiful but think big!"





https://thecreativeindependent.com/people/artist-and-educator-sharon-louden-on-why-youre-more-than-what-you-make



The Creative Independent

On why you're more than what you make



Artist and educator Sharon Louden discusses the changing definition of being an artist, her day-to-day as a residency's Artistic Director, and why porches are a perfect place for community conversations.

How did you first come into contact and conversation with Chautauqua Visual Arts

My first teaching job here ever was in 1992 at Chautauqua Institution. I taught teenager sand pre-college students how to draw and paint. I was here for the summer, and the director then was Don Kimes, who gave me thi sopportunity. He was the predecessor whom I replaced here as artistic director.

How did the artistic director role actuall start?

The School has been around since 1909. The Institution's been around since 1874, and the School of Art has always had an artistic director. So over the years, they've had different people come in and direct this program, where their individual visions form what the school is about.

It sounds almost like a legacy, or ongoing conversation, where artists are placed at or near the top of decision making power.

Well, yes. There have been different artistic directors who wear multiple hats, but I do think The Chautauqua Institution is very aware that in order to direct a program such as this, their artistic directors have to be intimately connected to the field they're involved in.

Why do you think they need to be sointimately connected?

Because Chautauqua Institution is based on lifelong learning and bringing people in who can extend culture once they leave. For example, the residency is eight weeks, and each week, a visiting lecturer comes to Chautauqua who shares their knowledge to around 40 artists from all different places, ages, and cultures. The artists will carry that with them when they leave us and move back out into the world.

That's why I believe that we have to live in the here and now. While we carry history wit hus, and while we have to acknowledge the pa stin order to move forward, Chautauqua Visua 1

Arts can be a brave space to incubate that culture.



What does it mean to you to be an artisticdi rector of a residency?

Well, I wear multiple hats, but I think the hat that I wear the most is as an artist.

What that means today is variable, but for me, an artist is far more than just a maker.

We do a lot more before we even start to make something. It's the way we think, the way we talk, we observe, we direct. That's why I took this position: to create and hold space for others, especially people's voices who haven't been amplified in order to address and attempt to correct historic exclusion.

Chautauqua seemed to be the right place at the right time to do this, as the Institution and School have been embedded in progressive history for over a hundred years.

I'm curious if you consider being an artistic director of a residency part of your practice as an artist.

Absolutely. I think everything that I do is intertwined There's a tremendous amount of creativity in administrative work. Especially for me as a white person, I want to share my privilege by making and holding space for others. I want to create a brave space, not just a safe space. I try to do that in anything I do: in my sculpture, in the books I edit, with the hope of creating opportunities and relationships for others. Being an artist in any position, I think, yields creativity, innovation, humanity, empathy, and consideration of others.

It makes me think about recent conversations with a friend of mine who only produces one, maybe two paintings a year. Because of that small volume, and because her day job is outside the arts, she has a hard time calling herself an artist. But my argument back to her was, no, you are an artist, because it isn't just isn't about the number of paintings you make, it's about how you live. It sounds like you've arrived in a similar space.

Definitely. Being an artist is more about how we think, how we live, and what we say. When I worked for Alyson Pou at Creative Capital, she always would tell me that when an artist comes into a conversation or walks in the room, they often have a lot more to say without even saying it. Artists have so much to give because they carry the knowledge and experiences from others with them. We start things from nothing. We have a lot of bravery. We don't need preparation, we just do it. And we bounce back from failure.

Do you think if an artist failed at makingsom ething, they would stop being who they are? No! They keep going. Most artists do their work because it is just who they arean d part of their truth.

I'm curious about your day-to-day work, especially during the off season.

Part of my job, and from my values, is to be able to present this program to as many people who aren't from places we historically think as central to where artists live, like New York or Los Angeles or other big cities. I reach out to academic institutions, nonprofit organizations, and individuals in different nooks and crannies, say hello, and share what we have to offer, like our information sessions.

I develop relationships with people and communicate constantly with our faculty and all 64 of our partners. And I work to ensure they continue beyond my years here, because I believe a relationship should never endunless something terrible happens to us. A relationship is a seed to grow and collabor ate.

We then go through a tremendously intense admissions process, where myself and the lead faculty decide who gets into this program. Everyone who isn't accepted receives feedback directly from me. To this day, I'm still giving feedback to hundreds of artists, because we had the highest number of applications this year, and every year it increases.

The program that I run here is certainly notj ust about me. I am the Director, but the lead faculty at the Chautauqua School of Art play a large role. It's a team-led situation. I oversee the difficulties and the structure and I sometimes feel I'm driving bumper cars. But that makes me happy. I've always loved bumper cars since I was a child.



Suffrage Rugs, 2020, courtesy Seth Foley and Melissa Cowper-Smith

I can then imagine that the work during the residency requires a lot of day-of logistics, like helping guest lecturers find the site and making sure the artists knowwhere to go. But it also sounds like it requires ensuring they come together to inspire each other and grow so they can take their new knowledge through to the rest of their life.

Running a residency is really about the maximum of the minutiae and everything in between. The key to this program is how hybrid it is. The School of Art is an interge nerational residency program with people from all different walks of life andag es and cultures which results in a lot ofdyna mism.

The Chautauqua Institute was always about sharing resources and having a place for discourse. There are a lot of metaphorical fireworks. It's wonderful. But sometimes it' snot wonderful. The ups and downs require being in touch with different humans at different times, and that takes vast amounts of energy, time, and attention. But not only are we willing to spend that time and attention with the residents, we love doing so.

Does the geographic location of Chautauqua have an impact on your work? I'm thinking no only along the lines of the town being the homelands of the Erie and Haudenosaunee, but also the importance of the town in early rai lines and the town developing the pop-up education and entertainment centers called Chautauquas. Do these histories flow into your present work?

I love that I work in a place that has different dynamics and elasticity. We are located on the Seneca-Iroquois Nation's land .Chautauqua is also in the second poorest county in New York State. We're about two hours away from Cleveland, two hours from Pittsburgh, an hour and 40 minutes from Buffalo, and under four hours from Toronto.

We invite everyone to visit from different geographic, economic, and racial contexts come. It yields so much growth. I think abou twhat making space really means for another person. How do we walk into each other's spaces? What do we need to be able to be there?

Artists have a tendency to buy into the artw orld system which, over the years, has yielded pretty exclusionary spaces. White walls make a lot of people feel unwelcome. Our residency tries to embrace the opposite. We're situated in a place with all this richness of conflict and exchange. It's an opportunity to think beyond one art world.

I'm curious if your work ever engages with Chautauqua's city workers, like elected officials.

The Chautauqua Institution definitely does. When I first became Artistic Director in 2018, I first reached out to the Director oft he Seneca-Iroquois National Museum, Joe Stahlman. I work with him a lot. He's on my board of the Friends of CVA. We also reach out to a lot of local communities. Chautauqua Visual Arts develops relationships with a lot of local organizations.



Chautauqua Visual Arts

Why do you think these neighbors, the Chautauquans and the local organizations, buy into the work you do and join you every year?

Chautauquans have been coming here generation after generation. Many of them have houses in town that have been passed on from family to family, and they return out of tradition. There's just so many spectacular people who come here, share knowledge, and promote conversation. Our program becomes an incubator. It's a space of constant conversation.

There are also lots of porches in Chautauqua. So, let's say, after someone comes and gives a talk, everyone goes to their porches and talks about it for days. The community here and the community that comes in have an intellectual appetite. They want to eat it and they want to drink it and they want to soak it in and they want to be present within that energy. That's why so many come back.

Why should artists be in decision makin ~capacities or advisory boards for residencies?

Why wouldn't they be? Artists have been underrated for so many years. There's been this exclusive perception of artists, where we're lazy, or we don't pay our rent. That's totally wrong. I think we look at the world in different ways, and we're risk takers.

Soif you think about what we do in our studio s, or how we make or talk about or observe or read things or bounce into ideas without even preparation, because we have that trust in our own community, it shows that we can leadw ith empathy and compassion. And that's whatI attempt to do as an artistic director.

Why do we have artist residencies in the first place?

Artist residencies give respite and opportunities for community building when it's nearly impossible to do so in other locations. So for example, if you move to New York City for the summer, a city of more than 8 million people, you might feel like you' re a part of a community. But there's a whole lot of other people there. It's hard to actually meet your community in a short period of time.

But if you were accepted to the Chautauqua School of Art residency program, myself and the faculty members have already decided on who else is coming. There are a lot of threads between each of us already. At Chautauqua Visual Arts, they don't have to "make anything." They can think, they can just be. So each year we've done this, the cohorts stay together and lean on one another for years. They share their work and grow with one another. They create opportunities for one another. And that s what we hope for every summer. I think most residency programs provide experiences like that, let alone the opportunity to work and grow however the artist wishes.



Windows, 2015 to 2017, courtesy Christopher Gallo

Could someone else in a small town do something similar to Chautauqua Visual Arts? Do they need a legacy of local people wantin to invest time and energy into the program, or is there a way to fast track some of the work?

It happens all the time. For example, there's a town outside of Duluth in Minnesota, where Annie Dugan started a residency. She realized her small rural community didn't have a placefor local artists to come together. She has a farm and loves artists, so she started one for them. There's another artist, Susan Delgalvis of Grand Junction, CO, who also created a space where she wanted to get her community together. She started with a dinner, and that dinner became Open Studio Fridays and Gallery Fridays once a month in Grand Junction. It's all about communities of artists coming together—it works.

Starting a residency is all about defining the space, the place, and the needs of the community. If you can generate the energy tosustain it, like any art project, I definitely think it can happen again. Why not?

There's something I find interesting about your work as an artist where you're buildin platforms and then stepping aside, up, or down from the spotlight. Why should artists be passing their platforms and the mic to others?

Well, first they have to hold the mic. Artists have to be strong enough to hold the mic. They have to acknowledge they're holdin gthe mic so that they don't disappear from the hecommunity. But it's not just artists that do

this. Passing the mic around is something I think works across humanity. It's a part of being human. I don't see it as an artist's responsibility. I don't even see it as a responsibility. I just see it as a natural form. It's like a conversation.

City Weekly

THE BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE NOVEMBER 26, 2000

The end?

Where one artist's work ends, another's work begins. The installation — preparations underway at right — is at Boston Center for the Arts. Page 10



croft. Each building in his tiny villages is made out of paper invitations from past art shows he has done, or from paint cans and other discarded art supplies.

Rising out of one of O'Shea's villages is a giant wooden sculpture done by Brooklyn artist Bruce Brosnan, who set up a bright light to shine on his sculpture and then

This installation seeks a sense of connectedness

By David Wildman
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

aking Ends Meet," the title of a new exhibit at the Boston Center for the Art's Mills Gallery, could be a deft pun on how difficult it is to survive as an installation artist.

Curator Shelley Bancroft, however, was more concerned with the literal translation of the title, the point being that each of the

Pulso

six installations in the exhibit had to physically connect one to the next.

The result is a colorful and confusing spectacle. The floor near the front of the gallery is covered with Mick O'Shea's miniature train track that winds around small uniform houses and villages. The tiny railroad then morphs into Daniel Stupar's train track made out of chains lying on the floor, precariously ridden by a strange wagon/s-led/boat sculpture.

This, in turn, is being pulled upward by a flying bicycle that seems aching to join Sharon Louden's hovering tufts of gold seaweed and Linda Price-Sneddon's hanging gardens of fluorescent pipe cleaners and ping pong balls that drape from the ceiling and crawl down the wall.

"As a curator I'm always interested in finding different ways to approach the artistic process, by providing interesting limits,' explains Bancroft, who says that this will be her last exhibit after three years as curator at BCA.

Bancroft conceived the idea of having six installation artists create site-specific work with the only limits being that each piece had to connect with the one next to it in some way. She mapped out who would have what space in the gallery, like a seating plan for an elaborate dinner party.

Then she made sure there was ample communication between the artists, so that each knew what was being built before their piece and after their piece along the chain.

"It's actually kind of strange how it turned out," says Bancroft.

The women's work is feminine and organic, and high up in the air. The men's work tends to be very structured, and mostly low to the ground. While the six pieces can be considered a complete unit, they also each stand on their own.

Traci Wile uses video surveillance cameras and monitors to make connections between pieces, at one point shining a giant eye onto the wall where Price-Sneddon's pipe cleaners and string are clinging.

O'Shea's railway, which starts the chain, is meant to reflect his comment on the uniformity of the art world, according to Ban-

Shelley Bancroft conceived the idea of having six installation artists create site-specific work with the only limits being that each piece had to connect with the one next to it in

painted on the wall of the gallery the negative space around the shadows thrown on the wall. Cleverly, it is a wall mural that is dependent on a standing sculpture to make its whole statement, just as the individual artists in the show are dependent on one another to complete each of their installations.

Making Ends Meet runs through Sunday, Jan. 21 at The Mills Gallery, 539 Tremont St. in Boston. There will be a talk Thursday from 7 to 9 p.m. at the gallery. Regular hours are Wednesday through Sunday, 1-4 p.m. and Thursday through Saturday, 7-10 p.m. Call 426-8835 for more information.



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