

Two local artists find inspiration from unusual spaces

By **Brian Benson**

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Two Natick women with a longstanding passion for art have a new exhibit at a Framingham art gallery showing their photographs and mixed media pieces.

Photographer Marie Craig and mixed media artist Jeanne Williamson each have several pieces on display as part of the exhibit "On and Off the Grid" at Fountain Street Fine Art, 59 Fountain St.

Craig's photos are of windows while Williamson crafts pieces that draw their inspiration from construction fencing.

Craig, who has lived in Natick since 1990, studied biology and art in college and began her career as a medical photographer, taking pictures of scientists' research in a way that left her with a strong eye for details.

Craig said the work appealed to both sides of her training. She had to ensure the photos were scientifically accurate but could also strive for beautiful images.

About a decade ago, Craig, Fountain Street Fine Art's co-director, left the field to focus on artistic photography.

Her photos on display at the exhibit depict windows in local places such as Natick and other nearby towns and international destinations including China and Australia.

In some photos, the edges of the window are not within the frame, a technique Craig said she hopes gives people a reason to pause while they are viewing the work.

"I hope people will say, 'What is it that I saw? Am I outside looking in or inside looking out,'" she said. "I hope people come down and spend a little time and try and figure out the vantage point."

Williamson, who has lived in Natick for 25 years, said her work starts with the orange fences used at construction sites.

Williamson said she thinks in terms of grids and grew to like fences, whose textures and patterns she prints onto fabric.

Using fabric that resembles bed sheets and paint, she said she creates art that delves into several processes including printmaking, painting and stitching.

The work ends up resembling more of a painting than fabric, she said

One series on display in the exhibit "explores what one might see when looking through the holes in construction fences out in their element," Williamson said in an artist's statement on her website, www.jeannewilliamson.com.

Williamson and Craig said they hope to partner with each other again on other exhibits.

The gallery formed in 2011 from the popularity of an open studios event artists who work in that Fountain Street industrial building organize.

"The question we always got was 'Can we see more?'" Craig said. "We started a gallery to answer that question."

The exhibit runs through Feb. 24. The gallery is open Thursdays through Sundays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. An opening reception will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. Saturday.

This year's open studios event will be held April 26 through 28.

For more information, visit www.fountainstreetfineart.com. Craig also has a website, mariecraigphoto.com.

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