

INDUSTRIAL STRENGTH

Fountain Street Fine Art
59 Fountain Street
Framingham, Massachusetts

Through July 31

A newcomer this year, the member co-op Fountain Street Fine Art gallery is a welcoming space that retains the gritty charm of its 19th century manufacturing roots in Framingham's Bancroft Building, home to the largest collective of working artists in MetroWest Boston.

The first half of summer offers up "Industrial Strength," an open-call juried show showcasing 65 works selected by Howard Yezerski, owner of Boston's Yezerski Gallery, from 232 entries. The theme asks us to reflect on the history of the gallery space and to investigate the detritus, elbow grease and politics of industry.

The low-ceilinged, ground floor gallery is cozy and spacious at once. A row of legacy supporting columns painted aging sea foam green divides the gallery neatly in two. These supports bear a storybook of scars that serve to create a dialog with and to succinctly frame the wall-hung sections of work, which span a variety of media including found-

object sculpture, photography and painting.

A trio of paintings by Andrew Haines offers views of post-industrial emptiness that are all too common in the day-to-day landscapes of this community and its surrounds. The best of the three, Haines' intriguingly anonymous "Small

City Ramps," depicts an overlooked corner of an industrial neighborhood set close to highway off-ramps. Rendered loosely in storm cloud blue acrylic on paper, the only signs of life are a shadowy figure exiting stage left, the signature of a car speeding past and a couple of lonely parked vehicles. Of the many buildings making up this



Andrew Haines, *Small City Ramps II*, 2010, acrylic on paper, 23 x 17 1/2".



Steven Martin, *the package*, 2011, mixed media/assemblage 18 x 18".

square block, all windows appear empty, boarded up or broken. As in all three of Haines' displayed paintings, the neighborhood billboard contains no message.

Tracking a similar vein of post-economic collapse ennui is Steven Thomas Martin's tongue-in-cheek, found-object sculpture "The Package." This junkyard cube of compressed and bound workers' garments sports denim, striped twill and canvas caps, work gloves and Levi's. In a protest cry of American jobs lost overseas to a cheap labor force, Martin's hand-painted package tag reads: "Ship to: China / Shipper: America / Contents: Jobs / Carton No: 1 — of millions."

With a theme lending itself so absolutely

to the medium, it's no wonder that clever sculptures rule this show. A.J. Grignaffini's intricate, mixed-media object "The Fish" makes ingenious use of found metal detritus puzzled together into the form of a menacing piranha. Cutlery, tools, enameled belt buckles, locks, even a meat thermometer convincingly conjure up the form of this hungry predator. A.J.'s brother Louie Grignaffini's "Perched" shows a similar material genius in the form of a bird on a branch.

Although the industrial theme conjures up plenty of grit and monochrome, there are bursts of juicy color that reference the more recent fruits of industrialization.



Bill Cohn, *Triple Tube Form*, ceramic, fieldstone, 27 x 20".



AJ Grignaffini, *The Fish*, 2011, repurposed metal sculpture, approx. 8.5 x 11".

J.B. Jones' large oil painting "Clip" serenades the strength and utility of this humble denizen of the office supply cabinet in silky strokes of crimson, electric blue, lime green and bubblegum pink.

One can't hang a show celebrating industrial space without paying homage to the factory restroom. Fine-tuned in Photoshop, Joe Barnes' giclée print of a mid-20th century restroom titled "The New Economy" sets lush greyscale tones against orange mineral deposits trickling from a lidless toilet bowl and a small basin sink (from which I suspect hot water never reliably ran.).

A trio of ceramic sculptures by Bill

Cohn investigates industrial textures, patterns which he applies liberally to clay slabs then shapes into tubes, planes, even a heart shape in a plastic vitrine. Always in search of new industrial materials to impress, Cohn admits to haunting alleyways and the aisles of Home Depot alike in search "of patterns we hardly see because they're so ubiquitous." Browsing "Industrial Strength" for the standouts is a similar, but worthwhile, exercise.

| Meredith Cutler



J.B. Jones, *Clip*, 2008, oil on canvas, 53 x 36".