

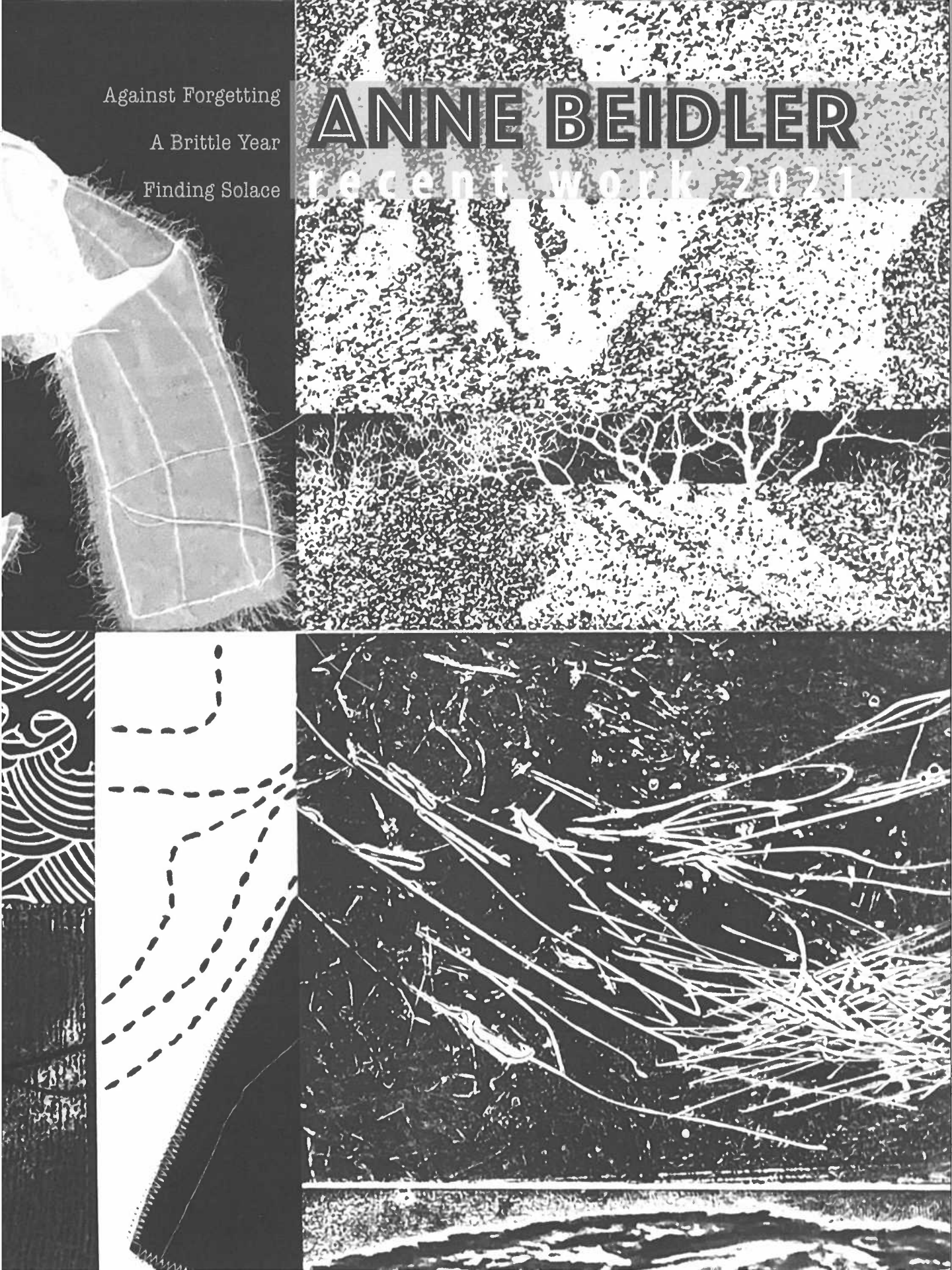
Against Forgetting

A Brittle Year

Finding Solace

ANNE BEIDLER

recent work 2021



Ode to Anne Beidler

DONNA SADLER

Thresholds, words, windows, doorways, bodies, nature, one medium ceding to another: Anne's artwork is difficult to classify as it is always experienced corporeally before the intellect rears its head to interpret what the body already knows. Anne Beidler's art elicits the viewer's inner archaeologist, for each image is composed of layers of not only different media, but also distinct layers of meaning. In viewing the haunting image of Daphne, a suspended Chinese gateway, or a garden, one surrenders to the complex dance of drawing, Xerox transfer, charcoal, graphite, ink, (and often tin, paint, wax, sewing and collage), in

pursuit of the narrative strain of Anne's works. For Anne's inquiry into the body in space, the creation of one's story from both cultural and personal memories, the Eastern sensibility that courses through her images, deeply affect the onlooker. In her latest works, for example, the somber palette, the searching tree roots and the majestic tree, the isolated human figure, the bold line charting a new passage into the void, all betray the depth of Anne's quest for a safe harbor during times of uncertainty. In one work, the figure (often an extension of the artist) reaches down into a tangled sea of roots; other images feature branches superimposed on the figure. The only way for the self to find refuge is to grow and now is the moment for that evolution.

It is particularly in Anne's artist's books that one perceives the intricate character of her work on a small, intimate scale. As in the Gardens and Gateways collection of works, these books reveal the Zen-like nature of Beidler's aesthetic. Anne's ability to weave the creation of book arts into the Liberal Arts curriculum reveals to me an artist/educator who is deeply involved in her own creative journey as well as that of her students. The

one course we co-taught was on pilgrimages through the lens of art history and in the thematic practice of studio art. It was through this experience that I witnessed the beautiful integration of Anne's pedagogical approach and her own artistic pilgrimage. Anne's pride in her student work reflects her profound commitment to both the theory and the possibilities of an education in the humanities.

In reflecting on Anne's body of work, strains of the events in her life surface, transmogrified by the creative process: self-narratives do not attempt to recover the past, but rather they re-imagine it by their rendition of the self, immersed in history. The images give voice to the integrity of the past by invoking the mysteries embedded in one's story. In Anne's Red Thread Book, she alludes to the Asian belief in destiny or fate. A very commonly held idea in both China and Japan is that there is an invisible red string that connects those who are destined to meet regardless of time, place, or circumstances. Is it providence that we must thank for the gift of Anne Beidler to Agnes Scott?

Generations of students and colleagues are grateful for the barely perceptible red thread that has catapulted us into the fabric of Anne's story, and in turn, Anne's art endures as a beautiful and indelible legacy to all.





FOREST BATHER

What We See

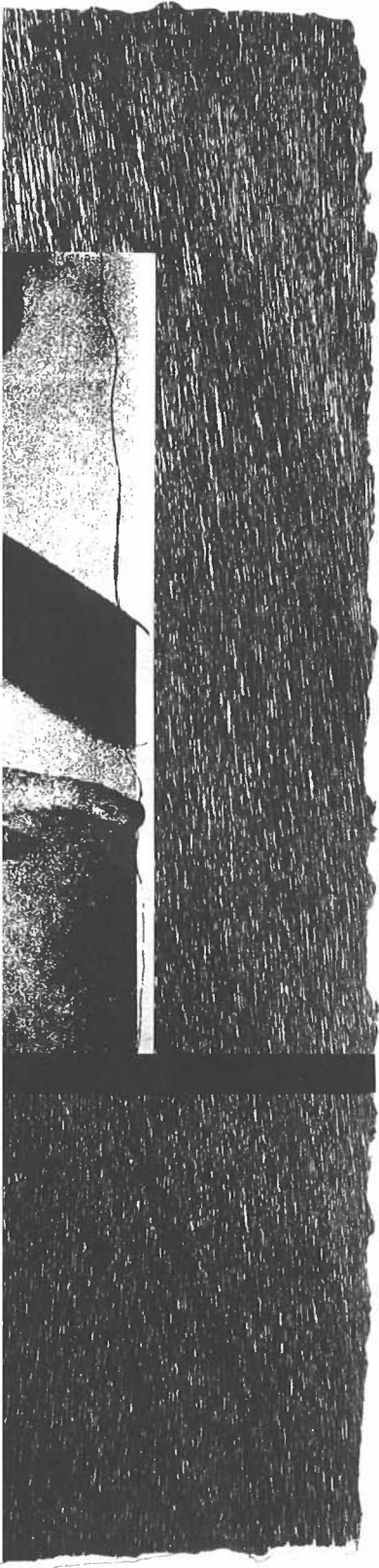
KATHERINE SMITH

I could write about close looking and delve into elements and principles of design. They are part of the language we share, between practice and history. I could draw out the lines and the shapes and the contrast and the balance and the rhythm, among many other compositional strengths and strategies, large and small. I could talk about the mind, nigh and nimble, that conceived these images and this installation, the hands that carved and set and held the plates, the letters, the paper, that chose and shifted, textures and colors. I could talk about the observable and tangible qualities, easily, because that is what I trained to do.

But I want to talk about the heart, because that, for me, is more difficult and more vulnerable. The heart that has felt its way through these moments and experiences and arrived here is patient and passionate and compassionate and caring for family, for friends, for students, for colleagues. I have learned from Anne to pause and listen and wait for the messages that reveal themselves over time and with attention in this work of teaching and service, in the innumerable ways that she is perceptive and present.

And I am grateful. Anne taught me to notice and nurture spirits and souls, to honor them. And when I am still and stay here, I can catch glimpses of what she sees so easily and feels so deeply – only part of who she is, and what she gives, and how I know.





Recent Work

ANNE BEIDLER

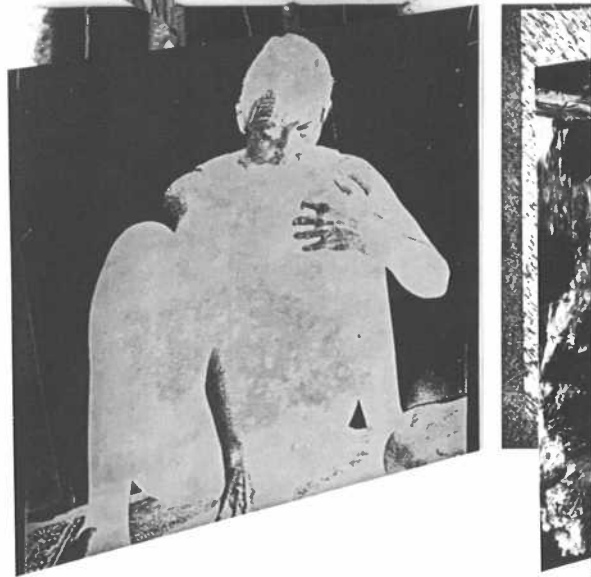
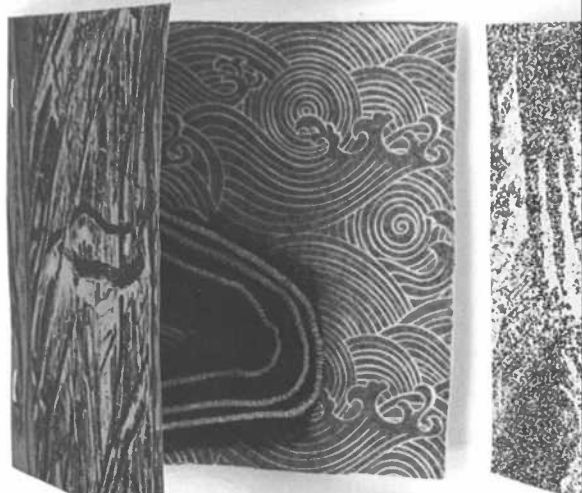
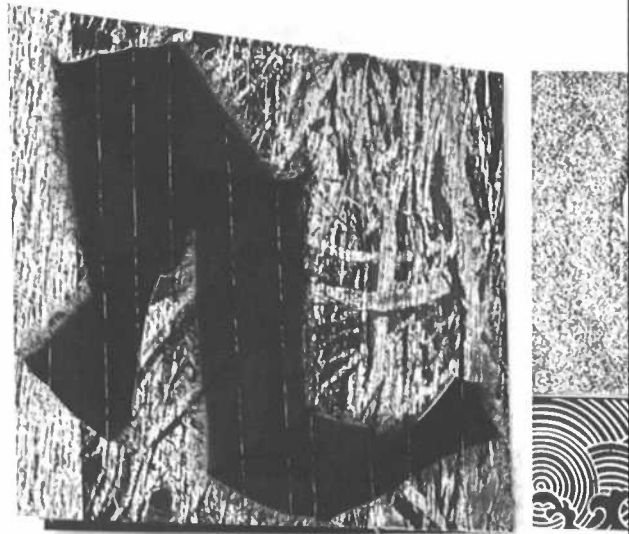
In this exhibition of mixed-media prints on paper, I explore several themes via a gathering of recent works. My images are grounded in the intimate and layered interaction between artist and viewer. I attempt to capture experiences that are my own, but also belong to others. Text by poets who have been strongly influential are interspersed on the walls with my images.

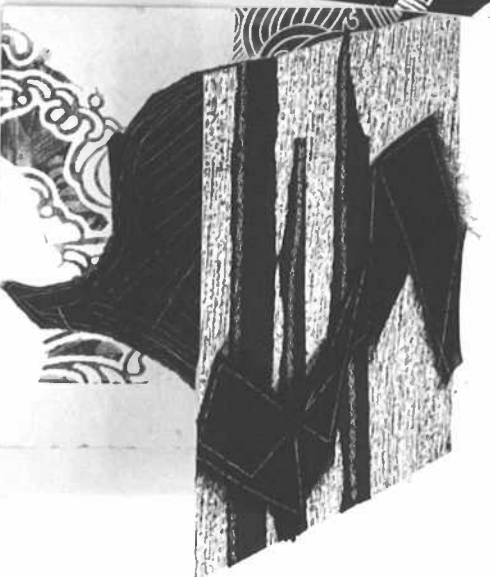
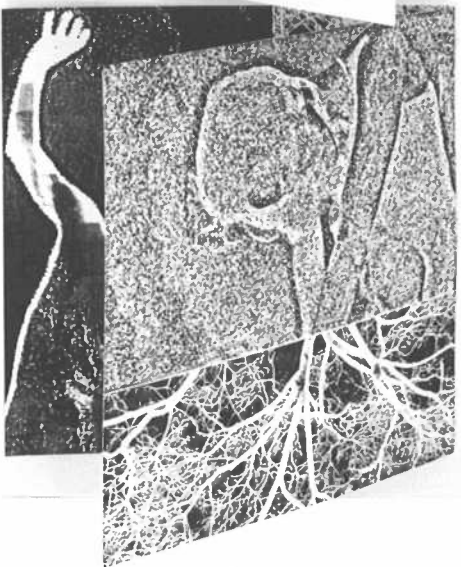
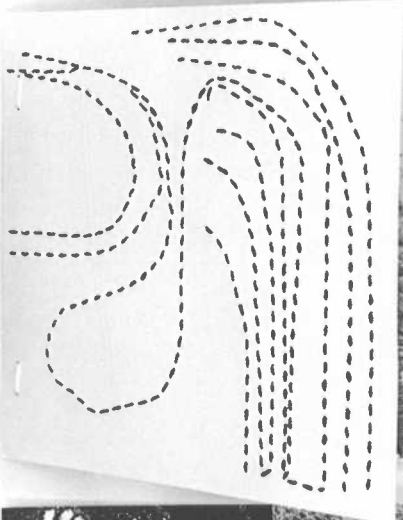
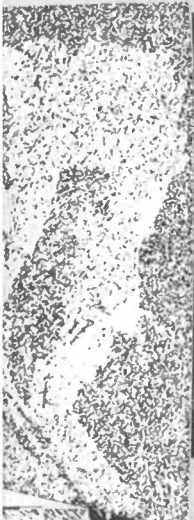
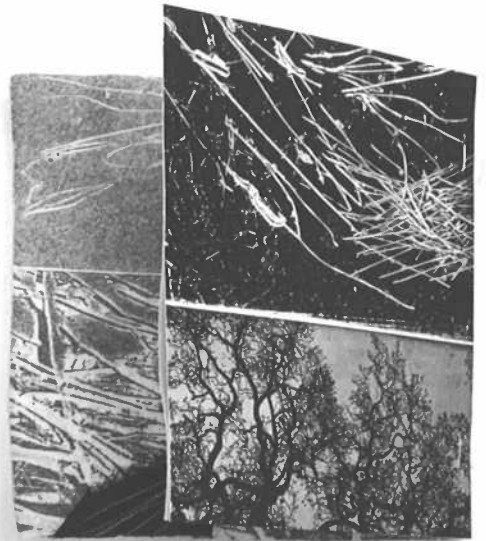
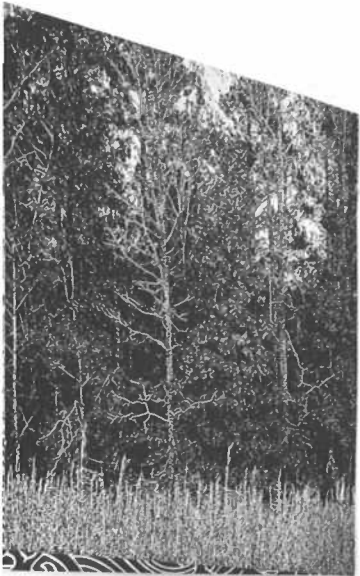
Against Forgetting was originally inspired by the poetry anthology of the same name by Carolyn Forché.

A Brittle Year includes pieces developed during the height of the Covid pandemic.

Finding Solace are images that explore personal spaces of calm and beauty, perhaps an afternoon spent alone in the forest.

The works in Haiku are letterpress printed visual poems. They evoke the focused simplicity found in traditional Japanese haiku poems.





Anne Beidler

CHRISTINE COZZENS

At an exhibition in 2019 in the Dalton Gallery of works from Agnes Scott's own collection filled with wonderful paintings, prints, photographs, sculptures, ceramics, and more, I noticed that my husband Ron had been standing in front of one work for at least ten minutes. I walked over to see what had so riveted his attention. It was a print by Anne Beidler. "This," he said, gesturing to the print on the wall "is the best thing here by far."

I know what he meant. A Beidler print draws you in—its appeal both visual and tactile—and won't let you go. The black and gray tones, muted colors, compacted lines, bleak textures, suggestive patterns, and intersecting surfaces ask that you give them time, and the longer you look, the more you are entangled. A quick glance might give the impression of a densely crafted book page, the feel of thick paper and a deckle edge.

Anne is also

a maker of artist's books, so a strong tactile sense and bookish qualities imbue all of her works. Her prints are more standalone or separate chapters in a series, and each one seems to put together something of the realistic and something of the abstract to tell its story. Common elements let you know this is a Beidler. There is often a human form or at least the suggestion of a human form, usually a woman, bending, crouching, in mid action, her shape and potential for movement echoed in a line, or a strip of fabric, or the arch of a tree branch. The surfaces—whether distinguished by texture, medium, or color—make me think of Cubism and give a kind of geometric resonance to the whole, but the rough edges and naturalistic forms take you in another direction altogether. Even when flat and in a frame, A Beidler print seems three dimensional. Each time I come back to one of them, I find myself moving in and out of the image as I make my own sense of it.

Given her fascination with the book, with ink and paper, and gray tones, and surfaces, it is no surprise at all that Anne would work with poetry, and the current exhibition of her work in the Dalton Gallery—"Recent Works"—includes a new series of prints coupled with poems. Of course, the prints don't narrate the poems. Instead, they evoke the moods, problems, and discoveries of each written work—they are visual poems paralleling the written ones. Another work in the exhibition, "a brittle year," brings book and print together in an astonishing twelve panel ink and paper array where each square panel opens like a book,

giving us three images instead of one, The first and third rows of four open one way, the middle row opens the



other way—a twelve month calendar of emotions and stories to ponder. I stood rooted in front of that one for quite a long time.

Back to that earlier exhibition—I eventually pulled Ron away from Anne's print so he could see the rest of the works on display. Christmas was coming, and fortunately, Anne still had a print from the long ago run from which the college had purchased its Beidler. Though the pandemic—a brittle year indeed—delayed our transaction for months, I finally got the beautifully framed print from her just in time for Ron's birthday last September. Now he can look at it all he wants.



Anne Beidler and the Art of Rereading a Classic

AMANDA H. HELLMAN

The process of printmaking reflects the complexities of life. To build a print, a printmaker carves different plates to build layers of color and contour. Once printed together on one piece of paper, these distinct parts become a whole. Likewise, an individual is made up of distinct parts—children, work, relationships, community—and a complete identity becomes apparent when imprinted on one soul. The fast pace of life often precludes our ability to stop and reflect, but that’s where art comes into play. The arts—visual, literary, performing, or musical—create an opportunity to stop time; to sit, to be absorbed, to reflect, and to connect. This intimate, reflective exhibition of recent work represents a fraction of Anne Beidler’s oeuvre and a small number of poems that she has carried with her over the years that push her to look more closely at the world around her. It is a poignant collection that compels anyone who walks past to pause, to look, to think, to engage.

When Anne and I discuss her work, we do not focus on the art for long before we begin discussing the poets who have accompanied her throughout her life. When we live with these artforms—printmaking and poetry—I am reminded of Italo Calvino, who wrote of the impact

of rereading great literature throughout your life in his essay, “Why Read the Classics.” Anne’s printmaking process and the process of viewing her work feels like the devotion to the joy and resonance of rereading the classics. Anne’s work shows the deep commitment to understanding the world around her, both the natural world and the constructed world. You see (and feel) the result of someone who has taken these wise words of the great poets with them through life, letting the words change meaning as they enter new stages.

While Calvino turned the classification of great literature into a science with fourteen identifying markers, there are three features in particular that could just as easily describe one’s relationship with a meaningful work of art. Number three states that “the classics are books that exert a peculiar influence, both when they refuse to be eradicated from the mind and when they conceal themselves in the folds of memory, camouflaging themselves as the collective or individual unconscious.” Artists, perhaps, are particularly susceptible to storing aspects of what they see, hear, and read and then retrieving them out of context to rework them into something meaningful for that moment. In that way, art making and art viewing point to the fourth

feature of a classic: “every rereading of a classic is as much a voyage of discovery as the first reading.” To walk through this exhibition of recent work juxtaposed with older work, I see the way certain elements are used again in a new way, creating new spaces and ideas along with it.

It is apparent to anyone listening to Anne talk about her art and her students that these components of her work are linked. She constructs a holistic, connected network of art making and art education. This underscores Calvino’s criterion number six: a “classic is a book that has never finished saying what it has to say.” This applies to Anne’s work as an artist and as a professor. Her dedication to teaching, to exploring the world with her students means that her work and her investigations of the natural world and those pieces that make up one’s identity have been spread across the world through her students—some who are artists and others who are not but carry an artist’s eye in whatever they do. These art champions add to her words, build on her ideas, and use a foundation she helped build to develop their own sense of self and transform their world.





Playing Out the Process

NELL RUBY

**the artist teacher
runs through color, texture, myth
making space for us**

