

Wilderness House Literary Review 19/2

May 27, 2024

MICHELE O'BRIEN is a collage and mixed-media artist working out of her home studio in Somerville, MA. Art can take many forms, but Michele often chooses an abstract approach; looking at nature, she sees the world in patterns, lines, and shades of light. In collage she uses colorful palettes and a variety of papers including vintage, found, and hand-painted sheets. Paper offers innumerable options because of its varied colors, textures, and weights. Michele enjoys exploring those choices and generating new combinations in her artwork. Creating with her hands is a satisfying and meditative practice. Some strong early influences include Matisse's energetic paper cut-out work, and the vibrant folk art and design experienced during family trips to Mexico. Michele has studied at the DeCordova Museum School, the CCAE Intensive Studio course and the Massachusetts College of Art. Her artwork has been shown during Somerville Open Studios and in numerous group shows, including a 2020 Emerging Artists juried exhibition at the Cambridge Art Association, and at Boston City Hall in 2022 and 2023.

Artwork Statement

Collage is a simple yet profound medium. It is essentially the combination of paper and glue, but with layering and thought it becomes more complex. The approach in these particular works is abstract with a liberal use of color. These collages are small, measuring

approximately 9" x 9" framed; sometimes mini-worlds can be found in the details and tiny elements of a piece. In many of these works, visual contrast is created by juxtaposing bold graphic details against a hazy or distressed setting. The backgrounds are created using image transfer techniques, producing engaging visual results.



Bring Your Own, 10"x12" framed, Collage



Stand Tall, 9"x9" framed, Collage



Me Two, 10"x10" framed, Collage



Bridges, 9"x9" framed, Collage



Alphabet, 5"x5" on cradled board, Collage



River Run, 9"x9" framed, Collage



Exit This Way, 9"x9" framed, Collage



Boulders, 9"x9" framed, Collage



Butterscotch, 9"x9" framed, Collage



Broken Heart, 9"x9" framed, Collage