

# Fast, spontaneous, willing to work

**S**arah Adam, a resident of Sunderland, is an artist who not only loves found objects, but prefers them as a painting surface to the usual paper and canvas. Mostly, she paints on wood surfaces, although a discarded laminate counter top would work just as well. The artist's current show at the GCC Downtown Center at 270 Main St. in Greenfield gives us a wonderful glimpse of this young artist's creative growth and development.

A total of 17 pieces are on exhibit. All the artworks have been painted using acrylic paints. Several of the paintings are painted on traditional canvas. The others have all been painted on found pieces of wood and other materials. Sometimes, it is a piece the artist has come across herself or that a friend might have given her. Adam explains that she has found canvas to be "... too bouncy, even and boring." The found pieces have character all their own. She

enjoys their unpredictable surfaces and really needs their hardness for her spontaneous and gestural style of painting. "I work with it and I fight with it," explains Adam.

Inherent in the medium of acrylic paints is that they can be used on literally anything. Oil paints must be painted on a prepared gessoed surface, otherwise the chemical properties of the oils and solvents would eventually deteriorate the piece.

Acrylics are a polymer product. Essentially they are plastic, thus sealing in and actually protecting the very surface they were painted on. They also dry very quickly; almost as soon as a paint-loaded brush hits the artist's desired surface, it dries, thus enabling the use of layers immediately. This is another attribute of the medium that suits this artist well.

Adam paints fast and spontaneously, often having to force herself to slow down. Her brush strokes, heavy with paint, are strong and determined. Sometimes, a piece of the surface she has chosen may actually break off in mid-stroke. Unfazed, the artist will work with this new development as well.

Adam's "found" surfaces in this show range from the front panel of an old dresser drawer to a large piece of driftwood. The truth is that their individual surfaces probably do create a certain mood before the artist has even begun to paint. The "Ex-Patriot Series" just wouldn't be the same if it had been painted on canvas. The

old wood lends the series a certain character that couldn't be duplicated on a surface of new materials. Adam states that these paintings of close-up images of the American flag started out because of an interest in color and shape and the 19th-century painter Jasper Johns, who became quite famous for his large paintings of the flag. However, they have also become "... slightly political." Adam is curious and dismayed at how respect for the American flag has changed drastically in recent years. "I can actually paint an image of the flag on an old construction pallet and the then walk on it," states the artist, sadly.

A piece titled "Within the Girl" stands out from the other paintings because of its lack of color and vibrancy. Painted in muted tones of brown and beige, it is a portrait of a young woman with closed eyes. It appears almost drawn with a brush rather than painted. The background is divided into several geometric areas that are also painted with little color. The mood of the piece is quiet and somber. On close inspection, one discovers that there are words scratched into the surface of the painting around the woman and across the picture surface of the background. Adam says that the portrait is of a friend of hers, but the woman's thoughts are her own: "What's going on in a young woman's mind," explains Adam.



"Flag No. 1," part of the "Ex-Patriot" series.

Sarah Adam photo

The other is a similar piece, only more abstract. In both paintings, the earth is made up of loosely painted geometric shapes of color that gradually change from blues to reds and greens, depending upon how deep underground one goes.

Adam also has a passion for painting tools and hardware. "Bulb," "Door Cranks," "Spray Bottle" and "Sink" are amusing examples of this fervor. The artist has a wonderful fantasy of painting paintings for businesses that depict the tools of that trade. For example, a hair salon would have paintings on its walls of scissors, brushes, combs and hairdryers. In fact, this idea is so enticing to the artist that she actually gave a painting she did of a gumball machine to Candylicious on Main Street in Greenfield.

Adam's goal as an artist is to continue to paint, but also to find more opportunities to promote her illustration skills. A graduate of the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth with a bachelor's degree in illustration, she would love to eventually be illustrating children's books. Currently, she is a graphic artist at The Recorder.

The paintings of Sarah Adam will be on exhibit at the GCC Downtown Center now through Feb. 28. Located at 270 Main St. in Greenfield, the center is open Monday through Thursday 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., Friday 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday and Sunday Noon to 6 p.m. The artist can be contacted through her Web site [www.Madsahara.com](http://www.Madsahara.com) or by e-mail at: [Sarah@madsahara.com](mailto:Sarah@madsahara.com).

Cheryl Rezendes Rulewich is a local artist and art teacher whose work has been exhibited nationally. She is affiliated with Green Trees Gallery in Northfield. You can contact her at [rezendes@crocker.com](mailto:rezendes@crocker.com).



"Bulb"

Sarah Adam photo



"Within the Girl"  
Sarah Adam photo



Sarah Adam photo

"Jeweled Landscape"

**Cheryl Rezendes Rulewich**

**Art Scene**

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