

Juror Statement – Judy Stone

I would like to thank the Enamelist Society for the honor of jurying the 2019 Student Online Exhibition, which included entries from students in the US and other countries. For me it is always exciting to see student work, and to identify trends and concepts that are being translated into enamel.

This particular exhibition, because it is online only, presented its own unique set of standards for jurying. The photographic image is all the viewers of the exhibition have and therefore the ability to “read” an image of an enameled piece requires excellent photography. Sadly, I had to lower the scores of some potentially wonderful pieces because the photography was not adequate for online presentation.

Most of the entries were of jewelry and smaller objects. Among the jewelry there were several pieces that could have easily been considered sculpture. There were also a considerable number of pieces that were mixed media where enamel was not the main element of the piece, which complicated the jurying process.

One of the most interesting trends was the prevalence of traditional enameling techniques. In particular, I was amazed to see so many students exploring pierced Plique a Jour in their work. Some of the Plique pieces that stood out were: *Jewel Beetle*; the two *Pigment of the Imagination* vessels; and the whimsical *Kunstkactus*. There were also quite a few pieces that were Cloisonné or Champlevé or both. Pieces using image transfers, surface textures, liquid enamel, graphite drawing, and sgraffito were also well-represented in the submissions. One of the more experimental techniques described by Zih-ci Liang in her wall piece, *Potential*, as “bodiless enamel” leads the viewer to believe that they are looking at an enamel piece without a metal substrate.

The human body, while always a popular theme in enameling, exposes its innards in Nicholas Hesson’s *Gut Feeling* and *Breath*, both of which use enamel transfer techniques on stainless steel. The settings of these large jewelry pieces are simple so as not to diminish the specialness of the images. The pieces look inside the human body but are only windows meant to be worn over the body parts they depict, the intestines and the lung. Iron oxide transfer gives a sepia cast to the work which conjures old physiology drawings. The front of *Breath*, a lung-shaped brooch, is ethereal in its subtlety even though it is the translation of a rib cage x-ray.

Lucas Pointon’s two mixed media reliquaries, both titled *Trash is a good King, Long live the King*, integrate Champlevé enameling seamlessly into the pieces. Using a reliquary to emphasize the artist’s message also draws attention to the importance of enameling in the history of the reliquary.

I am glad to see so many students using the more traditional enameling techniques as they hone their artistry and skills.