

## IN THE CARDS

by Karen Braun Malpas

The new thematic show at the Frank Bette Center has inspired artists to ethereal, magical, mystical images.

The digital collages of Deborah Griffin are full of visual hints and provocations couched in lush, old-timey settings.

The inclusion of stamps, cards, specific flowers and fruits all seem to have symbolic or allegorical significance (loyalty? duplicity?) encouraging us to linger while attempting to decipher a possible meaning.

Jennifer Cook shows a photograph which serves as a diptych. The top half shows a domestic scene of a couple at a table in a warmly-lit interior. They face each other at a table, possibly playing cards. The bottom half shows a single man outside the house by a bonfire. "Keeping Your Hands Warm", he is rubbing his hands over the flame. Both the couple and the man are caught in a moment of privacy but we, the viewers, invade by observing them both.

Paul Feinberg, a painter, and the photographer Ron Miller show images of dewy youth encroached upon by the mechanical procession of numbers (time passing) or the specter of death. It is fated that we all age. It is in the cards for C'est la vie.

Mystery prevails in Barbara Landis' nearly abstract photos of night skies where natural phenomena are captured but seem especially significant. "OMG it's a sign!" but, of what?

The cards might tell in Joanne Clapp Fullagar's tabletop still life of "Tea and Tarot." That the spout on the teapot may as well be a bird's neck and head, evokes the shape shifting sense scrambling of Alice in Wonderland.

A fur-lined teacup is about as functional as Karen Malpas' large, ceramic playing cards featuring calligraphic Kings and Queens, often overlapped toward a fluid abstraction.

Droth Thompson's paper works are droll, clever, private but not exclusive as the viewer is invited to enter and share her visual and verbal jokes.

Giving the work our attention, each one of us feels we have discovered a secret.

"In The Cards" will hang until December 23 by which time it will be joined by the Annual Holiday Boutique.

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The back room contains a group show assembled by a dozen members from the Tuesday Night Figure Drawing Group which gathers at the FBCA. For centuries, artists have attempted to draw the human model because it is among the most complex and expressive of forms. We may look, examine, search but still not "see" in the fullest

sense of the word. The arrogance, laziness, presumptions and prejudices of our gaze will be evident in our drawings. By working to make clear, honest, intelligent drawings, the disciples of figure drawing are therefore simultaneously working on themselves to become better people.

This figurative show hangs until November 2.