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Longtime Friends Collaborate on Still-Life Exhibit

They formed a drawing group decades ago. Now, their combined works are on display at New Brunswick's Alfa Art Gallery.

By [Marlaina Cockcroft](#) | | March 5, 2020 | Appears in the [March 2020](#) issue



Among the works to be displayed at a new exhibit at Alfa Art Gallery in New Brunswick are, from left: *Dinner Table* by Yvonne Skaggs; *Moving Blue* by Meredith Turshen; and a piece by Betty Jacobsen from a series of 100 small triptychs, collectively titled *The Walk*. Photos courtesy of the artists

They formed a life drawing group decades ago in Plainfield, and have been exhibiting together since the 1980s. "There's a real affinity in our work and a real friendship," says Meredith Turshen of herself and fellow artists Betty Jacobsen and Yvonne Skaggs. Their latest collaboration is the exhibit "[Life Distilled](#)," on display March 3–April 25 at Alfa Art Gallery in New Brunswick.

The exhibit came about after Jacobsen, now of Doylestown, Pennsylvania, and Skaggs, of Princeton, attended a still-life exhibit at Princeton University Art Museum. “We came up with this challenge to do 100 still lifes within a certain period of time,” Jacobsen says.

“Having come together and looked at each other’s work, we said, ‘Why not show it?’” says Turshen, of Hoboken. She approached the gallery with the idea.

Jacobsen’s 100 paper-and-feather triptychs were inspired by chance. “I was going through a hard time in my life,” she says. “I was doing a lot of walking, and it seemed like every time I was walking outdoors, I would find these feathers...they’re very spiritual to me.”

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Turshen uses collage art “to explore still life as being an interior decoration, and then how does it merge with the outside world?” Her materials come from magazines, “but I’m cutting them into such pieces...they’re not recognizable photos.”

Skaggs’s collage pieces reinterpret famous still lifes in mixed media.

The trio hope their work will offer viewers an appreciation of nature, as well as the nature of friendship.

An opening reception for the exhibit will be held at 5 pm on March 12 at the gallery. For more, see alfaart.org.

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