



“I got my start at Brookdale”



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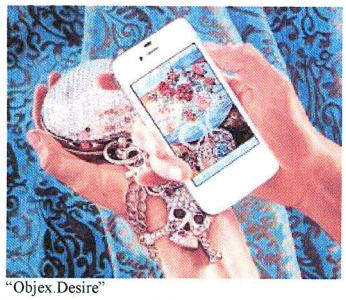
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Thinking devices

BYMARIE MABER Correspondent



"Objex.Desire"

Cellphones, iPods and iPads are everywhere — and now, even in works of art. Lisa Ficarelli-Halpern has filled a gallery with artworks featuring such devices. With images that are sometimes hidden and minute and others as big as a sofa, this artist reveals her timely obsession. Cellphones and other personal communication devices have infiltrated our worlds, and Ficarelli Halpern is venting in her own lyrical and beautiful fashion.

"Objex.Desire," a retrospective exhibition, is on view at the CVA Gallery of Brookdale Community College through Feb. 29. The artist's reception is Tuesday, Feb. 7, 4:30-7:30 p.m.

"The sound of the phone," she wrote in a recent e-mail, "makes different noises to let us know that a message is coming to us.

Unless we silence it (then it vibrates), it invades the space we are in, whether we are alone or with other people. It calls to us and commands our attention, like a crying infant." Small still-life paintings, elegant and masterful, line one wall. Humorous prints that imitate fabric and wallpaper "toile" designs that camouflage anachronisms line another. Filling an alcove is a human-scale soft sculpture of a cell phone.

"The comfort and security that the [cellphone] device affords us is what I was tapping into when I conceived this sculpture. I am always amazed at how people fondle their phones. Young people like to hold them all the time, even when they are interacting with live friends and family.

"I have had negative feelings toward these devices, but I think that's partially a generational thing ... I think that I really understood and came to appreciate this feeling of comfort when I was dining alone in a crowded restaurant while on a business trip. I felt awkward in the situation, so I took out my phone and started texting my family members. They responded, and I found myself continuing several separate texts with each person. It occupied my time and alleviated my stress at being by myself ... it really helps soothe and entertain, like having a little friend with you all the time."

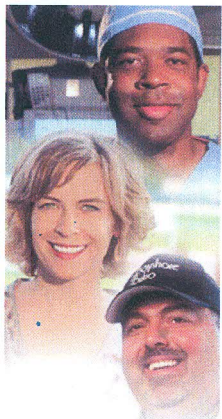
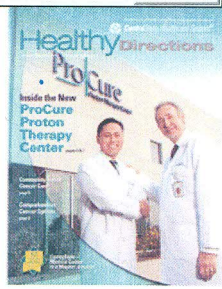
As we become more dependent on technologic devices, we should beware.

"We gain a sense of control because we literally hold 'the world' in the palm of our hand. But we are seeing the world through the selective lens of the device, which filters our experience. For example, we may believe that we are seeing a true image of the "Mona Lisa," or some other person's idea of what the "Mona Lisa" is.

"People who are unfamiliar with the 'Mona Lisa' will assume that they are getting correct visual information. But all they're getting is a distortion. As people rely more and more on visual information that is so many times removed from reality, the experience of seeing the true work of art becomes somehow less important or necessary. Virtual experience suffices, and feeds the feeling of instant gratification at the same time."

Themes of reality, time, illusion, fashion and the quality of life itself are presented throughout this exhibition. Don't miss it.

If you go:
 "OBJEX.DESIRE"
 Retrospective exhibition
 by Lisa Ficarelli-Halpern
 Where:
 CVA Gallery/CVA Building
 Brookdale Community College
 765 Newman Springs Road, Lincroft
 Reception to meet the artist:
 Feb. 7, 4:30-7:30 p.m.



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