

Seeing Connections

By Valerie J. Christell, Alfons Gallery Curator

Through our new, online exhibitions, Alfons Gallery continues to support artists whose exhibiting opportunities have diminished due to the pandemic. Our “Unexpected Connections” series also encourages viewers to discover similarities between diverse artworks through curated image sets accompanied by written analyses.

“Unexpected Connections: Dara Larson and Catherine Lottes,” went live online this week on the Alfons Gallery website. Both artists come together in exploring the essence and energy of each of their chosen settings, though through unique viewpoints on the world.

Thought-provoking comparisons can be made between these artists’ works that are focused on nature. But even more eye-opening are the similarities found between Dara’s view on urban environments and Catherine’s focus on the natural environment.



In this example, Dara’s black/white scratchboard, *Synthesis Labor*, and Catherine’s color, digital photograph, *Reflections*, are visually connected through multiple, unexpected elements that feel squeezed inward by their outside structures. Dara’s bold, vertical lines of buildings confine observers within warping windows; Catherine’s thick, vertical tree lines encompass pieces of nature. Both artworks also contain a central circular element: Dara’s main figure lunges toward

the viewer with a gaping mouth, while Catherine's detailed medallion shape is projected forward by the trees' perspective lines.

Dara's "Global Explorations: Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, India, Japan, Mexico, Paraguay, United States," was presented in Fall 2013. Travel has a major impact on Dara's subject matter that explores place, process, and philosophy out of her immersion in multiple cultures.

Catherine's "A Mirror to the Soul of Nature" was displayed a number of years later in Spring 2019. Catherine found inspiration in Milwaukee's wooded areas, where she captured spirit images that didn't reveal themselves until after each photograph was mirrored to itself.

Though Alfons Gallery continues to be closed during the pandemic, our virtual gallery space is active. "Unexpected Connections: Dara Larson and Catherine Lottes" continues into August, followed by an invitational exhibition featuring artists from across the state. We hope you're staying safe while enjoying taking these virtual excursions with us.