

'Beyond No' moves beyond trauma and toward recovery

By Cate McQuaid

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The subject matter of Alison Crocetta's installation, "Beyond No," could put off visitors. It's about suffering trauma, and recovering from it, and the

soundtrack has Crocetta singing one lyric over and over: "No means no." While no does mean no, and children should learn that at their mother's knee, the catchphrase is so common as to be emptied of meaning, save for a frisson of shrill defensiveness.

That is, until you hear Crocetta sing it, in a manner neither shrill nor defensive. Her clear, warm voice rises in welcome in the Rothschild Gallery at Radcliffe's Bunting Fellowship Program; it makes "no" be about opening up, rather than shutting out. The artist performed the song at the show's opening two weeks ago; a tape and photo documentation of the performance suggest what the experience must have been like. But the installation, with its audio component, stands on its own as a place for peace and reflection.

Crocetta has filled the gallery with white plaster balls, probably cast around huge balloons. A tether connects each to a ring on a white platform, where the artist stood in performance. When the

Beyond No: An Installation by Alison Crocetta

At: Rothschild Gallery, Bunting Fellowship Program, 34 Concord Ave., Cambridge, through March 15

Optical Illusion: An Installation by Bruce Bemis

At: Boston Sculptors at Chapel Gallery, 60 Highland St., West Newton, through Sunday

The Wedding Show: Photographs by Darlene DeVita, Jenny Edwards, and Corrine Schippert

At: Trustman Art Gallery, Simmons College, 300 The Fenway, through March 16

balls move, they rustle reassuringly. Poetic text suggests their role: "Beyond no there may be a life with calcified secrets . . . Beyond no there may be an expectation that your healing should be complete by now."

These calcified secrets look like boulders, but if opened up, you'll find nothing but air inside, a corollary to the psychological truth of how burdens vanish once we choose to put them down.

The title of the installation suggests the show is about rape. In fact, it addresses recovering from any trauma, anything that makes

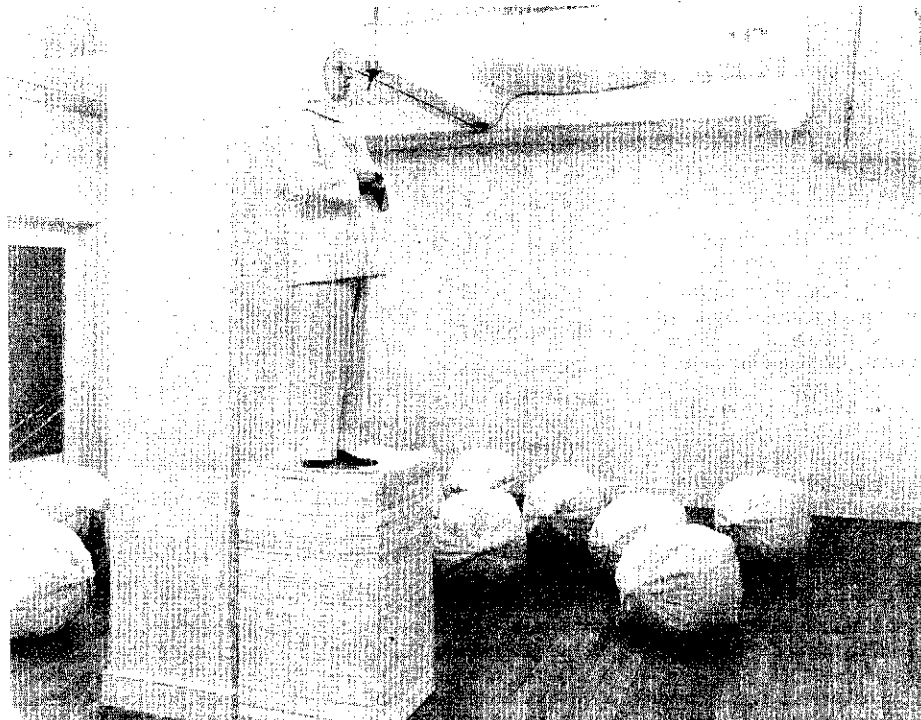
you freeze up and shut down and question your place in the world. It's a show about healing, and anyone may benefit from it.

'Optical Allusion'

In "Optical Allusion," his installation at the Boston Sculptors at Chapel Gallery, Bruce Bemis employs the cinematic magic of a dark room lit with flickering images. As when you settle into a chair at the movie theater, you walk into the gallery feeling that you're going along on a journey that will sweep you up.

Bemis uses old home movies from the 1930s, which he projects on chrome spheres, distorting the images in a way that doesn't disguise what you're seeing, but imbues it with pathos. One large screen repeats a picture of a young girl on roller skates going forward and backward between the legs of a standing man. Across the gallery, the opening of a tent echoes the triangular gateway of the man's legs. In effect, the viewer becomes the girl, going into the tent to see what mystery lies inside.

There, another image topples around the inside wall: a man falling, crumpling into a fetal position. It runs on a loop, so he falls eternally, never landing, stretching out and folding up. The endless tumble is disturbing, but the



Alison Crocetta has filled the Rothschild Gallery with white plaster balls tethered together.

repetition is soothing. Leave the tent, and across the gallery the girl either approaches you or retreats.

The viewer can claim the images as he or she needs: The girl might be Shirley Temple, or an evocation of innocence, which suggests that the tumbling man could be a never-ending fall from innocence. They work hypnotically on our eyes.

Bemis uses the space well, not only creating poles of light at either end but in making a gateway that encourages us to experience what the little girl is experiencing, to go deeper into the art. He deliberately builds a space for viewers to have a private, transformative experience.

'The Wedding Show'

Three photographers document a more public transformative experience in "The Wedding Show," at the Trustman Art Gallery at Simmons College. These fine art photographers make their living shooting weddings. They're part of a more photojournalistic trend in wedding photography, so there are no stiff, formal portraits here, and all of the images are in black and white.

Jenny Edwards says that photographing weddings gives her an opportunity to explore feminine identity, and that comes through in her pictures. Many of them depict women preening, fixing their makeup in a mirror, or helping

each other getting dressed. She also has an eye for the more somber moments, showing an older man looking wistful in his tuxedo.

Darlene DeVita's shots are more theatrical, capturing the heightened tension and giddiness surrounding a wedding. "Rachel Dancing" shows the bride spinning and grinning on the dance floor, as her groom stands back, watching and enjoying.

Corrine Schippert takes wide-angle images, making the festivities into a panorama. The three have distinctly different approaches to wedding photography, but all seek to celebrate the individuality of the couple, and the event, they are shooting.



A series of photographs from "The Wedding Show" at the Trustman Art Gallery.