

Crary exhibits open this weekend

The Crary Art Gallery will feature two artists in exhibitions that open Saturday and run through May 1.

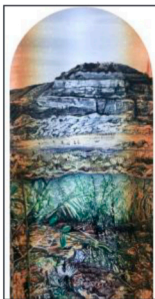
Artist Laura Bigger of Kirksville, Mo., presents, "Elements," a collection of prints, drawings and sculptures exploring the relationship of raw materials and the periodic table of elements to contemporary home construction and furnishings.

"My work explores the relationships that exist among humans, animals, and ecosystems, particularly in terms of the food chain, raw materials, and the human tendency to exert control over natural systems," Bigger said. "It considers existential quandaries such as what it means to be a human today, how we can live in the world responsibly, and what our obligation is to do so. As a multimedia artist, I question anthropocentric viewpoints and interpret the man-made environment primarily through print, drawing and installation."

Bigger is an assistant professor of art at Truman State University in Kirksville, Mo. Her work has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions nationally. Learn more about the artist and her work at laurabigger.com/elements

Thomas Matyas, of Buffalo presents, "The Lever of Reference," three-dimensional collages using wood, steel, cast concrete, pencil drawings and monoprints. The resulting geometric and architectural shapes are meant to evoke feelings of mystery and nostalgia. Matyas will be on hand to greet guests and discuss his work.

"The first word that might come to mind when viewing my work, abstract, is not quite accurate," Matyas said. "Although I'm not concerned with depicting the world as it is, I do use some



Laura Bigger's work, *Coal*, is a watercolor, silkscreen and monotype.



Thomas Matyas created *The Hall of Rhetoric*.

of the tools of representational art. There's a kind of perspective (although not rational) and sometimes a suggestion of light falling on surfaces. Objects pass in front of other objects. Maybe a better word is metaphoric. Geometric and architectural structures stand in for mysterious states of mind. This visual language probably evolved unconsciously in the margins of my school notebooks, where I obsessively doodled lines, boxes, and curves that somehow calmed my anxieties and conjured a more sensible world. I believe I

was constructing a mental refuge that saved my life and ultimately became the foundation of my artistic practice. As a composer might take inspiration from a small, pregnant motif and develop it into a larger musical structure, I often begin each painting or sculpture with a single, striking shape and carefully grow the work from it. Though one might expect the results of such a process to be full of movement and improvisational freedom, my work depicts a place where time stands still. Like many of the artists I admire, I'm unapologetic about trying to make beautiful objects. Not a decorative or facile beauty, but an uncanny and ultimately inexplicable type connected to long-held feelings beyond reason."

Matyas has exhibited in numerous galleries nationally, including the Carnegie Art Center, North Tonawanda, NY, Kenan House Gallery, Lockport, NY, and the Grey Cube Gallery, Denton, Texas. To learn more, visit thomasmatyas.com

The Crary Art Gallery will also feature a Pysanky workshop, the same day, to benefit UNICEF for the children of Ukraine. What is Pysanky? Beautiful designs are achieved by writing on an egg with a wax-loaded pen or "Kistka" and then dipping in colored dyes to achieve layers, with the final step being to melt the wax and reveal the design. For a \$20 donation you can learn to make your own egg, including materials. Janelle Turk, Shandra Wilson and Beth Jacobs will provide instruction for this workshop, created to bring the community together in art while raising funds for the children of Ukraine. Registration required, at: <https://www.craryartgallery.org/pysankyforpeace.html>.