

*The Winners' Circle* showcases the art of Elaine Dowling, Maja Shaw, Michelle Peterlin, and Sara Risley; the winners of 311 Gallery's 2017 Juried Shows.

Whether it's the plays of Tennessee Williams, the novels of William Faulkner or the work of any number of writers who draw on their American Southern roots, nothing says "Southern Gothic" to Elaine Dowling like the combination of beauty and decay. Set back from a busy road in North Carolina, this barn and shed are rapidly becoming one with nature, covered as they are by wisteria. It was a view that demanded Elaine paint it –the perfect setting for any plot filled with family secrets, delusional characters, and grotesque outcomes.

For Maja Shaw, art is about illusion. Maja enjoys creating the illusion of three-dimensional space in two-dimensions without photographic detail. In her florals she emphasizes the sculptural qualities of the subject against abstract backgrounds of intense color. Subjects are often defined with minimal detail, allowing the viewer's eye to fill in the rest. The sunny days in eastern Washington illuminate the flowers in her garden, providing many of the ideas for her paintings.

Abstract photography is Sara Risley's ideal instrument for expression. Greatly influenced by the Expressionists, she seeks to distort what is in front of her by saturating color, accenting or creating lines and shapes to create images that have not been seen before yet are vaguely familiar.

Michelle Peterlin's piece, *The Guardian*, is the first piece of a series that explores faith and spirituality within conflict. Her focus began with PTSD patients returning from a tour in Afghanistan; she was drawn to a GI and his German Shepherd service dog. The series has evolved over the years to include area first responders, policemen, and people that portray courage in tough situations.

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Opening Reception in February 2, 2018

Exhibition runs February 1-24