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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – AiR Studio Gallery, Westerly, RI**

**"Summer Crush - part III" Opening September 1 2023. AiR's 6th Exhibition Showcasing Artistic Versatility and Creative Expression**

"We've been crushin' on a few artists lately, and we're excited to bring them to AiR for the summer so you can crush on them too!" – Annie Wildey

AiR is pleased to present its 6th exhibition, "**Summer Crush - part III**" curated by owners and artists Annie Wildey and Michael Fanelli bringing together new works freshly presented, from our fabulous group of eleven contemporary artists exhibiting with us this summer. This showcase of experienced artists from Connecticut, New York, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts, highlights the richness of creative expression and artistic versatility, often blurring the lines between disciplines.

Visitors will find a wonderful wide range of artworks on view including abstract, floral and nature inspired photography. Narrative, abstract and landscape paintings in wood, acrylics, oils, oil/cold wax, and silk thread!. The exhibition offers large statement art, diptychs, triptychs, small accent pieces and groupings, along with prints. There really is something for everyone, at a range of price points.

**Margit Burmeister's** latest paintings of assembled painted wood with carefully constructed compositional grids, and typography, give us a hint at Margit's past. A childhood spent in her father's wood shop and a career as a graphic designer inform her work. She uses reclaimed wood as her medium, sourced locally, and chosen for its surface and textural qualities. Margit builds her color palette by cutting, painting and further distressing the wood. She meticulously assembles her paintings like a puzzle, making careful color and design decisions as she goes, embracing the irregularity of her materials with unexpected shapes and form. With discernment, she incorporates found materials from vintage advertising graphics and typography, encouraging the viewer to get up-close and explore in more detail.

**Sandi Daniel** skillfully combines traditional photography methods with contemporary techniques, allowing her to capture and reinterpret the worlds that surround her. From lush gardens to majestic landscapes and serene seascapes, these natural environments serve as a constant source of inspiration. Working on an intuitive level, Sandi approaches her photography without a predetermined image in mind. She considers an image successful when it transcends the mere representation of

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reality and establishes a personal connection with nature, inviting viewers to experience the beauty and depth of the natural world through her lens.

**S.W. Dinge** strips things down to basics creating compositions of non-figurative shapes impulsive lines, spills of color. Resulting in visceral images that are sometimes playful, fleeting, confrontational, or aggressive, even a combination thereof. His approach is direct and responsive resulting in work that exudes pure energy, and his creative restraint ensures that nothing is overworked. Once finished, each piece is turned to the wall. Only a faint echo remains in his subconscious, each one is its own moment in time. These works possess a dual nature, simultaneously embracing a meditative complexity with a punk rock simplicity.

One could easily mistake **Michael Fanelli's** photographs for paintings. But they are carefully composed observations that capture the reflections of sunlight on the surface of a small Connecticut stream. Anchoring his camera on a tripod a few inches to several feet from his subject, Michael skillfully employs exposure settings to record the delicate play of light on the water's surface. The resulting traces of line bear a striking resemblance to calligraphic marks, evoking the hand of an artist. They provide a vivid visualization of the water's graceful topography and dynamic energy. The depth of the stream influences the mood and atmosphere as the interplay of colors shift from warm ochres to cool darks. The results are unexpected and poetic abstractions.

**Shelley Lawrence Kirkwood** uses photography as a meditative tool to observe life. Her recent series explores landscape, memory, and home with a minimalist and conceptual sensibility. She closely examines and photographs debris and plants from familiar habitats, removing them from their original context. This reveals the cycles of growth and decay, showcasing the beauty and origins of each form. These diminutive objects presented at an enhanced scale, emphasize their profound significance within a larger system and the artist's personal history. In turn Kirkwood invites the viewer along with her into a realm of devotion and reverie for nature, reflecting on the fleeting aspect of time, and connection to cherished places.

**Diana Sartor's** mixed media works are expressions of feelings and the reactions to the world as she sees it. The impressions carried with her spill out in vibrant lush hues and spontaneous shapes. Abstract or organic, her approach to painting is intuitive, open to chance and the expressive possibilities of color. She follows the lead of a beautiful line or unexpected color combination with curiosity and excitement making connections as she wanders down creative paths. As the painting starts to take shape, the "formal language" of line, color and composition carries her through to its completion.

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**Carol Scavotto's** narrative paintings blend the traditional Asian art of silk painting with silk embroidery and gold leaf. These captivating artworks evolve around a strong contemporary female protagonist, occupying compelling and playful vignettes. Through a sensual female voice, the protagonist embraces her sexuality and sensuality, exuding confidence in her self-worth and societal value. Carol's process begins with an initial drawing on paper, which is transferred onto silk. A carefully curated color palette is established through a staining process, infusing the scene with depth and dimension. As silk thread embroidery is meticulously added, the figures take on distinct shapes, evolving with individual character and personality. These delicate fine art pieces stimulate and entice, presenting an invitation for the viewer to celebrate the feminine without objectification.

In a world where art can be a catalyst for change, **Tracy Stilwell's** work transcends the realm of aesthetic pleasure, serving as beacons of empowerment, resilience, and hope. She is always searching for new ways to interpret old ideas. In Tracy's long career as a creative, she has demonstrated her versatility in a wide range of media combining fabrics, papers, threads, paint, cement, politics, humor and any number of other materials in her work. Quilts, dolls, furniture, clothing, jewelry, sculpture and paintings have emerged from those efforts. She has exhibited and taught nationally as well as overseas and her work has been published in numerous books and magazines including Cloth Paper Scissors, Quilting Arts, Quiltfolk and Art Doll Quarterly.

Figurative and expressive, **Shari Weschler's** autobiographical paintings are from her ongoing 'Bunni' series. Cynical and humorous story tellers of human circumstances and a complex psyche. Channeled through cute soft figures, they are fast, fierce, shape shifting intelligent creatures. They emerge into existence as intuitively and fearlessly, as the color palette she uses, and can disappear on a whim, wiped away and painted over, perhaps multiple times until what's revealed feels raw but resolved. Breaking through the veils of paint, the viewer can catch a glimpse of a narrative, but can't be sure exactly what is seen or why. What can be guaranteed is a visceral response.

With a career of over 50 years, internationally known artist, and master printmaker **Dan Welden** has collaborated with such artists as Willem de Kooning, Eric Fischl, and Kiki Smith. Familiar themes run through his paintings and prints, drawing connections between landscape, and abstraction. He taps into the idea of linear pathways, echoes from animal tracks in nature, fissures in rock palisades, and metaphors for human connections. His paintings begin intuitively, with simple forms, and broad areas of color, gradually becoming more refined and delicate. His hands are playful with his tools, sometimes dancing, other times marching as the mind and heart work in conjunction to figure it out what wants to be said. The results are paintings rich in mystery, subtle layers, and a sophisticated color sensibility.

**Annie Wildey** explores moments of beauty, wonder and awe in the coastal landscape. In this new work Annie brings us a series of timeless seascape paintings, meditations of the rising and receding tides and the elusive nature of a subject in



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motion. Immersed in her studio, Annie interprets the sensory aspects of the elements. Smells, sounds, feelings, and energy infuse her work with their essence. Her process is fluid, moving between freedom, control, accident and intention. Working with a muted almost monochromatic palette, her expressive and gestural strokes celebrate the accidental mark. Whether it's a large dynamic painting or a small intimate piece, Annie's paintings resonate with the power and grace of her subjects, evoking a poetic and meaningful experience for the viewer.

**"Summer Crush – part III" runs from July 7 – September 10, With an opening reception on Friday September 1.**

**AiR Studio Gallery hours are Thursday – Sunday 1-6pm or by appointment.**

#### **About Air Studio Gallery - Creating & Curating Contemporary Art for the Community**

Opened in Dec 2023, AiR brings something fresh to the arts community in Westerly, blurring the line between gallery, studio, and something altogether new. AiR, an abbreviation of artists-in-residence, gives a peek into what owners Annie Wildey and Michael Fanelli are aiming to do with the venue. With three rooms and an abundance of space, visitors will find exhibitions that brings together artwork in surprising and inventive ways. Watch this space!

**Press Resources page to download images: <https://www.anniewildey.com/summer-crush-press.html#/>**