

## ART

# Artist Offers Plenty Of Edge

Linda Bigness exhibits at Limestone through Sept. 5

**KATHERINE RUSHWORTH**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER



Syracuse artist Linda Bigness likes to live on the edge. Her vivid, prismatic abstractions push color against color,

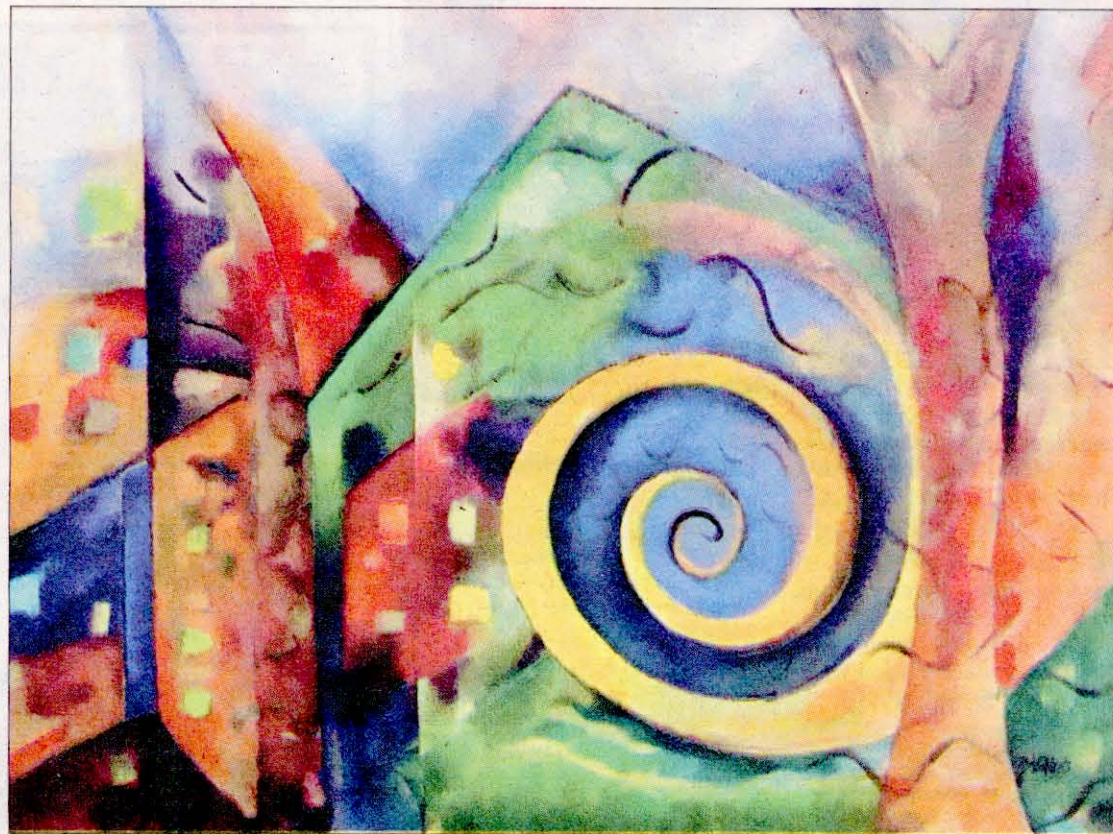
shape against shape and encourage our eyes to linger at the edges where form and pattern begin and end.

"Edges, jagged, straight, broken, bruised, bleeding with color, speak to me," Bigness wrote in an artist's statement.

Through Sept. 5, an exhibition of 20 recent pieces by Bigness remains on view at the Limestone Art Gallery in Fayetteville. The show, titled, "Linda Bigness: Color Remembered," is comprised of works on paper, canvas and encaustics, all of which demonstrate the artist's deft manipulation of color within a distinctly personal visual language.

Bigness' style is closest to the Synchronists' (in America) or Orphists' (European) of the early 20th century, where emotion was communicated through a rainbow of colors and hard-edged forms became the underpinnings for composition. They believed color and sound were similar in nature, with an artist arranging colors the way a composer arranged notes. Their goal was harmony.

This analogy to Bigness' works seems particularly apt when you see "Green House Blues," (2008), a striking oil on canvas that speaks to environmental concerns, but with a subtle voice. The piece exudes an improvisatory quality and, like many of her pieces, is slightly



"GREEN HOUSE BLUES" (2008) by Syracuse artist Linda Bigness is one of 20 recent works by the artist on view at the Limestone Art Gallery in Fayetteville through Sept. 5.

whimsical; but it's clear Bigness has carefully orchestrated her blocks and wedges of land and cityscape into a dynamic whole. Her colors recall the palette of Robert Delaunay, and like his, are full of light.

In "Green House Blues," as well as "Layered City" (2008) and "Pale Moon Rising IV" (2008), Bigness manipulates architectural elements — walls of buildings, windows, rooftops — to build a composition anchored within an abstract structure. These vibrant, hard edges and wedges contrast with more yielding shapes to create a push and pull of color and form.

Her whimsical touch dominates in the set of six "Martinis" (2008) paintings. In these, she embraces the iconic figure of a martini glass to play with aspects of cubism, fauvism, color and movement. The pieces are the most representational in the show and are sure to bring a smile to your lips.

For me, Bigness' collages and the mixed-media piece titled "Beyond the Wall" (2007) are the most effective works in this exhibition.

The collages titled "Playing Green" (2008) and "Taking Flight" (2008) read like aerial

views of the landscape, pieces of torn paper glued and repainted into a patchwork of croplands and pastures. Some of the swatches have edges accented with strokes of black paint, creating small exclamation points within the textured surfaces. The color palette for these two works is among the most subdued in the show and provides a nice contrast to the vibrancy of the paintings.

In "Beyond the Wall" (2007), a lush mixed-media piece, Bigness employs yet another color palette. This time we see more earth tones, yet she still ratchets up the volume with a

## The details

**What:** "Linda Bigness: Color Remembered."  
**Where:** Limestone Art Gallery, 207 Brooklea Drive, Fayetteville.  
**When:** Through Sept. 5.  
**What to expect:** Recent works on canvas, paper and encaustics.  
**Hours:** 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday.  
**Admission:** Free.  
**Info:** 632-4445 or [www.limestoneart.biz](http://www.limestoneart.biz).

bold block of pink and a slash of ruby red for dramatic effect. The richly textured piece alludes to the divisive nature of walls, built to both keep out and keep in, with a curling black line suggestive of barbed wire to emphasize her point.

In the two encaustic (hot wax painting) pieces titled "Journey Scrolls I and II" (2007) Bigness breaks the two-dimensional plane by affixing paper scrolls painted with encaustic to painted pieces of board. These pieces exude a sense of something lost or forgotten like pieces of history or fading memories. Encaustic is an ancient medium, rarely used today, but Bigness proves its relevance in a contemporary application.

There's a lot to like in this show. Bigness is one of the area's most prolific artists, who continues to experiment with style and media. And that just goes to prove she's not afraid to live on the edge in more ways than one.

Katherine Rushworth, of Cazenovia, is a former director of the Michael C. Rockefeller Arts Center (State University College at Fredonia) and of the Central New York Institute for the Arts in Education.