



MANCHESTER

# Artful yoga

Class combines stretches, installation

By Sarah M. Earle / For the Monitor  
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There is nothing lacking in Cristi Rinklin's Diluvial, a new installation at the Currier Museum of Art. The emptiness of the space seems only to enhance the majesty and mystique of the images laminated on the windows, wallpapered on the front walls and painted on the back walls. And yet, when the yoga students arrive and unroll their mats on the blond wood floors, when their ancient mantra fills the bare room and their bodies adopt poses evocative of nature, there is a feeling that, yes, this is what was meant to be here.

"Cristi's project is about cycles of destruction and renewal . . . the way that she depicts these destructive events in very beautiful, seductive language, it's almost a coming to terms with nature's destructive forces," said Nina Bozicnik, curator of the installation, which will be on view in the Putnam Gallery through Sept. 9. "That theme seemed to fit with yoga and the idea of finding a balance."

The yoga class, conducted by Yoga Balance of Manchester every Thursday from 10 to 11 a.m. through Sept. 6, is one of the many ways the museum strives to draw connections between art forms. In fact, the installation itself - the first in a series called "Contemporary Connections" represents one

of these marriages. Bozicnik, who had seen one of Rinklin's installations at Tufts University, approached her a few years ago about creating something for the museum that drew inspiration from the museum's collections.

Rinklin who had recently become interested in 19th-century American landscape paintings, began studying museum-owned pieces by Albert Beirstadt and Jasper Cropsey and was struck by the painters' fascination with geology.

"I became interested in how a lot of these painters from this period in history were interested in diluvial deposits that could be found around the U.S.," said Rinklin, who exhibits internationally and serves as associate professor of drawing and painting at College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass. "They felt this was evidence of the great flood, and so they saw the landscape as something that was very mystical and spiritual."

That feeling resonated with Rinklin, whose work is highly contemporary and innovative yet infused with otherworldly elements that evoke the ancient and sacred. For Diluvial, Rinklin made small-scale hand-painted images that she then scanned into Photoshop and converted into a digital file that could be blown up to 10 feet. "The image is kind of built layer by layer," she said.

For the piece that covers the large windows in the Putnam Gallery, Rinklin used a marbled background that she then scanned and blurred to give it an atmospheric feel. "There's this kind of organic-synthetic push-pull that happens with the piece," she said.

On the opposing walls are hand-painted murals that continue the motif, and on either side of the windows the walls are covered with a specially made wallpaper patterned to match the glass overlay. For this, Rinklin also drew inspiration from the museum's collection. "One of their earliest acquired pieces was a French scenic wallpaper. I thought that wallpaper could be a really interesting way to expand on this," she said. "Wallpaper is traditionally a way for people to transform their space, to psychologically transport that viewer so that you're immersed in a space."

For those who relish that immersive experience, the yoga class offers a unique and powerful connection to the art. "This is really an opportunity to be in the artwork rather than just look at it," Bozicnik said.

The ancient undertones, the billowy cloud forms and waterfalls all lend to the beauty and spirituality of the practice. And, like a good docent, instructor Kate Dube makes the art of yoga accessible yet intriguing, gently urging the students to perfect their poses and cleanse their minds. (next page >>)

"Feel the pleasure of being in your own presence," she tells the dozen or so students gathered in the gallery for a recent class. "Who are you when you're not doing anything?"

For a different sort of art-to-art connection, next Thursday evening at 6 p.m. the museum will hold a musical event in the gallery featuring talks by Rinklin and Bozicnik and original music composed by renowned composer Shirish Korde in response to Rinklin's imagery. Accompanied by a tabla player and a hand percussionist, soprano Deepiti Navaratna and cellist Jan Muller-Szenwas will perform Korde's works based on Indian rhythms.

The museum will be open until 8 pm for extended "First Thursday" hours. Admission is free for members and \$10 for non-members and includes light refreshments.

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