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## REVIEW Artists contemplate notion of memory in BCC exhibition

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Deborah Coolidge made this oil stick and graphite on paper, "Betula Papyrifera, N41&#xb0;38', W70&#xb0;58' (Levin Birch), Dartmouth." COURTESY PHOTO



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Memories slip and change. The longer we strive to preserve them, the more they evolve. Engaging this process can be a powerful formula for making art.

Three artists whose work is on view now at the Grimshaw-Gudewicz Gallery on the campus of Bristol Community College tackle the idea of memory and information, each in different ways. The result? Judge for yourself. Like most exhibitions at this modest but important gallery, this show rewards the inquisitive visitor.

Five large works by Deborah Coolidge create a dialogue with the world of trees. Coolidge starts by wrapping paper around trunks — large birch, beech, sycamore — then rubbing off the shape and texture of the bark. She then colors the results with pencil.

For Coolidge, the work represents a give-and-take with the trees. Far more than any simple rubbing of the surface, Coolidge interprets what she hears — that's why it's a conversation. She enhances textures with accents, applying color not necessarily related to nature.

The result becomes something like a narrative.

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Intentional composition is lacking; the shapes follow what she finds, or more appropriately, hears. But the strong sense of something real being captured — a surface of something profound, being brought to light — is inescapable.

Masha Ryskin also contributes five large works, delicate but boldly composed acrylic and gouache

on paper or board. Ryskin's abstract shapes seem determined to morph into natural ones — almost like a landscape in some pre-formed or pre-imagined state.

Three large works, "Stalactites" I and II, and "Crevasses," place an huge number of short white brushstrokes against large black backgrounds. Only the slightest traces of color — red or blue — interrupt the field. The work is ghostly in color composition, but inviting in its suggested natural shapes. It's a visual environment that seems welcoming, although thoroughly exotic, almost alien.

With a different type of approach, Ryskin hangs a large scroll of Shoji paper, titled "Scape XI," from ceiling to floor. It breaks the dark, detailed pattern of the other works in scale and color. "Scape XI" sets only the slightest mixed media details against the white background: a bit of string, pasted strips, sewings. The effect is both monumental (because of its size) and minimal at once.

Each of the works creates a longing — initially because they seem to be yearning toward a more definitive (or representational) idea, but then simply because they are, like a memory, fleeing from perception as quickly as they are approached.

Emma Hogarth's works speaks to itself. Thirteen pieces dominate a corner of the gallery, soft, monochromatically white with delicate shades. Finely embossed paper and digital scans, most are taken from a numbered grouping called the Achromatic Series. (Three much different works of cast glass dramatically inform the works on paper.)

Her artist statement speaks thoughtfully about the process, saying her recent work "grapples with the contingencies of information stored as memory in images and forms." Flopped presentations, on one hand seen as an embossed texture, on the other seen as a shaded, digitally shadowed image, speak directly to this "contingency."

This small sample hints generously at a larger body of investigation. Hogarth's subtly changing pieces — slight variations in texture, color, shading and composition — place memory in its proper perspective: present but elusive.

*Works by Deborah Coolidge, Emma Hogarth and Masha Ryskin are on view through Feb. 18 at the Grimshaw-Gudewicz Gallery on the campus of Bristol Community College. For information visit [www.bristol.mass.edu/gallery](http://www.bristol.mass.edu/gallery) or call 508-678-2811 x. 2631.*

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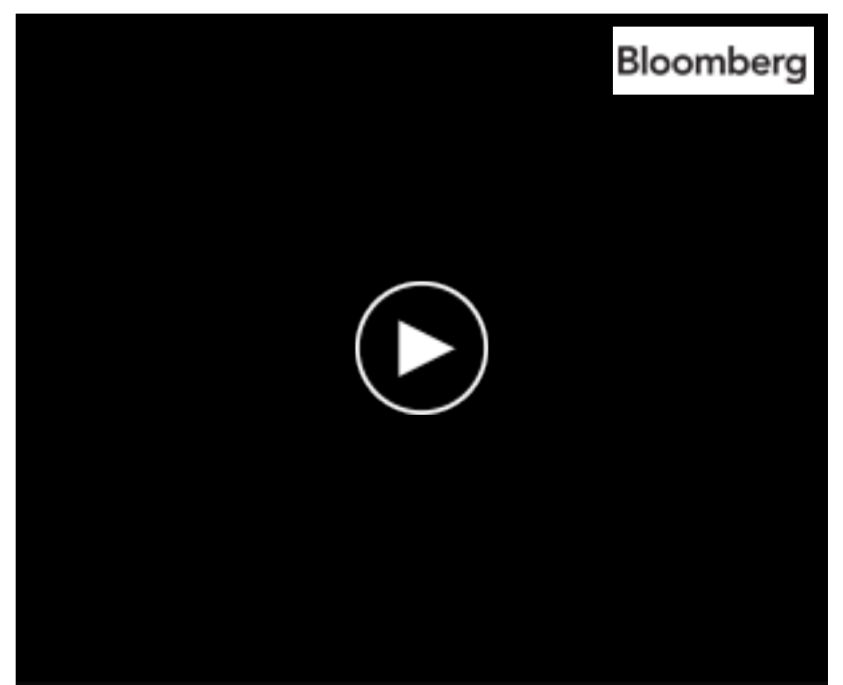
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	Incognito					
	<b>Family Volunteering</b>					9:00 am
	GiftsToGive					
	<b>"Silly Wonderful You" storytime</b>					11:00 am
	Barnes & Noble					
	<b>Teddy Bear Tea-Dartmouth YMCA</b>					12:00 pm
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