

Configurations at New Century Artists

One of the prey alcant temiencies in "Configurations," an exhibition curated by participating artist Basha Maryanska, is a species of allusive semi- abstraction with referents in the visible world. It can be seen in the paintings of Lilya Paylovie, whose exposure to different countnes and cultures during a childhood that involved much travel lends her paintings a unique appeal, with fancitUl figures in exotic costumes harmoniously enmeshed in vibrantly gorgeous landscape settings.

Although Carol Loizides' paintings are more overtly abstract, they possess their own allusive characteristics alluring nature and a strong sense of place with richly layered pastel hues that evoke landscape while making use of the freeformed drips and other techniques one normally associates with Abstract Expressionism. By contrast, Cynthia McCusker moves easily between inert representations of nature, as seen in "Perseverance" — an acrylic on camas its which a body of water is illuminated by beams of blinding light pouring through reassess of dark clouds to the somewhat more mystical mode of abstractions seen in her encaustic painting "Angelheart."

Then there is artist/curator Basha Maryanaka, who employs emotive color applied with a luminous glazing technique to capture how the mysteries of nature survive in the city as seen in her radiant painting "Walking Through Manhattan," where the brightly lighted windows of buildings arc juxtaposed with more abstract rectangular forms and explosions of verdant foliage and trees to highly poetic dim.

Four other artists in the show specialize in figurative sculpture and relief, each in her own distinct manner. ST18311 Holford combines handmade paper, wood, rusted metal, roots, hark, leaves, tea bags, tree limbs and other found objects to create evocative 3-1) assemblages, such as "Sanctuary," in which a partial female figure with realistically molded serenely benevolent facial features and gentle hands plays host to groups of stuffed birds, and another piece called "Wrapped," with two tacos, swathed within natural materials like a native American mother and her papoose, eloquently evoke traditional women's roles.

Bonnie Shanas, on the other hand, lends *the* unusual material of industrial wire mesh an unaccustomed sensuality, in her artfully fragmented depictions of loving couples dancing or embracing, giving them a sense of the classical and the eternal that locates her work handily in a host of art historical and prehistorical precedents, even while it remains as immediately contemporary as the plaster people of George Segal.

Renee Weiss Chase, a fashion designer

and sculptor had an epiphany: in a ceramics class when the ins' rk 'Or the term "dart," inspiring her to create dresses in clay. Else stately sculptural forms that resulted, however, go beyond those of ordinary dress forms, becoming glowing monuments to the feminine mystique, their graceful, .slinky contours evoking visions of elegant filmie femmes fatale such as Jean Harlow and Marlene Dietrich.

Then there is David Green, who does something similar for the masculine physique in marble and alabaster pieces such as the powerfiil "Male Torso" and the gracefully arching "Male Dancer," the latter charged with a sense of energy and movement rarely seen in contemporary sculpture.

The final sculptor Jim Lennox has delightfully quirky way with aeronautical imagery, as seen in both his tall painted steel piece "Rocket N I," which has a "steampunk" quality, *as* well as in "In Memory of Flight," a plane that appears to be morphing into a robotic bird. In "Red Shoes," however, Lennox pays tribute to Saul Steinberg, transforming one of the great New Yorker illustrator's drawings into an intriguing 3-D portrait.

Figurative painting as well makes an auspicious showing in this varied group show. Witness Agnicszka Szyfier's large acrylic and oil on canvas, "The Last Supper, 2011" which outdoes even Andy Warhol's late session of that great subject for Szyfter's audacious inclusion of likenesses of Bill Clinton arid Bill Gates at the table, as well the same artist's erotically charge mixed media on canvas "A 1:4:ss of Spring," in which a couple embrace 'amid a plethora of sinuous Art Deco floral forms and hot colors. By contrast Alana Allan embraces quiet moments, as seen in her "Nicole on a Bench" and "Sunglasses Girl," both of which capture thoughtful young women in public places, bracketed between colorful background shapes that lend a striking underlying tension to otherwise reposeful compositions in a manner akin to Richard Diebenkorn.

By contrast, a rare tOrmai beauty enlivens a series of paintings centering on the elaborately costumed figure of a lone Japanese geisha by Maria Hegglin, which arc especially notable for their expressively simplified forms and subtle subdud colors.

Several other artists exhibit landscapes and cityscapes that emphasize the vitality of both genres. Virginia Donovan, an area resident, puts a more contemporary spin on the tradition oldie Hudson Valley School with paintings that, rather than being panoramic, portray the local landscape and the famous river from a more intimate perspective in miniature (4x5 inch) canvases with light-tilled colors

and invitingly creamy textures. By contra Wendy Norton captures the romance of New York City with vigorous bravura brushmirk, moving from a sunny day in Washington Square Park; uptown to the skating rink in Rockefeller Center in a am flurry; to a night scene showing a couple passing under the canopy of an elegant hotel or apartment building; imbuing eat: with its own distinctive atmosphere %sidle sacrificing stylistic consistency.

For Beata Sawicka, Chiaroscuro, the play alight and shadow out shrubby and foliage, is the unifying factor in compositions nurked In a singular freshness of execution that comes across especially in her painting of shadows along a garden path, as well as in another composition where slender saplings, somi already blooming, others still bare of linty arc set against a pale blue sky intersected delicate wisps of cloud.

The light in the paintings of Malgorza Kisielcwska, on the other hand, appears to emanate from an emotional rather than natural source, lending her painting an imaginative dimension that is most dramatic in "At Sunrise," a painting of heavenly illumination streaming into the depths Ora forest which sets Malgorzata apart as a spiritual descendent of the great German Romantic landscape painter Dav Casper Friedrich.

The three final painters can only be classified as pure abstractionists: Hank Rondina's sprightly, brightly colored compositions in paint and collage share playful qualities with predecessors such as Paul Klee and Jean Miro, yet they have their unique slant, due to the artist's relationship to musical composition, mad evident in both his titles and the rhythmil movement of his forms.

By contrast, color is exquisitely refined in the collage paintings of Kathryn Hart, where the emphasis is on texture and line, AS seen in compositions such as "Memory" and "Mind Mapping," with their floating shapes and bits of string ant other timed elements tossed about in layers of monochromatic, liquified pigment like elements caught up in a blizzard.

Then there is Vcrrval Zimmerman, another artist enamored of monochrome. whose paintings of flowing, amorphous firms suggest unearthly things, such as phantoms and vortexes, as they swirl and turn in compositions possessed of a tulip visual drama.

— Nlatireen Fly

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