



Abstract Art and “Psycho-Delic” Summer

July 30, 2011

by Pat Rogers

DISPATCH - July 30, 2011 (Saturday; 5:57 p.m.)

Sag Harbor, NY

Betty has high hopes for summer and her upcoming vacation. After all, what could go wrong? Artist Athos Zacharias doesn't want to weigh in (he's not a story-spoiler!). But when asked to supply art for an exhibition to compliment the play, “Betty's Summer Vacation” at Bay Street Theatre, he thought bright colors and fun shoes.



“Clapper” by Athos Zacharias

An intimate show of six new paintings is currently exhibited in the lobby of Bay Street Theatre through July 31. “Hampton Vacation Series” by Athos Zacharias is presented by Karyn Mannix Contemporary.

An unexpected catch is that “Betty's Summer Vacation” is a dark comedy that reveals how wacky summer can be. Especially when Betty's housemates reveal “true colors” of a “psycho-delic” hue, according to Bay Street.

It's no matter really, said Zacharias. He doesn't typically paint canvases featuring high heels so the unexpected is fine.

The abstract painter made his first painting of shoes after being requested by a woman who loved Zacharias artwork and her shoes.

Zacharias made a painting and found he liked the expression he could render with lines implying stilettos. “Betty's Summer Vacation” gave him carte blanche to try something new with his art, he said.

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“Two Shoes” by Athos Zacharias



“Red Shoes” by Athos Zacharias

The shoes in his paintings aren't based on specific designers but are composites of those he's seen.

In a weird way, painting shoes took him back to his childhood, Zacharias said. His family owned a General Store in Fall Rivers, MA, he explained. The store sold cigars for 2¢. They also sold onions, potatoes, milk, Coca-Cola and more.

In the back, they sold coal. They also fixed shoes.

When customers dropped off shoes to be fixed and never returned, the shoes reverted to the family, Zacharias said. Wearing shoes that didn't exactly fit was part of the deal, he said.



"Hamptons" by Athos Zacharias

Making paintings of shoes seemed to honor his father in an expected way, Zacharias said. They are also a metaphor for high fashion and fun, he said.



Athos's shoes.

The new series is similar to his other work in the way Zacharias imparts expression through brush strokes. It differs since the shoe paintings place that expression in the lines which impart personality and motion.

"It was fun," he said. "You can see the fun in the paintings."



Athos Zacharias with Karen Clement at the "Hampton Vacation Series" opening on July 6, 2011.

Zacharias artwork combines images from pop culture, architecture and nature to make his abstract works with a touch of surrealism. His is known for "dynamic works notable for their spontaneity,"

according to Karyn Mannix Contemporary.

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“Swing” by Athos Zacharius



“Ace” by Athos Zacharias

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Zacharias was an assistant to Willem de Kooning (1904-1997) and a part of New York City’s Downtown Art Scene and the Tenth Street Cooperative Gallery Movement in the fifties and sixties. He also assisted Mary Abbott, Larry Rivers (1923-2002), Grace Hartigan (1922-2008), Alphonso Ossorio (1916-1990), Lee Krasner (1908-1984) and Jack Tworikov (1900-1982).

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“Within” by Athos Zacharias



“Glow” by Athos Zacharias



“She Woman” by Athos Zacharias



“Maestro” by Athos Zacharias

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Zacharias’s art is in collections held by the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC; the Museum of Art in Providence, RI, the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, MA and others. His international exhibition credits include Japan and Amsterdam, Holland.

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“Robo” by Athos Zacharias

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This summer, Karyn Mannix Contemporary decided to forgo a gallery space in favor of hosting exhibitions in alternate spaces. Presenting an art show at Bay Street Theatre was an opportunity to link with the Sag Harbor theater and showcase art by one of her artists, Mannix said.

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Athos Zacharias with Karyn Mannix at the “Hampton Vacation Series” opening on July 6, 2011.

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“Betty’s Summer Vacation” is performed at Bay Street Theatre from July 9 to 31, 2011. The play is written by Christopher Durang. It is directed by Trip Cullman. Tickets are available through the Box Office at 631-725-9500 or www.baystreet.org.

Athos Zacharias: www.athoszacharias.com

Bay Street Theatre: www.baystreet.org

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