



Perspectives of Abstraction

September 17, 2011

by Pat Rogers

DISPATCH - Sept 17, 2011 (Saturday; 4:30 p.m.)

Greenport, NY

Abstract art has a special place on the East End of Long Island. A range of abstraction was given its due in the exhibition, "Abstractions," held at the deCordova Studio & Gallery.



"Levitas" by Colin Goldberg

The group show featured art by Eric Ernst, Barbara Bilotta, Colin Goldberg and Mike Maas. All are Long Island artists.

"It's really a powerful show," said Hector deCordova, the gallery director and an abstract artist. "Simultaneously, each individual artwork looks welcoming but they also relate to one another and create chance encounters with art."

The exhibition was designed to make abstraction friendlier for those who find non-representational art unnerving. A talk held in August at Brecknock Hall in Greenport also helped quell uneasiness.

"Not everyone is comfortable with abstraction," deCordova said. "People look at it and think: 'That's not for me.' or 'I don't know what I'm looking at.'"

For fans, the show presented a slice of what's happening today. Artworks were inspired by science, astronomy, Japanese woodblock, nature, music, environmental issues and personal reflection. Historical and current art influences converge throughout the show.

Colin Goldberg is a digital artist who creates prints and mixed media works. He coined the word "Techspressionism" to describe his "intersection of technology and abstraction."

His art is influenced by the New York School Abstract Expressionist painters of the 1950's, wireframe diagrams used in industrial design, street art, and shodo—the art of Japanese calligraphy. Process as subject matter and importance of the gesture are part of his art making practice, he said.



“Absolute Magnitude” by Colin Goldberg

Technically, Goldberg said his art unfolds this way:

“Generally, my mixed-media works involve a painterly ground on paper or canvas utilizing acrylic and latex paints or inkwash, and then a ‘response’ based on the ground, which is composed digitally and layered atop the composition as a layer of silkscreen or pigment printing. The idea of utilizing industrial materials and processes, embraced by the pop artists, is also a central thread in my work.”



“Rotation #3” by Colin Goldberg



“Lotus” by Colin Goldberg



Colin Goldberg next to “Ulysses”

Eric Ernst’s work creates an “interaction of forms, shapes, and colors that, mixed with musical and harmonic elements, conjure a more immediate narrative and strive to transcend the limits of pure geometric abstraction,” according to his artist statement.

Ernst’s art is influenced by Japanese woodblock, the motion of jazz improvisation, Asian aesthetics, geometric art, abstract expressionism and surrealism. A figurative element marks much of Eric Ernst’s art.



“Naiad” by Eric Ernst (Side view of the sculpture)

Quirky titles provide insight into the work and let viewers share a laugh with the artist. His works are narrative with storylines that can cause debate.



“Patron Saint of Blissful Ignorance” by
Eric Ernst



“When Electricity Gets Angry” by Eric Ernst

Ernst is the son of Jimmy Ernst (1920-1984), an abstract expressionism-surrealist artist, and the grandson of Max Ernst (1891-1976), a surrealist artist and pioneer of the Dada movement.



“Patron Saint of Spiritual Ambiguity” by Eric
Ernst



Eric Ernst with “Rhythms of the Sirens”

Mike Maas’s paintings are tactile and textural with serious grit. The ghost of a grid can be seen in many of his artworks.

Maas believes abstract art is “visual poetry.” The “creative energy” of abstract expressionism drew his art into abstraction, he said.



“Black and White #2” by Mike Maas



“Black and White #1” by Mike
Maas

“Music, the human figure, and nature can provide the perfect point of departure for the artist inclined toward an abstracted, more purely poetic approach to the visual arts,” according to Maas’s artist statement.



“Untitled” by Mike Maas



Mike Maas with “Magenta Square Ascending”

Barbara Bilotta makes her abstract paintings by layering acrylic paint with multiple resin pours. The building-up process creates depth that pulls the viewer into the painting. When curvy fields of color rule, Bilotta’s art feels like abstract pop paintings.

Her goal is to “transform the natural order into a suggestive interpretation to stimulate the imagination,” according to her artist statement.



“Golden Elegance” by Barbara Bilotta

In “Golden Elegance,” Bilotta wanted an “extremely rich surface while blending in quietness and solitude,” she said. “I chose to fill the whole canvas with both movement and contrast to create a feeling of elegance.”

For “Rises In the East,” Bilotta fused three “brilliant colors to create a playful movement,” she said. This painting has a “more measured slowness” than some of her work, she said.



“Rises in the East”
by Barbara Bilotta

“Sad Tissue, Happy Tissue” is a light and playful piece that “signifies the triumph and tribulations in

one's life," she said.



"Sad Tissue, Happy Tissue" by Barbara Bilotta



Barbara Bilotta with "Vertical Drift"

BASIC FACTS: "Abstractions" was held at the deCordova Studio & Gallery from Aug 6 to Sept 11, 2011. All exhibiting artists had shown previously with the gallery. www.decordovagallery.com

Colin Goldberg: <http://colingoldberg.com>

Barbara Bilotti: www.teklafineart.com

UPCOMING: Barbara Bilotta and Colin Goldberg are part the next group show, "Nuggets," opening tonight (Sept 17) from 6 to 8 p.m. It remains on view through Oct 30. The gallery is located at 538 Main Street, Greenport.

"Nuggets" also includes art by Hector deCordova, Rosamaria Eisler, Gordon Gagliano, Helen Giaquinto, Bryan Landsberg, Bill Negron, Don Saco, Catherine Silver, Ursula Thomas and Amy Worth.

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