



Veers and Swerves for Complementary Paintings

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by Pat Rogers

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The paintings seem like they barely avert a clash. Barely. One painter favors soft compositions and the other likes edge. There's motion, but each artist portrays it differently. There's harmony between the artworks. An attraction to similar color palettes is evident. Shapes used as vocabulary quell any uneasiness. In the end, artworks made by two different painters seem to complement each other. But then again...

These intrigues come as a side dish served in a compelling two-person show at Halsey McKay Gallery in East Hampton. Creating the visual conversation are paintings by Louisa Chase and Sally Egbert.



"Clown Face" by Louisa Chase.



"Moon" by Sally Egbert.

Friends in real life, the two women wanted to exhibit their paintings in a single show, said Ryan Wallace, co-owner and co-director of Halsey McKay Gallery. They also wanted to exhibit in the "off-season" so the show could be more easily seen by the local community instead of crunched in the jangle of art exhibitions held in the summer.

There are enough similarities between the two to pair the paintings together, Wallace said. There are enough differences to give pause. Ultimately, it may be the artists' shared attraction to shapes, motion and saturated color in their artwork that provides a bridge for paintings that want to go together.



Paintings by Sally Egbert (left) and Louisa Chase (right) installed at Halsey Mckay Gallery.

Chase's art features saturated colors that "often combine static geometric figures with gestural marks culled from the same starting point," according the gallery. Paintings represent a single object that's abstracted yet identifiable. Motion is evident. Scribbles can range from energetic to frenzy with a purpose. Line, color and shape all seem to be equally important.

"The paintings always look like something to Louisa," said Wallace. "It could be a clown face, a snowflake, a Buddha or whatever. She makes her paintings quickly and there's a directness in the work."



"Buddha" by Louisa Chase.



"Hokey Pokey" by Louisa Chase.

Egbert also depicts objects in her art. She's inspired by the landscape and is especially drawn to linear structures like bare tree branches bathed in local Hamptons light.

Like Chase, Egbert's paintings feature saturated colors. Unlike Chase, Egbert creates compositions that seem as if they're drifting in a pond or floating while being gently carried by a lazy river in late summer. Her paintings are lush and sensual. The prominent shapes attract attention before the eye finds its way into the deep layers of color.



"Memory Flowers" by Sally Egbert.



"Blue" by Sally Egbert.

Both painters occupy a similar place where gesture links abstraction to representation yet remains apart from both genres. Chase and Egbert demonstrate the possibilities of variation. The exhibition resonates long after leaving the gallery.

BASIC FACTS: “Louisa Chase & Sally Egbert” is on view at the Halsey McKay Gallery through Feb 7, 2012. The gallery is open by appointment. On view in a separate gallery is “Fourth Estate Editions,” which includes selections of editioned work by Joseph Hart, Glen Baldrige, Kate Shepherd, Ruby Sky Stiler and others. www.halseymckay.com.

In NYC, Halsey McKay Gallery is currently presenting “Patrick Brennan – Moon Drawings, iMovies & Mirrors For Eyes” through March 3, 2012 at 195 East 3rd Street, New York, NY. www.thewildproject.com.

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