



Troves For Tough Times and Happy Endings

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by Pat Rogers

Maria Pessino is passionate about her family, about avant garde theater, and about expressing the darker corners of life coupled with hope for change. Her latest series of artwork channel all of these qualities and more.

"Karma Kit Kaboodle" presents "troves" made by Pessino. They are currently on view through April 29, 2012 at Keyes Art Projects in Chelsea. The artworks are like surrealist scenes presented in three dimensions for extra impact. Avant guard theater maven Robert Wilson described Pessino's latest series as "...tiny stages where poetry and mystery are framed."



"Heresay" by Maria Pessino, 2011. 16 x 16 inches.



"Lament" by Maria Pessino, 2011. 6 x 7 inches.



"Dis-Orientate" by Maria Pessino.

The art contained within distinct framing or boundaries reveal a heartfelt and personal journey Pessino experienced over the last year. Tragedy and challenges struck Pessino, her family and people close to her. She turned to art to channel the devastation and help ferry her through shock, recovery, acceptance and into peace.



"Regret" by Maria Pessino, 2011. 6 x 12 inches.

The latest troves in the exhibition make use of glass domes to reflect clarity, the lifting of the darkness, and the arrival of a lighter way of perceiving the world.



“Primate Orison” by Maria Pessino, 2012. 10.25 x 8.5 inches.



“Offspring Orison” by Maria Pessino, 2012. 10.5 x 12 inches.

“Karma Kit Kaboodle” also included a night of music where Pessino sang traditional Cuban songs from her native country. Many were sung to her as a child by her mother. Eventually, the family was pushed to relocate from Cuba and moved to Spain and then America.

The Cuban ballads were performed in the “Bolero-Filin” style, with Pessino accompanied by David Oquendo on guitar and Onel Mulet on saxophone. The songs are featured on her upcoming debut EP. Titled “Deseo,” the songs portray love: both failed and hopeful. The music is tied to the artworks exhibited in “Karma Kit Kaboodle.”

“These traditional gems of Cuban music...they are an arrow that cuts through the years of my life, immediately taking me back, without meander, to a place where the mango swells,” said Pessino. “The music takes you to a place where, even through exile and trauma, beauty and harmony are eventually restored.”

Pessino’s creativity manifests itself in art and theater. She describes her art as “hidden stories of delight for objects.” The works combine her love of narrative and dramatic presentation into thought-provoking art that isn’t afraid to challenge.

Pessino is also a well-regarded producer and creator of avant garde performance art and theater. She’s the founder and artistic director of Oddfellows Playhouse, a not-for-profit artist’s theater company based in East Hampton. Oddfellows Playhouse produces and creates new works and presents them in alternative spaces both indoors and outside.

BASIC FACTS: “Karma Kit Kaboodle” is on view through April 29, 2012 at Keyes Art Projects, 551 West 21st Street (4th floor walk up), New York, NY. The gallery is open today from noon to 6 p.m. and tomorrow by appointment. www.juliekeyesart.com.

Maria Pessino’s studio is in East Hampton. To see more of her art, visit www.mariapessino.com