



Survey of Edgy Contemporary Art Arrives in East Hampton

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by Pat Rogers

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A curated look at provocative contemporary art can be found at Vered Gallery in East Hampton. "Art on the Edge" is presenting works by 13 artists who represent art innovation of some kind, said Damien Roman, the exhibition curator and Director of Contemporary Art for Vered Gallery. This is the third year the contemporary survey has been presented.

Exhibiting artists are Esao Andrews, Peter Buchman, Ray Caesar, Nicola Verlato, Natalia Fabia, Grant Haffner, Adam Handler, Shawn Huckins, Elektra KB, Jessica Lichtenstein, Franceso Lo Castro, Lu Cong and James Roper.

The show includes a range of mediums and interests. There is plenty of narrative art. Many conjure scenes of imaginative worlds with a social commentary subtext. Painting, sculpture, printmaking, art made using digital technology and more are part of the mix.

Linking the contemporary art exhibition together is a subversiveness and a humor that is slightly dark, said Roman. All of the artists are accomplished in their area of art. The gallery also anticipates that each will continue to climb and make a mark in new contemporary art, said Roman.

Nicola Verlato composed music for documentary films and studied architecture at the University of Venice before turning his attention to art. In 2009, Verlato exhibited an installation of paintings and sculpture at 2009 Venice Biennale in the Italian Pavilion.

Nicola's paintings grab what it's like to live in the here and now, said Roman. Drawing on classical realism, some of his subjects portray a slice of life that can be fodder for the movies. In "Take The Road To Nowhere," the scene depicts thrill seeking teens ejected from a car. Pills jumble through the air with the nearly nude figures. Did they drive the car toward the cliff so they could cheat death or did oblivion have something to do with it?



"Take The Road To Nowhere" by Verlato Nicola, 2012. Oil on canvas, 59 x 96 inches.

Ray Caesar presents sculpture and installation through painting using technology. He uses 3-D modeling software that's used to create digital animation effects in film and the gaming industry to create virtual people and the virtual environment they live in. Extremely detail oriented, Caesar starts by building the anatomy (the skeleton and anatomical joints that can be bent and manipulated to assume any pose), according to Roman.

Caesar then adds hair, skin, eyelashes and fingernails before placing them in detailed and layered 3D environments with all the furnishings. He will often place items inside drawers that cannot be seen by viewers of his art but contribute to the realism of his art, said Roman.



"Self Examination" by Ray Caesar.



"La Chasse" by Ray Caesar.

Electra KB works across mediums to portray different facets and scenes from a world she created where a war against suppression is being waged. Characters were created that seem to make wrap religious references into the work but may or may not be the case, said Roman. Electra KB's use of the familiar in her new and imagined world is another way to engage the viewer and to give rise to self-examination of views held.

The world portrayed is The Theocratic Republic Of Gaia. "The Theocratic republic is a globalized civilization where the population gets brainwashed and forgets what reality is," according to her artist statement. "Contemporary society is trapped in a world of lies staged by the powerful governments and corporations; they are the new theocratic governments, becoming more important than god..."

Electra KB makes art using photography, painting, collage, fiber, video and installation. In some cases, photographs are printed on canvas and then embroidered with felt appliqué stitched into fabrics. In all cases, the work portrays parts of a battle set in a time where social and geological upheavals both rage.



"Liberation" by Elektra KB, 2012. Mixed media on fabric, 52 x 72 inches.



“Portrait of a Theocratic Republic of Gaia Being” by Elektra KB, 2012. Archival pigment print.

Shawn Huckins leads his artist statement with the following question: “An American Revolution: What would George post?”

His art explores the effects of technology and social media on human behavior by imagining how the American Revolution could have unfolded had America’s Founding Fathers been able to text, tweet and Facebook each other. By bookending current technology with traditional portraiture, Huckins presents 18th century American paintings with a serious twist.



“Paul Revere, Whatever” by Shawn Huckins, 2012. Acrylic and pencil on canvas, 32 x 36 inches.

Grant Haffner uses the back roads of the Hamptons as compositional muse for his neon-soaked paintings. Haffner’s work shatters the ideal of farm fields stretching without human impact by focusing on a necessity of society: electricity piped through power lines. Creating prominent slashes through what should be peaceful scenes, Haffner calls attention to the disappearance of bucolic landscapes of the Hamptons coupled with the fast pace of contemporary life demonstrated by captured motion in his work.



“Sunset on Napeague” by Grant Haffner, 2012. Acrylic on wood panel, 48 x 47.25 inches. Signed, titled and dated version.

The artists selected for “Art on the Edge” span the globe by birth or influence. The Hamptons are represented by Peter Buchman and Grant Haffner.

The Memorial Day Weekend opening of “Art on the Edge” also launched Vered Contemporary. Vered Gallery will remain focused on art from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries that are part of the secondary art market.

Vered Contemporary is the gallery’s way of acknowledging the “...significance of New Contemporary while showcasing the cutting edge talent increasingly pervading mainstream

culture,” according to a release. Ultimately, the goal is to create an environment where a dialogue of “The continued goal of the exhibition is to further advance the dialogue of New Contemporary art movements from around the world.

BASIC FACTS: “Art on the Edge” remains on view through June 18, 2012 at Vered Contemporary, 68 Park Place, East Hampton, NY. Some of the work can be viewed online at www.veredcontemporary.com

Information on Vered Gallery, visit www.veredart.com

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