



“Mostly Abstract” is Open Despite the Storm

February 9, 2013

by Pat Rogers

DISPATCH - FEB 9, 2013 (12:15 p.m.)

SPRINGS, NY-

UPDATE - FEB 9, 2013 (1:14 p.m.)

The will was strong but determination alone couldn't clear the parking lot and walkways to Ashawagh Hall of snow. **“Mostly Abstract” has been cancelled in its entirety.** Look for the exhibition on April 6 and 7, 2013 at Ashawagh Hall.

THE ORIGINAL STORY CONTINUES BELOW

It's official-the show will go on! The show in question is the “Mostly Abstract” exhibition at Ashawagh Hall. In their case, even the prospect of the art by battery-powered light and roads not fully cleared are not enough to keep the exhibition doors shut. “Mostly Abstract” will be open later today with the reception taking place tonight, as planned, from 5 to 7 p.m., said exhibiting artist Jana Hayden.

Non-essential travel is banned until at least mid-day today as a snow emergency has been declared by the Village of East Hampton and the Towns of East Hampton and Southampton, according to the [*East Hampton Star*](#).

“Mostly Abstraction” presents a snapshot of the ways abstraction currently appears in works made by artists with connections to the East End. Artists were selected and the show curated by Cynthia Sobel. The exhibition includes paintings, drawings and sculpture.

.



“Dance Series 1” by Sheila Rotner.

.

Artists presenting work are Barbara Bilotta, Phyllis Hammond, Jana Hayden, Jim Hayden, Sheila Rotner, Cynthia Sobel and Mark Zimmerman.

The original show was to also have included Beth Barry and Stephanie Reit.

"These are mostly people who I know," said Sobel. "I thought it would be great to put the art together. They are similar because the work is abstract; some work more than others. That's why it's called 'Mostly Abstract' and not 'Abstraction.' When people see the show, they'll be able to tell different artists made the art because each has a recognizable style and signature."



"Winter View" by Jana Hayden, 2012. White Clay with glazes, 20 x 20 inches.

Sobel herself is an abstract painter and an en plein air landscape artist.

Sobel decided to focus on abstraction because of the abstraction's historic connection to the Springs, located on the outskirts of East Hampton Village. Ashawagh Hall' has its own historic ties to abstraction. Abstract Expression artists Jackson Pollock (1912-1956) and Willem deKooning (1904-1997) both showed art at community fairs held at Ashawagh Hall.

"Springs has a big tradition of abstraction," said Sobel. "deKooning lived five minutes away, Pollock lived 10 minutes. There are more people who I know working in abstraction than landscape, which also has a tradition here, so it made sense to focus on abstraction for the show."



"Red Line" by Cynthia Sobel, 2012. Oil on linen, 10 x 10 inches.

While the artworks are linked through abstraction, viewers shouldn't expect the art to look the same, said Sobel. Since the artists incorporate abstraction into their work in various ways, the art is easily distinguishable, said Sobel.

For instance, Bilotta exhibiting works with recognizable ties to the landscape, said Sobel.



"Horizon" by Beth Barry.

Jana Hayden's work also references nature but her compositions are abstracted more than Bilotta's, said Sobel. Hayden is exhibiting a new series of ceramic wall sculptures inspired by Japanese brush

paintings. The works are executed in shades of whites and grays.

Jim Hayden's art is also connected to nature. From early childhood, Jim Hayden has been inspired by trees, the ocean and the changing moods and textures of the beach. For "Mostly Abstract," he is presenting a new series of abstract charcoal drawings, inspired by the many variations of tree bark.



"Palm Bark 1" by Jim Hayden, 2012. Charcoal on paper, 18 x 24 inches.

Rotner's work has no ties to representation and uses textures and layering of materials to create works that are "dark and mysterious," said Sobel. Rotner uses sheet metal, mica, wire and stone for create artworks with a sculptural component.

Zimmerman's artworks have the edge of geometric abstraction and he favors precision in making the works. Color, movement and the "excitement of discovery" is the essence of his work, according to Sobel.

Her own work is the opposite. Sobel's interest lies in expressive strokes of paint that result in color field composition and rhythmic lines. Her current oil paintings explore different color combinations and movement within the picture plane and across triptychs and diptychs, she said.



"Acrobat #1" by Mark Zimmerman.

Hammond creates large abstract sculpture made in variety of materials. These have included stoneware clay, porcelain and metal.

While circumstances prevented Barry and Reit from having work on view, the works of both artists presented different nuances of abstraction inspired by landscape. Barry begins her work from landscapes and seascapes and shapes created by sunlight and movement.

Reit was planning to present new works inspired by en plein air landscapes. She is more well-known for her whimsical collages and assemblages.



"Regatta" by Barbara Bilotta

Even though the exhibition won't be held under the circumstances and full range of artists as planned, "Mostly Abstract" will present a diverse range of quality works that demonstrate the relevancy of abstraction today. Most of the artists are presenting new works. This allows a peek into what's happening in the artists's studios.



"Magenta Sky" by Stephanie Reit.

BASIC FACTS: "Mostly Abstract" will be presented this weekend (Feb 9 and 10, 2013) at Ashawagh Hall, 780 Springs Fireplace Road, Springs, NY. An opening reception will be held tonight (Saturday) from 5 to 7 p.m. The show was curated by Cynthia Sobel. The exhibition will be open this afternoon and on Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

INSIDER INFO: Many of the exhibiting artists have also shown together at the Crazy Monkey Gallery in Amagansett. They include Barbara Bilotta, Cynthia Sobel, Jana Hayden, Jim Hayden, Sheila Rotner and Mark Zimmerman.

RELATED STORIES:

Hamptons Art Hub: ["Abstraction Then and Now Opens at Guild Hall"](#) by Pat Rogers. Published Oct 27, 2012.

Hamptons Art Hub: ["Perspectives of Abstraction"](#) by Pat Rogers. Published Sept 17, 2011.