



The Small Worlds of “The Big Show”

May 23, 2013

by Sandra Hale Schulman

DISPATCH - MAY 23, 2013 (8:30 a.m.)

BRIDGEHAMPTON, NY-

“The Big Show” at Silas Marders Gallery is an exquisite oxymoron. With 165 paintings from 55 different artists—all 8 x 10 inches in size—the bountiful big barn is filled with small worlds.

Commissioned by Silas Marder, the group is divided evenly between local and international artists, which roughly translates to mean anyone outside of Suffolk County. It’s a different group every year, and like cat herding, takes a good year just to organize. Kudos to Silas on mustering the patience it must take. His only direction to the artists, other than the size, is the art made for the show is in line with their current work.

The artists range from some of the most successful names in the art world to some newbies thrilled to be included.

John Alexander, the Texas transplant figurative painter, is included in major museum shows nationwide. For “The Big Show,” Alexander offers some marine still lifes of oysters, lobster claws and fish for the high-end price of \$10,000 each. New Yorker Ross Bleckner, another well-known name, offered paintings of surreal scenes of an eye on a silvery background, also going for \$10,000. At the other end of the spectrum, the least expensive pieces went for \$300.

Much like the recent exhibition “Matisse: In Search of True Painting” at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, half the fun is in following the thread of the artist’s hand. All three pieces by the artist are not arranged together and it leads to wondering: How does this relate to that? Are they all of a piece, or does one lead off elsewhere from the others?

Anytime the eye can be made to jump back and forth in viewing a wide range of work at an exhibition, visitors are bound to learn something or see something anew. This is how they do it in art-history class.

I loved how some artists paid major attention to the edges, finishing them with contrasting colors or extending the image around the side of a stapled canvas. Ted Asnis made good use of this technique in *Red Boat in the Marsh*. And some of the paintings are not even paintings, as in the hardware punk chic trio of works by Alice Hope, made up of cascading ball chain and perforated panel in various colors.



Red Boat in the Marsh by Ted Asnis, 2013. Acrylic on canvas. Photo by Sandra Hale Schulman



Untitled by Alice Hope, 2013. Ball chain, panel.
Photo by Sandra Hale Schulman.

Pure bovine fun frolics in the surreal work of Susan Siegel, whose delightful paintings show cows dressed in period costume flouncing through gardens. The cows have names such as “Helen,” and “Phil and Barbara.” Very moo-ving.



Phil and Barbara by Susan Siegel, 2013. Oil on linen.
Photo by Sandra Hale Schulman.

Painter Scott Bluedorn is in his element here, as he normally paints small anyway. *Upon the Hill* finds a small house perched atop a big boat. Is it marooned or just a trick of perspective? Are those people on the roof or just birds? Only the gentle sky knows.



Up on the Hill by Scott Bluedorn, 2013. Acrylic on canvas. Photo by Sandra Hale Schulman.

From big objects made small to small objects made life-size, Brett Eberhardt’s *Studio Phonejack* is just that... and something more. As wireless takes over, once necessary items become unused curiosities, marring clean space with their once vital portholes to the world.



Studio Phonejack by Brett Eberhardt, 2013. Oil on canvas. Photo by Sandra Hale Schulman.

Jane Martin achieves beautiful, lustrous high shine resin finishes in her work, basing the images on archival video stills and then giving them a gleaming gloss. *Reverie* is sweetly haunting, with its small figure perched way below the billowing clouds of dreams above.



Reverie by Jane Martin, 2012. Print, resin on wood. Photo by Sandra Hale Schulman.

There was already an early “sold” dot on the work of Charles Browning, whose carefully rendered *Fallen Arcimboldo* had the classic look of an Old Master.



Fallen Arcimboldo by Charles Browning, 2013. Oil on canvas. Photo by Sandra Hale Schulman.

I liked the flat abstraction of Susan Lichtman’s *Evening Interior with Four Women*. Something was going on here, though none of the women seem to be relating to each other, staring off in their own worlds and own color fields.



Evening Interior with Four Women by Susan Lichtman, 2012. Acrylic, gouache on canvas. Photo by Sandra Hale Schulman.

Aurora Robson, whose 3D piece graces the show invite, is the only artist whose works are exhibited together, a whirling dervish of cut out words and colors. Blues, purples and green swirl in circles, leading the eye up and around, fitting the jumble into a possible narrative.



Trio by Aurora Robson. Photo by Sandra Hale Schulman.

The layout is done as in previous years, with a large grid of paintings on the ground floor, with a matching thumbnail and description on a poster of the grid next to it. Unusual but it works, again forcing the eye to jump back and forth. The two-tiered barn is a fresh change from a white-walled gallery, rustic but sleek. A giant haywall outside corrals viewers into the art barn; fresh cut grass and raked rocks signal the start of a new season.



Bi-level installation shot. Photo by Sandra Hale Schulman.



Installation shot. Photo by Sandra Hale Schulman.



Installation Shot. Photo by Sandra Hale Schulman.



Outdoor crowd shot at "The Big Show 8." Photo by Sandra Hale Schulman.

BASIC FACTS: "The Big Show" remains on view through June 18, 2013 at Silas Marder Gallery, 120 Snake Hollow Rd, Bridgehampton, NY 11932. The gallery is open Thursday to Monday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. www.silasmarder.com

RELATED: "[Small Paintings for 'The Big Show.'](#)" Published June 21, 2012.

"[Alice Hope Creates New Works at The Armory Modern.](#)" Published March 9, 2013.