



ART REVIEW - Counterpoint of Shape, Movement & Color: Christine Hiebert and Diane Mayo at The Drawing Room

February 25, 2014

by Erica-Lynn Huberty

In the sparse, open front gallery of The Drawing Room, Christine Hiebert's structured yet gestural drawings suggest a landscape of scattered, linear debris: perhaps remnants of man-made shelters or forest dwellings; perhaps markings delineating a figure's dance-like movements across a space.

In complementary counterpoint to Hiebert's drawings are Diane Mayo's curvaceous ceramic sculptures, displayed in the middle and back galleries. Both artists have exhibited previously at The Drawing Room, and both of these one-person shows run concurrently until March 10.

In the works on paper exhibited by Hiebert, delicately cut and placed blue painter's tape is sometimes used alongside charcoal, ink or pencil, creating both depth and purposeful focal points amid the seemingly stream-of-consciousness markings.

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"Untitled (rd.08.61)" by Christine Hiebert, 2008. Water-based etching ink, charcoal, graphite on Lenox paper, 26 x 44 inches. Courtesy of The Drawing Room.

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"Untitled (rd.08.8)" by Christine Hiebert, 2008. Block-printing ink, blue tape, tea, red earth on paper, 30 x 44 inches. Courtesy of The Drawing Room.

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Hiebert has said that her work aims to investigate the nature and language of line, and one can see, in viewing each of the 10 drawings here (made between 2005 and 2013), a range of historical inspiration that may or may not be informing them, such as prehistoric cave paintings, or Matisse's figurative collages, to mention only two.

The three large-scale works lining one wall present a graphic, distilled retelling of the seven drawings horseshoed around the other three walls of the square space. In *Untitled [rd.08.61]* (2008), a gloomy fairytale forest of bare branches scatters over a thick arc of charcoal to a bright, empty ground. In *Untitled [ct.05.32]* (2005), impossibly delicate straw-like lines leap and hover across the page.



"Untitled (ct.05.32)" by Christine Hiebert, 2005. Blue tape, glue, charcoal on paper, 18 x 23 1/2 inches. Courtesy of The Drawing Room.

In some of the works in this show, Cy Twombly's scratchy, handwriting-like gestures are evoked. In others, Druidic hazel branch formations take flight over stone arcs. A limited palette of black, grey, blue and brown on white in all these variegated explorations of line helps establish a wide range of interpretations for the viewer.

In complimentary counterpoint to Hiebert's drawings are Diane Mayo's ceramic sculptures, displayed in the middle and back galleries of The Drawing Room. In her previous work, Mayo explored lanky vessels with playful lopsided silhouettes and geometric patchwork coloring. Here, these new works are more stoic (yet still immensely accessible), monumental in structure while still maintaining a relatively small, and very human, scale.



"Ultramarine" by Diane Mayo, 2013. Glazed ceramic, 14 1/4 x 12 x 4 1/2 inches. Courtesy of The Drawing Room.

The Montauk-based ceramicist previous body of work explored lanky vessels with playful lopsided silhouettes and geometric patchwork coloring. In the current show, Mayo's new works are more stoic (yet still immensely accessible), monumental in structure while maintaining a relatively small, and very human, scale.



"Violet" Diane Mayo, 2013. Glazed ceramic, 13 1/4 x 14 1/2 x 5 1/2 inches. Courtesy of The Drawing Room.

Mayo's delicious matte glaze is multi-pigmented and a trickery for the eye: often the final effect creates a carved-stone appearance (limestone, marble); a sense of heaviness of material rather than the hollow, thin-walled clay that is their real substance. While creating and applying these glazes must be a task akin to chemistry, the construction of these works must be one akin to physics. It is a feat that is, frankly, hard to imagine: impossibly thin, light slabs attached with no visible seam, entirely hollowed-out curves supporting more curves, that must elicit wonder from anyone familiar with ceramic work.

There is a stillness and temperance to Mayo's works that is revealed not just in, but by the process itself. One can imagine an immense amount of patience (as well as a prodigious understanding of material) that is required during construction for works like these to succeed.



"Green/White" by Diane Mayo, 2013. Glazed ceramic, 16 3/4 x 15 1/8 x 4 1/2 inches. Courtesy of The Drawing Room.

It should be noted that Mayo's sculptures succeed not just on a technical level, but also on an aesthetic one, with those multi-dimensional glazes layered and appearing to be an organic component of the clay itself. And while she was inspired to create this body of work after studying the shapes and silhouettes of Abstract Expressionist artist Conrad Marca-Relli, she has made them entirely her own, out of her own specific language of shape and color.



"Yellow" by Diane Mayo, 2013. Glazed ceramic, 10 1/4 x 14 1/8 x 4 3/4 inches. Courtesy of The Drawing Room.

The limestone-looking arc of *Green/White* (2013) evokes a sturdy, Stonehenge-like totem. The whimsical saturation of *Ultramarine* (2013) reads as a pop-art nod to one of Keith Haring's dogs. The subtle softness of *Yellow* (2013) wants to be held in hand—touched and cradled like conjoined eggs.

Hiebert's drawings and Mayo's sculptures are well matched in these two solo shows, forming a tranquil yet exhilarating counterpoint of shape, movement, and color.

BASIC FACTS: "Christine Hiebert Ten Drawings" and "Diane Mayo Sculptures" will be exhibited at The Drawing Room through March 10, 2014.

The Drawing Room is located at 66H Newtown Lane, East Hampton, NY 11937.

www.drawingroom-gallery.com

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