



ART REVIEW: Ruminations of Water Mused in Montauk

April 12, 2014

by Scott Bluedorn

“On an Eastern Shore” is an apt name for a show featuring the ruminations of water by two East Hampton-based artists, set appropriately in a small gallery clinging to the windward shore of Fort Pond Bay in Montauk, NY. Artists Ingrid Silva and Peter Ngo, the former a newcomer and the latter a gallery veteran, chose Scott Pitches’ Outeast Gallery to exhibit moving bodies of work that seems to reciprocate the gallery’s vibe and offers an entrancing dialogue. Though working independently, both artists here focus on the often oneiric realm that the watery element provides to a dramatic effect.

Ingrid Silva, born in Peru and now living and working in Sag Harbor, presents a related series of photographs titled “Waterdreams” and “The Universe Within”.

The “Waterdreams” series depicts mysterious solitary figures floating in a darkened plane, often draped in sensuous and shimmering fabrics and water-distorted reflections with heads and faces are conspicuously cropped or obscured. The setting itself is utterly black and reminiscent of the vacuum of outer space, and reiterates a feeling of isolation for the lonely figures who appear to be either lost in dream or submitting to this great void.

The work is rather sinister in mood; in one photograph, the appearance of a phallic snake paired with a curvaceous female form seems to subtly denote the allure of sexual temptation. Perhaps each torso could be an offering of flesh, dangling in the soup of the subconscious...

Silva explains, “The water is meant to represent the womb or a space with no presets, where the thought of floating and falling at the same time is possible.”



“Waterdreams: Nightdream No.6” by Ingrid Silva, 2013. Archival digital print mounted on cintra, with Plexiglass, 30 x 40 inches, Edition of 10.

In contrast, “The Universe Within” series burst with luminous light and energy. No longer is the space vacuous and uncertain, but instead, imbued with life and overlaid with transparent layers of clouds or flowers that Silva says represents “humanity’s inner connection to the natural world”.

The figures are still mysterious as well as anonymous, but here they frolic and submit to a certain 'joy de vivre' and enjoy the company of others in their revelation. There is an almost Renaissance feel to many of the images, both in color palette and composition, as bodies veiled in flowing silks huddle together, appear in active stride or express kinetic movement. "The Universe Within" is a beautiful and logical next step for the artist, who continues to focus on the inner spiritual lens of her subjects.



"The Universe Within: No.1" by Ingrid Silva, 2014. Archival digital print mounted on cintra, with Plexiglass, 30 x 40 inches, Edition of 10.

In the adjoining room, Peter Ngo's oil paintings highlighting faces and portraying landscapes proves to be the perfect complement to Silva's anonymous scenes, though still bound to the shared element of water as a "medium" for contemplation.

Ngo's painting vibrates with the power of color, and he deftly uses a spectrum of brushstrokes to convey a very dynamic world at once soothing with smooth gradients and striking with hard-edged detail. His subjects are nearly all attractive (disembodied or hybridized) women or occasionally animals, seemingly lost in a post-diluvia dream world. Electric oceans seethe with anticipation, paired with prismatic yet melancholic skies that could be dawn or dusk. Ngo's brand of surrealistic imagery is immediate in the same way as Magritte's— he burns an image into your mind.

Ngo said of his work: "There's a mystery and an allure about women. How they can seduce or make anything elegant like a darkening sky. I try to capture that glimpse that wasn't meant to be caught."



"She'll Set Your Heart on Fire and You'll Ask Her to Never Let it Burn Out" by Peter Ngo, 2014. Oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches.

"On an Eastern Shore" is a haunting and memorable show that brings two distinct artistic voices together in conversation about possibility, reality and the connection of seemingly separate things.

BASIC FACTS: "On an Eastern Shore" remains on view through April 27 at Outeast Gallery & Goods, 65 Tuthill Road, Montauk, NY. For details, call the gallery at 631-668-2376 or visit facebook.com/outeastmtk.

RELATED: For Opening Reception photos, visit Hamptons Art Hub tumblr page: www.hamptonsarthub.tumblr.com.

Copyright 2014 Hamptons Art Hub LLC. All rights reserved.