



# 'Holiday Show' at Ille Arts Surpasses Expectations for Small Works Shows

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by Pat Rogers

I have to admit: Curiosity drove me to see the "Holiday Show" at ILLE Arts. Sprawling groups shows of small works perfect for gifting is a Hamptons gallery tradition in December. The emailed invitation to the show that opened Thanksgiving Weekend held no clues: Fifty artists and none of them named. Breadcrumbs of info. appeared on Facebook. It was there I discovered Mark Perry, John Haubrich, Tracy Harris and Anne Seelbach were part of the line-up. The posts kept coming. Soon, I realized that gallerist Sara De Luca had silently put together a blockbuster group show that went beyond gifts. There was substance there and I had to see it.



"In The Flow" by Will Ryan, 2013. Acrylic and leaf on board, 14 x 26 inches. Photo by Pat Rogers.

Opening the gallery for me last Thursday afternoon, I wasn't disappointed. I had come fresh from art overload after visiting seven art fairs during Miami Art Week (including Art Basel Miami Beach) and some pops ups. Feeling like a seasoned pro, I felt like I could view art from 50 artists without panicking and actually seeing all the art. What unveiled was a quality show made up of Hamptons artists, international artists and people new to art making. It was a delicious mix that belied seeing work by artist "name" and instead asked: 'Do you like the work?'. In my case, I did. Very much.

For me, "Holiday Show" held treasures. One pleasure was seeing a painting by James Greco. Work by Greco had appeared earlier in the season at the group show "Somatic" curated by George Negrofonte. It was the first time I had seen Greco's work and the single painting in the "Holiday Show" compelled me again. [Greco is a Brooklyn-based painter and sculptor whose work liberally mixes conceptualism with abstraction, in an ironic way. His work is collected in Europe and the United States].



"Vicodin Mountain" by James Greco, 2014. Latex enamel on panel, 21 x 15 inches. Photo by Pat

Rogers.

I had the a similar experience with paintings by Mari Rantanen. Shapes brimming with turquoise and greens set on a field of bright orange seem to circulate within an oval picture frame or maybe a psychedelic two-tiered skating rink. The pattern paintings were titled *The Couple*. My eyes kept returning, even though I wasn't sure if this was a guilty pleasure or not.

[Mari Rantanen typically works big. An international artist based in Finland, her work has been the subject of numerous solo shows in Scandinavia since 1979, according to her [website](#). In the United States, her work has been exhibited at The Armory Show in New York City.]



"The Couple" by Mari Rantanen, 2014. Oil on canvas. Photo by Pat Rogers.

I was also gratified to see a small painting by artist and gallerist E. L. Brown of New York City. I had fallen in love with his Modernist paintings during his solo show "Monday Paintings" at ILLE Arts last summer (2013). Since then, I heard that Brown has expanded his color palette. The painting before me allowed me to see the rumors were true.



"Hen of the Woods" by E.L. Brown, 2014. Oil on canvas, 5 x 7 inches. Photo by Pat Rogers.

Much of my joy of looking at the art in the "Holiday Show" was catching up with current directions in works made by Hamptons artists; some whom I've been following for over a decade and others a few years. It felt very much like the Hamptons art scene had appeared at ILLE Arts for one final hurrah. New works by Eric Dever, Tracy Harris and Barbara Groot were entrancing. Each still held true to throughlines in their art but each held a surprise that revealed something new, or maybe, a new direction.



"NSIBTW 42" by Eric Dever, 2014. Oil on canvas, 20 x 20 inches. Photo by Pat Rogers.



“Avenir” by Tracy Harris, 2014. Encaustic and oil on panel, 12 x 12 inches. Photo by Pat Rogers.



“Untitled I and II” by Barbara Groot, 2014. Collage, 12 x 12 inches. Photo by Pat Rogers.

Small works by Darlene Charneco knocked me out. Working devotedly for years on two simultaneous series (one that deals with mapping and another with painted hammered nails that conjure mediation and prayer), there were two wonderful pieces from her resin-drenched “mapping” series. Each painting gave the impression of being plucked as a scene from her in-depth abstract “maps” that trace virtual and emotional connections. That said, each exhibited work was fully its own and implied a broader world beyond the artwork’s borders.



“The Quiet Beach” by Darlene Charneco. Resin, mixed media on wood, 5 1/2 x 5 1/2 inches. Photo by Pat Rogers.

The single artwork by Claire Watson reveals a new direction for the artist, said De Luca. Instead of sculpture, *Uncle* is a single-plane work revealing a new object of interest for Watson: baby’s shoes. The work deconstructed and assembled the shoe to portray a splintered whole whose presentation had a scientific feel to it. The art is tied tight to Watson’s interest of making use of historic objects that reveal cultural attitudes and patterns. Past sculptural series have transformed ladies’ gloves and kitchen implements to create figurative and narrative artworks.



Above: “Uncle” by Claire Watson, 2014. Garment leather, infant shoes, thread, buckram, 12 x 12 inches. Below: “Paper Bowls - (Five Nested)” by Linda Miller, 2013. Paper, graphite, 4 x 7 x 7 inches. Photo

by Pat Rogers.

De Luca explained the premises for the “Holiday Show” invitational was simple: She requested works by artists and artist-friends as a way of drawing together the art community that is linked together by the Hamptons (or a daisy chain of Hamptons connections).

“This is a group of friends and artists, many who have shown together, and are all part of the community,” said De Luca. “Yes, it’s a holiday show but it’s also my way of giving back to the artists who have shown here. For me, that’s really what it’s about: giving back. Giving back to the community is what I do.”

“Holiday Show” includes works by Will Ryan, Mark Perry, Matt Vega, Grace DeGennaro, Sabra Moon Elliot, Don Christensen, Tracy Harris, Mari Rantanen, Joe Pintauro, Steven Miller, Linda Miller, James Greco, Janet Goleas, Elaine Grove, Matthew Bliss, Monica Banks, Anne Raymond, Koichiro Kunta, Marianne Weil, Rosario Varela, Rudolph Serra, David Geiser, Darlene Charneco, Denise Gale, Sue Contessa, Grace DeGennaro, Jill Levine, Amanda Brown, Eric Dever, Virva Hinnemo and many others.

Continue scrolling to see additional art from “The Holiday Show”:



“Politics” by Monica Banks, 2005. Painted steel rod, 19 x 14 1/2 x 15 inches. Photo by Pat Rogers.



“Mancora” by Rudolph Serra, 2014. Print – ink, pigment, compound, 30 x 24 inches. Photo by Pat Rogers.



“Lasting Trace” by Marianne Weil, 2009. Cast bronze, 8 x 8 x 1/2 inches. Photo by Pat Rogers.



“Black Star III” by David Geiser, 2012. Oil, gold leaf, parchment, 30 x 24 inches. Photo by Pat Rogers.



“Breakthrough” by Steven Miller, 2014. Steel, Aluminum. 16 x 20 x 3 inches. Photo by Pat Rogers.



“Untitled” by Rosario Varela, 2014. Stoneware, glazed. Photo by Pat Rogers.



“Continuum 3” by Grace DeGennaro, 2014. Oil on linen, 34 x 21 inches. Photo by Pat Rogers.



“Aleatory” by Matt Vega, 2014. Acrylic on canvas, 16 x 20 inches. Photo by Pat Rogers.

**BASIC FACTS:** “Holiday Show” remains on view through January 2, 2015. The invitational art show features work by over 50 artists. Ille Arts is located at 216a Main Street, Amagansett, NY 11930. [www.illearts.com](http://www.illearts.com).

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