

Dreamlike Paintings Open in “Suspension of Disbelief” at RJD Gallery

June 20, 2017

by Pat Rogers

Contemporary paintings with implied stories can always be found on the walls of RJD Gallery in Bridgehampton. In the gallery’s new show, “Suspension of Disbelief,” expect to find paintings that explore worlds that are fantastical and make use of myth while portraying personal journeys that resonate for many.

“Suspension of Disbelief” features recent paintings by contemporary painters Alexander Klingspor and Margo Selski. The exhibition opens on Saturday, June 24, 2017 with a pair of events.

An Artist Talk with both exhibiting artists from 5 to 6 p.m. will be moderated by art journalist Pat Rogers, who is also the publisher and managing editor of [Hamptons Art Hub](#). An Opening Reception coincides from 5 to 8:30 p.m. Both events are free and open to the public. Reservations are requested for the Artist Talk and can be made by emailing art@RJDgallery.com. The show continues on view through July 16, 2017.

Occupying one of three galleries in RJD Gallery’s new location on Main Street in Bridgehampton, “Suspension of Disbelief” features three works by [Alexander Klingspor](#) and six paintings by [Margo Selski](#). While both artists create paintings that spark the imagination through dreamlike narratives featuring a compelling cast of characters, each painter’s style is distinct.

Alexander Klingspor’s paintings are frequently set in the underbelly of urban living, where decadence beckons at every hour. Alternatively, the figures in his large-scale paintings might find themselves alone, or nearly so, and in intimate settings where self-reflection is powerless to stave off the distractions of glittering company and indulgence in earthly pleasures.

Decidedly dreamlike and open to interpretation, Klingspor’s paintings have a distinct energy that’s charged with psychological dilemmas and surreal situations, yet counterbalanced with the sense that important personal battles are being waged where the outcome truly matters.



“Cult of Delusion” by Alexander Klingspor. Limited Edition Print, 41.50 by 48 inches matted. Courtesy RJD Gallery.

To make his paintings, Klingspor assembles models in his studio or in burlesque clubs in New York’s Lower East Side to imbue his art with the kind of vibrant realism that is drawn from actual experience. During these live sessions, he also photographs and draws in order to preserve some of the moments that unfold for incorporating into this work.

Purposefully dreamlike and surreal, the experiences of contemporary urban life and pinnacle moments of self-reflection represent different points where life paths may be on the cusp of being chosen. Portraying slices of life where personal stakes are higher than what appears on the surface is an integral part of his art.



“The Irresistible Force Paradox” by Alexander Klingspor. Oil on linen, 47.125 by 78.625 inches. Courtesy RJD Gallery.

Alexander Klingspor has exhibited nationally and internationally. He maintains studios in both New York and at the Royal Academy in Stockholm, and his work will be the subject of two major museum shows in Sweden this year. An expansive two-floor show opens at the [Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde](#), with most of the solo show continuing to an exhibition at the [VIDA Museum & Konsthall](#).

Margo Selski’s art also portrays slices of the human experience. Focusing on the moments that make up the fabric of family life, the artist specifically explores in her work motherhood; the journey of growing up and developing self-awareness; and the fragility of childhood and life in general. Informing all is the dance between permanence and impermanence and the desire for safety in a world that offers little of it.

Far from being heavy from the weight of the themes explored, Selski’s paintings have the joy and wonder that can be found in art forms that portray fairy tales. Nuances in her art reveal the dark and light of human nature and triumphs and dangers experienced along the way.

The characters in Selski’s paintings are also inspired by models, most often her children or people close to the artist. She frequently works in series where fantastic worlds are explored through the characters that inhabit them. At the heart of her narratives is mystery, wonder and a courage that is often quiet and understated but signals confidence and trust resonating through her narrative figurative paintings.



“Training Session” by Margo Selski. Oil and beeswax on canvas, 40 x 30 inches. Courtesy RJD Gallery.

In the same way that Selski makes use of myths, metaphors and analogies to channel the human experience, her paintings look to the past to portray the present. Inspired by Flemish painters, Selski developed a unique technique to “crack” beeswax as a way to merge the classic with the contemporary and mix the old with the new in her detailed paintings.

Most of the works on view in “Suspension of Disbelief” incorporate the use of cracked surfaces, but a few do not and allow for a deeper consideration of her process and the paintings.



“The Sailor and The Desiring Soul” by Margo Selski. Oil and beeswax on canvas. Courtesy RJD Gallery.

Margo Selski is based in St Paul, Minnesota. Her work has been the subject of extensive solo shows and her art is found in multiple museum collections.

Taken together, paintings by Selski and Klingspor in “Suspension of Disbelief” create a dynamic conversation in the two-person show. Both artists portray lives through distinct moments in time through characters who seem larger than life. An intense dialogue is born from the artists’s common use of myth and fantastical stories to explore the human experience but manifests in different ways.

Klingspor’s compositions portray cinematic scenes, lush colors and mystery suggested through expressive painting, use of changes in light and areas that are alternate between realism and impressionism.



“Dance Of The Deadly Nightshade” by Alexander Klingspor. Oil on linen, 47.50 x 70.50 inches. Courtesy RJD Gallery.

Selski’s compositions are tightly rendered and highly detailed, with the compositions evenly portraying elements that contribute with equal force to a singular impression of a single moment in time. Also captured in the middle of an ongoing tale, intricate details abound to create rich fairy tale settings where safety from the world about to unfold can be realized in the frozen moment portrayed.



"A Glimpse of the Encore" by Margo Selski, 2016. Oil and beeswax on canvas. Courtesy RJD Gallery.

The gallery paired the two artists for this show so viewers can experience the contrasts for themselves. Examining their works together, viewers can gain a deeper appreciation for each painter's unique style of contemporary narrative realism.

"Selski and Klingspor's work forms a dynamic relationship," said RJD Gallery Assistant Director Casey Dalene. "They both depict eccentric characters in a complex narrative, yet Alexander Klingspor's fantastical dramatic scenes where bodies stretch and writhe in theatrical environments exhibit an extreme contrast to Margo Selski's calculated diorama-esque compositions presenting the figures frozen, posing while the viewer dissects the roles each character plays within the narrative."

"Suspension of Disbelief" is on view from June 24 to July 16, 2017.

Also on view are hand-selected paintings from gallery artists as well as from gallerist Richard

Demato's private art collection, found in the adjacent front gallery. Artists with work on view include Bo Bartlett, Kadir Nelson, Margaret Bowland, Yana Movchan, Katie O'Hagan, Fatih Gurbuz, Armando Valero and others. Sculpture by Veronique Guerrieri and Jacques Le Bescond also have prominent placement in the gallery.

The rear gallery, which anchors the first-floor exhibition space, presents a selection of sculpture and paintings with a masculine vibe. Expect portraits of a classic locomotive and motorcycle by Drew Ernst, a portrait of a pair of jeans by Frank Oriti, vacant and abandoned buildings made colorful by graffiti by Rick Garland. Also on view are mixed media paintings by Jules Arthur, steel sculptures by Alfred Conteh and art exploring fragility by Gabriel Moreno.

In the second floor gallery, expect to find a solo exhibition of limited edition prints by [Andrea Kowch](#), who has an upcoming solo show of new paintings at the gallery from August 26 to October 1, 2017.

BASIC FACTS: "Suspension of Disbelief" is on view from June 24 to July 16, 2017. An Opening Reception takes place on Saturday, June 24, 2017 from 5 to 8:30 p.m. An Artists' Talk with both exhibiting artists takes place from 5 to 6 p.m., moderated by arts journalist Pat Rogers, who is also the publisher and managing editor of Hamptons Art Hub. Both events are free and open to the public. Reservations are requested to the Artist Talk and can be made by emailing art@RJDgallery.com.

Art can also be viewed online through [Artsy](#) and [1stdibs](#).

RJD Gallery is located at 2385 Main Street, Bridgehampton, NY 11932. www.rjdgallery.com.

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