

TALKING WITH: The Making of “Unravelled Beauty”

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by Pat Rogers

Surreal portraits that radiate like Day-Glo. Understated installations made from deceased trees. Sweeping figurative abstractions that conjure stories. Welcome to “Unravelled Beauty” where a trio of artists make unlikely yet complimentary bedfellows. The group show features art by Sydney Albertini, AM DeBrincat and Anthony Heinz May installed at the private co-working members club [The Spur](#) in Southampton Village, NY.

The show is open for visiting by non-members and is worth the trip. Set in a former potato and grain barn / weigh station that was constructed in 1884, the preserved historic details (such as an open gated interior elevator) contrast with the modern hip decor designed to encourage creative thinking among members who are entrepreneurs from the tech, media and East End business scene and beyond.

Even more than the setting, the exhibition is a compelling and powerful one. Installed across three rooms cojoined through an open floor plan that constitute the main gathering areas for The Spur, the exhibition combines the experience of visiting solo shows by each artist while still retaining the integrity of a group show that’s thoughtfully curated. This Friday, June 15, 2018, exhibiting artist Anthony Heinz May gives an Artist Talk from 5 to 6: 30 p.m. on his sculpture and site-specific installations that integrate deceased and discarded trees to infuse reconsideration through conceptual art that makes use of both deconstruction and construction.

May has five works on view in the show. The most prominent (yet conversely the most easy to miss) is *Common Demoninator*, a sculpture featuring an 800-pound tree that is installed at the entrance to the walkway leading to The Spur’s main entrance, located at the rear of the building. The sculpture will remain on long term view while the exhibition itself concludes on June 17, 2018.



"Common Demoninator" by Anthony Heinz May installed in Southampton, NY. Courtesy of the artist.

Curious about the origins of the exhibition, Pat Rogers from Hamptons Art Hub reached out to curator Kelcey Edwards via email to discuss the making of the show and the meaning behind the art. Edwards is the founder of Iron Gate East, a new art venture for the East End that began presenting challenging exhibitions at The Spur in February 2018. Part of the art offerings include a vigorous artist and art discussion series. All talks and art events are open to the public.

PAT ROGERS: How did you come to combine these three artists?

KELCEY EDWARDS: The concept for a show is usually rooted in something that is part conceptual (what the work seems to do/say), part aesthetic, and part energetic/romantic (what my instincts say, what I'm drawn to inexplicably, etc). Plus, my father was a museum curator of contemporary art, and I was pretty obsessed with his work from an early age, so I sort of grew up surrounded by/immersed in it. I learned many things from him, but most of it would be impossible to describe. Curatorial instincts are a strange cocktail, and ever changing.

I'm also kind of 'an art nerd.' I follow contemporary art the way some people follow music. I spend way too much time reading articles, going to art fairs, museums, studio tours, galleries and, of course, online: blogs, Pinterest, Artsy, etc - you name it. So when I'm putting together a group show, there is an internal logic at work while I review a large index of work that interests me that is like tracing a thread through the artists and their work. Naturally, being a popup, I'm also considering the space itself: the walls, the lighting, how it's furnished, the history, the use, the "vibe."

Anthony Heinz May, being averse to technology, is one of those artists who are "hard to find" in the virtual world. He has no Facebook page, no Instagram, no self-promoting website-despite the fact that he holds an MFA from Pratt Institute, has had 40+ residencies and commissions, and has over a dozen large-scale sculptures that have been installed throughout NY State and beyond.

Tracking down an elusive artist like him is one of the great joys of my line of work and one of the payoffs of having "an ear to the ground." But every artist "discovery" has its own love story. I discovered Sydney Albertini at the Parrish Art Museum, where her work is part of the permanent collection (along with Guild Hall). I discovered AM DeBrincat through an article online and I loved her work, and what she had to say about it, immediately.



“Double Decker Sherbert” by AM DeBrincat. Acrylic, colored pencil, transfer print, and oil paint on canvas, 24 x 24 inches . Courtesy of the artist and Iron Gate East.

PR: What’s special about each of the artist’s work?

KE: In the case of “Unravelled Beauty,” there was definitely a core interest in how the artists approach their materials - something I described as “reverse processes” in the wall essay. By this, I meant that they each disassemble and reassemble their varied materials in a way that seems to unearth something unexpected through the very act of de/reconstruction (hence the title). I also liked using the word “unravelled” given Sydney Albertini’s use of textiles, both in her weavings and in the patterned fabrics she paints on her double-blind gesture drawings which seem like an unraveling of movement as its depicted through time.



From the “Self On Brown” Series by Sydney Albertini. Courtesy of the artist and Iron Gate East.

PR: Why do these artists speak to each other?

KE: I love this question. I actually often use the analogy that the works need to “talk” to each other in the space.

These works connect on many levels: a radical and transformative exploration of the structures behind everyday gestures, faces and forms using varied materials: Albertini’s colorful, abstract, texture-rich woven landscapes and her aforementioned large-scale drawings/paintings of movement; DeBrincatt’s digital-to-analogue transfer print technique, which she combines, collage-style, with original acrylic and oil painting whereby she roots her composite-portraits in a moody, poetic atmosphere while imbuing their faces with luminosity and emotion; and May’s pixellated tree sculptures and other installations which explore upcycling dead trees and reconfiguring them in a way that visual demands the audience to consider the pervasiveness of technology and how our dependence on it might be impacting the shrinking wooded wilderness that surrounds us.

I guess, in a way, they all seem to have a “playful” (free/brave) way of working that reveals

something timeless and profound, like a cross between the brilliant/imaginative darkness of children's games (I have three children under five) and the wry humor of a New Yorker cartoon.



Mixed Media artwork by AM DeBrincat. Courtesy of the artist and Iron Gate East.

PR: In what way did The Spur's unique design and layout enhance the art on view?

KE: Since all three artists work in unique and varied methodologies that seem at once old school and forward looking/ahead of its time, I felt drawn to them for this show in this space because their approach is so in line with the mission and vision of The Spur: a work space and social club for entrepreneurs and innovators. Also, I knew the raw and varied materiality of all three artists would play well in the space.

The Spur is currently housed in an old red brick barn with vaulted ceilings, hand laid brickwork, arched brick doors, hand-hewn pine floors and beams. It's a cool feeling to walk around this historic building and see people typing away on laptops, conducting video or blue-tooth conference meetings. Meanwhile, outside, there is a Tesla parked next to Anthony Heinz May's striking, 800 lb pixelated tree sculpture *Common Denominator*,—an NYC Dot commissioned piece that was formerly installed in Inwood, Manhattan—a sculpture that questions the impact technology has on a broader natural world of which humans are only a small part.



The Spur at Southampton. On right is art by Sydney Albertini as part of the exhibition "Unravalled Beauty." Courtesy of The Spur.

“Unravelling Beauty” is the second exhibition presented at The Spur by Iron Gate East. It remains on view through June 17, 2018. The debut exhibition, “Ghost of The Inanimate” featured art by Hedwig Brouckaert, Caleb Freese and Jourdain Jonwon Lee.

Upcoming is “See Memory,” a solo show by Viviane Silvera featuring paintings and film. Iron Gate East exhibitions at The Spur can be found at 280 Elm Street (at the corner of Powell Avenue), Southampton, NY 11968.

BASIC FACTS: Exhibiting artist Anthony Heinz May presents an Artist Talk on Friday, June 15, 2018 from 5 to 6:30 p.m. “Unravelling Beauty” remains on view through Sunday, June 17, 2018. The exhibition can be visited from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free and open to the public. The Spur is located at 280 Elm Street, Southampton, NY 11968. For information, visit www.irongateeast.com.

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