

REVIEW

ELEMENTS OF
SURPRISE

Albuquerque artist Lucy Maki's latest exhibit is simply stunning

BY WESLEY PULKKA
FOR THE JOURNAL

Albuquerque mixed-media painter Lucy Maki has installed yet another world-class jaw dropper at Exhibit 208 titled “Betwixt and Between,” an extraordinary collection of 18 new pieces through March 26.

Maki, who exhibited in Santa Fe at Linda Durham for 25 years, should by now be receiving the recognition and support as a global force in contemporary painting that she has earned. I suspect she will one of these days.

Maki builds constructions with integral elements that are inseparable from the painted surfaces. Like Kurt Schwitters, Ben Nicholson, David Smith, Eva Hesse and her other inspirational mentors, Maki takes a “Total Art” — what Schwitters called Gesamtkunstwerk — approach to painting.

By building each work with various materials including traditional oil paint Maki blurs the edges between her background in printmaking as well as the distinctions drawn by too many critics and historians between drawing, painting, sculpture and printing.

One of my favorite works is “Imaginary Pictures 2015,” a drop dead gorgeous tonal extravaganza. Maki uses tonal washes to create the illusion of depth within the multilayered rectilinear composition. The layout shares a kinship with Lin Lecheng’s “The Old City Zone of Guangzhou” from 1989.

One might imagine injecting Piet Mondrian’s “Broadway Boogie Woogie” with steroids and filming the resulting high vibe action in black and white. Maki introduces a whole

IF YOU GO

WHAT: “Betwixt and Between” 18 new mixed media paintings by Lucy Maki

WHEN: Through March 26. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and by appointment. Call 450-6884 anytime

WHERE: Exhibit 208, 208 Broadway SE

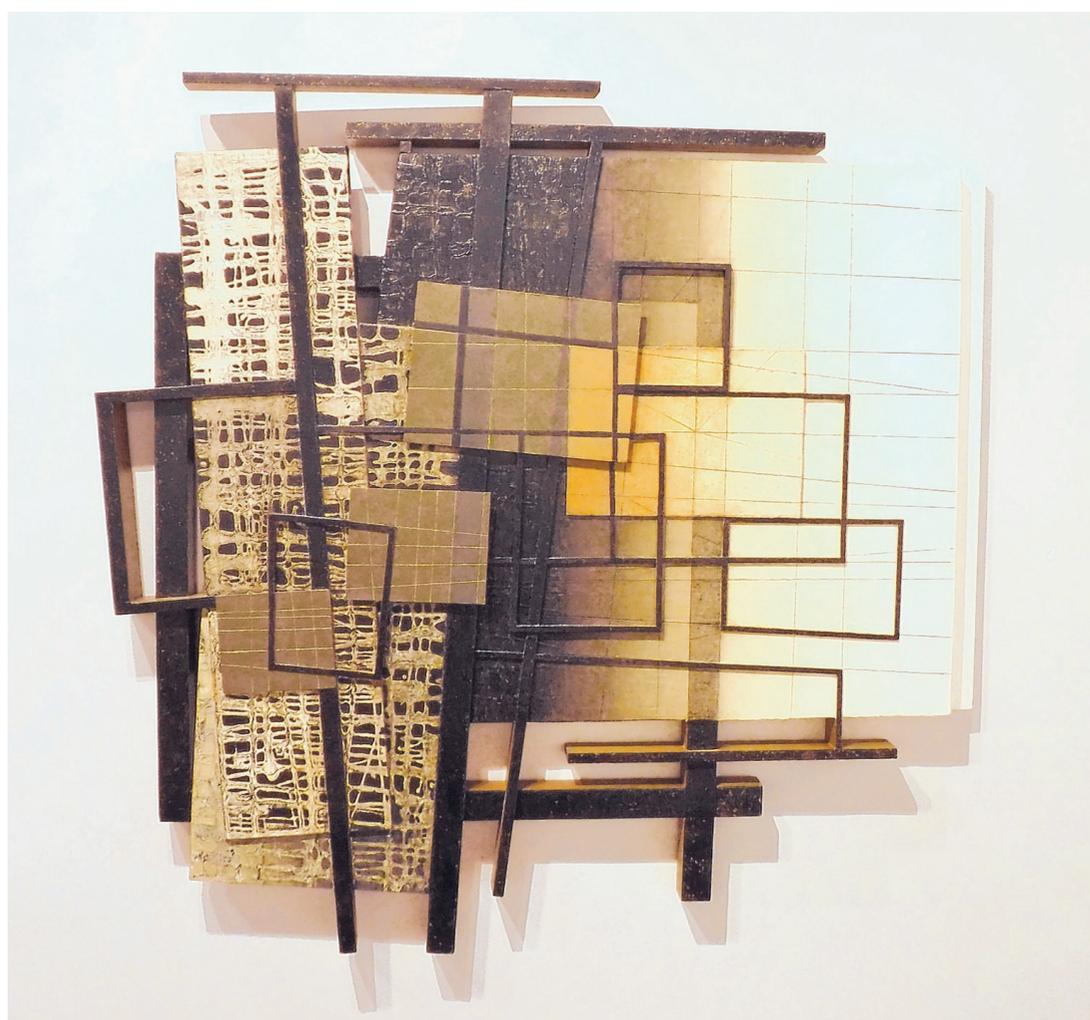
HOW MUCH: Free

new visual eye dance to the long revered rectangle with its roots in Greek architecture that celebrated the discovery of the Golden Section and Golden Mean. Maki’s “Imaginary Pictures 2015” is the kind of art that makes me visit a gallery even when I’m losing the battle with a bad cold. She’s the bomb!

Among the many excellent works is Maki’s “Lattice 2015-16,” a structured relief featuring transitional sky blue areas fading to white that read like roller applied tones on a printing plate. The work includes calligraphic passages juxtaposed to rigid structural elements creating a syncopated jazz-like effect I’ve noticed during other periods of her evolution.

During a gallery visit Maki discussed her intention to blend mediums and techniques while retaining her identity as a painter. She does not find comfort in categories — read pigeonholes — but feels strongly that paint is her main medium and how she prefers to be identified.

I mentioned Schwitters, Nicholson, Hesse and Smith earlier not only to offer a historical context for Maki’s art but to help describe her stature as an artist. She is not copying those artists;



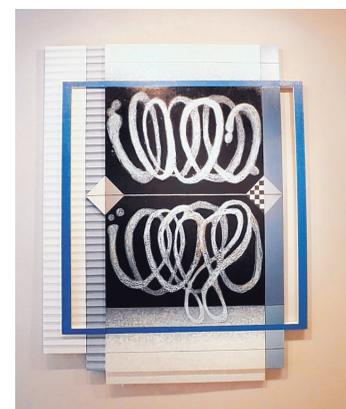
“Imaginary Pictures 2015” by Lucy Maki pays homage to the long revered rectangle as well as illusionistic tonality within a gorgeously designed multilayered rectilinear composition.



“Lattice 2015-16” by Lucy Maki bridges techniques borrowed from printmaking, drawing and sculpture that resonate together in a sky blue composition.



“Progenitor 2016” by Lucy Maki is a no-holds-bared black and white patterned homage to abstract expressionism.



“Vestige 2016” by Lucy Maki is a heroic scale replica of “Suspended Moment 2015” that reveals the artist’s mastery of materials and design.

Maki is one of those artists.

The masterful control that she exerts over her materials and designs is exemplified in “Vestige 2016” and “Suspended Moment 2015,” two virtually identical compositions presented in two different scales.

Maki’s “Vestige 2016” is seven and one-half feet tall while “Suspended Moment 2015” measures a mere 18 inches in height. It’s a great opportunity to practice visual déjà vu.

In “Progenitor 2016” Maki

unfettered all the razzmatazz that a black and white no-holds-bared homage to abstract expressionism can muster. It’s a wow piece that fills the eye with energy and enough patterning in motion to make you chose the blue pill ala “The Matrix.”

I find Georgia O’Keeffe and Nicholson hiding behind “Phantom City 2015,” a beautifully subtle low relief by Maki that parallels O’Keeffe’s early highly simplified drawings and paintings of New York City under the tutelage of

Arthur Dove circa 1918-21 as well as works by Nicholson like his “White Relief (AS) 1934.”

Maki adds the intimately familiar “first-mark” energy through her childlike ala Cy Twombly drawing style in pencil.

It’s a city in twilight or fog or heavy cold rain that lives like a phantom in the imagination.

Maki has 18 paintings in the show that are at least this good. Don’t miss this one!