

Sherrie Gallerie: Sculptures of wood play with perceptions

A work from the “X” series

“Melinda Rosenberg: New Work”

continues through July 26 at Sherrie Gallerie, 694 N. High St. Hours: 11a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays. Call 614-221-8580 or visit www.sherrie-gallerie.com.

Melinda Rosenberg scours the lumberyards and old barns of rural Ohio for the materials used in her 3-D found-wood sculptures, but the inspiration for her work comes from a much more remote and exotic location.

As the Columbus artist notes in a statement on her website, she is guided in part by chashitsu architecture, a style used for the traditional Japanese structures created for tea ceremonies.

In such structures, Rosenberg explains: “Slight visual tricks are intended to pull one into the present moment. I am looking for a contemporary version of a 14th-century Japanese aesthetic, honoring nature and confounding perception.”

Throughout her 20-year career, Rosenberg has pursued such a goal through repetition. In revisiting the same forms again and again, she aims to highlight what is unique in each and force viewers to slow down enough to appreciate the differences. Works from several series that illustrate her process are on display at Sherrie Gallerie.

Included, for example, are pieces from her “Mandala” series. Focused on different interpretations of the ancient, circular, spiritual symbol for the universe, the body of work has been ongoing for at least two decades.

In both *Mandala #59* and *Mandala With Hole*, she seems to be referring to the role of the individual in the grand scheme of life. The former features circular marks on its surface, evoking thoughts of the human life cycle, while the latter has a square hole at its center, suggesting the space that each person fills in the universe formed by individual perception.

For another series, “Toy Box,” Rosenberg creates a selection of playfully alluring sculptures, with toy blocks from her childhood as centerpieces.

In pieces such as *Toy Box: Rabbit*, the colorful animal illustrations on the blocks seize the eyes first, but the juxtaposition of the adornment surrounding them — ordered wooden kitchen utensils and raw, gorgeously gnarled tree parts — help hold the viewer’s gaze.

More fun is to be found in the “Hokey Pokey” series. In one particular work, the artist incorporates barn siding, wooden shelves and the curved bases of rocking chairs to create a visual pun suggested by the lyric “Put your left foot in.”



The works in the “X” series, formed from a template using wood planks and re-purposed window shutters, all take on the same crisscross shape as the letter in the title. With such consistency in the contours of each piece, the viewer is free to focus on unique variations in the grain and tone of her

materials, which are enhanced by her use of sanding, waxing and vibrantly colored aniline dyes.

According to Rosenberg, “Within this simplicity should be something that makes you look twice.”

Once absorbed by her works, some viewers might find that twice is not enough.

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