

ARTS & LIVING

Art Review

PERSPECTIVES

Conceptual And Visual Continuity

BY ERIC ERNST

While group exhibitions often strive (and fail) to achieve a sense of conceptual and visual continuity in matching artists of differing styles and approaches, this is not the case in current shows at the Silas Marder Gallery in Bridgehampton and the newly reopened and relocated Delaney Cooke Gallery in Sag Harbor.

This is particularly surprising when considering that the exhibit at Marders, which is titled "The Big Show" and features works by more than 50 artists from just about every stylistic approach, nevertheless manages to avoid becoming the cacophony of visual confusion an exhibit of this size might otherwise devolve into. This is accomplished, in no small part, due to a rather thoughtful and imaginative curatorial installation that allows the remarkably disparate works to develop dialogues with each other and which serve to help transcend their superficial aesthetic differences.

Further, this is also arrived at due to the requirement that each artist submit three 8-inch-by-10-inch canvases, which, in their structural uniformity, create an immediate sense of connection in the installation even before one looks closely at the works themselves.

Amplifying this element of con-



Installation shot at Marders.

ERIC ERNST

nectivity, however is the fact that once one begins moving about the gallery, the manner in which the works have been arranged somewhat elegantly underscores and magnifies the feeling of dialogue while often conjures a narrative of sorts that is, perhaps, illusory but entertaining nevertheless. This is especially noteworthy in those sections of the exhibition where the works have been hung in grid formations, which, were a great deal of care not taken in how the works interact, could have created a cacophony of dissonant voices but which instead seems as orchestrated as a choir.

The sense of connectivity in the exhibition of works by Joan Kraisky and the late Michael Knigin at Delaney Cooke Gallery is less surprising, given the fact that the artists were married, and they each strove in their works to merge elements of both abstraction and realism to create vistas both real and imagined.

In Mr. Knigin's mixed-media creations, this creates echoes of surrealism in his contrast of imagery, particularly in works such as "Montauk Waves A1" or "Futures

Assured 123" from his "Genesis" series, in which photographs of the space shuttle are juxtaposed with images of Greek iconography and ancient architecture. In other pieces in the exhibit, one can see a measure of Mr. Knigin's approach to process in the comparison of the collage titled "Dangerous Mission" with the larger work "Title Song," while "Lonely Tune" is memorable for its gently assertive illumination and dramatic use of negative space.

In Ms. Kraisky's works, on the other hand, while there are undeniable dreamlike sensibilities that permeate the works. The effect is more symbolist than surrealist, due to the images' tendencies to show reality as something that can be described only in indirect terms. The paintings, in essence, reflect the philosopher Jean Moréas's assertion that art should create "a perceptible form whose goal was not in itself, but whose sole purpose is to express the ideal."

In "Autumn Reflections" (oil on canvas), for example, Ms. Kraisky's use of color creates an emotional context for the work while she entertainingly distorts

the viewing experience by reconfiguring the viewer's perception of the scene by emphasizing the shimmering images of trees reflected upside down in a placid pond. In "Peconic Prelude," (archival print on paper) by contrast, the emphasis is entirely on the manner color is used to manipulate the picture plane, which thereby offers a wildly painterly orientation to propel the narrative.

Using a measure of simplification of form, the result is reminiscent of landscapes by Fauve painters Maurice de Vlaminck and Henri Matisse.

"The Big Show" continues at the Silas Marder Gallery in Bridgehampton through Wednesday, June 22. The exhibition of works by Joan Kraisky and the late Michael Knigin continues at Delaney Cooke Gallery in Sag Harbor through Tuesday, June 21.



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