



"Fissure 1989"

... detail of a paper and acrylic work by Linda Cross

Show mixes math, metaphor

By Thomas Lail

Special to The Times Union

Metaphor and mathematics are not often thought of in the same breath, and many would characterize them as polarized notions.

However, in "Dimensions Between Two and Three," on view at Five Points Gallery, math, physics, poetry and metaphor not only coexist, they permeate one another.

Curated by gallery owners Frank Peseckis, a theoretical physicist, and Lynne Levy Peseckis, a seismologist, the show, which includes 11 artists, explores ideas of dimension and chaotic systems.

The conceptual beauty of the endeavor is that the Peseckis have sought to explore these "hard science" ideas as they are metaphorically expressed in artworks that fall somewhere between traditional notions of painting and sculpture and that include densely textural or fragmented surfaces.

In an enlightening, if somewhat difficult, essay, the curators explain that contemporary mathematical physics has discovered that concepts of dimensionality must be expanded beyond the two or three to accurately describe the complexities of nature. This expansion also mandates the existence of dimensions between two and three — say 2.6.

REVIEW

"DIMENSIONS BETWEEN TWO AND THREE." Through Sunday, Nov. 18, at Five Points Gallery, Route 295, Sheridan House, East Chatham. 392-5205.

This is especially the case with chaotically structured forms. It is from this angle that the curators have approached the show.

Linda Cross' "Traces" greets one just inside the door and seems to epitomize the ideas at work in the show.

Constructed of shaped and layered paper, the piece is neither painting nor sculpture, but a kind of painted wall relief. A little over 6 feet high and 4 feet wide, the surface seems alive with odd cylindrical shapes of varying size and distortion.

Like a cave wall seen in a dream, the colors evoke feelings of rock, but at the same time situate the work in an abstract expressionist tradition. The complexity and variety of the forms make a fragmented, multi-faceted cascade that seems to spill from the wall.

Fragmentation becomes more literal in William Botzow's "Summer Salad." Drawing from the tradition of assemblage painter Robert Raushenburg, Botzow expressionistically paints on oddly

shaped and joined pieces of wood, with the result of an oddly articulated — almost exploded — painting that seems to hold onto its most bare necessities.

Perhaps the most subtly compelling works in the show belong to Ian Machell. Using a bizarre array of materials that includes copper, nails, turtle shell, oil, lead and aluminum, Machell constructs modestly scaled but highly evocative pieces.

A thin membrane of paper covers both of the works included. In "Now I Remember No. 2" the paper is interrupted by a wide gash and the protruding corresponding flap. In "Now I Remember No. 1," small cast aluminum spikes rest within similar rends in the surface. In both, the rusting heads of nails have left brown blemishes on the surface. Machell's work evokes memory and pain in a strangely beautiful manner.

Jon Isherwood's "Blue Tango" manages to make the steel of its construction look as pliable as one of Claes Oldenburg's soft fabric sculptures. Standing about 6 feet high, the piece is a chaotic piling of steel — welded in place and painted in subtle shades of blue, brown and beige.

As if sagging under its own weight, "Tango" seems frozen at a point of collapse, a melting, softly patinaed avalanche of metal.