

Industrial landscape inspires paintings

Barbara Gallo Farrell, Poughkeepsie Journal 12:03 p.m. EDT June 5, 2014



JoAnne Lobotsky (Photo: Courtesy photo)

Editor's note: Portrait of the Artist is a regular feature in Enjoy! that spotlights artists with exhibits in the Hudson Valley. If you are an artist in a current or upcoming exhibit and would like to be included in this feature, email bfarrell@poughkeepsiejournal.com. This week's Portrait of the Artist features JoAnne Lobotsky, whose work is on display at Betsy Jacaruso Studio & Gallery through July 7.

Tell us about your work in "Topographies" and what inspired you to select it for the show.

This show has a theme around the order and disorder of the industrial landscape. My "Terradaptions" paintings were initially based on Google Earth photos of industrial and urban areas from which I created dreamlike geographies — the fantasy of the psychological or dream state of a place woven into its geographic location in a way. My current work is more abstract and takes some urban elements from "Terradaptions," but through an additive and subtractive painting technique creates layers that I think of as "maps," which demonstrate the disparity of time.

Do you stick to a certain theme in your work or like to explore new techniques and subjects?

I usually stick to a theme or direction for several years, but I do like to explore new techniques within a body of work. I change direction when there are seemingly no more surprises left and I have lost the ability to make the mistakes or turn the corners, which leads to those discoveries and surprises.

What do you hope viewers come away with after seeing your work?

I would hope they feel some sense of mystery and intrigue loosely tied to reality.

What is your personal vision for your work?

To never stop exploring. When I work, I'm happy. Making art is meditative and I am present in each moment. As Picasso once said, "The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls." That is true for both the artist and the viewer.

How have you handled the business side of being an artist?

The business side of networking and promoting one's work is time-consuming. I would always rather be painting with my time. I am good at researching possible avenues for a show, taking notes and keeping files. Then I pick up a brush and everything else goes on the back burner.



"Yellow Stripes" by JoAnne Lobotsky. (Photo: Courtesy photo)

Who are some of your favorite artists?

At the moment, I especially like Nick Lamia, Ted Larsen and Mike Glier. Also: Sean Scully, Diebenkorn, Brice Marden, Terry Winters and Tapies.

What type of art decorates your home?

My paintings and ceramics, of course. My husband Stephen Brady's photography. Pottery and objects from my travels outside the U.S. I have a beautiful Huichol yarn painting by a female shaman that I brought back from Mexico. Handwoven fabric from my visit to Thailand. I love to travel to exotic places.

How does your background contribute to your process as an artist?

I enjoy process. The more steps there are, the better I like it. Perhaps that comes from growing up on a farm in Rhinebeck — nothing was instant, everything took time and there were many phases to pass through. It's the journey, not the end result of making a painting that is the focus and it's where the beauty, discovery and excitement lies for me as an artist. I have been a sculptor in the past as well, so I see myself as an artist in general, and not as a painter per se. I believe that creates freedom or willingness to move in different directions in my practice.

If your paintings could talk, what would they say?

My "Terradaptions" paintings would say humans have encrusted the earth with structures, dug deep pits, removed forests and altered the landscape in many ways that may have a kind of beauty from above, but practically, it is not sustainable. The impact has us and nature off-kilter and dysfunctional. My latest map-like paintings speak of how the past and present co-mingle and affect the way we perceive and inhabit our environment.

JoAnne Lobotsky grew up on a farm in Rhinebeck, has lived in Boulder, Colorado, and lives and works in New York City. She studied printmaking at the University of Colorado at Boulder, sculpture at the School of Visual Arts in New York City, graduating with a BFA cum laude, and painting at the Art Students League of New York. Visit www.joannelobotsky.com.

If you go

What: "Topographies: Mapping History & Time," featuring artwork of JoAnne Lobotsky and Kate Katowski

When: 6-8 p.m. June 7, opening reception; exhibit runs through July 7

Where: Betsy Jacaruso Studio & Gallery, 43 E. Market St., Rhinebeck

Admission: Free

Information: Call 845-516-4435; visit www.betsyjacarusostudio.com