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Why Is This Woman One of Washington's Most Beloved Artists?



Georgette Seabrooke Powell is founder/director of Tomorrow's World Art Center and the Art in the Park program. She has devoted her career to helping the young and the disadvantaged through art. She's won two Mayor's Awards and she's being honored with an exhibit at the Anacostia Museum. For the whole story, see the KOAN Interview beginning on page 12.

distancing flatness. He works in oil, ink and alkyd on linen. A large painting, *Untitled #3*, while an interesting composition of slightly off-center grid rectangles with contrasting circular sweeps, has the look of a photo emulsion or a blueprint, albeit in shades of black, yellow and red. Both artists seem like very skillful players who are unemotionally involved. [TP]

MFA Spring Thesis Candidate Show, at Dimock Gallery, Lower Lisner Auditorium, 730 21st St., NW, 202-994-1525, through May 18. Each piece of art is accompanied by its master thesis; the high quality of the work and its text, providing a historical and aesthetic context for it, make this a professional and informative show. Rebecca Bafford has gestural as well as small pierced and low slung sculptures in porcelain suggestive of facades and houses: it is a kind of existential minimalism. The crystalline glaze on the beautifully sturdy vase by Hakan Dakin was developed for use in the technical field of industrial ceramics. And while the watercolors by Petra Gerber celebrate the pleasures of the table, the still life subjects by Sharon Louise Moody demonstrate the pictorial and spatial illusions of that genre. Alexia Scheffler Scott is extremely clever in her small realistic oils; she incorporates the viewer and the painting viewed into her pictures with consequences both appropriate and humorous. The second section of the MFA show will open on May 25. [RJR]

Betsy Stewart: *Pieces of Arabia*, at American Institute of Architects Library and Archives, 1735 New York Ave., NW, through July 1. Stewart has created a body of work based on a two-year stay in Saudi Arabia. In many of the works, her approach is to juxtapose images having contrasting geometries (soft-edge, hard-edge) as well as contrasting cultural associations (modern, ancient). The results are both evocative and formally pleasing to the eye, as in *Road to Riyadh #5*. Her *Threshold* series is also quite effective, portraying a series of portals from modern doors to ancient cave openings. The least effective pieces are the small collages mounted to the left as you walk in the front door, which struck me as being overly busy. However, I was told by the gallery director that these were the most popular pieces for many visitors because they contain so many recognizable images for people who had spent time in Saudi Arabia. This demonstrates once again that art serves many purposes. [KO]

Terry Svat: *Works in Progress*, at Washington Printmakers Gallery, 2106 R St., NW, 202-332-7757, closed April 30. [Although this show has closed, KOAN is publishing a review to make up for an oversight last month; also, works from the show are still available in the gallery bins.] There are two lines of inquiry being investigated in this show—reflecting the inner life and the outer life. Several prints make reference to the fall of the Berlin Wall (Svat lived in Germany in 1989), and these tend to be distinct in their imagery. *Freedom*, for example, features a large red bird superimposed over a line of human figures

standing on a wall. Other prints, however, feature vague dreamy imagery of elongated human figures and hands floating over indistinct backgrounds. But what at first appears to be two unrelated sets of images gradually come together in the mind. It becomes possible to read all of these prints as expressions of longing for freedom of the spirit. In this context, *The Door* serves as a perfect example. It is a simple yet evocative rendering of a red door, slightly ajar. It serves equally well as a metaphor for the political situation in Germany and for the uncertain process of inner discovery. [KO]

What's So Funny? 9th Annual Humor Show, at Zenith Gallery, 413 7th St., NW, 202-783-2963, through May 14. In a town where art and artists take themselves oh! so seriously, Zenith's humor show is a breath of fresh air. Some of the works are very timely, like Dana Scheurer's *Flying Newts*, depicting a dancing elephant and Gingrich's namesake critter; others are by artists familiar from years past, and still funny, such as Stephen Hansen's papier-mache sculptured cartoon figures. *Man with Conscience* shows a big-beaked gent who could be a fat-cat lobbyist, and perched on his shoulder, a tiny replica of himself whispering in his ear. (Come to think of it, the idea of a lobbyist with a conscience is itself hilarious.) Gavin Heath's *Mermaid Goblets*, with lusty insouciance, features mermaids with breasts on both front and back. Peter Buchanan's sculptured tableaux inside of real suitcases are amazing. *Bowling* has an entire bowling alley inside with balls, pins, scorekeeper, bowler and kibitzers; *Homage to Andrew Wyeth*—two Wyeth girls running through tall grass—perfect! Judy Goodkind's *Well Into Middle Age the Sextuplets Remained Inseparable* will make you laugh no matter what kind of a day you have had. [TP]

Afaf Zurayk: *Paintings*, at Foundry Gallery, 9 Hillyer Ct., NW, 202-387-0203, through May 7. Zurayk's work poses an interesting dilemma for the viewer. The artist has painted a series of very subtle nudes and faces in the manner of dreamy semi-abstract landscapes. It is startling to unknowingly view these pictures and suddenly realize you might be seeing nude figures emerging from the apparent mountains and valleys; it was a relief to this viewer to find out the figures were really there, and that I didn't need to schedule a Rorschach. The dilemma is that, once you become aware of what the artist has done, it is difficult not to treat each painting as a game of find-the-figure. But it is worth the effort to overcome that urge and see these paintings for what they are: delicate meditations on the nature of form. Zurayk uses a limited palette (greens and blues) to induce the mind to see color-field landscape images. She then skillfully applies small splashes of contrast color to suggest form. The artist is from Lebanon. And although she denies it, it is tempting to speculate that these paintings are inspired at least indirectly by the traditional Islamic injunction against portraying the human form. [KO]