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Lifestyle

New view of Bay Area abstractionism

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By: Murray Paskin
Special to The Examiner
July 8, 2010

On view at the Luggage Store Gallery through July, “Rehistoricizing Abstract Expressionism in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1950s-1960s” attempts to compensate for the fact that some artists, due to their race or gender, weren’t given the recognition they deserved at the movement’s height on the West Coast.

To correct the injustice, curator Carlos Villa has assembled an exhibition of 33 works by male and female artists of color.

The exhibition is outstanding, even though the works vary in quality, nature and scale.

The show’s excellence is in how the pieces collectively exemplify an understanding and variety of abstract form and juxtapositions, reaching out to the viewer with an unusual display of creativity.

Among the most impressive pieces is Bernice Bing’s “Mayacamas,” a strikingly colorful 1963 oil on canvas inspired by the sea. Thin brushstrokes in the foreground look like they’re swimming; pervasive movement of rich, thin color adds to the richness of the painting.

Another notable piece is Deborah Remington’s “Mojo,” a large (96 inches by 47 inches) 1961 oil painting. Forms varying in size from diminutive to gigantic set in intensely deep, full colors wander violently throughout the surface, and clash fiercely with each other.

Bringing an unexpected significance to the show is a collection of ephemera: articles about the artists published during the period, reviews of their work, and statements by the artists themselves.



Inspired by the sea: Bernice Bing’s “Mayacamas” is among the works on view at the Luggage Gallery in “Rehistoricizing Abstract Expressionism in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1950s-1960s.” (Courtesy photo)

Material regarding Jay De Feo, one of the period's most outstanding artists, is prominent.

The exhibit is more than just a series of fine paintings, it contextualizes how the work of the period was characterized by particular, distinctive creative innovation. It's accompanied by a website packed with extensive material whose creators hope will offer a new, comprehensive, inclusive picture of the movement.

IF YOU GO

Rehistoricizing Abstract Expressionism

Where: Luggage Store Gallery, 1007 Market St., San Francisco

When: 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesdays-Saturdays; closes July 31

Contact: (415) 255-5971, www.rehistoricizing.org



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