

Collections

Galleries: A fine show of 'something else'



Gary Petersen's "zip line tow rope," colorful rectangles and parallelograms walls, is at Tiger Strikes Asteroid.

By Edith Newhall, For The Inquirer

POSTED: August 10, 2014

As befits its title, "Interchange," the 19-artist show at Moore College of Art & Design's Goldie Paley Gallery, was organized not only by the Galleries at Moore but in tandem with two local artist collectives, Grizzly Grizzly and Practice. Even more in keeping with its appellation is the work it presents, much of which stems from exchanges among artists and most of which aims for a relationship with the viewer.

But, as these diverse videos, sculptures, installations, photographs, and paintings introduce themselves to you - including several works made by groups of like-minded people who consider themselves communities - you'll inevitably wonder if you're receptive to them as art, entertainment, or something else that really has very little to do with art as we know it. I sometimes find the last more appealing than art with a capital A.

Case in point: The least artlike work in the show drew me in the minute my eyes lighted on a minor part of it, a bottle with a label saying that it contained water with *E. coli* bacteria in it. But more integral to the whole work (which has about as much visual appeal as a display at a water purifier convention) is the ceramic water filter that removes *E. coli* and other microbiological contaminants from polluted water.

This simple unglazed ceramic container, coated with a thin wash of colloidal silver, is the brainchild of Potters for Peace, a nonprofit that began working with Nicaraguan potters in the 1980s to provide safe drinking water and has since helped facilitate setting up filter-making pottery workshops around the world. I love this do-gooder project, but I wouldn't begin to think of it as art, even as an installation (and I've seen plenty of installations using bottles, from David Hammons to Tony Feher).

Hive76, a Philadelphia-based community of makers and crafters, is represented by *Connect Four*, a giant black panel with a grid of white dots that light up in color when you step on a control panel on the floor in front of it. It's entertaining in its intentionally DIY way, and everyone who sees this work will play with it. The same goes for the obviously well-used game-board installation by Dice Crew, a Kensington community of musicians, programmers, artists, and friends. These two separate efforts embody community spirit, but they do not take you to another place. They're just what they are.

A few works here are immediately identifiable as contemporary art, but in an unpretentious way.

There are the documentary photographs and a video of e-mail exchanges from *Guerrilla Public Service*, a well-known public artwork - perhaps *intervention* would be more correct - by Richard Ankrum. The L.A.-based artist clandestinely and seamlessly added information to improve a directional sign on the 110 freeway in 2001, and the documentation here exerts a mature authority in this show of mostly young artists but is also perfect for this context.

Matthew Fisher's small, colorful geometric paintings are nicely paired with intimate pencil drawings of those works in Fisher's Brooklyn studio by Maria Calandra. Lily McElroy's 51-second video, "A Woman Runs Through a Pastoral," in which a woman suddenly dashes into a landscape that turns out to be a huge painting or photo on paper, tears through it, stumbles, then continues running through a real landscape, is unapologetically slapstick and fresh.

"Interchange" strikes just the right mood for a summer group show - all play and no work.

The Galleries at Moore, 20th St. and the Parkway, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Fridays, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays. 215-965-4027 or www.galleries@moore.edu. Through Aug. 23.

Big, bigger

And sometimes summer means pulling out all the stops. Two solo shows on the second floor of 319 N. 11th St. are prime examples.

Maggie Casey's three sculptures fill the Napoleon gallery's small space like three very different people who might be related. Her methods and colors bring painter Gerhard Richter and sculptor Franz West slightly to mind, but her images say New England to me.

Breaker, the centerpiece of the show, mounted on a pedestal, is a large hollow shape reminiscent of a whale, made by pouring puddles of colored plaster into a tinfoil mold every day for five months. The multicolored amalgam in a wall-mounted wire basket in *Breadbasket* could have been fashioned from Play-Doh but is actually an accumulation of tinted pancake batter. *Untitled*, which drapes on the wall like a fishnet, is made from plastic sheeting, rubber cord, and cotton cord, and suggests something found floating in the ocean, its original purpose washed away.

Next door, at Tiger Strikes Asteroid, Gary Petersen has painted two of that gallery's walls with an exhilarating composition of variously colored rectangles and parallelograms on a soft, butter-yellow background that gives the entire gallery a golden hue. The painting, like the show, is called *zip line tow rope*. Organized by artist and Moore professor Alexis Granwell, it is one of this collective's most exciting undertakings to date.

Napoleon, 319 N. 11th St., 2nd floor, 2 to 6 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays and by appointment. www.napoleonnapoleon.com. Through Aug. 29.

Tiger Strikes Asteroid,

319 N. 11th St., 2 to 6 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays and by appointment. 484-469-0319 or www.philadelphia.tigerstrikesasteroid.com. Through Aug. 31.

We Recommend

Museum and gallery events
October 12, 2007

Daily News picks for what to see and do
the weekend of 2/24-2/26
February 24, 2012

Here's what's happening on Philadelphia-area stages tonight & in the coming week
October 22, 2010