

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT EXHIBITION

A Review by Leo E. Osborne

FIERCE: an intense, sometimes brutal or threatening display of malignancy

FIERCE: the context of Environmental Impact

And impacted I was, at the opening of this extraordinary, out of the box and over the edge exhibition of art at the Shreveport, Louisiana, R.W. Norton Art Gallery.

It was a phone call between, Curator David J. Wagner, L.L.C. and myself an artist that initiated and forged the concept of this "Spot On" show. I was in my studio during the Gulf Oil Spill and I was revisiting my sculpture done during the Valdez Oil Spill and Dave and I talked about how "we were still not listening" to the stories of nature alerting us to what is at stake at this time.

It is of our time. It is profound and motivating to the heart of the matter, this matter being our shared existence in this world of materialized energy.

Thus, everything matters!

The art takes us to forbidden places, desolation row, the photos of horrendous scars gouged into our Mother Earth.

Paintings of the imagination, by visionaries of our time, illusionists portraying what may become of us. Sculptures embracing the world of shared beings of this planet, our wild associates of this world we call home. It is a look at what we as humans, the highest species on earth are thrusting upon our world and theirs.

We are given glimpses of environmental fears, wrought upon us by greed and commercial, capitalistic ventures. We are also struck by the beauty of the natural world and embracing such wonders as the honeybee, essential elements all, to our continued beautiful life on this green/blue planet Earth.

Art is beauty and this exhibition of beauty cuts to the core of our beings and ignites a hope, a faith, a sense of wonder and with that we receive a fierce frontal blow to our minds, when we see up front and personal what we are bestowing upon our children!

That, of which matters, most of all!

Now, nearly two weeks after seeing the exhibition, what remains foremost in memory?

I am still 'caught' in the bodacious painting of Bateman's, DRIFTNET. The use of real fish netting over the meticulous painting of the albatross and dolphin, strikes me as most imaginative. The way too that Bob painted the shadow line of the netting onto the painted panel makes for not only a good hand and eye, but for a sense of depth that only Bob would have considered....away from the usual is this work of art.

The beautifully crafted sculptures of Chapel keep coming to mind and his masterful way of working materials together, stone, steel and bronze with patinization that only Chapel is recognized for. Life and death are revered in his captive souls, bound or swimming into their demise, hence his work is truly by word, captivating.

Chromogenic Prints of Edward Burtynsky take us somewhere 'beyond photography'. These photo essays are surreal landscapes that appear like paintings, for surely nowhere on this green earth could such photos be taken! May we consider them seriously.....

And Walter Ferguson takes us to places we fear to travel. His visionary glimpse of the carnage of waste that we humans are leaving on our beautiful Earth, is in your face. We have created trash of epic proportions in such a short time . Shame on us!

SHADES OF GREEN; Amphorae ca.2012, is a right now, in your face picture of what we find in the sea. This work strikes at me, for I too live by the sea and not far from painter Karen Hackenberg who has found a way to make art from the subject of debris strewn on our pristine beaches and shores of the Great Pacific Northwest. Karen's paintings call to us, to remember reverence and respect.

Scott Green will blow your mind open, with big paintings, colossal concepts, large frightful perspectives.

And big too are Julie Heffenan's paintings of BUDDING BOY, a cosmic wonder boy full of life, living matter-he himself branchlike, budding from wood.... and then PINK LANDSLIDE, stopped me in my tracks. This depiction of exodus by somewhat, still humanlike beings amidst pink skies of brimstone, sulphuric acid clouds and fragments flying through space, is mindful of iconoclastic images of biblical proportions! All of this fierceness is being hurled into the framework of this horrific view of our destiny, if we do not swiftly alter our ways of life!

And big too, yet again are the works of Ron Kingswood. His painting, TAKKEN IN HET BOX (FOREST SUCCESSION) is like hieroglyphics, as sacred writings, reed like fragments, tossed and tumbled, spelling out the understandings of earth speaking to us, along with his painting of Old Growth, CLEAR CUT with the only remains being, a very big stump in the snows of life.

For me Leo E. Osborne, I wanted to have one piece in the show that referenced BEES and not just the horrendous story of their plight for existence in this unobserving world, but for their continued love for everything and their place of importance in the pollination of food that we eat for our joy and sustainability. So my piece MO-BEE-US is about the Mobius Strip of Infinity and how the bees are truly that; eternal.

And then to conclude this review with Britt Freda, who also brings the subject of honey bees right to the forefront in her homage to BEES. Her paintings buzz and drip with pollen and nectar, in colorful spots and dabs of paint recalling us to wonder at the work of bees and their critical need to pollinate. Her way with shapes of color, captures the energies around and within her subjects and not simply the subject itself. Britt's use of spirit rocks and matter of earthliness seemingly in conversation with each other, causes one to realize everything's part in the great circle of life. These paintings are as spiritual blessings. We hit, IMPACT.....

It is the same old story of "the birds & the bees". Now though we need to learn again how to listen to them, and in spirit, listen also to our grandparents long past, and consider our children for the next generations to come and determine what is right.... do that, and stop worshipping the economy.

If your travels can take you to The R.W. Norton Art Gallery in Shreveport, Louisiana you will not be disappointed by this fine and quite extraordinary gallery/museum. And through January of 2014 you will find your emotions 'rocked' by this fierce demonstration via ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT.

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Leo Osborne and Jane Lane reside and work on Guemes Island in the San Juan Islands of Washington State. Captivated by the love and joyful spirit of this island, they have together co-created MILKWOOD STUDIO & HOME GALLERY. This cottage by the sea is "a living museum." The studio, sculpture gardens, home and guest cottage are fused together as one entity. There is no separation says Leo, as this spiritually creative journey of his and Jane's encompasses all aspects of being in the moment.



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