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AUTHOR

“Art Speaks, Lend Your Voice” at Arena 1 Gallery

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“Art Speaks, Lend Your Voice”
through March 10
Arena 1 Gallery, Santa Monica

By Genie Davis

Through March 10th at Arena 1 Gallery, “Art Speaks, Lend Your Voice” presented by the Women’s Caucus for Art, is beautiful group show, images carefully juxtaposed by curator Jill Moniz. Moniz has selected 62 artists from throughout the U.S. for this national conference exhibition.

Artists include: Jayne Adams, Kathy Aldous-Schleindl, Shula Arbel, Jenny E. Balisle, Sharon Barnes, Yvonne Beatty, Linda Brookshire, Janine Brown, Lorraine Bubar, Julie Carcione, Michele Colburn, Constance Culpepper, Liz Dodson, Laurie Toby Edison, Beth Fein, Clairan Ferrono, Kim Foley, Megan Frances Abrahams, Ellen Freyer, Dwora Fried, Christine Giancola, Amy Gilvary, Betty Green, Shelley Heffler, Mary Kameron, Veda B Kaya, Linda Kunik, Esther Kwan Simon, J. J. L’Heureux, Beth Lakamp, Lynda Levy, Charity Malin, Aline Mare, Robbin Milne, Lena Moross, Sandra Mueller, Mary Nash, Melissa Reischman, Lynda A. N. Reyes, Samuelle Richardson, Julia Rigby, Karrie Ross, Orly Ruaimi, Linda Jo Russell, Marilou Ryder, Seda Saar, Sondra Schwetman, Jacqueline Secor, Rebecca Setareh, Doni Silver Simons, Kerrie Smith, Stephanie Solomon, Leona Strassberg Steiner, Nathalie Tierce, Linda Vallejo, Elise Vazelakis, Arika Von Edler, Elizabeth White, Holly Wong, Joan Wulf and Tina Ybarra.

The wealth of gorgeous art aside, there is something profoundly compelling to see this much powerful female talent in both abstract and representational genres, all gathered in one place. If art speaks, perhaps what it is saying here is that women’s artistic voices are to be heard, loud and clear.

Megan Frances Abrahams’ paired paintings from her Fleur de Lys series feature a lavender and blue palette and the tiny burgeoning hope of a green bud in a lush fusion of the abstract and representational. Lena Moross offers a beautiful watercolor of a woman hanging her washing; the piece turns the prosaic into something proud. Moross’ decidedly representational work is also from a series, Suburbia. “I stumbled upon a collection of photographs from the 1950’s of women doing laundry which absolutely blew me away,” the artist says. Dwora Fried’s vivid, glorious diorama gives us the Virgin Mary and silvery hub cups with chartreuse military men in a suburban gas station setting. As always with Fried, she creates worlds that draw the viewer deeply inside, into an unexpected place.

The distinctive soft fabric sculptures of Samuelle Richardson are all texture, her sculpted head presented here as richly defined and reverent as a bronze bust, only more alive. A second piece, featuring a triangle with images of eyes and arms perched on two blocks seems like a cry for help, if such a cry could be infused with whimsy. Shelly Heffler's wall sculpture is an abstract, crumpled and cratered, a road map to the world. The precise and delicate papercut work of Lorraine Bubar jumps off the wall here, with robust sunflowers towering over her very-LA street scene. The amount of detail dazzles.

Veda B. Kaya's monochromatic work is both romantic and geometric, snowflakes, thick lines, patterns that intersect in Logos. Yvonne Beatty's abstract Bel Canto Dream has the vivid, light-filled look of stained glass and a vibrant palette created from Sumi and acrylic inks on paper. The indescribable unearthly glow of Aline Mare's work shimmers, jeweled and hurtling toward the viewer as if through space. Karrie Ross and Seda Saar, two very different artists, both intrigue and compel with works that step outside the commonplace.

In many of these works, there is a definite feminine aesthetic, whether it is a use of color, subject matter, or material that embraces and empowers the curves, lines, forms, and fabrics of what it means to be a woman and an artist. And what precisely does that mean? As seen here, as heard here, it is a sense of the sublime.



Linda Vallejo, Art Speaks, Lend a Voice, Arena 1 Gallery; Photo Credit Kristine Schomaker

