



Marna Shopoff: *Layered*, 2015. Mixed media on canvas, 60 inches.

Julia Street and Beyond

BY MARIAN S. MCLELLAN

GIL BRUVEL
STEPHEN CHAUVIN
LESLIE WILKES
Symmetric Equivalence
Octavia Art Gallery

KATHRYN HUNTER
Suspension
Le Mieux Galleries

MARNA SHOPOFF
Unusual Places, Unusual Spaces
Jonathan Ferrara Gallery

CAPRICE PIERUCCI
Rhythm and Form
Callan Contemporary Galleries

BRIAN ST. CYR
Hide the Keys to Fertile Kin
Isaac Delgado Fine Arts Gallery
New Orleans, LA

—

JUST AS NIGHT follows day, day follows night, we yield to the cyclic need for repetition in anticipation of yet another day. The artists included in this Walk seem attracted to the circadian rhythm of life, but with vastly differing results.

Regard the storybook narrative of Kathryn Hunter’s mixed media “Suspension” at LeMieux Galleries, where the lead characters of playful foxes and supine magpies act out events that could only be seen in the make-believe world of fables.

Hunter, who founded and operates the quaint Blackbird Letterpress in Baton Rouge, continues her foray into the human imprint on wild animals, or more aptly, their imprint on us. *Suspended: Universe* and *Suspended: Botanicals* both employ ink, beeswax, beads and thread to depict a cunning fox. In the former, the fox hovers above a golden, stellar circle and in the latter, the same fox issues flora from or into its mouth.

Nearby at Jonathan Ferrara Gallery hang the geometric paintings and drawings of Indianapolis artist Marna Shopoff in “Unusual Places, Unusual Spaces.” Shopoff’s artist’s statement asserts “My work is responsive and intuitive, creating an interpretation of a place, a layered representation of it.” The Structuralist films of Ernie Gehr come to mind when viewing Shopoff’s fractured arrangement of planes and altered spaces.

Certainly, paintings such as *Layered* and *The Other Side* evoke a sense of riding in a glass elevator inside a skyscraper. Shopoff achieves multilayered depth through careful arrangement of shards of flat color, and though shapes such as triangles and rectangles are repeated throughout, “Unusual Places, Unusual Spaces” manages to depict a new view from work to work.



Gil Bruvel: *Cubist #8*, 2015. Wood, resin on wood, 49 inches..



Caprice Pierucci: *White Cascade*, 2015. Pine, 36 inches.

Octavia Art Gallery's press release tells us that the three artists included in "Symmetric Equivalence" seek to "explore organic and geometric forms whose patterns have an underlying symmetry or synchronicity." Sculptor Gil Bruvel, originally from France but now living in Texas, is represented with freestanding stainless steel heads and framed wood and resin faces that recall Jacques Lipchitz's brand of sculpture. Bruvel's loosely arranged carved blocks, painted in white shaded with graphite, make-up the harlequin face in *Cubist #8* while Leslie Wilkes' tightly orchestrated paintings are kaleidoscopic compositions of polygons.

Also a resident of Texas, Wilkes' oil on canvas *Untitled 12.04*, is a jazzy mix of cool colors toned down with a bit of warmth.

Throughout Octavia's rooms are acrylic pieces of furniture that appear so delicate one is never quite certain of their ability to bear weight. These tables and chairs are by New Orleans architect Stephen Chauvin and are very reminiscent of Dutch architect Rietveld's simplified designs. Especially intriguing are Chauvin's rectangles and circles from his "Halo" series of high backed chairs, such as *Halo XII*.

At Callan Contemporary Gallery, Caprice Pierucci's "Rhythm and Form" features organic compositions of sinewy, lighter-than-air lines of painted wood. Pierucci, a lecturer at Texas State University, credits her late mother, noted fiber artist Louise Holeman Pierucci, as being a great influence on her work. Ac-



Kathryn Hunter: *Suspended Universe*, 2015 (left). *Suspended Botanicals*, 2015 (right). Drawing and mixed media, 16 inches.

According to one account, Holeman Pierucci, at the start of her career in the early Sixties, was unable to buy a loom and improvised by hammering nails into the home floor to hold woven threads. Undoubtedly, such an accessible arrangement of joyous strands impressed a young Caprice. Of her own work she says “Originally the wood was used as a support or armatures for my fibers and paper. Eventually the wood became the more expressive way to define the images in my head.” While fiber is fluent, it is also susceptible to change. Wood, however, obeys, yielding to the cessation of time. The freestanding, circular *White Cycle I*, fashioned from painted pine, and the uterine *Colossal Birch Cascade II*, of birch, plywood and pine, immortalize the fleeting memories that carry us through life.

On the other side of town at Isaac Delgado Fine Arts Gallery, we find Brian St. Cyr’s “Hide the Keys to Fertile Kin.” Empty rodent cages, in the shape of aquatic creatures, such as

a fish in *Proof I*, ride atop pink waves opposite pencil drawings overflowing with scurrying Mickey mice and gargantuan preying mantises to create a very sterile, might-makes-right, environment. As a reminder to the allegory at play, there is “k.a.t.r.i.n.a.!” whose individual letters, made from repurposed screens, lumber, and hardware, stand in a jumble, propped seemingly haphazardly against a vacant wall, until we notice the letters “A” “R” “K”.

Hurricane Katrina emptied New Orleans of many folk, through death or displacement, with a large number still unable or unwilling to return. Vacant lots and homes, hidden from tourist view, attest to this loss. It remains debatable whether New Orleans can afford the loss of those who cannot afford to return.

This would seem to be the gist of St. Cyr’s “Hide the Keys to Fertile Kin.” □