

VISUAL ARTS & ARCHITECTURE: Rodriguez: Layers mix elements, meanings

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REVIEW

Rocio Rodriguez
Through March 29. 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays.
Prices: \$2,800 to \$16,800. Fay Gold Gallery, 764 Miami Circle, Atlanta.
404-233-3843; www.faygoldgallery.com.

Bottom line: Rocio Rodriguez presents her latest large-scale abstractions, multilayered and intellectual takes on visual and geopolitical spaces.

In her latest exhibition at Fay Gold Gallery, Rocio Rodriguez goes one-on-one with space. Her ongoing exploration of the artistic process shares center stage with a continuing interpretation of geopolitical realities.

Working in large format, Rodriguez's oils and acrylics are consistently imposing. Literal and metaphorical elements of opposing forces and contemporary conflict are clearly in evidence.

"Rogue State" features a wide swath of bloody red over predominantly white and sandy tones. Areas of matte canvas compete with thickets of scrambled line. "The Round City, Baghdad" contains a finer mapping of detail and contours, re-creating an even more violent landscape (that is surprisingly pretty to look at). This mayhem is observed from an apparently safe (aerial) vantage point.

Two expansive works force the viewer back, quite literally, into space. "Pieces of the Sky" presents an unsettling image. Depicting a huge orb with dangling objects, it suggests bombs, satellites and ominous weaponry. In a similar vein (and darker palette), "World upon Worlds" is an enormous diptych with a galactic perspective. Hemispheres, maps, stars, land masses and hints of manmade environments reveal themselves in this striking and futuristic abstraction.

There's no denying the competence of Rodriguez's intriguing compositions or the multilayered aspects of the work. But we are held at arm's length from the potential power of her subject matter. We don't feel chaos in these surfaces, nor the heat of turmoil.

Perhaps this is the artist's intention. But the distance between painting and viewer is palpable. The result is a body of work that remains coolly intellectual rather than emotionally engaged.