



REVIEW: *Little Things Mean a Lot*

Little Things Mean a Lot
Through January 12
Tuesday – Saturday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Swan Coach House Gallery
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Small works sparkle in Swan's holiday show

By Debra Wolf

One hundred Georgia artists contribute a little of this and a little of that – literally – to “Little Things Mean a Lot.” It’s the Swan Coach House Gallery’s annual exhibition of small works, a seasonal fixture since 2003.

Curator Marianne Lambert does not disappoint, pulling together a sparkling array of over two hundred artworks in varied styles and diverse mediums – painting, drawing, photography, collage, printmaking, ceramics, and more.

Here is a sampling of some of the highlights.

- Kevin Cole’s variations on the necktie typically run the gamut from roller coaster convolutions to tongue-tied configurations: his metaphorical artworks reference lynching, corporate power, and societal constraints. “Between the Struggles II” is a beautiful example, a textured and brightly painted form. Its upper knots resemble holiday ribbons, as the artist opts for a seemingly celebratory shape. The addition of zigzagged fragments on the sword-like sheath suggest small boats or possibly bared teeth, and mark an intriguing element in a striking mixed-media sculpture.
- Fragments of curved and angled paper animate cheery works by Yvonne Wilhelmi. Her colorful collages combine vivacious rhythms with a sense of scientific precision in Kandinsky-like manner. Normally creating on a much larger scale, for this venue (like many of the artists on view) she explicitly constructed new works in small format. In a related voice with a distinctly different tone, Wilhelmi also displays photomontage. “Das Experiment” is surreal and satisfying

in the tradition of Hannah Hoeh – a fascinating and macabre displacement of body parts, as a woman's hand dangles from a deer's head, attached by thin, twisting wires.

- Marc Granberry's diminutive turned vessels are exquisite. With simple form and satiny surfaces that beg to be touched, Granberry allows the natural beauty of the wood to shine in three untitled works – in spalted maple, oak burl, and Texas ebony, respectively.
- Flora Rosefsky's "Reality" is monochromatic collage in black, white and silver. Fashioned of lace, a crocheted potholder, veil netting, paper, and silver fabric, the composition is anchored by a vintage vinyl 45, still intact. Ironically, it bears the label "Really," adding a whimsical touch to this record of an imagined, pieced-together past.
- Recently published in *New American Paintings*, emerging artist Terri Dilling turns to both urban and natural landscapes for inspiration, juxtaposing elements of each to fine effect. In recent paintings like "Bird at Twilight 1," she combines fluid, scrolling forms and blends them with strong blocks of light-infused color, achieving dreamy, vivid imagery.
- Pencil and ink drawings from Birgit McQueen twist, turn and wriggle in a jubilant free-for-all of fine line and primary color. McQueen's near doodles yield playful, improvisational compositions as in "D" and "Non-Directional Drawdel." The latter is signed at each corner, presumably so that the viewer can hang the piece on any axis that pleases the eye.
- Suzanne Selman's "Number Five" is a witty acrylic on wood, a portrait of a tipped bottle of Chanel's most famous fragrance. With expressive brushstrokes, honeyed hues, and dark, energized background, this quirky depiction takes on near human character.

Also of note are: Kathryn Taylor's moody destroyers (in lieu of abandoned vehicles); John Otte's gritty, textural abstraction in smoky shades; Ilia Varcev's lonely black and white photographs; Jena Sibille's delicate wax sketch encaustics; Katherine Mitchell's subtle, geometric mixed-media word weaving; Dana Haugaard's eerie, plaid-sleeved arm with upturned palm; Joe Peragine's jewel-toned watercolor; Audrey Ward's charming baby shoes; Helen Durant's pair of gawky newsprint and painted birds; Tina Dunkley's rhythmic, figural mixed-media work; an enigmatic head from Debra Fritts; and Judy Shreve's stoneware teapots.

Aptly billed as a holiday treat, this show delivers a little something for everyone, with the added advantage that smaller formats mean smaller price tags – particularly helpful at holiday time when we're tempted to do more than just have a look.