

the arts

“Salud!” – deCordova Gallery Toasts Hudson River HealthCare In Suffolk County

Joan Baum



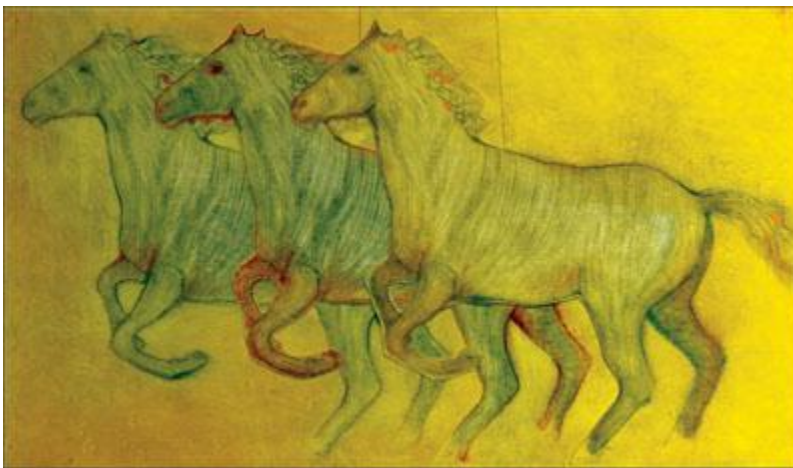
"Flamenco" by Guillermo Espinasse

Greenport - It's not the usual arrangement between art events and charities, but community-minded Hector and Joyce deCordova convinced 13 community-minded, participating artists to "go easy on the prices," so that at least 30 percent could benefit Hudson River HealthCare, a 13-member, state-wide healthcare service for the underinsured and underserved that recently opened a center on Front Street in Greenport. In "Salud," its opening show of the season, the gallery proves once again that it can attract high-quality artists, local and international - painters, photographers, sculptors - and curate an exhibit that is diverse, intelligent and, as the artists themselves noted, well-lit.

Located on the ground floor of a lovely yellow Victorian house on Main Street that has a charm of its own, the gallery is composed of a number of rooms, replicating in a way what the deCordovas have also helped initiate at large - Greenport Gallery Walks (the third Saturday of every month). The gallery itself invites strolling through and allows for imaginative mounting, admirably executed here - placing works in different media but with similar subject matter or stylistic effects near each other. There is no set starting

place to the exhibit and no sharp division between gallery and home. In fact, modestly recessed in an alcove near stairs, two elegant transparent floral watercolors by Hector sit at a right angle away from Bob Lefferts' "Sunbeams," a joyous, dazzling detailed photograph of flowers, plants and trees that nicely complements deCordova's single-daub flowers. Lefferts' keen eye for textures and composition is also seen in several other pieces.

Multiple pieces by one artist are not all grouped together, giving viewers a chance to get a feel of medium and style and then testing out that sense with the artist's other work, in another room. Sometimes, however, one piece can generate surprise. Marilyn Church, familiar for a series of semi-abstract demimonde nudes, delivers a rich, warm acrylic in this line in "Altar of You," particularly effective in its selective use of red. On an opposite wall, however, in "Red Rider," a nude is draped over a horse, forming a quietly erotic scene of sunset hues that descend into vague darkness in the lower third of the canvas. To her right, Nickie Van Deckter commands attention with "Nude in Venetian Red," a dry point mono-print of a red nude rendered in delicate, scratchboard-like lines. Who would imagine that the same artist also did the traditional landscape pastels and watercolors in another room.



"3 Horses" by Georgia Charuhas

No mistaking the Jim Gemakes – so distinctive as low relief assemblages, each piece a perfect composition of rusted-out tool parts, paint, burlap, found objects, old paper with lettering, and more. "Hong Kong Harbor" startles with its rough beauty, a huge, lava-pocked, free-form shell, with hook and chain. "Blue Ark," with its slips of organizing red pigment, is also ingenious. Kristian Iglesias, an emerging mixed media sculptor when he first showed at deCordova, has now not only arrived but continues to astonish with his humor and inventiveness, as in

"Permutation" (stacked steel cut-out cubes and bungee cord – it moves!), and with a playfully titled, wittily designed vertical made of "flame cut steel and brass," "Anti-Oxidant (The Last King of Kings Drinks Blueberry Juice)". How thoughtful that deCordova has off-set these dramatic pieces with Burt Van Deusen's smoothly painted oil, "Misdirection," where a bottom sweep of dark blue rises incrementally to yield to free-form blue shapes and a light blue upper-corner.

It's not all abstraction, though nothing realistic is totally representational, either. Harvey Helling's "Peconic Thinker" and "Fall Revival" photographs glow with super-real color. Helen Giaquinto's watercolor boat scenes subdue pigment for picturesque effect. Conversely, many abstracts play with representational symbolism, such as Arturo Balam's colorful large acrylic, "Familia Indigena" (where face lines express the subject matter) and Karyn Mannix's intriguing mixed media nipple designs. Guillermo Espinasse's whimsical, illustrative homage to cats, "The Lady is a Tramp" with its musical motif may resonate even more if his guitar compositions are playing in the background.

Catherine Buchakian's small, delicate mixed media abstracts in a front room hardly prepare viewers for the larger crackled, drip-pigment pieces in another room, "Winter Glimpse" and the moody "Edge of the Pond," both intricately textured layerings of watercolor, acrylic, pastel and ink. As for Georgia Charuhas, the several hand-colored prints seen here, with their lyrically sculptured contour lines and burnished hues, merely hint at her extensive talent and celebrated career. Most notice, however, has to go to Rosamaria Eisler, whose attractive solar etchings elicited a lot of inquiries about technique.

The show is impressive, the cause compelling. The barely year-old center, the effort of Sister Margaret, a member of the Hudson River HealthCare board and said to be "the patron saint of migrant workers," is staffed by Dr. Blaise Napolitano, Dr. Christopher Marshall and a pre-natal nurse midwife.

- The deCordova Studio & Gallery is located at 538 Main Street, Greenport. "Salud" runs through June 29.



A piece by Rosamaria Eisler.

Joan Baum lives in Springs and covers literature and the arts for print and radio.

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