

## GALLERIES



COURTESY OF ELLEN DELANEY/TOUCHSTONE GALLERY

**'WYOMING FARM':** The colors here are typical of Ellen Delaney's works, which are more representational than those of other artists at Touchstone.



COURTESY OF ELLEN DELANEY/TOUCHSTONE GALLERY

**'OCTOBER':** Delaney's acrylic paintings of farms rely on expanses that verge on Diebenkorn-like distillations of landscapes.



COURTESY OF ANNIE ALBAGLI/PLEASANT PLAINS WORKSHOP

**'PYRAMID STUDIES':** Annie Albagli's works at Pleasant Plains Workshop contrast two ideas of heavenly perfection — for example, trees from an Edenic garden and the pure form of geometric shapes.



COURTESY OF MICHAEL WEBER/LONG VIEW GALLERY

**'GRANDFATHER TIME':** Michael Weber's work looks almost like a magazine illustration, which fits with Long View's sleek aesthetic.



COURTESY OF TONY SAVOIE/NO LONG VIEW GALLERY

**'FLOUNDER':** The pileup of brownish junk in Tony Savoie's piece suggests the bottom of a defiled ocean.

The common theme in four shows? Variety, and plenty of it.

BY MARK JENKINS

In 1978, iconoclastic museum curator Walter Hopps invited artists to bring their work to an open-call show at downtown's Museum of Temporary Art. It was called "36 Hours," after the amount of time Hopps supposed he could stay awake to receive and hang the art. The result was a lively mess, inspiring if not always inspired.

Hopps left Washington years before his 2005 death, and MOTA closed when it lost its home in a storefront destined for demolition. But the local tradition of wide-open exhibitions continues in such anti-hierarchical events as Artomatic and the District of Columbia Arts Center's "1460 Wall Mountables." The latter's 21st annual edition ends this weekend, as do several other grab-bag summer shows.

For \$15, artists can rent one of DCAC's 2-by-2 spaces; center members get one for free. The maximum number of spaces any participant can purchase is four, so there are no large canvases or other grand gestures. Instead, the selection is heavy on comics — or poster-style illustrations, modestly scaled photographs and simple assemblages of found objects. The show is tidy but packed; squatting is necessary to view the stuff closest to the floor.

The artists choose their own spaces, so intriguing juxtapositions — among Joe Nemeth's bird paintings, Philip Yabut's bird photos and Kara Davis's birdhouses, for example — are the result of happenstance or collusion among artists. Political iconography abounds — President Obama, Lenin and three presidents who have their portraits on U.S. bills appear — but the commentary isn't pointed. Conceptualism is rare, although A.C. Valdez invites visitors to sing their favorite tunes into a vintage MiniDisc recorder, and Davis tweaks expectations by slapping a \$92,000 price tag on a birdhouse titled "Wow — What a Deal!"

Although much of the art is rough, the highlights are polished. Brendan L. Smith melts vinyl LPs into sinuous forms, paints them in metallic tones and places them atop burner frames from gas stove tops. It's a simple idea, neatly rendered.

Yaroslav Korpula's "4 Elements — Earth, Air, Fire, Water" personifies the classical idea of life's rudiments in a modern style but with a twist of Hieronymus Bosch. The quartet is not typical of "1460 Wall Mountables," but it's not diminished by hanging out with art that displays more attitude than authority.

### 'MiniSolos' at Touchstone

The range is nearly as wide, but the level of craft more consistent, at Touchstone, whose "MiniSolos" is open only to members of the artist-owned gallery. This 37-artist show also has numerous collages, notably Denise Graveline's assemblages of wood, paper and found objects; Deborah Saks's playful (if unsurprising) tributes to Paris and French couture; and a Kathy Paz piece in which a doorknob juts invitingly from the surface.

Eric Johnson's photographs stand out for being black and white and documentary: They depict humble eateries in the Washington area and beyond. Some of Jonathan French's photos are in black and white, but he also works in sepia and

**1460 WALL MOUNTABLES**  
on view through Sunday at District of Columbia Arts Center, 2438 18th St. NW, 202-462-7833, www.dcartscenter.org.

**MINISOLOS**  
on view through Saturday at Touchstone Gallery, 901 New York Ave. NW, 202-347-2787, www.touchstonegallery.com.

**ReFRESH**  
on view through Sunday at Long View Gallery, 1234 Ninth St. NW, 202-232-4788, www.longviewgallery.com.

**ANNIE ALBAGLI: GREETINGS FROM PARADISE**  
on view through Saturday at Pleasant Plains Workshop, 2608 Georgia Ave. NW, www.pleasantplainsworkshop.blogspot.com.

full color; the most striking one abstracts the left side of a vivid street scene into bands of color.

Bhaval Shah Bell performs similar alchemy, but without a camera, in three acrylics whose bold, flat blocks of pigment initially seem abstract, only to reveal themselves as maps of Earth's continents. Ellen Delaney's acrylic paintings of farms are more obviously representational, but with expanses of green fields or yellow sky that verge on Diebenkorn-like distillations of landscape. Gongsan Kim Park also paints in acrylic, gently blending stripes that favor shades of blue and purple; the loveliest of these is on rice paper, whose irregular texture complements the shifting hues. Mason Thorpe Calhoun arrays pixel-like blocks of color on wood, sometimes including the paint-store name; that gives these hymns to color a hint of collage, linking two of the show's leading forms.

### 'ReFresh' at Long View

Although it has more square footage than most D.C. galleries, Long View Gal-

lery gives art room to breathe. There are only a few pieces in "ReFresh," a group show of new work by gallery regulars, and they look great in the wide-open space. These include large works, such as Cheryl Wassenaar's assemblages of found commercial signage — think Kurt Schwitters with a band saw rather than scissors — but also Marie Ringwald's small, simple renderings of sheds, as paintings and models.

The gallery's aesthetic tends toward the meticulous and sleek, so it's fitting that two of the featured artists coat their art with resin. Mike Weber's "Grandfather Time" — which looks like a magazine illustration, but not in a bad way — has a glossy finish. Tony Savoie's glazes are lumpier, but his style is no less accomplished. He paints on the back of acrylic panels, leaving some areas clear to show objects he places beneath the surface. The centerpiece of his offerings — and of the entire show — is "Flounder," in which a transparent area in the shape of that fish reveals the stuff below, a pileup of brownish junk that suggests the bottom of a defiled ocean. Savoie is also showing some more traditional paintings, which are beautifully made. But it's his 3-D work that fascinates, offering literal depths beneath the shiny skin.

### 'Greetings From Paradise'

Trained in sculpture, Annie Albagli has recently been an artist in residence at Pyramid Atlantic, a Silver Spring printmaking center. One result of this affiliation is "Greetings From Paradise," her show at Pleasant Plains Workshop. It ranges from a 3-D installation in the storefront gallery's display window to postcard-size prints. All contrast two ideas of heavenly perfection: trees from an Edenic garden (actually, the artist's Germantown back yard) and the pure form of geometric shapes (specifically, a pyramid). This opposition may not be philosophically profound. But it works visually, especially when Albagli contrasts branches in muted blues and grays with pyramids in day-glo orange and yellow. The subtle variations in form and hue play off each other as the lone hot color in the horizontal prints on one wall leads to the brighter, vertically oriented ones on the other. It's a satisfying journey for the eye, even if it doesn't lead all the way to paradise.

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