

# Gallery RIVAA Mounts Vernissage XIII

review by David Stone

Every spring, the Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association's contributing artists exhibit their most recent work at *Vernissage*. This year's exhibit is RIVAA's thirteenth. It bristles with new art and fresh ideas.

Valeriu Boborelu, the group's veteran abstract expressionist, introduces a brighter palette. In *Magenta* and *Yellow Beings*, his objects burn the canvas with intense reds set against yellow, blue, and green energies. His efforts to continue describing ineffable entities with increasing clarity glow with inspiration in three new works.

Maintaining the Vernissage theme with more conventional expression, Mircea Nicolescu's photographs catch the simple pleasure of everyday activity as he captures private gestures in public settings. Some will make you smile. All bring a nod of recognition.

Adding a selection of exciting oils on canvas for the first time is Monika Stø, a Norwegian with a color-rich style dependent on the flux and flow of vibrant energies. Stø finds an abstract element in people that swells lyrically beyond physical form. In *Cold Morning*, a woman's face warms a corner of the canvas with deepening blue hues, extending a theme in which her subjects emerge off-center, more subtle and less direct.

As if subtlety itself were a value worth celebrating with irony, abstract expressionist Ioan Popoiu introduces a big set of acrylic paintings on paper, and not just paper, but paper peeled off a sketch pad. His 16 vibrant, diverse statements dance among each other like a community reaching for cohesion. Once in a while, a face tries to emerge from the dance of colors, reminding viewers that all art is human, however abstract.

"I try to create, using modern technology, a new kind of expression of the spiritual," declares sculptor Viorica Colapacci. Her electrified *Expanding Star* dominates a corner of the gallery as it produces an aura of intense light within a physical frame that glows outward in diminishing waves of photons. Her installation freezes quantum reality to make a point.

In *Vernissage XIII*, veteran RIVAA artists have brought new ideas to work that has long been appreciated. Never predictable, Tad Sudol steps out with *Muses – Quadriptych*, a study of four nudes drawn with conte crayon on paper. Eschewing color, Sudol's black on tan brings a relaxed appreciation of female form.

On a foggy morning in January, Esther Piaskowski carried her camera to the tip of Roosevelt Island where, in Four Freedoms Park, she found a universe that existed once and will never return. Her four images are the essence of photographic art, of geometric rows of trees and stacks of buildings turned poetic and ephemeral in the rising river mists. Everything is softened, quieter, than it will be again.

Pastelist Georgette Sinclair adds an unusual note of humor to her artwork in *Waiting For The Guy To Go Away*. Sinclair's pictures are always pauses that relax viewers with discovered natural compositions that bring out a solitary beauty. Here, though, her idyllic scene in Central Park is disturbed by a man who stays, oblivious to her painterly interest in his exiting. Also, working from photographs and sketches made over a string of frigid nights, Sinclair has created a quintessential Roosevelt Island scene for this winter, *Blackwell House* in an embrace of fresh snow.

One of RIVAA's brightest new lights is Deepti Shukla, an artist who draws on the traditional styles and traditions of India. For *Vernissage XIII*, Shukla displays the broad range of her skills, offering an abstract, softened image of the Hindu god Ganesha, the patron of arts and sciences (among other attributes). Nearby, a set of coordinated tiles, *Home Decor II*, instantly captures your eye. Shukla creates her intricate designs with acrylics on canvas.

A gifted colorist, Toshiko Kitano Groner contributes a beautiful group of still lifes, but also steps ahead with pastels. In a streetscape, *Hotel Chelsea*, she gives us a sentimental image of this memorable residence for quirky characters, showing us how it separates itself from the grime of the streets. She pairs it with *On The Way To Paris*, a poetic observation from the French countryside.

Photographer Alexander Movshovich continues the trend with three related pictures that use the play of black and white to emphasize texture and composition in natural settings. With *In Motion*, he breaks the linear pattern of waves and shore to expose a small bird finding its way through a much larger universe.

Izumi Tokuno returns to the gallery with a pair of her Zen-like sea scenes. As always, her prints capture the endless, changing complexity that comes with the play of water and sun in the ocean.

In her sunny *Happy Time*, Rachel Garrick sparkles with a Matisse-like array of colors that swirl in the company of a dancing figure whose blond hair is swept by a gentle wind across her face. This expressionist watercolor is alive with motion expressed with warmth and contentment.

Laura Hussey is an ambitious creator of large oils on canvas. In *Avle (Garden)*, she takes us to the Mediterranean, where three women, one partly off the canvas, populate a kind of barefoot dream, their space framed by gentle mountains and deepening blue sky. In spite of its true-to-life size on the canvas, the garden feels apart, a robust dream of peace and awakening.

The black-and-white photographs of Antraniq Ghariban are a kind of visual poetry – with balance, abstraction, and symbolism all offering a commentary that encourages viewers to participate. In *USSR*, Ghariban expresses the former Soviet Union as an abandoned railcar in a perpetual midnight.

RIVAA chose well when the gallery decided to open with Radu Serban's *iPhone Man*, a sea of rich colors that give a routine city scene more vibrancy that it has in itself. Artistically, Serban injects a warmth and grace to the composition of a man and his cellphone, isolated in an urban space of abandoned chairs and disinterested passers-by. Mounted at the entrance, it ushers visitors into a space filled with visual treats, surprises, and thoughtful gestures.

*Vernissage XIII* opened with a packed crowd at Gallery RIVAA on March 15. It will remain open for public viewing through Sunday, May 4, with many of the artworks available for sale. The Gallery is on the street level at 527 Main Street. It's open from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays, and 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.



Art works are in color on the website – MainStreetWIRE.com

