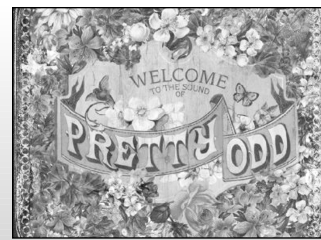


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Arts & Entertainment

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Philly's Smile Gallery exhibits feminist art

By Calista Condo
Contributor

Tucked around the corner of 22nd Street and Arch Street in Philadelphia lies a small art gallery hosting an exhibit with heavy subject matter and large artistic range. The Smile Gallery, also a café, is holding a show this month in honor of Women's History Month that is not overtly feminist but covers narrative and aesthetic works focusing on women's views of the world.

Everything from religious ideas to past memories of childhood are displayed in this show focusing on local women artists. Curator and Rowan professor Dr. Debra Miller chose this accumulation of artists because she had worked with them before and knew that each would add more variety and impact to the whole exhibit.

The show is not meant to be feminist in a political sense but in the idea that the works created are a woman's response to her world, according to Miller.

The gallery, which is reminiscent of the top of a small house, is composed of two main rooms and a narrow hallway. It is tight and enclosed, yet airy and bright.

"I chose this space because it is deceptively small and it allows things to flow together and the works draw your eye around the space," said Miller at the opening reception on March 14.

The front room opens up, exposing three artists' works that correlate with and complement one another. The first collection that immediately draws your attention is Lilliana Didovic's "My Journey." It is a vibrant and dynamic narrative of Didovic's life and journey from Yugoslavia to America, and primarily Philadelphia. Expressive in execution and lively with color, Didovic's works are a celebration of life and her personal adventure.

"The work is not necessarily feminine," said Philadelphia resident Herb Sharp while observing Didovic's work at the reception. "They are just thought of a female looking back over their life."

The next group of works in the front room, which then lead to the small hallway of the gallery, is Betsy Alexander's art entitled "The Joy of Light." Using photography and reflective found objects to create crosses, Alexander focuses her work on the study and exploration of light and the images light can create. Right next to Alexander's bright and impacting photography is Madelen Warhola's "Slovakian Pop," which blends fine art and pop art influenced by her uncle Andy Warhol and folk art inspired by her grandmother. Creating silk-screened t-shirts and practicing pysanky, which is a Slovakian way of meticulously decorating eggs, Warhola has created a way to blend two very different and important parts of her family into one cohesive group of art.

Moving down the hall you will encounter little stuffed dolls, entitled "The Lost Souls Collection" by Francine Strauss. Combining cloth, buttons, lace and other found objects, Strauss creates the angelic dolls in



Above – "Regularies" by Nicklus at the Smile Gallery on 22nd and Arch Street in Philadelphia.

Right – "My Journey" by Didovic on display.

representation of memories and the people who have come before us.

In the back room you will find two more artists' works. To the left you will encounter expressive, colorful mixed media creations hanging from the wall. Rachel Citrino's collection entitled "Fecundita" could almost be the show stealer, incorporating emotion, power, and her inventive nature. Citrino depicts wonderful Italian landscapes with a childlike quality, using intense color and powerful lines.

"The colors are spectacular," said Philadelphia artist Michael Diprinzio. "Rachel's work gives a sense of Matisse's works."

This collection was created from Citrino's time spent in a painting studio in a little town located in Abruzzo, Italy, the birthplace of all four of her grandparents. The quiet town with only about 70 residents and medieval battle walls covering the whole exterior forced Citrino to look to the hills, a fertile lush landscape. Her works are renderings of a living nature and a beautiful world full of memories and history, including her own.

Following around to the right side of the room, Liz Nicklus' Reliquaries leaves the viewer with a final summary of what this show is all about. Nicklus, an artist for as long as she can remember, has created what seem to be treasure boxes of memories. Using old objects that she could never find reason to part with, Nicklus combines all media into small wooden boxes. They are autobiographical narratives of haunting and happy memories. Each box represents Nicklus' childhood observation of the women and absent father in her life. According to Nicklus, they are about the people who shape any woman's perspective on life and the standard that woman have to seemingly live up to.



Photos by Calista Condo

This show is about the ideas of memories and life and how they influence women, the past and the present. The works are autobiographical. The ideas become essential by showing that all options are open to women today and that we have reached a place in time where a woman can become, create and experience any thing she chooses.

Beat Briefs

Photos from corbis.com and amazon.com



This Week in Music History — March 27

- 1970 - Mariah Carey was born 38 years ago..
- 1973 - Jerry Garcia, of The Grateful Dead, was pulled over for speeding. He received a \$15 ticket and much more, after various illegal substances were found in his vehicle.



Movies: Box Office from the 3/21 weekend

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|--------|
| 1 | Dr. Seuss' Horton Hears a Who! | \$24.6 |
| 2 | Tyler Perry's Meet the Browns | \$20.1 |
| 3 | Shutter | \$10.4 |
| 4 | Drillbit Taylor | \$10.3 |
| 5 | 10,000 BC | \$8.9 |

Source: Billboard



Music: Top Selling Pop Album

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Trilla Rick Ross |
| 2 | NOW That's What I Call Music! 27 Various Artists |
| 3 | Ego Trippin' Snoop Dogg |
| 4 | Sleep Through the Static Jack Johnson |
| 5 | Good Time Alan Jackson |

Source: Billboard