

Clicking the Moment on That Which Vanishes

Flying in the face of Fran Lebowitz's quip about modern poetry, "It is generally inhumane to detain a fleeting insight," it would appear that the resourceful Italian artist/curator Stefania Carrozzini creates a group show by hoarding whatever such musings occur to her, then presenting them to select artists like a Zen master dispensing koans — the paradoxical, sometimes even non-sensical, sayings such spiritual teachers dispense to students to inspire meditation.

Her most recent such venture, "Clicking the moment: The Ephemeral and its Opposite," evolved from questions such as "How can you determine if the ephemeral by its very nature defies definition? What is Ephemeral? Ephemeral means that which is transient; but hasn't art always wanted to challenge time to look to the eternal?"

Ask a Zen question and you'll get a Zen painting, seemed to be the attitude of Donata Deflorian, an avant garde saxophonist and visual artist, with a penchant for mixing her two forms of expression, who responded with scroll-like abstraction in the swift gestural tradition of literati ink painting, albeit with vibrant veils of translucent color in place of the usual monochromatic gray washes.

Marea Atkinson, an adjunct lecturer, researcher, and former head of printmaking at the University of South Australia, who recently presented her installation, *The City of Stars* at the Hayden Planetarium in New York City, responded with a work called "Labyrinth XVI," featuring a solar sphere glowing out of a square void set against a burnt orange border embellished with traces of delicate plant forms resembling tiny details in an ancient Chinese landscape painting.

Digital photographic artist Cristina Madeyski created a fanciful tableaux centered on two fairylike female beings, gracefully dancing hand-in-hand amid floating bubbles and garishly colored abstract forms resembling undersea flora in some lost Atlantis of the Jungian collective unconscious — or else in some equally ephemeral kitschy Las Vegas production number on the same theme!

Tina Parotti, best known for her "Dying Nature" series of mostly figurative ecological protest paintings, showed two recent abstractions based on irregularly spherical forms set afloat on subtle color fields, receptively titled "la foto" and "Allegato di Posta elettronica," that Carrozzini refers to in her catalog essay as "a new aesthetic sensibility based not on the more egocentric vision of the inner



Cristina Madeyski

world of the artist, but the sensitivity that transcends the immanence of reality."

Clara Scarampella Lombardi known since the '70s for a poetic take on nature praised by Pierre Restany, the French art critic, cultural philosopher and champion of Nouveau Realisme, expresses the paradox of the ethereal turning into its opposite with a work in which the delicate pastel-colored wings of butterflies appear embossed in thick silvery blue waves of impasto, as if their usual element of thin air has turned into thick, viscous matter.

For Don Lisy born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio, now living in Brooklyn, the creative process is itself an ethereal event, taking an emotional form that he must seize before the feeling dissipates, shows an untitled "action" painting, in which even drips of yellow that flow sideways, instead of down, record his act of turning the canvas, giving permanent form to a momentary creative impulse.

Another artist who entrusts his creative process to the mood of the moment, Giovanni Battista Sciello, also known as Veil (Dea Mater Red), projecting a visceral feeling that is anything but ephemeral. So it must refer to its opposite: the bodily mortality that holds us all hostage to fate.

Fiorenza Milanese, who specializes in architectural design but also paints and creates sculpture jewelry from recyclable materials, contributes a truly bizarre sculptural installation comprised of what appears to be plates of fast food displayed on tall translucent poles rising out of holes in a platform covered in AstroTurf, suggesting an elemental truth: take sustenance to avoid becoming ephemeral yourself!

Nothing appears ephemeral in the intricate, meticulously crafted hard-edge paintings of Pino Chimenti, made up of an entire alphabet of cartoonlike figurative and abstract shapes and symbols that interlock like pieces in a puzzle, suggesting a strong stand in favor of the polar opposite

of the ephemeral: that which is determinedly solid and enduring.

By contrast, Tiril, born in London, now a U.S. citizen, professes "a lifelong affinity with the manifestation of the spirit within the physical vehicle," expressed in bold, energetically brushed painterly gestures, which give form to the ephemeral without attempting to arrest its vitality.

Susi Lamarca, known for exploring the sign in drawing, photography, and graphic design, exhibits a composition based on the spiral, a symbol in Eastern spirituality of infinity, possibly positing it as the receptacle capable of capturing and containing that

which we think of as ephemeral.

Like any enlightened Zen master, Carrozzini does not expect linear answers to metaphysical questions — especially in the subjective precincts of contemporary art. But the aesthetic solutions these artists supplied to an existential puzzle offer their own rewards.

— Marie R. Pagano

"Clicking the Moment: The Ephemeral and its Opposite," Onishi Project, 521 West 26th Street, April 15 - 26, 2014

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Out." While the first envelopes the viewer in graceful leaves that fan out around a central stem, in the latter two pictures, the long, slender, light-toned fronds stretch out horizontally, as though trying to grasp the surrounding darkness.

"Every moment that passes is one that will never come again," says Nadine Levin, a native of Washington D.C., now residing in Poolesville, Maryland. "Some of the images associated with those moments are worthy of preserving for all time."

— Thomas Rafferty

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