

Monthly Featured Artists
By Virginia Billeaud Anderson
Published April 11, 2012

Nicola Parente's geometric abstractions vaguely reference the landscape and architecture of Houston and his native Italy. The thing that makes them so seductive to collectors though is they seem to stretch beyond objective representation into a type of symbolism. Abruptly scraped white-toned columnar bands framed grid-like in black, and interrupted with snatches of vibrant colors proximate "existence between worlds." The paintings' unrelenting blurriness stirs up possibilities, undiscovered realities.

In 2011 Parente exhibited his art in Ethiopia and spent time at the Bishangari wildlife sanctuary. There, inspired by the light around Lake Langano he photographed the landscape, and these images are as sensual and mysterious as his paintings. You have until April 14 to see "Bishangari," Nicola Parente's Fotofest exhibition at Gremillion & Company Fine Art.

In 2008 Nicola Parente designed installations and videos as stage sets for the Dominic Walsh Dance Theater production of "Terminus."



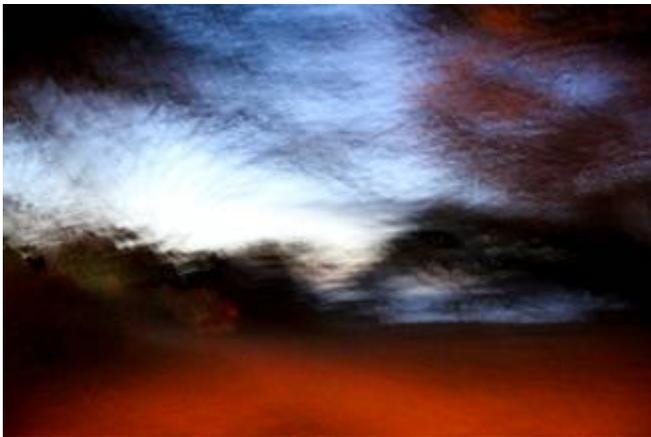
Nicola Parente, "Bishangari #12-492," Lake Langano, Ethiopia, 2011, Archival inkjet print on metallic paper - Gremillion & Co. Fine Art

Full Article:

Topics: Nicola Parente at Gremillion, Kathy Erteman, Libbie Masterson's "Dora Maar House" residency, Robert Boyd and Kallinen Contemporary, Camargo Valentino, Winter Street's Solomon Kane, Richard Serra at Texas Gallery, Darke Gallery, David Adicke's museum, Roberta Harris, CAM, literary gift

Nicola Parente's geometric abstractions vaguely reference the landscape and architecture of Houston and his native Italy. The thing that makes them so seductive to collectors though is they seem to stretch beyond objective representation into a type of symbolism. Abruptly scraped white-toned columnar bands framed grid-like in black, and interrupted with snatches of vibrant colors proximate "existence between worlds." The paintings' unrelenting blurriness stirs up possibilities, undiscovered realities.

In 2011 Parente exhibited his art in Ethiopia and spent time at the Bishangari wildlife sanctuary. There, inspired by the light around Lake Langano he photographed the landscape, and these images are as sensual and mysterious as his paintings. You have until April 14 to see "Bishangari," Nicola Parente's Fotofest exhibition at Gremillion & Company Fine Art.



Nicola Parente, "Bishangari #12-492," Lake Langano, Ethiopia, 2011, Archival inkjet print on metallic paper - Gremillion & Co. Fine Art

While at Gremillion be sure to see Kathy Erteman's ceramic wall sculptures, clay vessels and works on paper in the exhibition "A Particular Balance." Her wall pieces Erteman feels are in accord with the "freedom within restraint" she finds in the minimalist aesthetic of Sol Le Witt and Agnes Martin, as well as 19th century Japanese abstract natural forms. Her sculptural vessels, she wrote, are metaphors for containment, and the works on paper are inspired by Rothko, Hoffman and Gottlieb.



Kathy Erteman, "Sway - Clay Vessel," 2011, - Gremillion & Co. Fine Art

In 2008 Nicola Parente designed installations and videos as stage sets for the Dominic Walsh Dance Theater production of "Terminus." Parente is not the only Houston artist to collaborate with choreographer Walsh. In 2008 Walsh used Libbie Masterson's monumentally sized photographs as scenic props for "The Mozart Trilogy," a production Walsh subsequently took to Tokyo. Libbie Masterson's newest photographic works can be seen in the exhibition "Nuit" at Wade Wilson Art. "Nuit" serves as Wade Wilson's Fotofest exhibition.

The images in "Nuit" were taken in the evening in the south of France, where Masterson lived and worked as the recipient of a Dora Maar House fellowship. According to biographers, Picasso's mistress Dora Maar disliked the house he gave her in Ménerbes but used it until her death in 1997. Maar's former house is now owned by the Brown Foundation and Houston's MFA who grant residencies to awardees such as Masterson. (I was recently gifted a sketch from another Dora Maar House fellow.)

Masterson photographed the image below from the house's balcony. To create its blue tones, she said, required a bit of experimentation with processing chemicals.



Libbie Masterson, "Tingry, Dora Maar House," 2009-2012 Silver Gelatin toned - Wade Wilson Art

The photographs she took in Provence brought Masterson a second collaboration with Dominic Walsh who will use them as scenery for his new production "Claudel," inspired by the life of Camille Claudel, the sculptor who was Rodin's mistress. Dominic Walsh lucked out, he told us, to have for his performance photographs taken very near the asylum of Ville-Evrard where Camille was committed by her brother Paul, and where she remained for the last 30 years of her life.

Many believe Camille's sculptural skills surpassed Rodin's, and that she was sane, so it's understandable Walsh would be artistically drawn to her story. Camille's brother's extreme religiosity and obsessions with sin as gleaned from his writings suggests he himself might have been slightly off balance. Paul Claudel wrote with a patristic tone reflecting hysteria. "He gives me the impression of a solidified cyclone," Andre Gide wrote in 1905. His sister Camille's atheism and mistress status may have partially accounted for Paul's judgment of her as demented. "My sister," Paul Claudel corresponded, "what a tragic existence! She was 30 years old when she understood that Rodin would never marry her."

Picasso's fear of castration and death is most evident in the portraits of his lovers. "Psychosexual dissection," biographer John Richardson labeled the paintings. Richardson finds "wrenching intensity" in Picasso's portraits of Dora Maar. Others observed that among Picasso's mistresses Dora Maar suffered the most emotional abuse.



Picasso, "Weeping Woman" (Dora Maar)

Robert Boyd works his ass off writing about Houston's contemporary art scene. His photographic coverage and commentary are excellent, so I recommend you check out Boyd's posts on "The Great God Pan is Dead."

Boyd recently did a splendid job of covering the group exhibition "Space Zombie Mayan Apocalyptic Human Sacrifice Uplift Mofo" at Kallinen Contemporary, so check out his blog to see images by a number of the artists, many of whom are very deserving of exposure. Camargo Valentino, a fine painter who works in "old master" glazes style, is an example. Back in 2007 or 2008 for a newspaper article I wrote about Lawndale's Big Show I showed a painting by Camargo.

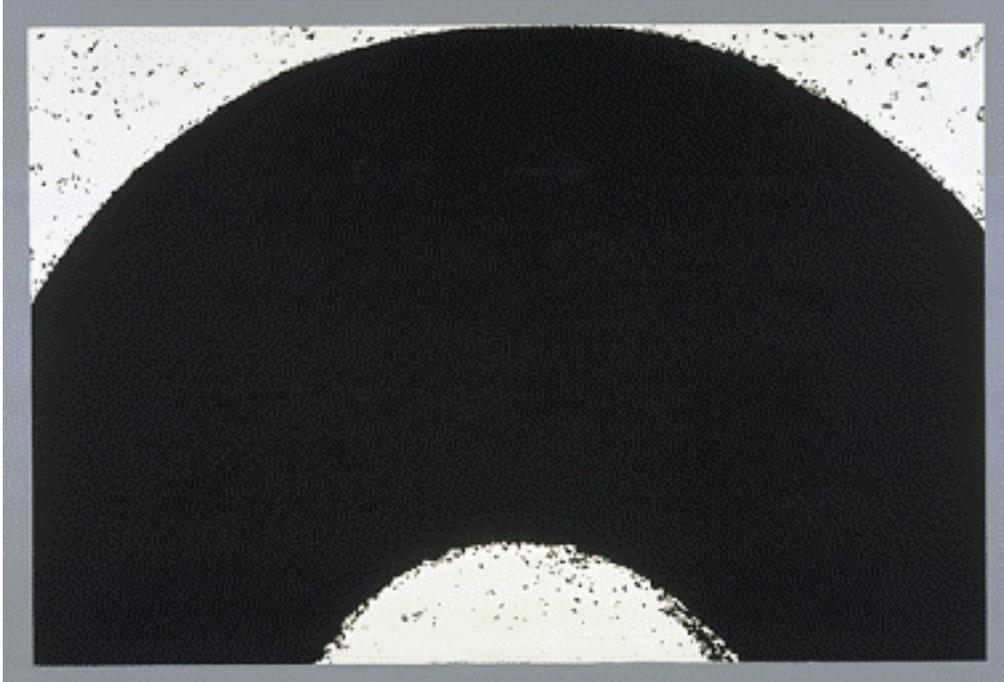
It's hardly possible though to cover a big crazy group show in its entirety, and indeed Boyd described "Space Zombie Mayan" as an "over stuffed jumble of art." Size undoubtedly accounted for his camera only partially capturing the work of Solomon Kane.

Remember acid trips? Kane's art incorporates the psychedelic colors seen on hallucinogens. His three dimensional pieces are intelligently loony, and his prints and drawings catch the eye like hippie poster-art under a black-light. If you can't see the exhibition at Kallinen Contemporary, think about visiting Kane (his real name is Jeff Reese) at his Winter Street studio. The guy loves showing his art to visitors, and will want to talk philosophy. It'll take him precisely two minutes to pose the question "do you think we'll ever know the reason we exit?" He'll discuss the Hindu interconnectedness of all things, and mention Kierkegaard, and the Kabala. I pulled the image below from Kane's website. See how "Yoric Re-visited" redacts death, Shakespeare, and pop art, which in my opinion just about sum up all of existence.



Solomon Kane, "Yoric Re-visited," - Winter Street - www.artavodah.com

Richard Serra is believed by some to be the world's most important living sculptor. This won't stop a whole bunch of people from finding his drawings (Menil exhibition) somewhat outrageous in size and tactility. But it is possible to see more intimate and accessible Serra artworks in the exhibition "Richard Serra Prints" at Texas Gallery. Serra collaborated with the print shop Gemini G.E.L. between 2004 and 2011 and the smaller scale works are delightful. Through May 5.



Richard Serra, "Untitled" 2008 - Texas Gallery

On Friday April 13, 6-9pm, Darke Gallery is having the opening reception for "Elixir," an exhibition of ink drawings by John Adelman. Adelman's subject matter is ordinary, but his obsessive repetitive process is complex. Through May 5



John Adelman, "Nails," Ink drawing - Darke Gallery

And Linda Darke just emailed to announce that Jon Clark is the new Assistant Gallery Director at Darke. Handsome!



Jon Clark - Assistant Gallery Director - Darke Gallery

After working on the dilapidated building for a while, David Adickes is finally opening his museum, and you are invited. Grand opening for the Adickes Foundation Art museum is April 26 from 7-10. The museum is at 710 University Ave in Huntsville, and over 300 paintings and sculptures will be exhibited. You probably heard that David purchased the Huntsville high school from which he graduated in 1943, "I couldn't let them tear down the building where I learned to jitterbug."

Roberta Harris wants you to know about her exhibition "Step Up" at Kirk Hopper Fine Art through April 28. In 2009 I had the pleasure of writing the catalog essay for Roberta's retrospective at the Women's Museum in Dallas, and studied her work, so I feel all puffed up about comprehending its symbolism. Those checkerboard square forms represent steps and ascension to a higher place, meaning spiritual enlightenment.



Roberta Harris, "Cream Rose" 2011, Acrylic and mixed media - Kirk Hopper Fine Art

And here's an image from CAM's "The Deconstructive Impulse: Women Artists Reconfigure the Signs of Power, 1973-1991" which is ending soon on April 15.



Laurie Simmons, "First Bathroom", 1978, cibachrome print - CAM