

ARTE FUSE



Gildersleeve Going Elsewhere and Taking You There

-Review by Oscar Laluyan 05/22/14

A sense of place and orientation gives reassurance but in the landscape of art - chaos takes you further. Last May 15th at Asya Geisberg Gallery that Allison Gildersleeve featured her latest painting series for her show Elsewhere. AF came to the show and in the abstract twisted world of the artist, they allowed themselves to get lost willingly or be in the moment of wanderlust.

Gildersleeve with her abstract nature landscapes punctuated by colors and riotous forms brought a whole new dimension of a created world that is all at once familiar yet exciting to explore. Recalling the Van Gogh technique of bringing the undergrowth into closer focus and dispensing of the middle horizon line where the viewer is captive to the static world she exposed. One can see impressions of branches, twigs, vegetation or rock formations but they are all tumbling or almost spinning out of axis. It is a great demonstration of dynamic forces beyond control and the aesthetic color choices and lines rein it in for the balance. It takes a deft skill to paint enough movement but it still relates to the overall composition. No line is ever unnecessary or an afterthought. Her base image in mind may be photographic but it is also in memory of rural scenes that the worlds are created by Gildersleeve to capture one's interest.

Looking for Cover (2013) demonstrated the jumbled universe that is created but the brilliant touches of acrid green with some streaks of purple representing vein like roots which could easily convey a modernistic landscape. It can also be looking inside the chamber of a heart where all these veins meet. The transitive experience is subtle and not forced as one is transported from one type of scene to the next. Foothold (2014) with the dense browns and fiery reds pulsated with the same vibrancy and electricity. It can be the woodland of dreams or hallucinated hell based on what one felt or made of the canvas. There is a freedom of choice to unabashedly make an interpretation. The propensity of being transported elsewhere is not by force but by sheer voluntary escapism afforded through the rich hued and static formation of Gildersleeve's oeuvre.

It is a masterful machination to transport viewers into worlds of their own choosing. An artist can create portals or doorways but it takes one's sensibilities to exercise the freedom to open them by ascending towards fantasy or descending into hell. The choice is yours - trying to get elsewhere sometimes ends up in nowhere you'd expect to be. And that can be a pleasant surprise indeed. Remember, it's not the destination but the journey that is the best part of any trip.