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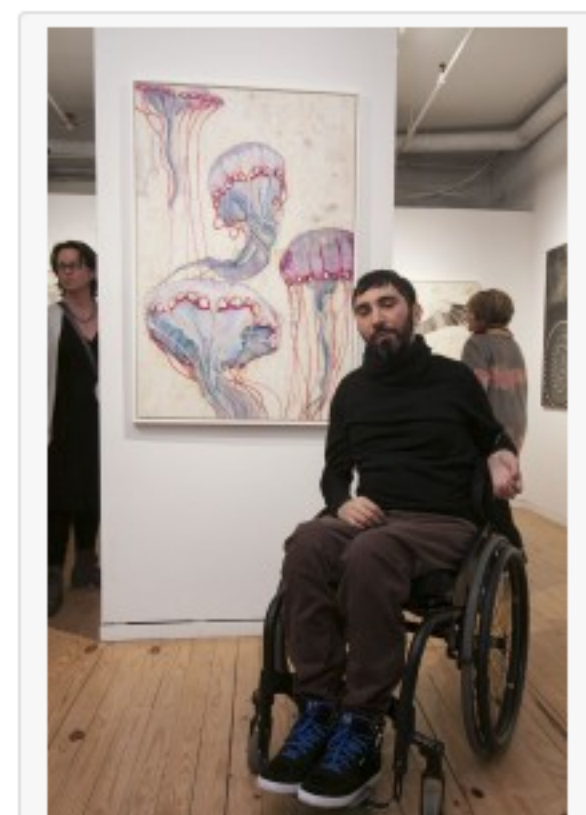
Happy Studio Sunday! from Pato Garcia

Reception Review: April 3, 2014

by MARY ELEANOR HURT on APRIL 5, 2014 · LEAVE A COMMENT



This Thursday night at Agora Gallery, the artwork spanned two floors on 25th Street with four richly diverse shows: *The Pulse of Abstraction*, *Sensorial Perspectives*, *East Meets West*, and *New York City 2014: Synchronicity*. I had the chance to speak with a few of our sculptors, painters, and photographers with the hope of learning a little more about their procedures.



Luca Viapiana poses in front of his mixed-media *The Unrestrainable Need to Emerge*.

It was a great pleasure to ascertain the refined process of Italian artist Luca Viapiana, who paints exclusively on collected sales receipts. These receipts, he told me, are made from thermal paper, which is chemically treated and reacts continuously to light and heat. To create contrast or to ornament the work with a burned effect, Viapiana applies a layer of paraffin wax over the receipts and his acrylic paint, which he melts at a temperature of 75 degrees Celsius with an infrared lamp. Egg whites are combined with honey and heated to make the receipts transparent, giving a great tactical and also deeply personal quality to his works. I had the desire to inquire about my favorite piece, *Danae*. In the myth, the princess of Argos is jailed by her father, who felt threatened by the prophecy that his death would come by the hand of his daughter's son. In his usual form, the god Zeus notices the great beauty of the imprisoned princess and, disguising himself as rain, impregnates Danae, who will later give birth to Perseus. "In my interpretation," Luca told me, "the woman redeems her dignity through private, cathartic release." He identified Zeus as the volcano in the distance, which spits fire over Danae's skin.



Marcel Neuschwander meets with art appreciators in front of his work.

Of course, our stories are not always relayed in strict narrative, as *Pulse of Abstraction* artist Marcel Neuschwander playfully reminded me. I was insistent upon identifying imagery in the fluid, sinuous forms of his work — I discovered two waves crashing into one another, the curving body of a woman, a fish. Marcel smiled and nodded patiently, telling me with a chuckle, "It's so funny to me to hear what people see in my work, because I don't see such real things when I paint. This is the language of my thoughts, and you will see what your experience speaks to you." Neuschwander begins his compositions by first building his serpentine figures in color, and then contains their form in line. Finally, he covers this layer and paints the background. The artist leaves his works untitled, surrendering them to every individual interpretation.



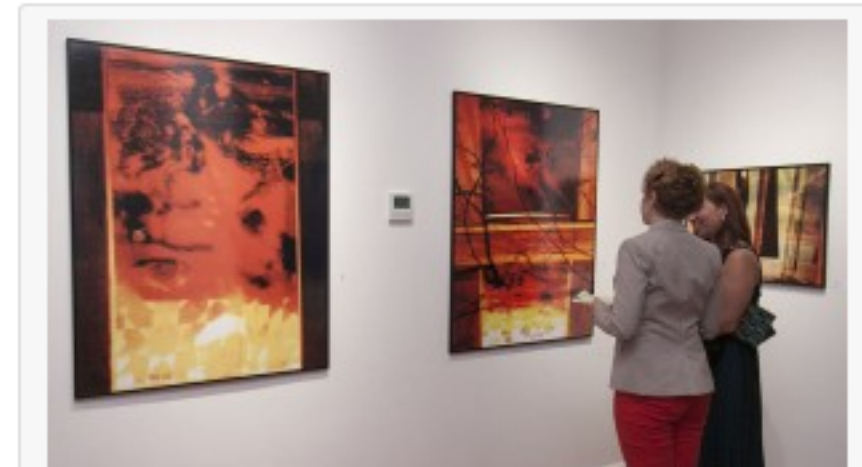
Mikey McGhee stands before her hand-crafted, functional teapots.

Sculptor and potter **Mikey McGhee** abides by ancient, Chinese instructions for the construction of her fully functional teapots. For example, the handle must be oriented directly behind the center of the spout, the inside of which must be leveled so that the liquid pours and does not drizzle into the cup. I asked about the three distinct legs on which each vessel stands. McGhee responded that "each leg is different depending on the proportion of weight that it must support." Similarly, the tubes which connect to the two primary vessels all connect to the lower portion, behind the piece's center of weight. McGhee says she usually creates her teapots in a group of 5, and that the process usually takes her about three months to complete. The works are of an extremely fine detail that deserves careful observation in person.



Gallery director Angela di Bello (l) stands with Ron Yue and *Sensorial Perspectives* painter Steven Cary (r) in front of Yue's photographs.

In our *East Meets West* exhibition, Hong Kong-based photographer **Ron Yue** expressed a desire to document Chinese culture during a period of rapid urban expansion. "At this time, China is moving and developing so much more quickly than in North America, that I feel I'm in a rush to document." Yue is a featured National Geographic photographer, and considers his work and goals primarily journalistic. Nonetheless, it is plainly evident that he has a very creative sense of composition. Looking at the aerial mosaic *Blue City*, I asked Ron if he builds his canvas out from one motif or detail, or if he sees these parts of a greater whole. "Because I like to give a sense of place in my work," he answered, "I find that focusing too tightly will lose the concept. I do like to repeat smaller details, however, if it conveys the concept of the place."



Nichole Bodin and I consider her series featured on the third floor.

Currently, in our third floor suite, we are featuring the recent works of some senior artists of the gallery. One photographer, **Nichole Bodin**, begins her compositions with light boxes that she constructs out of wood. She then layers her boxes with the transparent prints of her photography, overlaying her images and then capturing the final effect with her camera. "The photography is what I use to express my medium," she said, "The camera can only capture reflected light, so what I'm doing is capturing many layers of the experience."



A visitor pauses in front of the work of Cuban artist Alejandro Tejeda Mora.

It was a big night at Agora Gallery for certain, and it was a wonderful experience to unite so many artists and enthusiasts from all across the globe. The current exhibitions, *Pulse of Abstraction*, *Sensorial Perspectives*, *East Meets West*, and *New York City 2014: Synchronicity*, each offer a rich repository of very diverse artwork. We invite you to come explore the collection yourself. All of these artists and more have their artwork for sale on [Art-Mine.com](#). Keep yourself updated with the goings-on at the Gallery by subscribing to our [blog](#), and joining our [mailing list](#).

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