NATURE RePERCEIVED

September 13 - October 22

Opening Reception: Friday September 15
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OPENING RECEPTION: FRIDAY SEPT. 15, 6-9 PM

Tues - Sat: Noon-9 pm, Sun: Noon-4 pm

215 South 4th Avenue
Ann Arbor MI 48104
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THEGALLERYPROJECT.COM

HELEN BEVAN
ROCCO DEPIETRO
MATT DEGENARO
ZACKERY DENFELD
KEVIN EWING
JOHN GANIS
CAROL HANNA
ADRIAN HATFIELD
COOPER HOLOWESKI
RICK LIEDER
KATHRYN BRACKETT LUCHS
KEELY MCCARTHY
PAUL McMULLAN
ARMIN MERSMANN
PATRICIA OLYNYK
FRANK PAHL
RICK PAS
JANIE PAUL
MARY PENN
GLORIA PRITSCHET
LIDIA SACHARNY
GINA SACKMAN
MATT SHLIAN
JOSHUA SMITH
NELSON SMITH
CLINTON SNIDER
LESLIE SOBEL
NELE ZIRNİTE
Disconnection from nature spotlighted

ART REVIEW

Gallery Project once again succeeds with hot-button themes

BY ROGER GREEN
Ann Arbor News Bureau

Continuing its admirable practice of addressing hot-button issues with inventive art, Gallery Project is showing "Nature Reperceived," a group show of works by 28 local, regional and national artists. On view through Oct. 23, the exhibit may be the most imaginative the gallery has mounted to date.

Working in traditional and more compellingly experimental media, the participating artists celebrate nature's glories, and focus attention on mankind's interferences. "Most of us live in an environment shaped more by meta narratives and global economics than by nature," text reminds visitors. Works in the exhibit address that disconnect, and its perils.

Adrian Hatfield, for example, superimposes images of birds on wallpaper patterned with botanical forms. The wallpaper disparages nature by reducing its complexity to repeatable, ornamental motifs. Further, because wallpaper prettifies interiors, it effectively excludes, indeed denies, the natural world outside.

Preceding Hatfield's wall-hung works are four freestanding "Graze Persons" by Matt De Genaro. These are potted plants whose vertical stalks, bound with twine, are stick figures evoking the "Sorcerer's Apprentice" sequence in Disney's "Fantasia." According to De Genaro's statement, the anthropomorphized plants coalesce contemporary Process Art, in which the process of work's creation is disclosed, and traditional preoccupation with the human figure.

Like De Genaro, many artists use unconventional materials and techniques. Patricia Olynk's monumentally scaled, black-and-white photographs are electron micrographs, magnifying images of human and animal sensory organs. They're combined with photographic images derived from Japanese gardens designed specifically to heighten sensory awareness.

Matt Shlian's "Strain 2" comprises two columns of folded white paper; simultaneously rising and falling with motorized help. The precision with which the columns' prismatic segments expand and contract is sublime. It imitates how proteins misfold and collapse, causing Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, and some cancers.

Two installations fill the gallery's lower level. Frances Pahl's "The Secret Language of Fireflies" is a sound installation occupying a darkened space. In it, the recorded sounds of crickets and birds combine with flashing lights to evoke a nocturnal campus.

Markedly different in its lightness is "In Honor of Human Protection II: Do You Really Know What's in a Bottle?" by Gina Saekman and Lidia Sacharny. An artistic response to environmental and drink-based toxins, the installation is paradoxically, like devil's bargains, seductive visually.

It comprises a square space whose walls are chains of transparent plastic bottles, all empty, suspended from the ceiling on wires; the twinkling bottles are alluring but may be toxic, by virtue of being non-biodegradable. At the center of the space a pedestal supports a filled, plastic bottle, spotlighted from above. Can visitors trust the bottle's liquid contents?

The most provocative work, by Zackery Denfeld, is a software program titled "A Corporation Is Not a Tree (Yet)." Displayed on a monitor, the program is aimed at identifying and "saving" colors from privatization by corporations.

Besides the above, the exhibit includes many estimable works in traditional styles and media. Noteworthy are Rick Pas' paintings of birds in urban settings and, more especially, Nele Zirnite's poetic engravings, reminiscent of Odilon Redon's proto-Surrealist visions.

But the experimental works are the most exciting, and most appropriate to the exhibit's topical concerns. Score another success for Gallery Project.

Gallery Project is at 215 South Fourth Ave. Hours are noon to 9 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday; noon to 4 p.m. Sunday. For more information, call 734-997-7012 or access www.galleryproject.com.

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