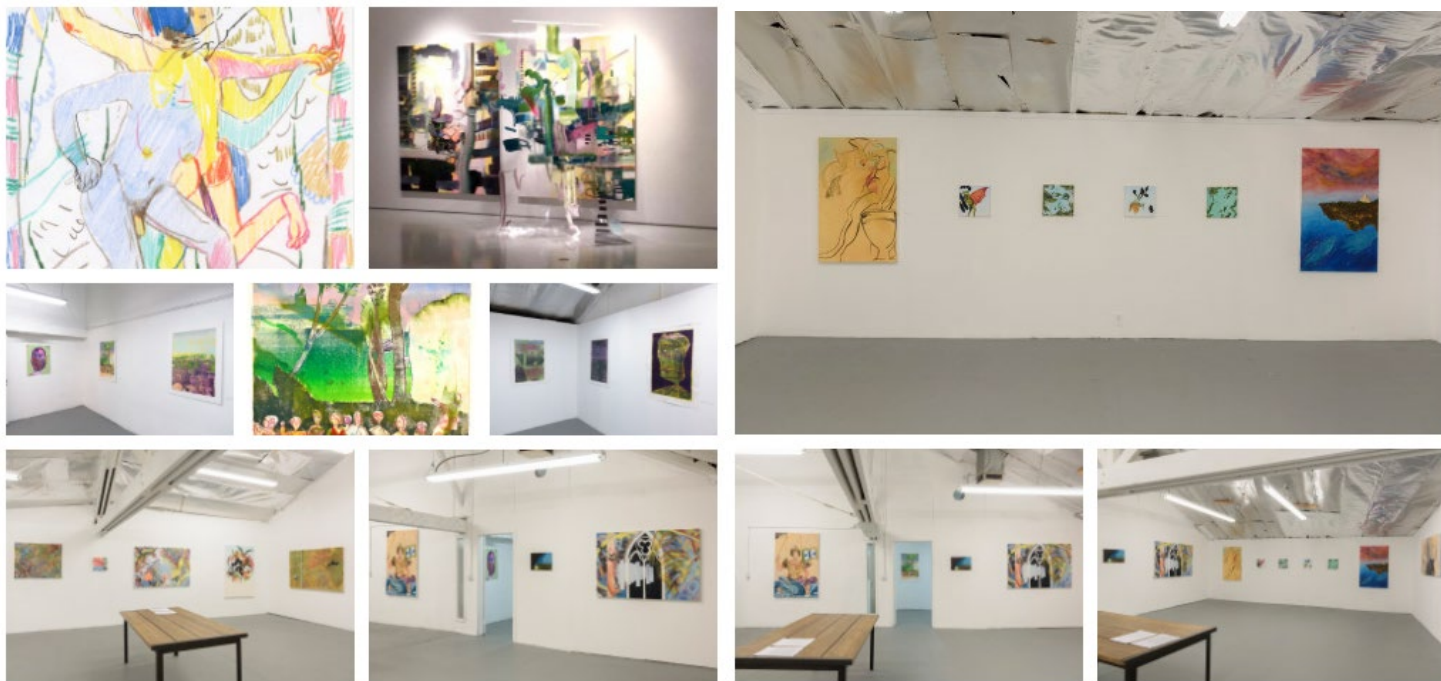


INARTFUL

IMAGES AND WORDS ABOUT ART AND BOOKS AND MAGIC.

14TH MAY 2016



Four solo shows in a month? That's the kind of nutty things artist-run galleries do, and DTLA's [Durden and Ray](#) is no exception.

The bad news is, the month in question is May and you've already missed the first pair of concurrent solo shows: **Susan Lizotte in the main gallery** and **Stephen Benenson in the Project Room**. The good news is, Alan Shaffer took some gorgeous installation shots and I'm posting them here.

The also good news is that the second pair is about to open. **Yvette Gellis and Drea Cofield**, from today (Saturday, May 14, with an opening reception from 5:30-8pm) and on view through May 27th.

From the press release, I have to say this sounds just gorgeous: "[Yvette Gellis](#)' paintings are simultaneously an additive process of reconstructing and reconfiguring her position in the world predicated on memory and perception, and a deconstruction that reiterates and reflects the impermanence, mutable, and inevitable

nature of entropy." Right? Based on the invitation picture, I can't wait to see her new work installed.

I was not familiar with the work [Drea Cofield](#) before, but based on a quick web search and the promise of this part of the press release: "She investigates a lush impermanence and shifting space reminiscent of Bonnard and the Post-Impressionists. A deep sense of magical possibility and secret spaces that hint at vulnerability, desire..." – I'm all in.

As for [the previous show\(s\)](#), I had the pleasure of writing an essay on Susan's work last year for the [Huffington Post](#). You can read it in its entirety here, and view a recent studio visit filmed by Eric Minh Swenson on [YouTube](#) – but this excerpt is still the heart of the matter: "Painter [Susan Lizotte](#) both mines and mimics history to construct a poignant and eccentric allegory for the present day. She marries a haute-naïf aesthetic of thick lines, blocky color, proto-Cubist mannerism,

and collapsed perspective with a visual lexicon of knights errants and dogged explorers, sea monsters and tall ships, architectural ruins and sketchy outlines of uncharted territories. All of which serves to reconstruct an alternative narrative of the New World and certain rather salacious and cynical, yet consistently under-reported, consequences of its “discovery” for the Old World – and how those forces and effects continue to shape the world today.”

But there were also several new works completed even since that studio visit earlier this year, notably that one new large-scale work we discuss at length, in which elements of an unmistakable contemporary lexicon of geometric abstraction, ruled grids, and deliberately awkward negative spaces are introduced directly into the appealing rainbow of grotesqueries and folkloric urgency in her more complex scenarios and maps.

She also showed a suite of small-scale works, with the intimacy and simplicity of studies but with the fully realized narrative and technical resolution of the tableaux. The map paintings work well at this scale (about 12 x 12 inches) but differently than the larger works. Something about a large map placed on a wall implies academics or a war room – whereas something that could be held in the hand seems more like a treasure map, something secret. And don’t worry, there are still PLENTY of dragons.*

The juxtaposition of these works with [Stephen Benenson’s](#) monoprint/drypoint/watercolor works in the project room was really intriguing, given that he too uses a variation of an outsider-style hand, but a much more early 20th-century, intellectual folkloric hand evoking Paul Klee’s eccentric Bauhaus aesthetic, and the geological abstraction and organic surrealism of Jean Dubuffet. Line and color march to the beat of different drummers in Benenson’s figures and landscapes, as do texture and form – and yet, a singular gestalt of proto-modern narrative unites the field.

*By the way, even though the first show is down, Lizotte keeps her studio in the same building and she’s very nice and I’m sure she would be happy to arrange a visit, perhaps while you are there to see the new show...

Durden and Ray, 1950 S. Santa Fe Ave, #207, Los Angeles, CA 90021.

Gallery hours: Saturday and Sunday, 12-4 pm, and by appointment.

Contact susanblizotte@gmail.com for both studio and gallery appointments.