



Untitled by Caroline Niebuhr

SURFACE TREATMENT

With COVID-19 rebounding and slowing gallery openings, we are continuing to keep your art experiences alive by looking back at some memorable shows as well seeking out new exhibits. Today we revisit an exhibition about the IMAS permanent collection: “Dialogue with Art” from the summer of 2013.

Dialogue with Art: The Collectors

The exhibition showcases a variety of works donated by local collectors.

BY NANCY MOYER

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

“The question often comes up,” said Juan Carlos Suarez, Chairman of the IMAS Board of Trustees, “Are we a collecting museum? Our 8,000-piece collection answers that question.” The exhibition, “Dialogue with Art”, currently on display in the Clark and the Cardenas Galleries, offers a glimpse of those 8,000 pieces. IMAS not only considers its collection to be an important part of the institution, but its donors have also become part of the institutional history. “Beyond the quality of the piece, it’s the relationship the donor had with the museum,” added Suarez. “Dialogue with Art” shows that relationship and that generosity. Without it we would not be able to achieve our mission.” The selection demonstrates the museum’s intentions by offering a window into the museum’s acquisitions; it also offers a thoroughly enjoyable viewing experience.

“Dialogue with Art” is intended to create a visual dialogue about the past, the present, and a possible future. Selections of acquisitions spanning forty-six years are featured in the Cardenas Gallery. There are collections from Glen Bruner Jr., McKee Caton, the Clark family, David Farb, Ann W. Harithas, Ann Moore, and Arturo Torres. Their collecting habits provide insight into the personalities of these donors as well artworks that emit the artists’ visions. Glen Bruner Jr. found relevance in the powerful graphic imagery of early 1970s prints; “USA 66” by Robert Indiana, an acclaimed American artist, is a case in point. By contrast, Ann Moore often gravitated to positive and lighthearted imagery such as past

Edinburg resident Caroline Niebuhr's "Untitled" color pencil drawing.

Selections from works that were donated more recently are displayed in the large Clark Gallery. "Here we want to deal with the present," explained Gilberto Gomez, Assistant Curator, "and so we have pieces from the past eight years. Hopefully when people see this it will spark an interest for future donors, and also bring artists and collectors to our museum. In this section we wanted to focus on the different media in the fine arts, like painting, printmaking, ceramics, sculpture, and assemblage; overall, the collection reflects the historical taste of the museum."

These more recent acquisitions feature works from IMAS exhibits and from several local artists. Frank Manuella's "Mona Lisa" is an update on the iconic masterpiece, replacing the familiar figure with computer parts. Cande Aquilar's "Stars in My Yellow Dream" reflects the artist's cross-cultural daily perceptions, and Leila Hernandez combines the past and present with her technologically mixed work, "Stella Naciente". Pieces that allow revisiting favorite IMAS exhibitions include Ron English's "Digital Graphic Novel," an electronic comic book lampooning the American fast food industry. This piece offers more than artistic significance; it takes us beyond traditional art media and extends the museum's interest into electronic media. Colin Christian's futuristic faces also move in a forward direction with a distinctly space-age interpretation of the human figure.

"Dialogue with Art" is a time capsule of aesthetic pleasures that is intended to inspire and embolden a new generation of artists and collectors. Most of the collection consist of works that were chosen to be lived with and loved; now they are being shared with us.

Since the exiting of Joseph Bravo in May, IMAS has been without a Director, and according to Suarez, a search for a new Director is underway. "It's a careful and deliberate effort," He assured us.

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