



The 45 by Dennis Grover

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: "Hidalgo Watercolor Society"
Where: Kika de la Garza Fine Arts Center, 921 E 12th Street, Mission
When: January 11 – February 1, 2020
Hours: 10am to 6pm Tuesday to Friday, 10am-2pm Saturday
Contact: (956) 583-2787
Free and open to the public

The Annual Watercolor Show

The watercolorists have been busy and easily filled the UVAL gallery with new and interesting works.

BY NANCY MOYER

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

When Looking at watercolors, there is a tendency to focus on the watercolorist's drawing skills and control of the medium, and perhaps compare those qualities from work to work. In the new "Hidalgo Watercolor Society" exhibition on display at the Kika De La Garza Fine Arts Center, all of the works demonstrate an assurance of both skill sets. The Hidalgo Watercolor Society consists of both local members as well as a large percentage of Winter Texans who bring images from their home states with them, giving the show a wide range of scenic experiences. Both groups also tend to travel and capture scenes from sometimes unexpected and exotic places that are ultimately turned into watercolor art. Every year the Society focuses on this annual exhibition, sharing bits of life experiences and offering diverse geographic identities. The exhibition showcases highly professional and beautifully executed works in this unforgiving medium.

The artist's selection of image, or aspect, is crucial as to whether the watercolor will be limited to sharing only its subject, or whether it will also share something more. Ordinary subjects can seem matter of fact or spectacular depending on their relationship with the artist, and the artist's ability to communicate in the given medium. Dee Tunseth's "Glorious" depicts morning glories catching patches of sunlight filtered through their foliage, falls into this experiential category. "Glorious" achieves a unique character with Tunseth's use of resists that suggest unexpected flecks and slashes of crisp morning light welcoming the blue petals into a new day. Doris Rodrigues "Silence at Night" offers an objective view of midwestern barns and adjacent structures, but lets us feel the bitter cold of their existence after a snowfall. Her horizontal composition with a palette of white, grey, neutralized blue, and patches of yellow-brown is chillingly expressive; all activity has stopped. The view chosen by Betty Vermeer for her "Boardwalk" offers poignant reflection by letting us perceive that we are walking upon its planks leading to the sea; the dilapidated fence of an earlier and more relevant time is experiencing collapse, and the boardwalk stops abruptly against the blue water.

Works that move away from the traditional approach of literal representation include Chris Leonard's expressionistic visions of pigs and cats which take us into a realm of both suppressed and released emotional states, and Dennis Grover, who started out with a very traditional subject in "The 45" and then allowed it multiple interpretations. Leonard touches on behavior patterns through whimsy with his "Sheet Cake City #3/The Old One-Two. Rather than containing the color, the line drawing of the cats plays counterpoint to strokes of pale red watercolor. Delicately charming, it feels like dancing on paper. Grover's "The 45", is a sharply realistic painting with visual weight and could easily fall into a traditional framework, except for the black background shadow that visually severs part of the gun from the holster in which it rests. But it doesn't rest; It is shown upside down from its normal carriage, which suggest several gun related interpretations as well as political grist. Parts appear to be breaking apart and floating off into the black void. With its disconnection, this is a forceful image.

The Hidalgo Watercolor Society members have installed an excellent exhibition this year, certainly one worth visiting. As the spring art show season gears up in this part of the Valley, make this show your starting point.

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