



Inside Out-A Window-Door to the Past by Ruth Keitz

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: "View / No View" by Ruth Keitz
Where: Art Forum's D'Arte Centre Gallery, 115 E Jackson Street, Harlingen
When: March 29-April 20, 2019
Hours: 12-5:30pm Tues-Wed-Thurs-Fri, 10am-5:30pm Sat
Contact: (956) 425-4030

Rooms of One's Own

Found objects are seen as representing something else in this witty exhibition of familiar spaces

BY NANCY MOYER

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

Ruth Keitz is a master of shifts from flat space to illusion and actual space with her exhibition, "View / No View", at D'Arte Centre Gallery. She presents witty works that appear to be flat renderings of 3-dimensional spaces, but none are really flat. Found objects mingle with graphite lines and watercolor washes. "View / No View" is all about spaces and rooms; Keitz' former classrooms, views from her studio, views of a room in what was once her sister's home, and spaces and structures from her childhood home all find a place in these works. Most typically, a direct view of a wall with a window/door bounded by a perspective view of its adjacent walls is featured. What makes these images interesting is the use of business envelopes and other found materials that adapt so well that they may be overlooked; window envelopes become doors with windows and cat whiskers become pulls for window shades. Whiskers appear as window shade pulls in "G-115 Classroom". This first work tells us that Keitz is going to play mental perception games with us in these misleadingly simple and direct images. With this triptych she has deconstructed her gaze through the classroom door window –

representing views through the window of the classroom door across the hall, through the window of another classroom door, and through the window of that classroom to the outside. Classroom teachers can probably best relate to this.

Renaissance perspective is also a major player here, along with the Renaissance concept of the painting being the window to the painted image. The envelope window becomes a conveyor of questionable meaning within this concept. With “Outside View In” the envelope becomes a door, and its window becomes a classroom-door window. Although it is shown as an indoor scene, we see the outside of the envelope with its window showing the inside. To mess with our minds further, Keitz twists a familiar philosophical question into “An empty room may have a window, but if no one is in the room, is there a view?” Keitz also leads us into other optical conundrums. Here and elsewhere the linear perspective is often distorted. “It’s not a pretty kind of perspective,” admitted Keitz, “I just distort them in some way so it looks alright, but when you start looking - hey that’s really not going on the way it should.” “Inside Out: A Window/Door to the Past” tears open the envelope, which creates an illogical perspective, allowing the window to become a vision of memory. Other works, while still maintaining the intellectual basis of formal art investigation, incorporate autobiographical remembrances. “1601 Pine Hollow Road: Through a Glary, Blurry Window Triptych: My Mother, My Sister, and Shortie” looks back upon rooms and spaces that shaped the artist and how memory reshapes the past. “28 Harrison Ave: Theo Waiting by L’s Empty Chair” is the most acutely moving of the group. Remembering the rooms of her sister’s home, now silent and empty, she offers two poignant views; in one, a 3-D room holding a remembered presence is constructed within the 2-D window/door frame, and the other offers a flat non-existence of skewed dimensions.

The display is congested, but all of these works deserve a careful gaze. Guideline information is posted for each set. In “View / No View” Keitz has deconstructed her mental perception of memories for us.

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