



Arctic Spring

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: *Boundless & Bold: Shirley M Ingram Art Exhibit*
Where: UVAL, Kika de la Garza Art Center, 921 E. 12th Street, Mission.
When: Through June 4: Hours are Tues-Thurs from 10am to 6pm, Saturday 2-6pm. Or by Appointment
Contact: 956 583-ARTS (2787)

Bold Non-objectivity

With her Master's degree in Art from the University of Denver, Shirley Ingram got off to a strong start, but then abandoned her creative output for a few decades. During that hiatus, she involved herself in teaching, and for the past sixteen years has served as Human Resources Director for STC. Now retired, she's celebrating her return to the creative fold with her new exhibit, *Boundless & Bold* at the Kika de la Garza Art Center featuring paintings done within the past three years. A couple of earlier pieces serve to anchor the new collection to her artistic beginnings.

Boundless & Bold reflects different styles of Ingram's abstract directions. There are hard-edge and soft-edge treatments, mixed media and straight acrylic, plus various stylistic distinctions occurring within that gamut. It appears to be the sudden outpouring of bottled-up expression that after many years suddenly pours forth, respecting no particular order. Ingram reinforced this perception: "I stopped because I had to go to the practical world," she said, "but now I can forget all about that world and do everything that's been in my head and my heart. Life experiences and my thirst bring to fruition ideas tucked away within and not bound by consistent style or trend."

Apart from her impressive hard-edged graduate works that include fiberglass wall sculptures, there are two styles represented within the new collection that seem confident in their manner of expression: the completely hard-edge compositions, which include "Pathways," and several expressionistic paintings. "Boundless and Blue," with areas of color sometimes contained within bold lines and other times oblivious of their linear counterparts, falls into the latter category. Several interesting paintings consist of multiple canvasses. The geometric "Summer" takes on additional interest with the nine-part division. This treatment imposes a tension that might otherwise be lacking.

Trying to understand Ingram's work through her titles proves folly. "Titles don't mean a thing to me," she explained. "It's only because I needed to put something on it. I would never title a work if I had my way." This reflects her non-objective approach to her image; she does not start a work with a special concept in mind. "It's hard to put into words," she mused. "I start thinking, what do I want to do? And it comes from the head and the heart. I just start sketching and putting it together." Although she endorses that method for work throughout this show, there was at least one work with a story. The acrylic, "New Life," symbolizes a grandson being born into her husband Bob's passing. The cluster of B shapes forming the new life reference his name, and in this painting the Bs are both the past and the future.

Overall this exhibit offers a dilemma. The different styles that delight Ingram make it hard for the viewer to grasp her artistic identity. On the other hand, her openness to possibilities allows us to appreciate her boundless search.

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