



SECRET STORIES: AN EXHIBITION OF NEW WORKS BY GIOVANNA CECCHETTI AND SUMRU TEKIN

Closing the gap between the seen and unseen can be considered art's primary purpose. What is perceived as reality is never quite set in stone. This two-woman show of 20 multi-surface drawings and oil paintings seems to possess this idea of connecting the dots of personally and commonly held "truths" with the land of possibility lying beneath them. The two artists' styles are as divergent as their inspiration, though they combine to present West Branch patrons with a dynamic, vividly colorful romp through the parameters of actuality.

West Branch Gallery and
Sculpture Park
17 Towne Farm Lane
Stowe, Vermont

July 11 through August 23



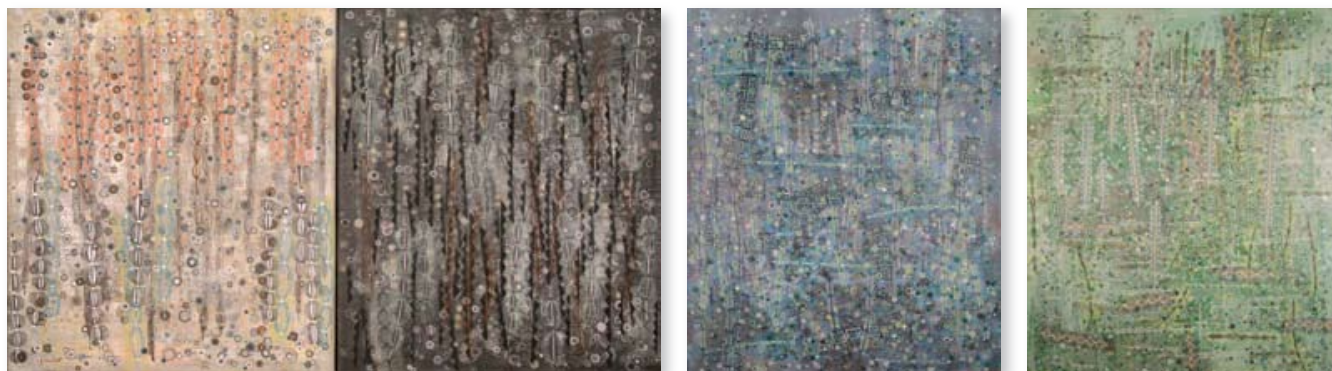
TOP: Sumru Tekin, *The Arrow From Her Eye*, 2009, pencil and ink on paper.
ABOVE: Sumru Tekin, *The Captain Asked for My Mother's Hand (detail)*, pencil and ink on paper.

Sumru Tekin, who was born in Erzurum, Turkey, creates large, multi-image paper drawings that deconstruct issues of history and accepted truth in the context of the Armenian genocide, which was perpetrated by Ottoman authorities between 1915 and 1917. "The current, official narrative offered by the Turkish Republic, created in 1922 to explain the events, is that no genocide was committed; rather, an internal civil conflict resulted in the deaths of the Ottoman Armenian population," Tekin said. "Yet there are other narratives within communities in Turkey that contradict this 'official' voice. The two versions exist side by side, often within the same family, yet each remains impenetrable and immovable."

For several years Tekin focused on multi-plate monotypes with engraving, from which this new direction toward multi-surface drawings, entitled "Fragments,"

emerged. "My formal interests then, as now, were in generating images through layering, transparency and collage, to engage the viewer in constructing (narrative) meaning. This current series continues my interest in using erasure, revision and transparency as elements that can create a visual object as well as a story," she expounded.

Armed with images from early 20th-century Ottoman school primers, altered family photographs and renderings of early modern poetry and Ottoman lyric poems, Tekin layers one "fragment" of a complete story over another. The resulting work has a menacing, ethereal quality; magnificently vague upon first glance, yet dense, culture-rich and thematically complex upon study, the images supersede and blend with others. Thematically linked is her intrigue with humans' "capacity to



ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Giovanna Cecchetti, *Gracias Madre/Gracias Padre*; *Untitled Insect Medicine/Night Jungle*; *Untitled Jungle/Green Cricket Song*, all oil on linen.
 BELOW: Sumru Tekin, *September and October*, 2009, pencil and ink on paper.

forget or erase what is undesirable and replace it with what we want to see.”

Oil painter Giovanna Cecchetti, of Paterson, New Jersey, directs her studies of perception toward nature and alternate dimensions. The Parsons School of Design alumna has made multiple trips into the Peruvian Amazon, where experiments with indigenous plant medicines offered new modes of seeing.

“For the last three years I have been working with a curandero, or traditional Amazonian plant medicine man,” said Cecchetti. “The plants we work with have some very intelligent qualities that teach through our senses —

not just through the senses of sight, sound, touch, taste and smell, but also through the intuitive senses... in the jungle there is this tremendous knowing of everything that is alive — the dirt, the insects, each plant in every stage, all of the animals — and it is like 24-hour surround-sound. So much of the experience is sound that you can’t see, especially at night. So what is happening in these works is the mind’s eye view of what sound can look like.”

Cecchetti believes that aspects of the spiritual and physical worlds combine to form the reality humans commonly observe, although spiritual dimensions and cross-sense recognition is often stifled. These works are densely layered

with color and shape in a way that both isolate the definition of each pattern while seamlessly attributing it to the whole — a metaphor for a stacked reality. “The paintings are so layered that all of the elements begin to fuse into a conglomeration of elements, and this is where my obsession with finding a time/space relationship in the work emerges.”

West Branch has outdone itself in reaching beyond the sculptural focus so often associated with it. With the play on layered realities and the use of color and form to indicate these realities’ inherent divisions, both Tekin and Cecchetti have accomplished the breaching of a vast — and teasing — philosophical quandary.

Clara Rose Thornton





2008, woodcut print.

ANNA HEPLER: INTRICATE UNIVERSE
 August 22 - October 17, 2009
 Thursday, September 3rd:
 Artist Talk: 11:30 am, Reception: 6 - 8 pm

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