

Color blind

A LARGE GROUP SHOW WITH ITS PALETTE DEFINED BY THE TITLE, 'BLACK AND WHITE AND SHADES,' KICKS OFF THE NEW YEAR OF ART AT JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER

By Josef Woodard,
News-Press Correspondent



"Black and White and Shades"

When: through February 25

Where: Bronfman Family Jewish Community Center, 524 Chapala St.

Gallery hours: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Friday

Information: 957-1115, jewisasantabarbara.org



"Triptych Mandala," Cynthia Husted

Cynthia Husted photo

As a whole, things are both as simple as it sounds and broader than expected in the show called "Black and White and Shades," the first art exhibition of the new year at the Jewish Community Center. Black, white and shades of gray need only apply here, and they do, in ways both conventional and otherwise. Limitations can enhance creative solutions and artistic voices, of course, and the lack of color in this large gathering of paintings, drawings, prints, photographs and other media adds up to a refreshing spectral perspective.

Curator Lynn M. Holley, who has put together interesting JCC shows in the past, has enlisted Larry Feinberg, director of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, and L.A. art critic/curator Peter Frank as judges, and culled art from far, wide and locally. Likewise, the range of artistic depth and polish is wide, but all within the boundaries of the stated theme.

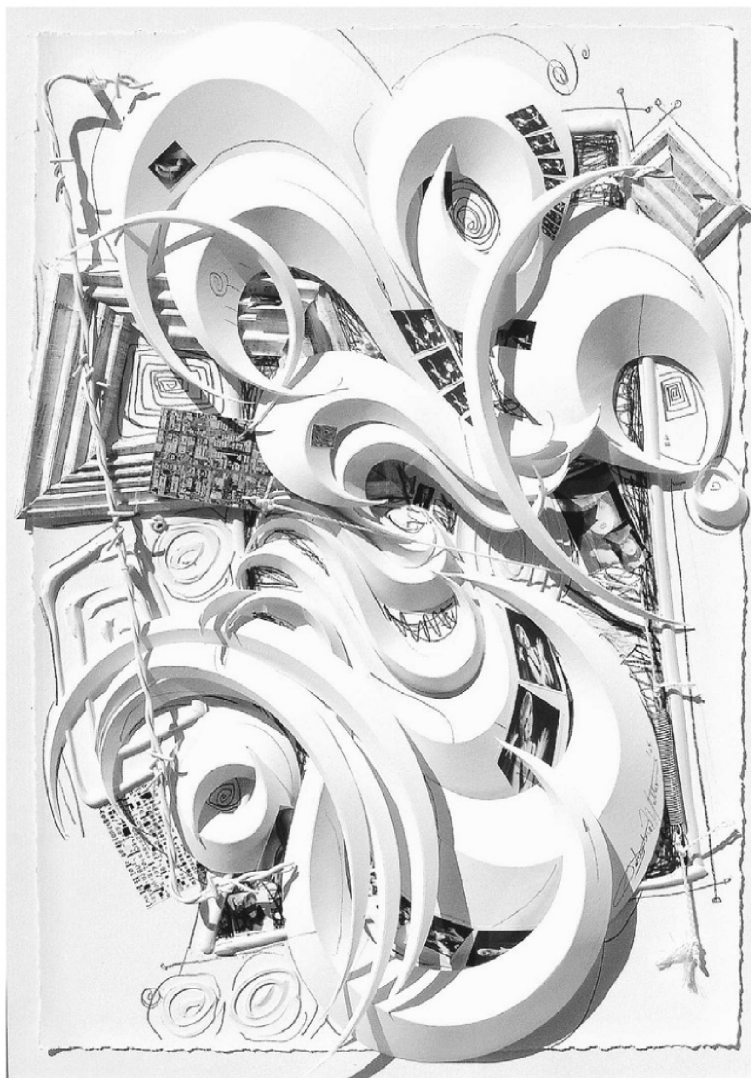
Still and all, this is a happy, expressive show, mostly steering clear of any rigorous or ascetic aesthetics. Even a token all-white piece, Jennifer Goyette's "The Fields," teases and massages the senses with its sensuous, textured paint surface. It's quite the opposite of severe, artworld-contrarian white-on-white voids going back to Russian Kazimir Malevich, nearly a century ago.

Black, white and dimensionality come together in one of the more impressive artists in the lot — L.A.-based Salvatore Matteo, artist to the movie stars (as the press material notes, Robert Redford and Howie Mandel are among his collectors,



"The Fields," Jennifer Goyette

Jennifer Goyette photo



"Stars in Random Orbit," Salvatore Matteo

Salvatore Matteo photo

for what that's worth). Deft and detailed paper sculpture is his expressive forte, and one can't help but be awed by the handwork and visual/spatial balancing act in his "Seeds of Change" series, and his "Stars in Random Orbit" (a first-prize winner in the show). Frank Ghery-esque white arabesques and swirling shape-making lift off the two-dimensional basis of abstract pencil drawings at the base, making for ripe dimensional contrast.

Michele Zuzalek's graphite drawing "Etoile Filante" veers closer to an attitude of figurative earthiness, but keeps pictorial elements — a figure viewed from the rear, odd cloudscaapes — poetically afloat, thrown into a pleasing dizzied context. A different kind of seductive vertigo shows up in her

"Just in Time," with its scruffy, roughed-up white upper portion hovering over a murmur of scrawled data, numbers and letters all a-jumble and patiently struggling to find meaning to deliver.

One of the obvious, inherently black and white mediums is photography, and there are many examples woven throughout the show. Two that jump out of the pleasant pack push the medium to eye-catching extremes. Dimitris Tzanis' "Into the White" is a dreamily soft-focused image, into which a wave of mysterious white haze comes, with reality brushing up against unreality. By contrast, Frances Reighley's "Trees at Alamada" burrows into the very visceral and rugged reality of trees and their gnarled root systems, rendered almost sculptural.



Linda Lee Dolwig photo

"Tenements of Mishuga," Linda Lee Dolwig

At a time when, in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo tragedy, cartooning has taken a higher profile in the public consciousness, the pen and ink scenes of Linda Lee Dolwig's "Tenements of Mishuga" takes on a heightened intrigue. But whereas conventional cartooning tends to deliver a focused and pointed message, the 18 images in her composite piece appear in tangled, mash-up fashion, as if in an inebriated celebratory state bumping into the ramparts of chaotic intersections of humanity.

Despite the function and institutional basis of the JCC, different

religious and spiritual proclivities are accounted for in this show, as well. Anthony Galvan's "La Virgen" offers up a new variation on the theme of Virgin of Guadalupe imagery, this one in the form of a silver-on-black tribute to the deity. From the Buddhist perspective, Cynthia Husted's "Triptych Mandala" is a fiber and felt piece, contemplative in a cushiony way, and with a small astronaut in the mix, for comic/cosmic relief.

Other pieces of note in the show include Megan Leal's "Imperial Space," a glossy-to-the-visual-touch, acrylic-on-wood piece with

a strange negative space-like effect, as if we're peering into an alternate reality. Jana Julian's linocut "A Place Once Called Home" suggests a cabin in the woods, but in the detached, mythicizing visual language of woodcut-related imagery; and Carol Dixon's "Circular Reasoning" is a geo-abstract collage with post-Machine Cubist undertones.

Centered on one wall in the main gallery space, a borrowed conference room, Amber Goldhammer's



Amber Goldhammer photo

"Winter," Amber Goldhammer

"Winter" easily seizes our attention amidst the muchness of the show's ample offerings. In this large yet admirably controlled, evocatively minimalist image, sparse and silhouetted black tree impressions are seen upright and upside-down (presumably in the form of inverse reflections in water). Set against a pure white backdrop, with no other landscape bearings, it makes

the most of its poetically inclined expressive limitations.

"Winter," after all is said and done and seen, may be worthy of the award for art best illustrating the premise and potential of the show's title, celebrating art about black and white, only. No extra frills or shades are attached, nor necessary, to deliver its artistic message and wintry essence.



Frances Reighley photo

"Trees at Alamada," Frances Reighley

January 23, 2015 - January 29, 2015



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