

Collages piece together moments of our lives

By DIANE HEILENMAN
Courier-Journal Critic

Swanson Cralle East Market

Eugenia Woolman describes her collages in the title of her exhibition: "Particular Moments: Recent Collage Works Projected From a Life."

The moments are meetings, it seems, little personal collisions with people, from an African woman mesmerized by her cultural collision with a Western world bedsheet in "Agbetor's Grandmother" to a young thespian enmeshed in his collision with Shakespeare's prose in "To Be or Not to Be."

There are real stories behind the moments made into tangible memory through snippets of tissue, cloth and paper augmented with paint. Sometimes the moments are simple memories of the globe-trotting artist, now 86, who spent her life traveling in Europe, Africa and Asia with her late husband, Myron Woolman, an educational consultant.

The artist recently left Asia to live near family in Evansville, Ind. She is a native of New York City and attended art school at the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia and at George Washington University in Washington. Her first exhibition was in New York in 1947. Her first U.S. show in many years was last winter at the New Harmony (Ind.) Gallery of Contemporary Art.

Woolman has used collages as her medium almost exclusively for 20

OPENINGS

TODAY: Jewish Community Center, Patio Gallery, 3600 Dutchmans Lane, Louisville, 8:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday; 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Sunday. Opening today, "Crystal Kinetic Art," works by Jeff Johnson; ends Sept. 25. Reception: 2-4 p.m. today.

MONDAY: University of Evansville (Ind.), Krannert Gallery, 1800 Lincoln Ave., 8 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Saturday; noon-5 p.m. Sunday. Opening Monday, "Fall Faculty Exhibition"; ends Sept. 14.

All submissions for Openings must be received by mail and must include street address, opening and closing dates of the exhibition and days and hours of gallery operation. The information must be received by the Monday prior to publication. Capsule information can change after our submission deadline; we suggest you call to confirm. Send to Openings, The Courier-Journal, 525 W. Broadway, P.O. Box 740031, Louisville, Ky. 40201-7431.

REVIEWS

years. She has a fine hand at it, producing images with a sumptuous, painterly feel. What underlies the serene skill is a firm sense of dynamic abstraction, which gives Woolman's "particular moments" an impact past the documentary.

The exhibition, at 638 E. Market St., Louisville, continues through Sept. 2. Hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday.

Speed Art Museum

There is one appealing fact about photographer/artist David Levinthal, whose tiresomely fascinating exhibition of dollhouse dramas is on view at the Speed Art Museum through Oct. 31. That fact is found - with other facts about his Jewish heritage, his high school hang-ups and his now almost legendary teamwork with Garry Trudeau when they were Yale University students - in a \$ 65 book by the same name as the exhibition, "Modern Romance."

The fact that so appeals is the admission of an early ambition to photograph the sunrise over the ocean on his native West Coast. He went, camera in hand, at the appropriate moment and - nothing happened. Levinthal confronted the cliché that the sun always rises and sets at the ocean.

And so, when you wander through the Speed exhibition of dozens of tiny photos, all foggy and out-of-focus, grainy and resistant to comprehension, it helps to remember that a moment of bafflement is basic to the artist.

Levinthal has made his mark setting up Never-never-land stages populated by miniature toy figures. Like his watershed first project with Trudeau, in which they produced a book, "Hitler Moves East," a fictionalized battle of Stalingrad, this "Modern Romance" series from 1983 to 1985 is also not much more than the kind of stuff most kids do. At one level, it's about playing out fantasies, pretending at life and at enjoying being the authority in a pretend world created simply to be destroyed at the maker's whim.

At another level, of course, "Modern Romance" is about the essential artifice of the photograph, a medium we all sometimes like to think never lies. Levinthal is considered a pioneer of the "constructed photo."

His photographs introduce us to the comic-book novella, part Mickey Spillane tough city and part soft-porn titillation. But it is eventually all too blurry and the content too hard to pick out, and we rebel against being the manipulated voyeur.

"Modern Romance" continues

through Oct. 31 at the Speed, 2035 S. Third St., Louisville. Hours are 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, until 8 p.m. Thursday; 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday; and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday.

Erin Devine Gallery

"Summer Show III" is a mix of sensibilities from the unrealized notion of fiber artist Sharon Loy of Louisville to use photo transfers of human limbs as graphic designs repeated on quilts to the subtle, satisfying textural drawings of James Doiron of Louisville.

What stands out is a series of demanding photographs by Stephen Chalmers of Louisville, who deals with the dark side of growing up.

His portraits of children, all apparently composed rather than candid, include a disturbing image of a nude child being ushered through the shadowy doorway of a tumble-down house by an ambiguous adult hand on the child's shoulder. Other images also address the experiences of children, such as one that shows a small truculent boy in full cowboy suit with toy six-shooters pulled for the camera, his mock victim.

Chalmers writes in his essay that he is compelled to reflect the real and often unhappy reality of children abused, neglected and killed. Although most family pictures invariably show children as happy, Chalmers notes that many "are killed by guns, die from abuse (and are) . . . plagued with the fear of abandonment, depression, neglect, loss and rejection by peers."

Not a happy theme, but a compelling one in an otherwise soft show.

The exhibition continues through Sept. 2 at the gallery, 620 E. Market St., Louisville. Hours are 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

Zephyr Gallery

Small and large, stone and wood, Michael Ratterman's sculptures are about the timeless pursuit of the abstracted figure. It is a serene art the Louisville sculptor produces, one suited to quiet gardens and meditative nooks.

"I'm really interested in the purity of the form and the lines," he said. He often works with a model, asking the model to do slow movement so he can "see" and transcribe that movement into works where form and line have a physical, rather than abstract, relationship to each other.

Motion is the leading force in "The Rattle & Roll," a spiral of limestone. Ratterman said he likes to work with

stone found in Bedford, Ind., quarries, just for the regionality it lends. But he also likes the monotone of the gray-brown stone, which doesn't distract the eye from form like a more dramatic, streaked marble or spotted alabaster might.

Gallery mate Janis Kirstein continues to develop painting in an idiosyncratic manner, using large rectangles of paper, painting on them and combining them in large grids. The art becomes "a bridging" of known to unknown.

Kirstein works intuitively and develops the final image from the process of painting, drawing, scrubbing, etching and brushing various colors and layers in place.

Most of the works display childlike drawings of houses, windows and doors, symbols of vision and movement. They relate directly, she suspects, to her childhood passion for playing spy in the dusky evenings, when looking through windows and going past doors opened her imagination to an explosion of possible experiences.

Kirstein writes that her paintings are "a lifelong metaphor for the game of searching for reality's meaning."

The exhibitions continue through Sept. 2 at the gallery, 610 E. Market St., Louisville. Hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday.

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