

Zigi Ben-Haim

Made in the USA

Fine Arts Gallery

Lake Placid Center for the Arts



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July 17th, 2015 – August 16th, 2015



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Made in the USA is a cross section of works: paintings, sculptures and drawings, including a new series of paintings on burlap, created in 2015. "The opposing forces in our living environment feed my work," says Ben-Haim. "It's like a second nature to my art. It manifests itself through the materials, colors, shapes, dimensions, etc, that I choose to use. Burlap is a warm and soft material, resembling a natural world as opposed to my works on aluminum, cold, hard and industrial presence. A tension of opposites, like a pull on a rubber band and most of us live somewhere in the middle."

Most of the works, especially the paintings on aluminum address the current state of environment affairs, which concerns humanity's place in the universe. The large-scale, multi-layered works present nature as simultaneously fragmented and grand. Using aluminum panels, wire mesh, paint and collage, Ben-Haim has created a visual world that threatens chaos, yet, upon close examination, reveals itself to be as ordered as nature itself. Elements both disparate and familiar, such as leaves, bricks, ants, and water, derive from his own recurring iconography, which addresses issues of habitat loss, global warming, and the delicate balance between culture and the environment.

"The essence of my work lies in balancing the tension between survival and extinction. The abstract forms I utilize are drawn from both the natural and industrial/cultural world. Materialized in my work, each world adopts the other; they collide and coincide with each other to form a third 'being-existence' that reflects the idea of survival and projects the energy of life," says Ben-Haim.

Ben-Haim's multi-layered cultural background inspired his art through the years to come. His works in general and in particular this exhibition exist somewhere between abstraction and symbolism. The choice of imagery and materials constructing the work accumulate to and draw from his own visual language and iconography. Images and symbols that influenced Ben-Haim throughout his life have become part of his vocabulary, "writing" a progressive diary on aluminum panels that constantly unveils itself. The imagery in the works creates a dialogue and harmony in a new environment. Building layer by layer, or image by image, his multi-cultural background inspires his constant search for identity. An identity Ben-Haim considers as a product of adaptation and the interconnectivity of cultures. Like "footprints" of culture and nature as seen through his multi-cultural experience.



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"I was five years old when my family and I fled my birthplace of Baghdad, Iraq, and immigrated to Israel via Iran. It was in Tel-Aviv where I spent my adolescence and graduated from the Institute of Fine Arts in 1970. Following a solo exhibition as a young artist, the America Israel Cultural Foundation awarded me a scholarship to study abroad. I arrived in California and enrolled in California College of Art in Oakland and San Francisco State University. After graduating and receiving my MFA, I set off for the East Coast and have been living and working in SoHo, New York City since 1975. My multi-layered cultural background and experience inspires my art through the years."

Zigi Ben-Haim (b. 1945 in Baghdad, Iraq) lives and works in New York City. He has won numerous distinguished awards including Pollack Krasner Foundation grant, 2013 ; 1998; 1990; The Emily Harvey Foundation, Fellowship to Venice, Italy, 2007; DAAD Fellowship to Berlin, Germany, 2004; National Endowment for the Arts, 1985; America-Israel Cultural Foundation, 1966-70. Ben-Haim has exhibited extensively in USA, Israel and internationally and his works are in the collections of the Guggenheim Museum, Brooklyn Museum, the Israel Museum, Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv Museum of Art among others. In 2005, NASA commissioned Ben-Haim to create a work in tribute to the space shuttle, "Columbia." In 2013, NASA commissioned an additional monumental work by him in honor of the robotic rover, "Curiosity," exploring Mars. Zigi has been selected for the National Art and Culture, Legacy Program, 2015-16 Art Cart, Saving the Legacy, a project of the research center of Arts and Culture.



About the LPCA

Nestled in an Olympic village, The Lake Placid Center for the Arts is a year-round treasure to residents and visitors of the Adirondacks and is the premier art and cultural hub of the region. Orchestrating quality programming, performances, rotating art exhibitions, and education experiences to residences and visitors alike, the LPCA provides an ensemble of offerings in music, theatre and dance, and supports local, regional and national artists in its Fine Arts Gallery. At the heart of this hub is hands-on learning experiences for children exploring their creativity and adults finding new passions. As a leading organization, the LPCA collaborates with other Adirondack non-profit partners to build, support and cultivate the arts community. Inspiring excellence in the arts for generations, the LPCA continues to thrive today at its unique and captivating Lake Placid campus.