

Emerging artists get first look in Summit

ART

First Look 2004: Emerging Artists Series

Where: New Jersey Center for the Visual Arts, in its temporary gallery space at 343 Maple St., Summit

When: Through Nov. 7, Noon-4 p.m. Mondays-Friday

How much: Free. Call (908)

273-9121 or visit www.njvca.org

BY DAN ROSENKRANTZ

PHOTOGRAPH BY JIM COOPER

This week the New Jersey Center for the Visual Arts opened its new, temporary gallery in the Kinsley Hall on Maple Street in Summit, a freshly remodeled former cigar shop with white walls and a black, polypropylene floor — just like a commercial gallery.

NJCVCA's permanent lease on Elm Street is undergoing extensive renovation through the rest of the winter season, and while repairs/changes will continue there during the reconstruction work, it would be an impossible space for hosting exhibitions.

So we have "First Look 2004: Emerging Artists Series," a show of three artists who, in the light of gallery real-estate that if it's abandoned, have not yet received the attention they deserve.

Eric Jago Lee, Alyse Gottesman and Lily Prince all work in abstract forms, and together they create a colorful drawing with just a few lines of Conceptual underpinnings — a detail that is minimized to give the new gallery an immediate profile in Summit.

NJCVCA is actually doing a double opening with the advanced private gallery in Summit, the Dome, which is just around the corner at 417 Springfield Ave. The Dome Gallery is showing "Jordan Eagles Continuum," a show of paintings done with resin and chronoliths on Plexiglas, mixed with animal blood. "Eagles" won an award at the NJCVCA last year.

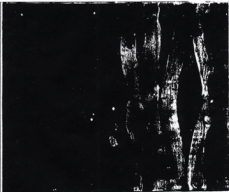
The most intense color in "First Look" is provided by Gottesman, who makes esoteric paintings that she often portrays with a color cloth until they shine like slabs of marble. Esoteric (the term is from the Greek) is one of the oldest extant painting techniques, a way of suspending pigments in hot wax.

The second oil, the wax is crystal transparent, colored just a little toward the yellow. Laid down in thin layers, you can work up a very deep, saturated hue in minutes, and that is what Gottesman does.

Most of her work is small — the largest painting here is 36 by 22 inches — but even the least among them has real presence. "Unstable" is a personal favorite, a series of blue-green stripes with a dark orange edge cut off by a deeply liturgical black corner.

All the pieces suggest surfaces of great age, but several are also inclined to reveal lower layers of evanescence that are in reconstructing colors. "Inside Out" appears to have been painted, then covered with light blue paint, and then polished in the lines above the light blue color, leaving thinly etched sky blue lines across the darkening surface.

Prince is showing "drawings" that are far more evanescent — they are done with candle smoke on paper, leaving a smudgy sfumato that she titles, in series, "Cumulus." They remind you of Lee Bontecú's drawings with an acetylene torch, but Prince is not into handmade stencils or clever games with fixative. Covered with her own fingerprints, the "Cumulus" series is more like Prince's version of Vilja



Alyse Gottesman's "Unstable," part of the New Jersey Center for the Visual Arts' Emerging Artists Series.

Orlov's paintings of the ocean surface or distant galaxies. These works present an infinitely receding subject in just a few microns of paper surface.

Although all three artists are mixed together on the walls of the Maple Street gallery, you can read them on a kind of entropy scale, going from Gottesman, as the artist with the most specific context of her materials, through Prince's paintings with smoke, to Eric Jago Lee.

Lee makes his marks in several ways, but most of them involve chance. Lee pours or drips his

acrylics on unprimed canvas, mdf, tuffex and silk, leaving lumpy puddles of flat color or great white stains that bleed through the fabric. He also draws color thickly with a brush, to make a multicolored, stippled that stands up in relief from the surface, or he can render patterns in thin sheets of plastic paint.

It is almost as if Lee is displaying different techniques for working in acrylics.

Each picture could be a piece of methodology covered in discrete sections with different sample stitches, only here each section demonstrates another way to thin

or thicken acrylics.

When Lee's surface is a dyed fabric, you can't help but be reminded of the Pattern Painters of the '60s, or the brief "We fell for painting on continuing printed fabrics collapsed together." "Thou Thine," which is painted on red satin, has a nearly blue lagoon swirling across its surface and oddly organic puddles of paint, hovering above the picture plane. You think of stained glass, or diaphanous screens, floating in a space of pure color.

There is a lot of absorbible abstraction around today.

SEPTEMBER 13, 2004

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DETAIL
ON LILY
PRINCE
9/19/04

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