

# Kazaan Viveiros at Julie Baker Fine Art

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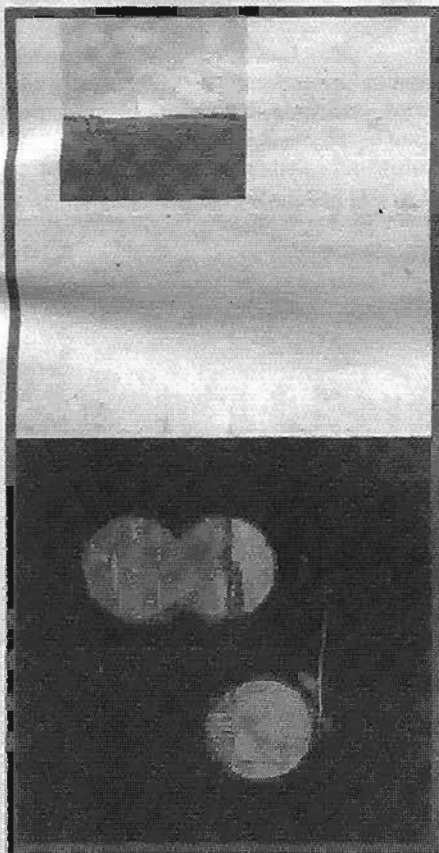
ollow the paintings hung chronologically along the gallery walls and you become aware of many subjects and compositions evolving in one direction.

Early in the chronology, individual canvases and hardwood panels are crowded. In each—enclosed by emphatically demarcated rectangles of varying sizes—many crisp, pithy renderings of both unique and recurring symbols clamor for attention.

*Genesis* is, appropriately enough, the earliest and most symbolically populous painting in the series. The rigid grid of rectangles separate fragments of curvaceous calligraphic flourishes, Leonardo da Vinci-esque studies of hands



Kazaan Viveiros, (above) *Road*, 2003, acrylic on wood panel, 12" x 9"; (below) *Morning*, at Julie Baker Fine Art, Grass Valley.



(Kazaan Viveiros is nothing if not a meticulous draftsman) and fleur-de-lis wall-paper patterns that would not look out of place in a Victorian parlor. Interspersed are numbers, pink lotus flowers and many-colored circles, the latter having special significance that emerges as a theme within the exhibition.

Further on, the linear separations widen in *Composition 2003*. Three-inch gaps expose the off-white gallery wall between a hundred small, 5-by-8-inch rectangles of rice paper. Glued upon these are found bus and train timetables (cut and mixed up, their linear progressions subverted), canceled stamps, fragments of reprinted watercolors of birds and other subjects which suggest travel or

perhaps daydream escapes to faraway and exotic locales. There is also an aura of mysterious codes, inaccessible "inside knowledge," hovering about the bits and pieces of handwritten shorthand and yellowed baseball statistics glued to other pieces of rice paper. *Beach* (acrylic on canvas) also features rectangular cells, but arrayed in a more freeform grid. In this composition, the abstract symbols have receded in importance. Some are partially covered with whitewash which forms the background and fills a lot more "blank" space than in previous paintings. This canvas surface is texturally rich; Viveiros used palette knife and brushes of varying widths to load on the pea-green background. So thick was the paint that it dribbled from the brush and coursed down in narrow white streams that violate the border and contrast with a solid ochre rectangle. Floating in the upper right-hand corner of the painting, a much smaller rectangle encloses more pale white, in

swatches amid heavy layers of dark green and blue. A closer glance is rewarded as these apparently abstract patterns are resolved into—sure enough—a beach before a wind-tossed, whitecapped sea.

*Atlantis* is a departure from Viveiros's generally private symbology. In the center of the canvas is a strong, plain view of a black ship's bow with its name, *Atlantis*, in brightly contrasting white letters. The seas are rough, the red-painted bottom of the bow emerges from the water while an anchor has just dropped with a splash. This scene is two-feet square and from it rise twin columns of numbers, reminiscent of the depth measurements painted on the sides of hulls. Next to the ship panel hover three-inch pale blue portraits of the World Trade Center, undamaged.

Coming full circle, physically and thematically, Viveiros's two most recent landscapes are hung side-by-side near *Genesis*. Reflecting Viveiros's recent move to Charlottesville, North Carolina, *Road* and *Shade* are by far, at 9-by-12-inches each, the smallest works in the show. And yet these scenes from the rural South share a freewheeling expansiveness that wasn't apparent

amid *Genesis*'s busy rectangles. In *Road*, a sandy, rutted track meanders down the center of the painting, framed by pale yellow grass and dark green trees beyond. Two dark woodlots frame a field in *Shade*. Demarcations have less to do with line, which in these two paintings is soft and gently curving, and depend more on contrasting color for differentiating subjects. The broad monochromatic fields, which backgrounded and dominated earlier paintings are here, confined to smooth, narrow rectangles forming horizontal "pedestals." Each pedestal contains, perfectly centered and symmetrically spaced, three solid circles the color of the trees in both the landscapes above.

—Brian Elsasser

Kazaan Viveiros: *Passages* closed March 22 at Julie Baker Fine Art, Grass Valley.

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Clockwise from top: Barbara Allie, *Doppelgänger II* (woman in red dress), 2002, oil on canvas, 60" x 48" (Photo: Jim Dewrance.); Patricia Sherwood, *Americana*, 2002, oil on canvas, 48" x 60" (Photo: Amber Shields.); Jerry Ross Barrish, *Yellow Ballet* (yellow ballerina), 2002, assemblage, 78" x 12" x 12" (Photo: Mel Schockner.); Sa Ra Lee, *Dream*, 1999, oil on linen, 45" x 57" (Photo: Amber Shields.), at d.p. Fong Galleries, San Jose.

