

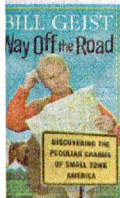
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Bill Geist finds the amazing in the ordinary in Books & authors inside

Elements of style

Globetrotting artist a natural at finding creative inspiration

BY ROY PROCTOR
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Kazaaan Viveiros was the class artist specializing in pencil drawings of rock stars at Midlothian High School.

That was two decades ago. Today, with a solid string of solo shows stretching from San Francisco to New York to Rome to her credit, she's becoming a star in her own right.

Viveiros — pronounce her Portuguese-flavored name Kah-ZAHN vivei-ros — is attuned to our environmentally conscious age. “I would say I’m becoming a green artist, but not in the sense that I’m using recycled materials to create my art,” she said recently at the Page Bond Gallery after driving here from her home in Charlottesville.

life, and a lot of this work is about appreciating nature and nurturing it. I’m not trying to be a green activist or preach to the viewer at all. I’m just pointing out what nature has provided.”

Surrounding Viveiros as she talked were the 29 paintings and three digital prints in her first Richmond solo show.

All but four were created since the beginning of last year.

In the precision of their drawing, the lightness of their palette and the careful balance of their abstract and representational elements, Viveiros’ paintings sparkle with an Italian Renaissance sense of order and clarity.

Nothing is jumbled. The effect is both elegant and eloquent.

Viveiros is creating, in the words of a critic reviewing her show earlier this year in Savannah, Ga., “a series of miniature paintings scattered across the surface of each composition.”

Viveiros pointed to the show’s largest painting, “Iceberg,” which is 26 inches tall and 80 inches wide.

Here, in a precisely rendered painting-within-a-painting, Viveiros presents



ALEXA WELCH EDLUND/TIMES-DISPATCH

IF YOU GO

WHAT: “Beyond Nature” (new paintings by Kazaaan Viveiros) at Page Bond Gallery, 1625 W. Main St.

WHEN: Through May 29

INFO: (804) 359-3633 or www.pagebondgallery.com

SEE VIVEIROS, BACK PAGE ►

Kazaaan Viveiros’ painting “Chesapeake” is part of her exhibit through May 29 at the Page Bond Gallery.

Viveiros

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an iceberg, but no globally warmed chunks are crashing into the sea.

Instead, the white paint of the glacier dribbles down into the ocean before it, and the darker paint of the ocean dribbles down into the abstract plane at the bottom of the canvas.

"In 'Iceberg,' I was definitely thinking about melting glaciers, and the dripping paint was one way to express that," she said.

Those drips and dribbles, which appear in many Viveiros paintings, serve other functions, too.

"In general," Viveiros said, "they acknowledge the process of painting. Through the drips, I'm drawing attention to the fact that what I'm really doing is creating a flat painting."

"Iceberg" contains many of the elements in a visual vocabulary that, taken together and combined in various ways, mark Viveiros as an artist with a style she can truly call her own.

This vocabulary includes:

- Examples of flora and fauna, especially endangered species, often rendered in textbook detail.

- Representational paintings within abstract contexts.

"My art has always been a meeting place between abstraction and realism, between the material, physical world and the imaginative and spiritual world" Viveiros said.

- Circles. "They're about the cycles of nature, the seasons, unity and completion.

- Numbers. "Like days on a calendar, they're about counting time and recognizing the passing of time."

- Dogs. "I just love dogs, but I don't have one because my landlord won't allow it."

Viveiros didn't arrive at her signature style overnight.

She majored in religious studies and studio art, with an emphasis on printmaking, at the University of Virginia, and then earned a masters in fine arts in printmaking at the San Francisco Art Institute.

There her art took a major turn. "I had to have an etching press after I graduated in San Francisco to continue to make prints, but I didn't have one and I didn't have the \$1,000 to buy one."

So, on the basis of one painting class at U.Va., she turned to painting on Masonite panels in acrylic, which, along with pencil, is her principal medium today.

"I was working in my bedroom, which was very small, and there wasn't much ventilation to take care of oil fumes," she said. "But there was another reason for turning to acrylics. If you do something you don't like, you can paint over it quickly because it dries so fast.

"I think you can see the influence of printmaking in these paintings. In printmaking, as in drawing, precision of line is very important. I was trained to use an etching needle or a pencil, not a big brush.

"I had to learn a new medium to do what I'm doing now."