

connecticut art scene

DEDICATED TO COVERING THE VISUAL ARTS COMMUNITY IN CONNECTICUT.

sunday, october 07, 2007

Something beautiful, quite disturbing, or both

City Gallery

993 State Street, New Haven (203)782-CITY

Nest

Closed

In her artist's statement for **Nest**, the City Gallery's show for September, **Meg Bloom** captured the feeling of the exhibition itself when she wrote that she hoped "to challenge the viewer to think about what is being revealed: whether something is part of a natural process or product of violation; whether it is something beautiful, quite disturbing or both." The exhibition was a welcome challenge for audiences, as it was at once creepy, comforting, and aesthetically pleasing. Each of the artists—**Meg Bloom, Howard el-Yasin, Laura Moriarty, Colleen Tully**, and curator **Liz Pagano**—took an individualized approach to the idea of the Nest or the act of nesting.

Howard el-Yasin's sculptures conveyed the mixture of feelings that arise when inspecting bird's nests: fascination, admiration, slight disgust and a fear of little things with minds. This was added to by the way they were mounted in the gallery. The cage-like "Verboten Grid" perched above the rest of the exhibit, and one worried that whatever had been in it had been watching one before it flew away. "DNA Strands," made of human hair, plastic, filament, and wire, was fastened to a wall in a bug-like manner that would be frightening if seen out of context.

Meg Bloom's sculptures had a similar, albeit more comforting feeling—one could sympathize with their creatures instead of running away as one might from those that inhabited **el-Yasin's** nests.

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Bloom's "Empty Nest," hung in the exhibit window, made out of wire, mesh, paper, fabric, wax and pigment. Fragments were scattered on the floor under it as though residue from the emergence. "Bridal Nest" was slightly more creepy—white and a little slimy-looking inside. This viewer wondered, especially after considering the title, what exactly was supposed to be going on within.

Colleen Tully took a more personal approach to the topic. She digitally manipulated personal images such as maps, childhood Polaroids, and cemetery diagrams--blowing them up to expose the dots per inch. By printing and layering them on film and printmaking paper she created, (as she wrote in her artist's statement,) "multi-layered, nested patterns of what has become a physical version of my memories and thoughts."

Laura Moriarity, too, used a type of human by-product in her work, taking fragments of



deconstructed paintings and using them to make small whorls of color, piecing them together to create natural-seeming environments—gorgeous variations on what might be found growing deep in the woods. (The photo to the right is of Moriarity's "Swarm.")

Liz Pagano, who thinks of a nest as "a place of refuge," used glass, plexiglass, and a combination of painting, printing, and carving to create intricate layered paintings. Mounted in white boxes, they were fascinating—this viewer wanted to stare into them more and more deeply, metaphorically nesting inside.

Congratulations to **Pagano** for both creating such fine work and for curating such a strange and wonderful exhibition.

posted by tanya angell allen at 4:33 pm 

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