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Westmount Art Scene

Driven to abstraction: Sokolowski, Provost and Guez

BY HEATHER BLACK

A splotch, a square, a pasted penny! Imaginative play is at the heart of abstract art. But each artist's interpretation is unique, as three Westmount exhibits reveal.

Dominik Sokolowski at Galerie D'Este

Sokolowski combines paint with pasted personal objects – newspaper from his native Poland, a paint chip or clothes peg. “Novembre 13” is a mix of rhythmic sweeps of black, gray and red paint with transparent glazes against a white background. The effect is a musical dance between positive and negative space.

Known for his colourful block-style painting, this Quebec artist creates highly textural works. In “Février 48”, corrugated cardboard and blue-jean denim dominate the composition to create a dense and complex work. The schematic “Février 2” is, on the other hand, quiet and serene.

Resembling a floor plan, the textural grid serves as a template for other works – blue and black blocks in one, or green and yellow in another. The work of a designer, these paintings are variations on a theme, or – like music – improvisations. Sokolowski exhibits at Galerie D'Este from April 18 to May 3.

Jean-François Provost at Galerie de Bellefeuille

Rhythm and repetition also dominate Provost's elegant abstract compositions. A talented colourist, Provost adds a splash of yellow, orange or red to a restrained palette of tans, grays and black. The solid black background of “Plénitude du vide 62” dramatizes the central white and gray motif.

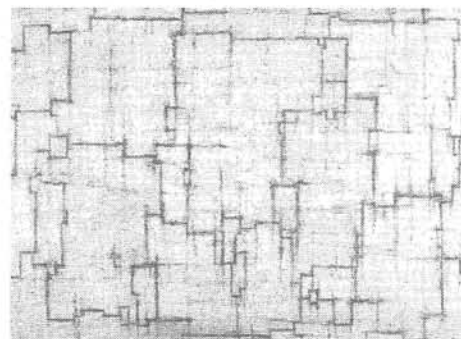
For this artist, less is decidedly more. A quiet paint drip or red squiggle enhances the emotive quality of the paintings. Seemingly spontaneous, the flower-like dabs against a nest brown of “Plénitude du vide, acte 2-3” tease the imagination.

A later variation “Acte 2-10” is exuberant yet restrained, with fine lines and smooth yellows and greens.

A Quebec participant in the 2007 Florence Biennale, Provost exhibits from April 23 to May 4 at Galerie de Bellefeuille.

Nathalie Guez at Victoria Hall

For this Westmounter, a chair is abstract sculpture. An architect, Guez plays with positive and negative space in a three-dimensional form. Her work is minimal-



Dominik Sokolowski “Février 2”

ist, yet complex, combining elegance with wit.

In the “Afro-chaises” series, each of the six black dining room chairs is unique. Decorations—a bone or a chair leg with three anklets—reflect tribal masks and humour. But her chairs also exude a sense of humanity.

“Myrium”, a lounge chair with a large “O” side cushion, a tribute to her mother, suggests comfort and love. Another, the overstuffed red “Asia” also combines the symbolic with function. Guez's chairs are on exhibit until April 21 at Victoria Hall.

In these exhibits, the artists' sense of play prevails. But it is experimentation that confronts and teases the viewer. Challenging existing perceptions of beauty and design, this art is a reminder to look again and find another way.

Colourfully Yours

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on Greene Ave, AREVCO. I love their solutions for bookshelf and kitchen cabinet lighting. Your room will come alive with illumination on top of a wall unit to bounce light off the ceiling. Cooks will love to see the veggies they are chopping more easily with some thin tube lighting hiding under the top cabinets and illuminating the work surface. After all one does not want to have finger bits left in the sauce! Please ask Greg or Robert to show you the new tiny LED strip lights, or the European dimmable Linestra tubes in 1/3, 1/2 or full meter sizes.

Finally, I must ask you all to please visit my friendly sources mentioned and give me a report, as I'd like to dialogue with all of you out there. I must get out of this chair, and slip into a dry martini!

Hugs, your Greta Von Schmedlapp.

Keep those comments coming to
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