

Emotional Intensity Links Disparate Pieces

By Eric Ernst

The current exhibits at both Karin Sanders Fine Art in Sag Harbor and the Ferregut Tower Gallery in Southampton very succinctly put me in mind of Paul Cezanne's statement that "a work of art that did not begin with emotion is not art."

Karin Sanders is featuring both a group show of gallery painters as well as strikingly evocative figurative sculptures by Emil Alzamora, and while the contrast in materials and approaches creates an interesting visual juxtaposition, the works' atmosphere of emotional intensity serves to tie the disparate pieces in the exhibit together in a rather surprising manner.

Reflecting Jean-Baptiste-Simeon Chardin's observation that "one makes use of pigments, but one paints with one's feelings," the show gains in impact from its broad expressions of emotion, veering at times from bucolic and peaceful to anxious and angst ridden.

This is particularly true of Mr. Alzamora's works, which offer physical manifestations of the human form that are memorable for their psychologically confrontational blend of classicism and emotional expressiveness. Mixing a distortion and exaggeration of form along with an intense attentiveness to anatomical detail, the works represent a dynamically surreal approach to sculptural figuration transformed into writhing and twisted manifestations of the human condition.

In their traditional framework, the impact of classical sculptors such as

PERSPECTIVES

Michelangelo and Rodin can be seen in Mr. Alzamora's work, although his use of these principles of classicism in a modernist context draws inevitable comparisons to Salvador Dali as well.

The analogy is notably appropriate in sculptures such as "Afterlife Afterthought" (gypsum, 2005) and "Masochist" (gypsum, 2004) both of which resemble the type of twisted figuration found in Dali's "Premonition of Civil War" (1936) and "Ghost of Vermeer of Delft, which can be used as a Table" (1934).

In a similar vein, the summer group show of gallery artists at Karin Sanders presents a display of entertainingly atmospheric paintings, meant to evoke the differing tones and rhythms of summer. While dramatically more understated and subtle in ambiance than Mr. Alzamora's works, there are nevertheless aspects of psychological distance to the paintings that impart a deceptively dreamlike sensibility.

In Marjorie White's "The Neighbors Next Door" (acrylic on canvas, 2006), for example, the use of a cold blue palette and silhouette-like figurative imagery conjures a narrative that is simultaneously surreal and cinematic. The work gains greater impact from the artist's adoption of an air of curious anticipation through her use of asymmetrical structure, which in turn emphasizes the dominance of negative compositional space.



Frank Wimberley's "Bay Still-Life" is on view at the Ferregut Tower Gallery in Southampton.

Cecile Brunswick, on the other hand, uses a more overall approach to compositional structure and creates an atmosphere of gentle reverie through a lack of detail that conveys a sense of viewing the images through a thick summer haze, as in "Pastel Houses, Tangiers" (oil on canvas, 2002).

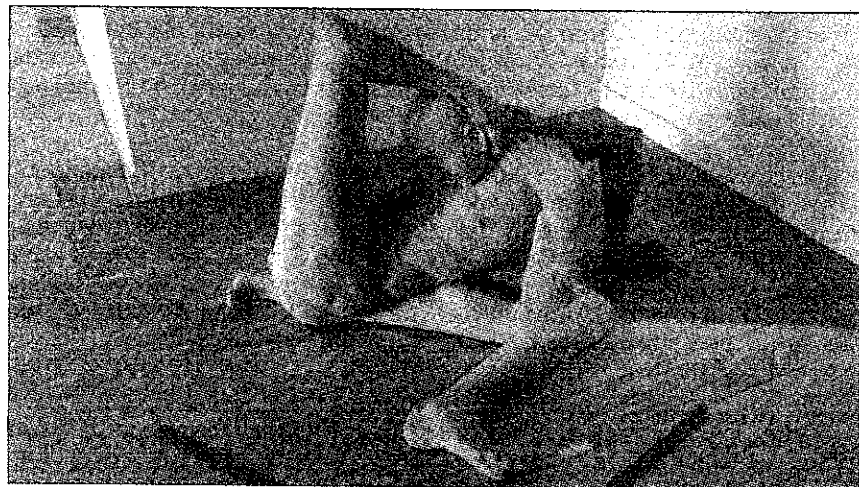
Also featured in the summer group show at Karin Sanders are Eric Demarchelier, Angela Beloian, Aja Apa-Soura, and Day Bowman. The exhibit runs through August 9.

Also offering works that spring from a powerful oasis of emotion and tension is the exhibition of recent paintings by Frank Wimberley at the Ferregut Tower Gallery in Southampton, "Melodic Impasto." Eschewing the looser compositional structures of his previous exhibit at this space, in these works the artist obliterates any planar distinctions, forcing all the action to occur either on the surface of the work or just beneath it.

Eliciting a profound ambiance of tension that seems to pulsate throughout the canvases, the artist has layered in the jazz rhythms and tonality of his previous works, although here he seems to be searching for emotional beauty tinged by an uncertain anxiety.

This is notably apparent in works like "Azure Suggestion" and "Ochre Drawing" (both acrylic on canvas, 2006), which are dramatically symphonic yet also delicately elegiac. As a result, the paintings are concurrently unreserved and cryptic, thereby embodying the philosophy of the abstract expressionists as reflected in Jackson Pollock's statement that "I want to express my feelings, not illustrate them."

The exhibition of Frank Wimberley's recent works continues at the Ferregut Tower Gallery in Southampton through August 7.



Emil Alzamora's "Masochist" is on view at Karin Sanders Fine Art in Sag Harbor.