

## the arts

### Klaus Kertess Curates Fireplace Project Second Annual Hamptons Show

Joan Baum



"Stages" by Jake Patterson, 2008, Oil on Pegboard, 28 x 40 inches

**East Hampton** - Gallery owner Edsel Williams finally got Klaus Kertess, whose books and articles could constitute an exhibit of their own, to curate a show. "I begged for two years," he joked. So how did he get him? "I'm easy," the soft-spoken and modest Kertess replies with a laugh. A well-known authority on contemporary art, Kertess, in collaboration with Williams, assembled 11 artists - most of them friends, all of them with a connection to the East End, many, full-time Hamptons residents - with a view to presenting "a range of artists" and a show that would fill out each wall in the former Talmage garage as a unit of design. And so, a vibrant piece by Billy Sullivan - "Jane" (based on an old photo of one of Andy Warhol's stars) - shares space with a variety of abstracts, some as delicate and subtly hued as Sullivan is bold and pop art representational. How clever of Kertess to place near the wild effusion of hair in "Jane" Robert Harms' "Untitled" oil on canvas, a joyously colorful tangle of loops and accent marks.

'Range' includes not just style, medium, and subject matter, but age and standing as well. In exhibiting Jake Patterson, a 2008 graduate of Bridgehampton



High School on his way in the fall to the School of Visual Arts, Kertess and Williams show support for the idea that it's never too early to champion an emerging artist. "Stages," expressionistic oil-on-pegboard, thickly painted take on a self-portrait, and "Dedication," where Patterson has posed his basketball coach in a reflective pose against globs of bold color, evince the young man's fine sense of design.

Mary Heilmann, of course, comes with a long career of having solo exhibits in galleries all over the world and being in permanent collections of major museums. "Rompe Cabeza Dos," an arrangement of colorfully painted jigsaw pieces that suggest they once formed a whole, shows her signature playfulness. Each piece is angled in such a way that the white wall becomes part of the overall hot-color design. The sections, some dripping slightly with acrylic, others showing faint brushwork, surprise with punch-through holes - the medium is indeed the message. "Narrow Lane #3," an oil on loan from The Parrish Art Museum, a more traditional piece, plays with juxtaposed colors: four by three loosely delineated squares in different colors sit on a muted pea-green background of faint drip marks and under-painting. Are the similarly colored squares really the same or does the design produce an effect of different hues?



"Jane 5.20.08" by Billy Sullivan, 2008, Oil on Linen, 30 x 20 inches

An unintended but manifest unifying element in the exhibit is the unusual color palette of many of the participating artists, among them Cynthia Knott, whose oil and encaustic misty landscape, "Divided Light," may be, arguably, her most subtle recent work. Luminous and smooth, moody and compelling, its low horizon line, barely seen, moves the eye across the canvas from dark rose-gray to deep olive, both sides yielding to center light captured by clouds and water spray. Not far away Joe Zucker shows his own preference for a deep olive-gray tone in his labor-intensive, deceptively simple "Yawl," a small two-part construct executed here in acrylic and cardboard, the poured satiny dark gray-green neatly set off by the cardboard outline of the boat, slyly inflected with a trace of orange.



Certainly, Darius Yektai's provocative "The Giant Between Us II," with its unexpected mix of pigment, marker, canvas and panel contains some of the most unusual color - and texture combinations in the show. A 6' x 6' semi-abstract in brown, ochre, maroon, flesh-tone wood of a man (his figure a cut-out), a woman painted onto the wood, except for a cut-out leg, and a giant androgynous-looking presence clasping both their hands is suggestive of a disturbing narrative (the man is turned away). On the other hand, it's doubtful that Tony just intended to make a political statement with "Marcus Garvey 2," an intriguing use of oil (lime greens and yellows predominating) on Xerox and canvas.

Startling color arrangement is also evident in Judy Hudson's "All Night" acrylic and collage on canvas, a remarkable composition of several overlapping



"The Giant Between Us II" by Darius Yektai, 2008, Oil and Marker on Canvas on Panel, 72 x 72 inches

layers, each one seemingly distinct in color, style and manner of applying paint.

Ironically, the minimally colored works in Fireplace's front wood room hardly prepare the viewer for the full-palette diversity further in, but perhaps this contrast was what Kertess had in mind by hanging James Nares' huge oil on linen extended green spiral, "Delete All Gaps," scrolled with a mop, and Michael Tetherow's two "Untitled" paint on paper abstracts, marvelously delicate with their wispy black thread lines and strategic coagulations, perfectly composed on white space.

As this Second Annual Hamptons round-up implies, a judicious grouping of emerging and established artists can nicely serve as either introduction or renewed acquaintance.

- The Annual Hamptons Show will remain on view through June 16. The Fireplace Project is at 851 Springs Fireplace Road, East Hampton.

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