

Rita Blitt Art Dances in Space

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Laguna Beach is privileged to see the works of an accomplished artist who is new to the community. Rita Blitt comes from Kansas and exhibits her art in museums and galleries across the country and internationally.

Blitt brings a fresh body of work in an abbreviated retrospective of her sculpture, painting and drawings, entitles "The Passionate Gesture," at the Marion Meyer Contemporary Art Gallery, 354 North Pacific Coast Hwy. through March 15.

Graceful drawings, with a minimum of marks, reveal her passion for lines dancing through space and the rhythms they project. Deft and quick recurring curvilinear swirls, frozen motions that tell of Blitt's use of line, shape and space and a strong desire to get to the essence of mark making —the drawn mark, the painted stroke, and the sculpted form.

Two features pervade her art: doodles and her unusual method of creating using two hands simultaneously, with eyes closed. One day she realized that the many doodles she made and discarded held within them the DNA of her soul, the source of her creative expression.

Picking up a conte crayon or a brush in her left and right hands, like a musical conductor, Blitt begins composing her visual symphony. The lines crescendo and decrescendo, carving out space and shape on a white paper or canvas. Lines may have similarities to a doodle, but they reflect the sophistication and elegance of a very fine drawing.

Of course, once a drawing becomes a painting or a sculpture, other artistic factors come into play. In her acrylic paintings, Blitt works with color, building an intense thicket of linear stalks. Using direct colors, rather than mixing, the motivation is the rhythms her body and the strokes create. At times, the paint is applied straight up and down, and at other times, she continues the dancing line, in a more random and spontaneous direction.

Blitt's sculptures are fabrications of stainless steel, bronze, aluminum or wood, small table size forms or 60 feet in height, standing erect on the floor, on a shelf, or hung from the wall. Blitt choreographs strips of steel that wend in, out, and around, forming wide and bouncy biomorphic figures. At times, ribbons of steel almost collide and come very close together, while at other times, their distance forms broad open spaces. Metal lines are continuous or broken, energetic or serene, as they are in her original conte drawings. Her wooden sculptures placed on the wall, are more solid and flat, but they too undulate in graceful circuitry.

Unlike her drawing or painting, sculptural forms made from obdurate materials can never be shaped intuitively. But, somehow, Blitt transforms a small spontaneous, two-dimensional drawing to a massive solid form that exists in three-dimensional space. The results are lyrical, a fluidity of material as if Blitt magically bent it with her two bare hands.

Because of the musical and choreographic nature of her art, Blitt frequently creates alongside dancers and musicians.