

ART

Experience Jolts of Color, Expression

Limestone featuring art by Carl Plansky and sculptures by Stefanie Rocknak

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CONTRIBUTING WRITER



sion.

The bold and lusciously painted landscapes, still lifes and portraits of East Meredith, N.Y., painter Carl Plansky celebrate paint in all its glory....unctuous blobs squeezed from tubes, feathery strokes dragged color through color and gestural sweeps that hint at an underlying freneticism.

More than a dozen of Plansky's recent paintings remain on view at the Fayetteville gallery through Friday.

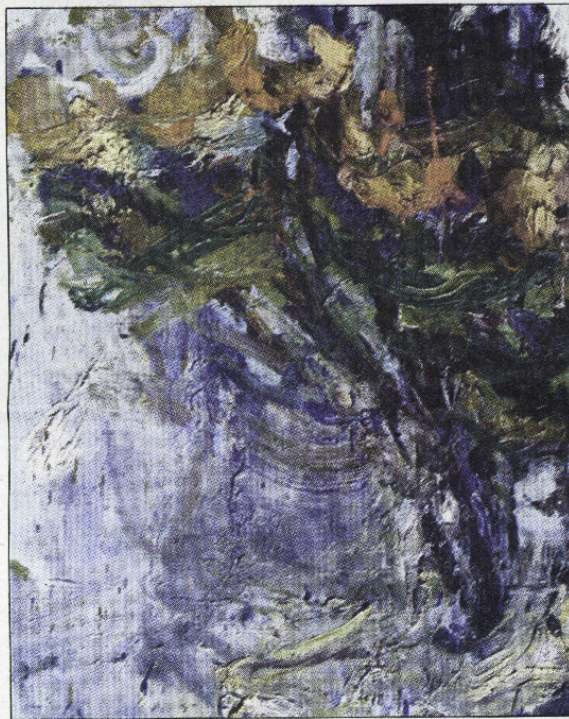
Also on view are the technically stunning woodcarvings by Oneonta sculpture Stefanie Rocknak; but for me, this show was all about the paintings.

Gallery organizers tell me Plansky worked in France as a studio assistant for the late second-generation American Abstract Expressionist painter, Joan Mitchell, and her influence is apparent in his work.

Plansky's style is much more physical than Mitchell's, more urgent in execution and tumultuous in tone and he uses a lot more paint than his predecessor. A painting by Plansky jumps off the wall and says "look at me."

At the heart of these paintings are Plansky's thoughtful ruminations on color, form and light. Some of the pieces seem

Step inside the Limestone Art and Framing Gallery and expect a high-octane jolt of color and expres-



CARL PLANSKY shows more than a dozen paintings at the Limestone Art and Framing Gallery. This oil on linen painting titled "Cyprus Revisited," measures 48 inches by 36 inches.

lit from within or backlit, ramping up the color intensity.

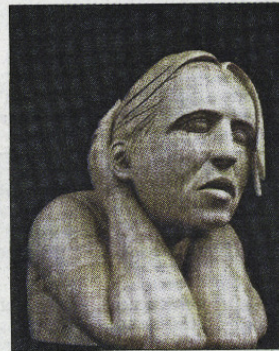
In others, he plays with space tilting the picture plane ("Cypress Revisited"), or placing the viewer in an unusual vantage point ("On Further Consideration").

Looking at "Cypress," "Liverpool" and "Fanfare," you can feel the artist's presence as he moves the paint around the canvas with a brush, squeezes a dollop of red

from the tube, or drags a finger through a creamy swathe of color.

He uses orange and red the way Camille Corot and Eugene Boudin used the colors — strategically placed accents designed to balance the composition or to draw our eyes to a specific spot within the painting. He is direct in how he handles the paint and the viewer. Plansky is in our faces, but with the best of intentions.

Less complex are Rock-



SCULPTOR STEFANIE ROCKNAK carved "Ghastly Nights, (inspired by Shakespeare's Sonnet 27)," from curly maple. The piece is slightly larger than life-size.

nak's exquisitely carved wooden sculptures, which range in size from heroic ("The King") to diminutive ("A Mistaken Life" and "Old Man"). Rocknak, an assistant professor of philosophy at Hartwick College, employs fine woods such as basswood, limewood and ebony to create figures expressing a variety of emotions.

Rocknak has stated a personal skepticism to conceptual art, so she deliberately distances herself from anything other than the "immediate and obvious," which is ironically, both the strength and the weakness in the work.

By that, I mean she carves beautiful figures reminiscent of medieval Germanic carvings, but I'd like to see something more personal in style, more stylized in approach. Rocknak's figures aren't individual enough in their artistic voice and, as a result, don't

The details

What: "Paintings by Carl Plansky and Sculptures by Stefanie Rocknak."
Where: Limestone Art and Framing Gallery, 207 Brooklea Drive, Fayetteville.
When: Through Friday.
What to expect: Abstract still life and portrait paintings by Plansky and figurative wooden sculptures by Rocknak.
Admission: Free.
Hours: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday.
Info: 632-4445 or www.limestoneart.biz.

linger in the mind's eye the way something truly original can linger.

That's not to dismiss them as trivial. "Old Man," a 10-inch carving in limewood, captures the quiet despondency and physical deterioration of old age. "A Mistaken Life," a 20-inch carving in ebony, (most of which is comprised of a carved ebony pedestal) depicts the onerous disappointment of a life unfulfilled. But there are less effective pieces — "Philosopher" loses its poignancy when placed in front of a gaggle of crudely carved faces and some of the larger heads simply were large heads — albeit well carved.

The pairing of these two accomplished artists is an interesting choice, but the power and expressiveness of Plansky's paintings is what will live on in the mind's eye of this viewer.

Katherine Rushworth, of Cazenovia, is a former director of the Michael C. Rockefeller Arts Center (State University College at Fredonia) and of the Central New York Institute for the Arts in Education.