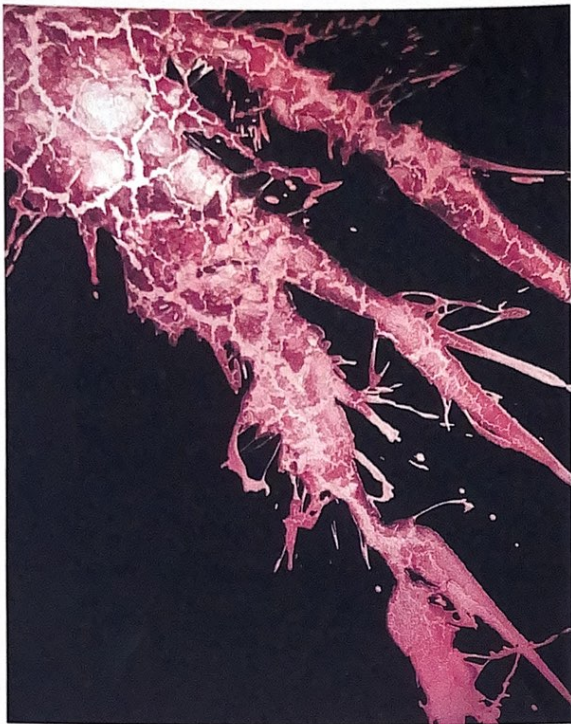


CRITIC'S PICKS: SF BAY AREA

By DeWitt Cheng



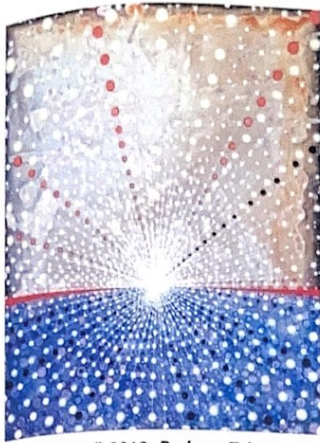
"FKTS21," 2012, **Jordan Eagles**
BLOOD, COPPER PRESERVED ON PLEXIGLAS, UV RESIN, 44" x 36" x 3"
PHOTO: COURTESY MARK WOLFE CONTEMPORARY ART

If artists have been exploring media culture's representations of reality since Pop artists tuned in to ads and comics, the proliferation of imagery in today's mediasphere, including the Internet, and its accessibility via new technology, up the ante considerably. Photographer/videographer **Cassandra C. Jones** scavenges images from the random flow, recontextualizing and organizing them to reveal new forms and meanings. The result is a kind of poetic and impromptu joining of nature and science a bit reminiscent of the work of sculptor Andy Goldsworthy. Details on her upcoming show at Eli Ridgway are sketchy as of this writing, but based on previous work, expect formal rigor and elegant wit. Some examples: mosaics of photographs of lightning arcs arranged so that the electricity forms a sizzling, crackling white wreath or the silhouette of a running squirrel; wallpaper composed of floral or snowflake motifs composed of incrementally rotated cheerleader or flamingo photos; stop-motion animations made from still photos of cantering horses, flying birds, and the setting sun by unknowing collaborators, namely (in Jones' words), "friends, family, colleagues, acquaintances, strangers, stock photography agencies, photo exchanges, thrift stores, private collection\$, want ads, eBay, and the public domain archives of the US Army, NOAA and NASA." As Jones observes: "If you find enough photos you can recreate life with them." From April 21 to May 19 at Eli Ridgway Gallery.

"BOLD," 2011
Cassandra C. Jones
ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, 11" x 14"
PHOTO: COURTESY ELI RIDGWAY GALLERY

"Haemoscuro," a neologism for "dark blood," is a fitting title for **Jordan Eagles'** new show of abstract assemblage paintings, his second at Mark Wolfe Contemporary. Since the late 1990s, his work has employed pig and cattle blood ("expired mammal" in the artist's words), which the New York artist procures fresh from slaughterhouses. He then applies the blood with painterly bravura to clear and white Plexiglas sheets and swaths of absorbent cheesecloth (resembling bandages), sometimes adding other substances—metal, glass and old dried blood and other organic materials—for textural effects. He then seals the heavy, sandwiched, door-sized "slides," sometimes backed with orange-gold copper, sometimes backlit, with clear ultraviolet-resistant resin. Eagles' use of blood as an art medium repels some viewers, but the beautiful textures and effects (bubbles, blobs, spider web cracking), achievable only with paint that clots and congeals, and darkens under sunlight, fascinate others; blood's inherent aura of sacrality and sacrifice is no doubt deeply implanted in ancient parts of our brains, and still enthalls. Eagles: "Using death to express life holds a lot of interest for me. This was once a cow, now it's a cow in [a] Tupperware [container], now it's a cow on Plexiglas. There's something transformative and regenerative about it. Something transcendent." "Haemoscuro" runs from April 5 to May 25 at Mark Wolfe Contemporary Art.





"MINUS RED," 2012, Barbara Takenaga
ACRYLIC ON WOOD PANEL, 24" X 20"
PHOTO: COURTESY GREGORY LIND GALLERY

Partisans of textile decoration, biology, botany astronomy, Op Art and visionary art—comprising a surprisingly wide-ranging demographic—find common ground in the exquisitely rendered, visually stunning, and thematically rich paintings of **Barbara Takenaga**, who returns to Gregory Lind Gallery for a fifth solo show. Formerly a printmaker, the painter employs the systematic, even obsessive, approach that is required in certain printing processes for creating her simple, geometric subject matter—spheres by the thousands, in general, of various colors (some done in iridescent metallic interference paints), radiating out in strings or tentacles:

excited, animated subatomic particles in cosmological mandalas. Spiral nebulae and soap bubbles; mathematical progressions and plant/animal growth; endless metamorphosis and the less comforting astronomical reality of Big Bang and Big Crunch are other interpretations of these paintings, fractal ball pits for metaphysically inclined grownups. One critic, Carol Diehl, likened Takenaga's recent work to Van Gogh's *Starry Night*, updated for the digital age. Another, Nancy Princenthal, discerns, in the appearance of horizon lines in the new works, and thus spatial division, references to the artist's native Nebraska, "limitless, unmarked expanses... of matter-of-fact infinitude," and no vacuum, but a plenum (or completely filled space) charged with "a kind of electrifying, animist spirituality." From May 3 to June 16 at Gregory Lind Gallery.

Artforum, the art magazine published in New York City (after a childhood in San Francisco and adolescence in Los Angeles), is accorded ecclesiastical status by many art worlders, despite its history in the '60s and '70s as the de-facto Ministry of Formalism, a purist doctrine now fallen into disrepute: an undocline, almost, in Orwell-speak.

Francesca Pastine's sculptural interventions with copies of the magazine for the past four years, then, have a certain sly humor. Notes Pastine: "They were familiar fixtures in my friends' homes, nobody wanted to throw them away. I was intrigued by their square format, particularly when the bloated art market was reflected in their one-inch thickness... Starting with the covers, I cut, bend, manipulate, pull, and dig my way through them, revealing a visceral topography of art



trends... My X-acto blade mimics a pencil, subtracting rather than adding... Through physically intervening with these familiar icons of the art establishment, I suffuse the inanimate with emotional power, creating a palpable complexity of form and information." Pastine's intricately cut assemblages resemble, variously, quilts, lava flows, tree fungi, clouds, and kids' pop-up books; some of them, labeled "unsolicited collaborations," name names—of famous, envied cover artists. From May 2 to May 30 at Eleanor Harwood Gallery.

"ARTFORUM 39, UNSOLICITED COLLABORATION WITH GUY DE COINTET," 2012
Francesca Pastine
ARTFORUM MAGAZINE, PLEXIGLAS, MIRROR, AND WOOD, 46" X 105" X 15"
PHOTO: ELEANOR HARWOOD GALLERY

DRAWING/PAINING
PHOTOGRAPHY/MIXED MEDIA

San Francisco Studio School

CERTIFICATE PROGRAM
WORKSHOPS/CLASSES
SEMINARS

SUMMER & FALL SCHEDULES ARE
NOW AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE
OR CALL FOR INFORMATION

INFO@SFSTUDIOSCHOOL.ORG
WWW.SFSTUDIOSCHOOL.ORG
415 398 4300



The new show of abstract paintings by **Tom Lieber**, his second at Dolby Chadwick Gallery, is titled "Wired," referring not to the twittering electronic group mind, but to the faster pace of life in Los Angeles vis-a-vis Kaua'i, the artist's longtime home. Lieber said in an interview, about island life, "The lines in my paintings are reflections of my walks, and the way things grow here." Accordingly, his sojourn in Southern California has changed his work, too, charging it with new graphic energy. Judging from the preliminary images, the trademark scumbled, brushy mists that used to hover close to the picture plane, parallel to it, have receded into the luminous atmospheric haze, with tangled skeins of brown, burnt sienna, black and gray inhabiting the middle ground, occasionally coalescing into a shape that might be read as a roof or boat's hull—or not. Other works still contain dark soft-edged patches, but they, too, hint at mist and light and enigmatic tumble-down structures, reminiscent of Nathan Oliveira's *Site* monotypes which were inspired by Turner and that other Venice, stately and serene. "Wired" runs from May 3 to June 2 at Dolby Chadwick Gallery.

"Tip 1," 2011, **Tom Lieber**, 60" X 60", OIL ON CANVAS
PHOTO: COURTESY DOLBY CHADWICK GALLERY

"Ascending River," the title of **Younhee Paik's** installation at The San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art, is an aptly mystical description for a work dedicated to the artist's late mother. Paik, a Korean painter who attended art school in San Francisco, and exhibited in the Bay Area for thirty years—she still maintains studio here still—is known for her lyrical wet-in-wet acrylic/oil dreamscapes. Her work is laden with evocative archetypes: fire, rippling water, ships and boats, mythic (standing) fish, bridges, lanterns, furrowed land, forests, galactic clouds, stars and polygonal linear shapes. Featuring suspended, unstretched canvases, bellied like wind-filled sails, her installations are charged spaces symbolizing spiritual quests and mystical states that viewers can physically inhabit. With this piece, Paik adds painted-canvas floors (beneath a Plexiglas layer simulating water or ice) bearing the floor plans of Romanesque cathedrals rendered in white paint (an element in her canvases since 2004), and a lie-down rest station where weary art pilgrims can listen to music through earphones. Paik's ecumenical, even universal mystical vision, deriving from painterly improvisation and intuition, whether expressed on canvas, on aluminum plates, or in installations, is genuine and affecting. "Ascending River" runs from March 3 to May 12 at The San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art.



"ASCENDING RIVER"
(INSTALLATION VIEW AT THE SAN JOSE ICA)
2005-2012, **Younhee Paik**
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, PLEXIGLASS
PHOTO: DAVID PACE, COURTESY OF THE SAN JOSE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART