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New Exhibits at Hotel Indigo and GMOA

Art Notes

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Jiha Moon

Winter Wonderland: **The Gallery@Hotel Indigo's** newest exhibit, "**Wonderland**," features the works of Athens-based artists **Nina Barnes, Michele Chidester, Eleanor Davis** and **Cobra McVey** and Atlanta-based artists **Sean Abrahams, Ann Marie Manker** and **Jiha Moon**. Using a variety of media like painting, drawing, photography and collage-relief, each artist explores personal and fictional narratives with a colorful pop or a psychedelic sensibility. "All the works have stories or places that are fanciful or surreal," says gallery curator Didi Dunphy.

In what might otherwise be a gray winter, "Wonderland" offers an oasis of vibrant, dreamlike landscapes to escape into. "Usually for the January show I like to open with works that are bright and exciting, as January can be dark and quiet," says Dunphy. "This is my third season curating at Indigo, and, over the years, in a way it has been a bit like *Alice in Wonderland*, as artwork appears to me in thrilling and surprising ways."

Moon's layered mixed media collages blend heritage and the present day by juxtaposing traditional Korean imagery like cranes, teapots and ribbons with pop culture references, whereas

McVey's photo collages of trailer interiors reveal otherworldly landscapes through the windows. The stream-of-consciousness drawings of Abrahams resemble intensified Dr. Seuss landscapes with wildly colorful and erratically reoccurring images not unlike those of LSD-induced experiences. Manker's femme fatale portraits from her "Under the Rainbow" series are similarly psychedelic, with their gentle washes of rainbow hues. The exhibit is rounded out with storybook narrative paintings by cartoonist and illustrator Davis, surreal gouaches by Chidester and whimsical collages by Barnes.

Pining for the Fjords: On view in the **GlassCube@Hotel Indigo** is "**Hello Polly! This is Your Nine O'Clock Wake Up Call**," a new sculptural installation by Swedish-born, Madison-based artist **Liselott Johnsson**, who is a trained architect from Columbia University with an MFA from the Art Institute in Boston. In the center of the cube hangs a large chandelier-like structure ornamented with two tiers of small color-field paintings circling a blue parrot perched on a frame centerpiece. Strips of boldly colored, transparent vinyl line the windows in precise columns, creating an environment of hard-edge geometry and multihued lenses for viewers to gaze through.

Although "Hello Polly!" is more modern and less fantastical than the works in "Wonderland," the two installations complement each other through a shared palette of bright colors and whimsy. "Hello Polly!" draws inspiration from the 1969 "Dead Parrot Sketch," one of the most popular routines from *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, in which a disgruntled customer and a shopkeeper argue over whether a newly purchased Norwegian Blue parrot is truly alive or dead. "Liselott's intention in her work is to reconfigure the nature of modernist painting, in a way, by claiming it is not dead," says Dunphy.

An opening reception for "Wonderland" and "Hello Polly!" will be held Thursday, Jan. 9, 6:30–8:30 p.m. The exhibits will be on view through Sunday, Mar. 23.

All Eyes: "**It's Not Polite to Stare**," the **Georgia Museum of Art's** first of many new exhibitions arriving this season, includes three short pieces of video art exploring the themes of seeing versus being seen, privacy in public spaces and societal "rules of looking." In her iconic performance piece **Touch Cinema**, Austrian artist **Valie Export** stood on a sidewalk while wearing a Styrofoam case around her bare chest—like a miniature movie theater—inviting passerby to reach in and touch her beyond the curtain. In contrast to the male-dominated film industry and typical cinematic experiences, which are inherently voyeuristic, Export traded a visual experience for a tactile one in which she was in full control. In **Mrs. Peanut Visits New York**, filmmaker **Charles Atlas** follows performance artist and dancer **Leigh Bowery** as he sashays through the city streets, turning heads with his ensemble inspired by the Planter's Peanut mascot, complete with a full bodysuit, asymmetrical floral dress, top hat and clear heels. **April 2nd** investigates respecting boundaries and personal space in public places as artist **Shelly Silver** quietly follows a series of men around the streets of Paris with her camera.

The exhibition is on display through Thursday, Mar. 20, and will be highlighted during 90 Carlton: Winter, GMOA's quarterly open house, on Friday, Jan. 24 at 7 p.m.

comments