

Lines, danced and drawn : Artist/dancer/filmmaker Rita Blitt gently demonstrates cross-currents in her media

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ART REVIEW

Rita Blitt, 'Passionate Gestures'

When: through April 17

Where: Bronfman Family Jewish Community Center,
524 Chapala St.

Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday,
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Friday

Information: 957-1115, www.sbjf.org

To understand the undercurrents in the deceptively simple art of Rita Blitt, now filtering through the Jewish Community Center, it helps to recognize the willful diversity of her creative focus. She is a painter, sculptor and filmmaker, channeling her interests and energies into media.

And then, not incidentally, there is her central fascination with dance, and by association, music. Suddenly, we get it: this art dances, moving ever so subtly to internalized rhythms.

Many of the works gathered for the current show, called *Passionate Gestures*, involve spare and simple means. In works on paper and paint on canvas, Blitt relies on the simple, carefully realized brushstroke. Calligraphic and spontaneous, but invested with intention, her black marks against white voids radiate peaceful intensity.

In some works, soft color elements speckle the leanness of the black/white dichotomy, whether in stowaway, collage-like fragments affixed to the surface, or in luminous, blossoming orbs of yellow, anchoring the composition. In yet others, the black brushstrokes morph into organ, red and earth tones, finding expressive weight through variations in density and gesture.

■ From the film side of her aesthetic life, the show also includes Blitt's six-minute film *Caught in Paint*, shown at the 2008 Cannes Film Festival. A collaboration with David Parsons, of the Parsons Dance Company, and photographer Lois Greenfield, the film documents a unique project combining Blitt's spontaneous brushstrokes on Mylar, dancers interacting with those painted gestures, and the symbiosis caught in mid-air, via photography. Needless to say, there's more than meets the eye in this show. Barriers are being lovingly thrashed here. A sculpture in the courtyard is essentially a drawing in steel, a twisting and twining form sketched in three-dimensional space from concrete material. It, too, aspires to the quality of dance, no small feat.

Against the exhibition's general backdrop of restrained image-making, a dramatic triptych on one wall is a veritable garden party of optical sensation. Titled, aptly enough, *Summer Bliss*, the triptych is deftly and densely packed with colorful sensations in paint, at once exuberant and heady, rooted in both abstract and floral/landscape art.



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