

THE NEW ECO-FRIENDLY ART



This spring, Translations Gallery is exhibiting work by artists Cassandra Tondro (Santa Monica, California) and Christina Yocca (Eau Claire, Wisconsin). The exhibition is entitled *Ordinary Alchemy* due to both artists' transformations of ordinary materials into art. Examples include the use of Home Depot's wongly mixed "Oops" latex paints in Tondro's acrylic latex paintings and the use of earth materials in Yocca's sculpture. Both artists' work can be called eco-friendly due to their materials. The "Oops" paintings are created with paints that would otherwise be discarded, because they are rejected and often unsellable as house paint, therefore creating waste. Yocca's sculpture is created solely from earth materials such as branches, clay, and fibers, so the artwork can safely return to the earth.

Tondro's approach to her "Oops" paintings consider both our environment and mass-produced waste that increasingly becomes a part of it. The materials she uses also allows her to produce work with a unique color palette. About the "Oops" paints, Tondro says, "Sometimes the selection is insipid, and other times it is wildly extravagant with colors like hot pink, black, and metallic silver. I embrace the challenge of working with colors that have not met with approval, and paints

that would otherwise go to waste."

Tondro's combination of "mis-mixed" colors appear to explode, resulting in forceful tensions that resemble those in nature. For example, the swirls and bursts of paint resemble a cosmic black hole in *Tempest*, in which charcoal, lilac, and ivory combine in electrifying shapes and lines. In *Zenith*, cool blue, ivory, brown, and black mix to appear as water or the sky in turmoil. *Free Fall* gives the appearance that the viewer is looking down on a landscape with a green river surrounded by orange and pink rocky cliffs. The work has energy and the paint appears to have taken on a life of its own. The nature of the shapes and colors results in infinite possibilities for what each person might see when looking at these paintings.

Like Cassandra Tondro, Christina Yocca is also conscious of the environment. Her work varies from free-standing and wall sculpture that is created from organic earth materials to large scale, site-specific, environmental installations. The work that will be on exhibition in *Ordinary Alchemy* focuses on the free-standing and wall sculpture. Although clay is the base, Yocca incorporates earth materials, resulting in a rustic

yet elegant appearance.

The vessels and shield shapes in neutral colors reflect functional primitive art. For example, *Exhale* is a simple white lemon-shaped vessel that is accentuated with branches on its lip that cross over each other at each end. Several tiny fringes hang down from the point at which the branches cross. Some also protrude, sticking straight up. *Winter Landscape*, a wall sculpture that is ivory in color on the top and a chocolate brown on the bottom, looks like a long bone that has been twisted. It hangs on the wall in a slight horizontal diagonal, also making it look like a slide or a slippery winter landscape, thus alluding to the title of the work.

Tondro's paintings joined with Yocca's sculpture will create an environmental and stylistic dynamic in the gallery space. Bright and bold colors clash with neutral colors. Two-dimensional paintings clash with three-dimensional sculpture. Eye-popping and electrifying clash with minimalist and organic. Through such juxtaposition, combined with the artists' similarities in mission, the alchemy of the two artists becomes evident.

—Kate Merkel

Ordinary Alchemy will debut May 9 with a opening artist reception from 5 to 8pm. The exhibition continues through June 14. Translations Gallery is located at 773 Santa Fe Drive in Denver, CO. For more information, call (303) 629-0713 or visit translationsgallery.com

