



PHOTO COURTESY MARIT GERALDINE BOSTAD

Gallery offers a color bomb, electric energy

By DANIELLE RIVERA

Madelyn Jordon Fine Art presents a fresh, wildly charming collection with three dynamic artists to round out its summer season.

"Body Electric" breathes like an Alice in Wonderland dream, exploding with vibrancy and childlikeness.

The exhibit, now open through Sept. 9, includes the work of Norway native Marit Geraldine Bostad, multimedia enthusiast Liz Tran and long-celebrated contemporary American painter Gary Komarin.

The artists' work varies in medium, subject matter and style — but there's a lot of overlap in mood and color scheme.

Seattle-born Liz Tran said she never grew out of that early, pulsing creative stage, and it's clearly reflected in her work.

"[It's] incredibly intuitive," she said. "On some level, it feels like it makes itself ... It starts to mimic nature, [the] body."

Tran's work messily reconciles the world around her, made up of physical stuff — landscapes, geodes, planets — with a dream-world she drifts in and out of, one splattered with color and charged with circus-like mania.

People tend to really respond to that dichotomy, Tran said.

Mostly, it makes them happy.

"My goal is to create environments," she said, and "to make work that kind of takes over a space and creates an ... uplifting atmosphere."

Tran is open about her battle with depression, and hopes her work will offer audiences some lighthearted, albeit temporary relief.

Recently, many hospitals and health care facilities in Seattle have purchased Tran's pieces to encourage their patients.

"I've had friends [who] have gone in for surgeries or have visited sick loved ones ... and they've told me that they're really happy to see the work and it made it a tiny bit easier. That's a huge compliment; it makes me happy."

Tran is dabbling more and more in installation and video, and her palette's growing brighter as she finds more innovative ways to inject color into her work — whether through colored LED lights or interaction between her paintings and installation sculptures.

"Each medium kind of pushes the next one," she said. "There's a back and forth conversation [there.]"

But painting is the major thread running through each piece.

"I paint from a childlike place in myself, or at least I try to ... Non-judgmental, where I'm just making in the flow," she said.



It's no surprise kids tend to offer the most authentic readings of her work.

Children identify with that curious, imaginative spirit, but adults are usually all over the place with their interpretations.

"It's kind of like a Rorschach test," Tran said.

Fellow artist Bostad identifies with that childlike spirit, too.

"Children play their way through life," she said, "until they are told not to behave childishly. Sometimes unlearning is the most crucial thing."

Bostad calls her work a deconstruction of reality, fused with the sum of her experiences and the "echoes of people" who have impacted her life.

The six pieces curated by Madelyn Jordon walk audiences through Bostad's inner life, touching on themes of admiration, heroism and strength.

With lofty, almost sleepy imagery and achingly poignant themes, it's surprising Bostad didn't start her career off as a painter.

In fact, she was an art director creating visual projects for film, illustration and concept building in Oslo, Norway, before she decided to pursue painting full time and open her own gallery.

Now, Bostad says creating art is therapeutic.

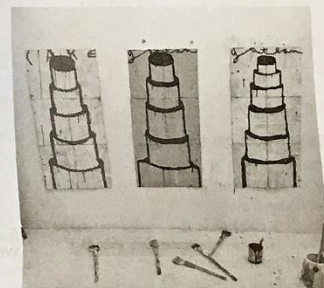
With two young children, ages 8 and 5, to run to and from school, she said she needs to set an alarm while painting or she'll disappear inside her work.

She compared the feeling to rebooting a computer, rejuvenating and necessary.

"I'm just a translator," Bostad said, "translating what affects me ... what I find worth communicating and putting into painting."

Komarin, a renowned player in the art world for a few decades, channels his childhood in a similar way.

The work featured in "Body Electric" is part of Komarin's "Cakes" series, fluid, nostalgic pieces painted from top down to bottom on paper bags and envelopes.



PHOTOS COURTESY GARY KOMARIN

Gary Komarin, top, won the Joan Mitchell Prize for painting and exhibited his work alongside the likes of Robert Motherwell, Larry Poons and Jean-Michel Basquiat. Above, three works in Komarin's "Cakes" collection; top left, "Hello" 2017, acrylic on canvas, unique by Marit Geraldine Bostad.

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PHOTO COURTESY LIZ TRAN

This Is Not the Party I Wanted, 2017, mixed media on panel

A gallery color bomb

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The “Cakes” series plays on the architectural versus the domestic, reminiscent of Komarin’s mother, who baked cakes during his childhood, and his father, who worked as an architect.

That personal history is translated even through his technique.

To make his cakes, Komarin overflows his brush with paint, letting a free, uninhibited trail etch across the canvas. The result is a sense of movement mirroring the icing of a cake.

“Komarin does in his paintings what acrobats do on the high wire,” fellow artist Hamlett Dobbins said. “There is a constant balancing act between sophistication and simplicity, between cartoonlike expression and eloquent abstraction.”

All of the featured works share a sense of jubilation and vibrancy, gallery curator Madelyn Jordon said.

“[Tran and Bostad] really impressed me, that they were so on the pulse of what’s happening today ... They’re very useful and fresh and energetic, which is always what I try and present.”

Komarin’s pieces worked terrifically with the two artists, she added, particularly with his use of bright, neon colors.

“[His pieces] are kind of timeless, funky and cool ... And we get emotional responses to artwork through the color ... So, I saw the vision of the artworks together ... It’s just the way it hit me.”

An opening reception will be held Aug. 17 at 6 p.m. at Madelyn Jordon Fine Art, located at 37 Popham Road.