

Ann Bingham-Freeman, Kerry Kugelman, Meriel Stern, and Jamie Sweetman at Kellogg Gallery

The gallery is full of unusual forms that grow, morph, and in the case of “Ristra” by Meriel Stern even hang from the ceiling. The group show, which in addition to Stern also features Ann Bingham-Freeman, Kerry Kugelman, and Jamie Sweetman, was assembled by curator Quinton Bemiller based on the artists’ shared interest in organic and mutation-like qualities. Bingham-Freeman works with the human form in a loose manner as a starting point by capturing the contours of the body through nervous line work that emblazes the subjects with dizzying energy. In works like “Proof Big Floater” the skin of the seated woman flaps uncontrollably as if floating in space.

Kugelman’s imagery by contrast is much more mysterious. A mixture of pigments and mixed media, the results suggest the cosmic and otherworldly. Whether the subjects are microscopic bits of DNA or distant galaxies, they appear to be growing and expanding on the canvas.

Stern’s sculptures are the most engaging of the bunch as they reach out from the walls. Her wire and fiber forms resemble nests, pods, and other natural forms. However, the industrial materials seem at odds with the forms, which create an enjoyable juxtaposition.

Lastly, Sweetman’s layered drawings of human anatomy are often mixed with limbs from plants and roots. A good example is “Bone Grapevine,” which appears plantlike at the bottom and proceeds to become a spine at the top of the composition. The intricate design looks scientific because of Sweetman’s attention to detail. As these mutations come to life, they read as a cross between medical illustrations and a botany textbook. While the aesthetics of each artist differs significantly, the shared concepts are enough for this show to really grow on you.

W. Keith & Janet Kellogg Gallery, Cal Poly Pomona

G. James Daiehendt

Gallery Exhibit Features Artists' "Organic" Works

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Light colored pencil sketches on transparent Dura-Lar paper meld together with the images underneath, creating an intricate work that reflects on the connection between the human body and nature. "Cervical Tree" is the work of Jamie Sweetman, one of the four artists featured in the W. Keith & Janet Kellogg University Art Gallery. In the January/February exhibit, each artist has something organic in their work, either in their methods, or their creations.

"All four artists are being treated as solo shows," Michele Cairella Fillmore, gallery director, says. "Each artist has a fingertip connection to the others through the idea or concept of what is organic." The show has been popular with students, Cairella Fillmore says. "We have students who come in and sit down and just look at Sweetman's artworks for 45 minutes to an hour."

Sweetman's work explores the complex nature of botanical forms and the human body. Her intricate works utilize layering of transparent pieces, and range in height, some as tall as 12 feet.

Across the room are Kerry Kugelman's paintings. A contrast in color from Sweetman's light and airy drawings, Kugelman's paintings are darker in nature. Pieces such as "The Ascendant I" are painted with acrylic, ink and charcoal and have bright colors, then are overlaid with a darker hue of gray or black. This makes the pieces appear three-dimensional, though it is on a two-dimensional canvas. Each painting draws the viewer in, as more detail becomes apparent. "I explore the territory of the mysterious and the ominous, where the unknown has a sense of wonder, but dread as well," his artist statement says.

Meriel Stern's work, delicately crocheted wire pieces, embrace not only organic shapes but an organic process as well. She lets the wire dictate the shape, and comes in and out of consciousness and awareness of what is around her as she's working. To her, the process is therapeutic. "Blue Organon," made out of crocheted polyvinyl chloride wrapped wire, are bags of various shapes, reminiscent of the various shapes of the human body. "While I hope they contain meaning, they are full of holes or spaces, and contain very little physically beyond air," Stern's artist statement says. "This seems to be symbolic of the human condition."

The final room of the gallery hosts Ann Bingham-Freeman, whose art explores women from various aspects -- their physical shape as well as the journey that life takes them on. To Bingham-Freeman, every woman's body is beautiful, no matter the size. Her sculpture series is a darker exploration of women's journey through life, but Bingham-Freeman also brings some more whimsical work to the gallery. A colorful mixed media sculpture of a woman's head, titled "Kiss Kiss," is a bright addition to the room. Though it looks delicate, Cairella Fillmore says it's actually quite sturdy. "This is really a metaphor for women," Cairella Fillmore says. "Women have the ability to overcome and survive, even with a delicate appearance."

Free and open to the public, the show runs through **Feb. 22** and is open Monday and Tuesday from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.; and Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday from noon to 4 p.m. For more information, visit the gallery website at www.csupomona.edu/~kellogg_gallery.

http://polycentric.csupomona.edu/news_stories/2014/01/gallery-exhibit-features-artists-organic-works.html