

LANDSCAPES OF MIND AND NATURE. Paintings, works on paper and installations by 11 artists. Through Feb. 28 at Gallery Authentique, 1499 Old Northern Blvd., Roslyn. Open 11 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday.

By Julia Szabo

GALLERY AUTHENTIQUE has gathered the landscape works of 11 artists in an appraisal of nature itself, in innocent and not-so-innocent states. There are extremely literal landscapes: Anita Lamb's oil paintings of seashores, Jihong Shi's woodblock print of a Chinese fishing scene and Peter Loonam's painstakingly detailed watercolors. There are also more challenging, less realistic scenes, such as Helen Meyrowitz' "Lion's Head" (whose angry pastel squiggles clearly call to mind hedges and trees), Eleanor Honig's mixed-media "Mondello" and Stan Brodsky's exuberantly colorful oil-on-canvas abstraction "Landscape as Memory #14," with its textural brushwork. These appreciations of nature all have a before-the-fall simplicity; they seem to accept nature as it is without questioning its condition.

Not so the "architectural landscape" paintings by Richard Vaux, which are infused with a longing for the earth as it was before mankind polluted the landscape. Vaux superimposes grids on partially abstracted nature scenes, rendered in nuclear-winter mauve. The smooth, polished surfaces are air-brushed, as if to indicate just how far removed these machine-enhanced landscapes are from Eden.

Conceptual artist Chris Coffin distills landscape, quite literally, with "Two Jars from Strandline Series: Locational Samples from Pt. Lookout." Beneath their beeswax seal these glass vessels contain micro-horizons: space in a bottle. Layers of sand and seawater are topped off with a thick, quivering mass of oily brown sludge — a cynical commentary indeed. But most poignant of all are Linn Meyer's oil paintings on thick wood panels. Evoking rather than depicting nature, they suggest cracked ice on a frozen pond, green leaves soaked by spring rain, a clearing in an autumnal wood, or a golden, magic-hour sunset reflected in water. At once innocent and knowing, these paintings have a mysteriously iconic, almost holy aspect, like plunder from a church. ■

Julia Szabo is a free-lance writer.