

gallery reviews

RIGHT: Karin Broker, *In the Country, Farm Box* (detail), construction and found objects, 2002.



McCLAIN GALLERY: Formal Gesture: A Decade of Drawings and Paintings

McClain Gallery openings are always a first class experience, complete with valet parking. On a recent opening night, the gallery attracted a sophisticated, international crowd. The venue's stellar space, created by Architect Marshall Reid, houses the current exhibitions of work by Alfred De Credico and Karin Broker. If you go expecting to see the drawings for which both these artists are noted, you might be disappointed.

Formal Gesture: A Decade of Drawings and Paintings is a survey of Alfred De Credico's work from the past ten years. The transition his work has undergone over the decade is obvious. This abstract expressionist is widely known for his drawings. However, his most recent creations are more painterly and vibrant with color than previous works. De Credico continues his practice of using blood, dirt, marble dust, wood, fur, etc. for these works.

Originally from Penn, Pennsylvania, Karin Broker earned a BFA from the University of Iowa and studied in Paris before completing a MFA at the University of Wisconsin. She has received many honors, awards and grants over the last twenty years and is currently Associate Professor of Art and Art History at Rice University.

In addition to being known for her large scale drawings, she is also known for her work as a printmaker. Her current show, titled *A Mad Girl's Small Notes*, includes only constructions and boxes. Robert McClain notes that "when she has completed experimenting with a particular medium she moves on to something new but continues to focus on the same narrative and the same issues of her role as a woman and artist in contemporary society." This is typical of the progression of her work.

Sitting Pretty (2004) is an excellent example of Broker's constructions. It is intricately made with antique jewelry and found objects. *Sitting Pretty* (2004) is a sculpture of a goddess-like figure sitting on her throne with her head turned toward the audience wearing an expression as mysterious as the *Mona Lisa's* smile. Her head is chopped off from the nose up and sprouts a jeweled garden complete with a bumble bee. The most interesting feature of this work is the arm. It is extended with a little chain from the hand that is connected to an iron sitting at her feet. This piece exemplifies the contradictory roles universally inflicted on women.

The McClain's have been focusing on exhibitions and acquisitions of museum quality contemporary and 20th century art. Both of the currently exhibited artists have been nationally recognized for their work. Their works are highly collectable and should be considered as prize possessions. – Nichole Pruitt

The exhibit runs through February at McClain Gallery, 2242 Richmond, 713.520.9988, www.mcclaingallery.com.