

ART & EXHIBITS

Three shows to see now at Houston art galleries

Summer exhibits at Hiram Butler, Deborah Colton and Art of the World suggest the range of gallery experiences awaiting visitors this summer.



Molly Glentzer | June 4, 2020 Updated: June 5, 2020, 2:12 pm



A view of Kate Shepherd's installation "April, May, June, Etc. Etc. Upended Floor (Mud, Blood)," designed to be viewed through the front windows of Hiram Butler Gallery while the space inside is closed.

Photo: Hiram Butler Gallery / Hiram Butler Gallery

Art dealers who shifted to virtual platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic have stayed busy with online fairs, live chats and video tours. Galleries are not generally crowded except during opening receptions, and many are now open by appointment. A few are once again welcoming drop-ins, with limited hours and safety protocols.

Here are three shows to see now.

'Kate Shepherd: April, May, June, Etc., Etc., Upended Floor (Mud, Blood)'

Hiram Butler Gallery, 4520 Blossom, 713-863-7097, hirambutler.com. By appointment; outdoor viewing 5-8 p.m. Tuesdays-Saturdays.

An inventive workaround for visitors who still aren't ready to step inside a building with other breathing humans, Kate Shepherd's show is still meant to be viewed in person.

A kind of existential tour de force, it is best experienced from outside, through the gallery's front windows, preferably at dusk, when the light is best for the optical illusion: The installation creates the sense of a proscenium space in the gallery's narrow entry room, where several large canvases appear to hang on the walls.

In fact the whole thing is a three-wall painting. Shepherd, a blue-chip artist from New York, is known for combining mirror-like and matte surfaces in paintings, whether on canvas or directly on walls, that bounce images back into a room.

"I like things that are seemingly simple but multiply in some way," she says in a statement about the Houston installation. "I knew there could be something funny going on." Gallery director Josh Pazda executed the piece, following Shepherd's measurements.

Architecture shifts with the surrogate paintings, and the challenge of perspective becomes a quiet metaphor for a world that has become scarier and slightly unreal.

With the gallery now also open by appointment, the larger room where Shepherd would have created a different show this spring holds architecture inspired striped canvases by Matt Kleberg that were initially made for an ill-fated April pop-up show in San Antonio.

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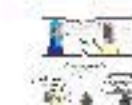
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“Felipe Lopez: Precautionary Principles of the New World”

Deborah Colton Gallery, 2445 North Blvd.; 713-869-5151, deborahcoltongallery.com; by appointment

Houston artist Felipe Lopez combines soulful, humanitarian themes and environmental science in fabricated, molded and illuminated sculptures that sometimes contain intriguing, floating worlds. This ambitious show combines works from several new series that are mostly a departure.

Faux flowers sprout from arrows embedded in flat honeycomb structures in the “For the Greater Hive” series. These pieces require too much explanation — something about economic infrastructure, industries that make society function, man-made implements and symbols of hope. For his “Natural Tendencies” series, Lopez places bouquets in mysterious and creepy fabricated wall planters that appear to have sprouted roots. His “Purification Series” sculptures look like geology projects, consisting of clear tubes that hold layers of soil and pebbles in liquid that equates to the amount of water in a human’s body.

Simpler turns out to be better. “To Create A Diamond,” a series of drawings made by rolling a charcoal stick over paper, have an element of human touch that resonates. The thinking about forces of pressure aside, you can lose yourself in the meditation.

“Spanish Masters of the XX Century: Picasso/Miró/Dali”

Art of the World Gallery, 2201 Westheimer; 713-526-1201, artoftheworldgallery.com; 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Mondays-Saturdays

This now-extended show of prints by three icons of Modern art could be in a museum. In fact, it originated last year at the Museo de Art Nouveau y Art Deco Casa Lis in Salamanca, Spain. Its 108 works illustrate a number of the many graphic techniques employed by Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró and Salvador Dali, but more importantly comprise a rare collection of graphic works in complete suites.

The prolific and lusty Picasso dominates the show. His work unfolds in a good arc through six series and a few drawings that date from 1933’s sensuous, classically-inspired and rather hilarious “Suite Vollard Series” (depicting himself lollygagging nude in his studio with Marie Therese and horses) to 1955’s purposeful “Venti Pochoirs Originali, a colorful retrospective of familiar images. A few works from the 1960s are included as well.

The lithographs of Miró’s “Wonders with Acrostic Variations in Miro’s Garden,” shown as two series in different sizes, dance with lyrical movement. A collaboration with musician Rafael Alberti, they are seem almost ecstatically happy in the context of this show, appearing just a few steps from Dali’s darkly energetic “Life is a Dream” illustrations, which transform scenes from a Baroque play by Pedro Calderón de la Barca into personal expressions of life in an ominous, macabre world.

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Molly Glentzer

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Molly Glentzer, a staff arts critic since 1998, writes mostly about dance and visual arts but can go anywhere a good story leads. Through covering public art in parks, she developed a beat focused on Houston’s emergence as one of the nation’s leading “green renaissance” cities.

During about 30 years as a journalist Molly has also written for periodicals, including Texas Monthly, Saveur, Food & Wine, Dance Magazine and Dance International. She collaborated with her husband, photographer Don Glentzer, to create “Pink Ladies & Crimson Gents: Portraits and Legends of 50 Roses” (2008, Clarkson Potter), a book about the human culture behind rose horticulture. This explains the occasional gardening story byline and her broken fingernails.

A Texas native, Molly grew up in Houston and has lived not too far away in the bucolic town of Brenham since 2012.

