

# The Southampton Press

## Arts & Entertainment



**Eric Ernst**

### Perspectives

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While Sag Harbor was once known as a primarily blue-collar burg boasting perhaps more bars per capita than any other town in New York, with the addition of spaces such as the Amy Pilkington Gallery and Silas Marder's "Temporary Gallery" it is now also fashioning a reputation as home to a burgeoning number of rather entertainingly anachronistic art venues.

At least in part as a by-product of the traditional architectural motifs found in the village itself, these galleries are also offering a memorable ambiance through their imaginative curatorial expressions and thereby often transcend the traditional and sometimes clinically antiseptic environs most art galleries tend to exude.

This is particularly apparent in the exhibition at Silas Marder's space, ensconced in a late 18th century building whose exposed brick and stone walls and foundation create remarkable atmospherics through their juxtaposition with the group show currently on view. The mix of pieces in this show—paintings, sculpture, and furniture—creates a refreshingly spacious and moderately eccentric viewing experience.

This aura is reinforced by Cynthia Knott's large hanging installation in the rear space, which benefits from the contrast with the gallery's rough-hewn walls and raw flooring to produce a truly dynamic and aesthetically dizzying impression. Consisting of two 25-foot-long canvases, strung from the ceiling and partially wrapping around each other, thus allowing viewers to walk between the paintings themselves, the work straddles the line separating painting and sculpture.

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Soraida Bedoya's "Bed Chair," on view at Amy Pilkington Gallery in Sag Harbor.

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This effect is enhanced by Ms. Knott's use of gently flowing colors and subtle manipulation of light, which combine to replicate a seascape absent the literal presence of a horizon line—an effect that only gains in impact based on the titles, "Horizon I" and "Horizon II."

Also using a nautical motif, albeit in a style that is both more frenetic and more immediately figurative than Ms. Knott's, is Oliver Peterson's "Here Be Dragons (Maritime North)" (acrylic, mixed media on wood, 2008). Collaging together comic book imagery, stencils of sailing ships, and slashes of paint over a map of the world (circa sometime in the 20th century), the piece develops a narrative that pays homage to both pop art icons and mysterious historical legends of the sea.

The exhibition at Silas Marder Temporary Gallery in Sag Harbor continues through October 4.

The Amy Pilkington Gallery, by contrast, is somewhat unusual in that it doubles as an exhibition space as well as, in the rear, a studio space for Ms. Pilkington's own work as a painter and jewelry designer.

While the exhibition space is typically dedicated to her own work, in this show the featured artist is Soraida Bedoya, whose photographs of manipulated and re-cast found objects create rather surreal and whimsical images of imaginary items that are completely sculptural, and, seemingly, conceptually functional.

Most immediately reminiscent of the aesthetics of the German Kurt Schwitters, whose sculpture and assemblages consisted of random cast-off items that others might have seen merely as trash, the works also evoke other surrealists and images of their work, such as Man Ray's "Cadeau" or Meret Oppenheim's iconographic fur-lined teacup.

This effect is particularly notable in works such as "Chair with Rocking Wire Seat," "Wire Cushion," or "Bed Chair," each of which looks marginally functional, although perhaps more appropriate as cheeky and mischievous furniture for some of the surrealist Hans Bellmer's erotic sculptures of reconfigured dolls.

In other works, Ms. Bedoya seems to strive for a more overt measure of inscrutability and uncertainty, as in "Crate," which creates a degree of interest and mystery between what the viewer can see and what is hidden. This is also true for "Suitcase," a mattress the artist has cut up and re-sewn as a valise, still redolent, as mattresses tend to be, of the personas and pasts of all those who may have slept upon it.

"Wooden Arcs with Metal," by contrast, offers a more immediately minimalist sculptural form that springs from aspects of Russian constructivism and illustrates a powerful contrast between its languidly arching linear elements and the elegant shadow of a circle cast by its intertwined form.

The exhibition of photographs by Soraida Bedoya at the Amy Pilkington Gallery in Sag Harbor continues through October 13.

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