

Kristy Shandal – Inside Euphoria

Visual Description

This exhibit is of 8 oil paintings by Kristy Shandal, each painting showing a small, domestic scene. I will describe 5 of the paintings. They are arranged on large, freestanding gallery panels covered in a beige carpet-like material. There are four double sided panels, stacked in a line, running north-south. The panel faces also point north-south. The panels are numbered 1 through 8, with 1 being the northernmost panel, 2 being the south facing panel on the rear side of panel 1, and so on, through panel 8 being the southernmost panel.

Kristy says of her work, “I have been exploring the vibrancy of my daily life. I have been reflecting on my home as a place of ‘embodied rituals’ where I move through time via a series of repetitive acts. By experimenting with a looser form of mark-making, I have embraced a less polished and more active style that is indicative of the ineffable memory of ‘home’ I strive to capture. I wanted these painting to feel like quick illustrations of moments of time – like memories. They are the routines, habits, and actions that the brain carries out without the intervention of the conscious mind.” This artist quote comes from an exhibit description provided by the artist.

Panel 2 – The Pour Over

The first picture is the largest in the exhibit, an oil on canvas, 41 inches by 43 inches. It shows an arm reaching from the right side of the painting toward the centre, with the hand holding a kettle of water, pouring into a coffee filter balanced on a coffee cup. The water is flowing from the kettle, which is tilted just under 90 degrees. The filter is bright red, and draws attention to the action of pouring, and in contrast to the background of the painting. Just to the right of the coffee filter is a can with a dark blue label. The can and the coffee are placed near the rounded corner of a table, two sides of which can be seen in the picture leading away to the middle bottom and upper left. The table itself and the wall and floor behind, are a variety of colours, with no discernible features. The brush work is visible and seems to move the energy away from the central image. There are areas of bright yellow, darker turquoise, and highlights of pink and red. The pink is also visible reflected in the side of the kettle. The arm is of a white person, and the upper half has a tan sleeve. About 1/8 of the way from the right side of the picture is a vertical line of demarcation in the brush work, with possible sketching lines for more of the body.

Panel 5 – The Refrigerator One

The second painting is 30 inches square, and is an oil painting on wood panel. In contrast with the canvas paintings, which have lighter colour schemes, this painting on wood panel (along with its companion painting, Refrigerator Two) has a rich colour palette which evokes dim, late-night lighting. Just to the left of centre taking up almost the whole vertical space of the painting, is a refrigerator with the bottom door open wide to the right. The top of the fridge is closed and shows a number of small papers or rectangular objects in a haphazard though not overcrowded arrangement. The open bottom of the fridge is dominated by a large wine bottle which sits on the centre shelf just on the right side of the fridge, but in just about exactly the centre of the painting. The bottle glows a deep, cherry red. Apart from a small jar next to the bottle which is a dark green, nothing else in the fridge is distinguishable distinctly, though we can infer what some of the items are in the different fridge compartments (for example, a pale object in the butter compartment could be butter, and some dark things in the produce drawers are likely produce). The bright light on the top shelf of the fridge, filters down through the shelves until the items in the bottom drawers are very dark. The door also has several things, but also has more expressive brush markings in bright turquoise instead of distinguishable fridge contents.

To the left of the fridge, is the corner of the stove, facing perpendicular to the fridge. Behind and to the right of the fridge are some cabinets which glow with warm orange and yellow light, reflecting some of the light coming from inside the fridge. The floor in front of the fridge is an orangish-red tile with strong grout lines. Deep shadows lie under the cabinets, along the floor under the fridge door, and to the right of the fridge door.

Panel 6 – The Coffee Table

The third picture is a 36 square inch oil on canvas. On the left hand side of the painting is a rounded coffee table with a few objects placed along the edge – two remote controls and three small jars of different sizes. The objects are partially highlighted in surprising colours such as red on the black remote controls and bright blue on a couple of the jars. The tabletop is somewhat transparent and has a beveled edge. Through it a single table leg is visible. The rest of the table top is covered in brush strokes in various muted colours, reflecting other objects in the room. To the right of the table (as well as extending beneath the table) and in the upper 2/3 of the frame is a multicoloured blanket or other textile. It appears rumpled and with an indistinct pattern. Under this blanket, a clear bit of graphic rug pattern is visible in black, white and red. There is an object in the bottom right of the picture in dark green with a black circle, which may be a slipper. In the top ¼ of the painting is some impressionistic brush work in 2 main sections, an orange section and a purplish blue section. The light appears to come from the top of the painting, and casts shadows towards the viewers of the containers on the table, as well as highlighting the tips of the blanket edges.

Panel 7 – The Bath Tub

The fourth picture is another oil paint on canvas, 30 inches square. It shows a bird's-eye view of the end of a full bathtub with the wall-mounted faucet. Centered at the top of the picture and filling the top half is the faucet. It is mounted on the wall, and the tiles on the wall have their grout lines in a dark, pinkish red. The tap and faucet reflect the blue-grey of the wall and the pink of the tub. The tub beneath the faucet is a bubblegum pink and is darker on the left hand side of the inside of the tub as if light is coming from the left hand side of the painting. The darker pink of the shadowed side of the tub imbues the whole painting with its colour feelings of both vibrancy and calm. Inside the tub, which is half-filled, is a light blue and turquoise irregular pattern of bubbles or oil on the surface of the water. Through the surface of the water, the bottom of the tub is slightly visible as pink or yellow highlights. In the corners of the tub are some jars or bottles that seem transparent. On the left hand side of the tub is a small light brown object, which may be a sponge or similar object. The edges of the tub extend beyond the edges of the painting.

Panel 8 – The Shoe Rack

The final image measures 24 inches by 29 inches and is oil paint on canvas. It shows a small, wire, 4-tier shoe rack with several different pairs of shoes. The rack takes up the upper 2/3 of the painting. One pair of round-toed, lace up boots faces the viewer, on the floor in front of the shoe rack, arranged in a slightly open V shape. These boots are red with pink highlights, and have turquoise shoelaces. The other shoes on the rack are darker in colour, with black and turquoise being the dominant colours. They are arranged in what seem to be pairs, though upon closer inspection, some of the so-called pairs are different colours, and one 'pair' is actually three shoes. The overall colour impression of the painting is an almost bubblegum pink with highlights of deep red and pale yellow. Several of the floor tiles are pink, and a few of them are white. The tiles on the floor are separated by dark, thick grout lines, which combined with the shading on the sides of the tiles, gives them a strong element of dimensionality. The brushstrokes on the wall behind the shoe rack are messy and appear to be painting over other layers of paint.