



JUST AROUND THE BEND: FROM THE OLD-SCHOOL TO THE ADVENTUROUS IN SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT

HAVING JUST EXPERIENCED ONE OF THE RAINIEST AND INTENSELY HUMID SUMMER SEASONS ON RECORD, I EMBRACE THE RELIEF OF A LONG AWAITED COOL, DRY DAY TO VENTURE OUT FOR A GALLERY CRAWL AT MY FAVORITE SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT GALLERIES.

Elizabeth Archer

Sculpture and Drawing

October 3 – 25



OPENING RECEPTION
Saturday, October 3, 3–5 p.m.

Hours: Thursday 11–5 p.m.
Friday 11–7 p.m.
Sat, Sun 1–5 p.m.

The Gallery at
Emmanuel Church
15 Newbury St. - Boston, MA

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I hop into my car with the windows down and cross the Connecticut River to find myself in the Birthplace of American Impressionism. A one mile strip known as Lyme Street is the center of the charming historic district of Old Lyme.

Anchored at one end by the long established Florence Griswold Museum and at the other end by the new Diane Birdsall Gallery, Lyme Street holds a variety of artistic treasures from historic to contemporary. A word of warning: don't start your venture too early, as some establishments on Lyme Street don't open until 11 a.m. Just as well, as that allows time for a leisurely morning sleep and a hearty breakfast. Inns and eateries are plentiful here; one such oasis is The Bee and Thistle

Inn at 100 Lyme Street. Run by Linnea and David Rufo, it's not only a lovely overnight retreat, but presently boasts the work of master sculptor and bronze founder, Andrew DeVries. 14 works of bronze dancers and figurative sculpture have been installed on the grounds and are on display through Spring 2010. These sculptures capture and unite with the essence of the surrounding environment, reflective of what locals say is light reminiscent of Paris.

My next stop is to see my old friend, Gilbert Boro, sculptor and owner of Studio 80 + Sculpture Grounds at 80-1 Lyme Street. A long time Boston resident, Boro has settled in Old Lyme, bringing his abstract sculpture to rest next door to the very traditional Lyme

Academy College of Fine Arts. Students wander across the shared properties between the college and Sculpture Grounds. This art microcosm brims with student and faculty exhibitions for lovers of traditional fine art.

Though Boro's abstract, minimalist work juxtaposes the artistic sensibilities of Lyme Academy, he designed Studio 80 to compliment the architecture of his neighbor. The studio comprises a 3,500 square foot work space and gallery and sits on four acres next to the Lieutenant River, where the visitor will find the line and curve of Boro's large scale sculpture nestled among the pine trees. The grounds are open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; the studio is open by appointment.

Before moving further down Lyme Street, I stop off at the Old Lyme Ice Cream Shoppe & Cafe for a coffee, a signature "Phat Albert" sandwich and the best homemade ice cream "east of the Mississippi." The "New York Times" has rated this little nook "Luscious" and I couldn't agree more.

Best known for its grand selection of historical American paintings, The Cooley Gallery at 25 Lyme Street also supports and exhibits contemporary artists. A



new series of work by Pat Smith, on view through September 12, reflects the artist's close examination of the relationship between porcelain and paper, light and air. According to the website, "Patterned piercing brings texture to her work and light washes of color offer tonal variations which, when literally stitched together, create sculptural works full of wonder. This exhibition includes 'curtains' of paper work, familiar ceramic vessels and objects, watercolor sketches, paint book 'journals' and a few surprises."

The area's newest gallery is that of Diane Birdsall at 10 Lyme Street; it offers the work of abstract and contemporary artists such as Elizabeth Gourlay, Patricia Carrigan and Janet Lage and is open

weekdays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from noon to 4 p.m.

Feeling the need for work that will scratch my mind a bit, I head away from Old Lyme to my favorite gallery in nearby Chester. Defying the Connecticut art world's reputation for revolving around landscape painting and birds in a marsh, EO Art Lab on 69 Main Street offers a refreshing stable of works. EO — meaning the beginning, the source or inception — has an ever-changing collection, which represents both emerging and established artists from across the nation.

Gallery Director Sherrie Coleman informs me that the ceramic works of

Kelly Jean Ohl of Minnesota, "Stand in Line," will be on display from September 2 through September 27. According to a gallery representative, "Viewers often remark that Ohl's work reminds them of things they've found on the forest floor, touched in a tide pool, or seen under a microscope. Her ceramic pieces aren't any of these things in particular. They are simply small abstract objects that reference many biological entities without being any one specifically." Connecticut artist Elizabeth Gourlay's work, which presents a process of layering color and form based on fusing the act of painting with imagination, feeling and experience, will be spotlighted from September 30 through November 1.

Having wrapped up my day on the town, my retreat for the evening is Pip's Brasserie, at Copper Beech Inn in Ivoryton. There is nothing better than ending an art crawl with a glass of crisp pinot and some four-star cuisine. The food here is outstanding and the bar staff knowledgeable and efficient. Should you care to rest your head on a local pillow after your day, the Inn features 22 guest rooms and luxury suites.

So take a drive around the bend and see what Southern Connecticut has waiting for you. From the birth of American Impressionism to the emerging artist's explorations, these galleries' offerings are sure to please.

Lisa Mikulski



LEFT PAGE FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: Bronze sculpture by Andrew DeVries. Gilbert Boro, *Word Chain - Wave Series*, welded and bolted pipe, custom fittings, powder coated steel base plates, precast concrete bases. THIS PAGE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Kelly Jean Ohl at EO Art Lab. Elizabeth Gourlay, *Oliva 2*, 2009, ink, gouache, acrylic, collage on paper.

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