

SOMETHING WEIRD GROWS IN BROOKLYN

VISUAL ARTS

BY FELICIA FEASTER

If “goosey” is a genre, then much of the work in *Working Artists in Brooklyn* is representative of the New Ooze. In highly self-conscious colors and mutating forms, many of these artists convey the power of the bodily and organic, even within a technology-dominated age.



“Cerebral Emergency” by Elizabeth Huey

ROMO GALLERY

Les Joynes’ abstract paintings done in the fleshy pinks and fatty whites of viscera are reminiscent of painter Philip Guston’s tubular, fleshy forms. In Joynes’ painting “True Happiness this way lies,” his pink formation suggests some nightmare dinner, an ambiguous fat, pink intestinal object placed in the painting’s dead center and flanked by a spoon to up the gross-out factor.

Many of the works on display revel in ugliness and the transmogrifying, dripping, candle-wax and spider-web forms of the new gothic practiced by artists from local boy Alex Kvaras to NYC superstar Banks Violette. Garish neon color, glitter and ribbons of crepe-paper tentacles are purposefully kitschy, lowbrow materials that render the gross and gothic properties of the world. That idea is best typified by Randy Wray’s abstracted sculpture, “Kudzu,” in which that Southern über-weed is conveyed as interlocking, necklace-like forms in every shade of green except ones even close to nature.

There is a shared sci-fi quality to much of the work, as it deals with contemporary life. Sol Kjuk’s ethereal drawings of a congregation of nude, bald women and men forming their bodies into a planetary mass look like a cross between the androgynous representatives of some future race and the randy hippies of Alex Comfort’s *Joy of Sex*.

The work is trendy and very now, and gives the sense there are cohesive, shared doings bubbling up from the studios and galleries of Cool Factory New York. But *Working Artists in Brooklyn* also begs the question: How much of this work is of the time, and how much has the potential to transcend it?

What the show does assert is the welcome, fresh vision of this Castleberry Hill gallery and its willingness to take some chances and bring something new to the city.

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Working Artists in Brooklyn, through Sept. 10 at Romo Gallery, 309 Peters St. Tues.-Sat. 11:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. 404-222-9955. www.romogallery.com.