

'Viewpoints' is at the Bachelier-Cardonsky Gallery

Everything about this gallery's summer show is a delight. Featuring the work of three artists, landscape painters Warner Friedman and Cushla Naegele as well as sculptor, Melissa Stern, the exhibition takes us on a journey through the sun drenched landscapes of Provence and the cool, inviting seascapes of New England, interspersed here and there with whimsical figural sculptures. "Viewpoints" will be on view through July 24, presenting both engaging subject matter, as well as the work of skillful artists. It is an adept combination of three artists with very different styles.

Beauty of nature

Landscape painter Warner Friedman distills the beauty of nature into flat planes of color that are minimalist in their application. There is no hint of the artist's brushstroke in the large, geometrically shaped canvases, a technique that recalls the shaped canvases of the color field artists of the 1960s. The beauty of the landscape is expressed in great expanses of saturated color. The inviting and tranquil, turquoise blue of the sea in "Southern Pier" stretches to the horizon and effortlessly melds with the cool, blue sky above. The only suggestion of a human presence in this perfectly rendered landscape are the boardwalk railings, painted a brilliant white, through which we view the seascape.

These architectural elements are central to Friedman's paintings,

canvas for his landscapes as well as a human perspective. In his large two-panelled painting, "Inside-Out," the view of lush, green hills surmounted by blue sky and baroque white clouds is seen from the corner of a porch. The sun's shadows across the porch are long, suggesting that it is late in the day. A doorway off the porch leads to the darkened interior of the house where an upright piano can be seen in the parlor. In contrast to the subdued palettes of the cool, summer porch, the vivid greens and blues of the landscape seem to jump off the canvas. The bright, rich colors of the natural landscape are overwhelming in their intensity, softened somewhat when seen from the safe haven of the cool porch.

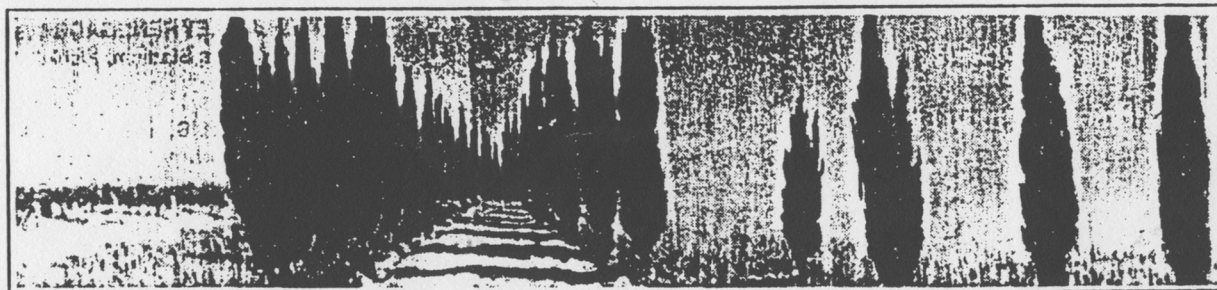
In contrast to Friedman's immaculately rendered landscapes, Naegele's paintings demonstrate the exuberant hand of the artist. These works are not large, in fact most of them are no higher than a foot, but

they offer panoramic views of Southern France and the Italy. Naegele seems to relish in the textural quality of applying paint to canvas, alternating thickness and brushstroke to create layers of sun drenched color. The subjects are immediately familiar: the fields of blood-red poppies and rows of lavender, olive trees and an occasional old farmhouse with passing clouds overhead breaking the startling blue sky. It would be difficult to imagine tiring of these small canvases celebrating nature.

Stern combines a wonderful sense of humor with her skill as a metalworker to create whimsical figural sculptures. Her work combines found articles, such as kitchen utensils, old 45 rpm records, nails and discarded pieces of cloth, with traditional sculptural materials such as bronze and clay. The results are funny and provocative, as in her small sculpture entitled "Yoo-Hoo,"

where the eyes of the figure are two old, rusted yoo-hoo soda caps. Her figures are for the most part genderless, and there is a festive mood among them. Many wear hats, which breathe the suggestion of life into the small figures. In her work "Sailor," a paper hat made from newspaper with a tiny green plastic sailboat perched on top decorates the naively sculpted body. In another work "Birthday Girl," the figure wears a simple, cone shaped hat, and pale pink skirt. The artist has modeled the feet with toes turned inwards, one foot on top of the other, an amusing and tender gesture that captures the childlike attitude.

The Bachelier-Cardonsky gallery is located on the second floor of the House of Books building on Main Street in Kent, Conn. Gallery hours are Friday through Sunday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and by appointment during the week. For further information call (203) 927-3357.



"Giuseppina's Cypresses" by Cushla Naegele is an oil on linen that can be seen at the Bachelier-Cardonsky Gallery through July 24.