



Lifestyle

Allison Hersh: New exhibit celebrates creative exchange between student, SCAD professor

By Allison Hersh

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For artist Othiana Roffiel, abstraction serves as a welcome creative refuge.

“In a dire and desperate need to escape the world of illusions that surround me, I turn to abstraction,” she said. “Fields of nothing but mere color and texture become my unconditional allies that lead me in this new search for truth.”

“A Visceral Dialogue: Laura Mosquera and Othiana Roffiel,” currently on display at ThincSavannah, showcases two complementary approaches to abstract painting. Presented by Slate Gray Studio, this exhibit celebrates an ongoing creative exchange between a student and a professor at the Savannah College of Art and Design.

Mosquera, the professor, exhibits sleek, high-energy paintings defined by bright, saturated colors and eye-catching geometric shapes. In compositions like “Static Beats” and “Wimble” she emphasizes the contrast between foreground and background, as horizontal lines serve as a foil for central X-shaped marks suggesting the human figure.

Her paintings often incorporate vivid citrus hues, ranging from electric lime to bright tangerine, as well as a range of deep oceanic blues. She captures the raw energy of color, line and form in her deceptively simple compositions, which reveal a strong understanding of color theory.

“Interesting shapes inspire my art,” she explained. “It could be architecture, or forms seen through a fence, or the silhouette of a tree at night. All my work is rooted in the act of looking.”

Inspired by artists ranging from American minimalist Ellsworth Kelly to French modernist Henri Matisse, Mosquera enjoys using abstraction as a vehicle to

comprehend the world at large.

“Whether riding my bike or walking the dog, there are always moments that capture my attention,” she explained. “I use this visual information observed throughout each day as a jumping off point, but not in a literal sense. By examining the act of constructing form and space organically and intuitively, I arrive at compositions that work for my paintings.”

Othiana Roffiel, Mosquera’s student, uses a more muted color palette and a thicker application of oil paint to create a series of abstract compositions on canvas. Her paintings are looser, coarser and more childlike, often revealing bare patches of canvas.

“Abstract forms allow me to transcend the physical world and simply surrender to the medium, surrender to paint,” she said. “It becomes not about creating illusions, but rather about creating emotions that ignite naturally from the mere act of allowing paint to be paint.”

For Roffiel, the work is all about her relationship with paint, which she treats as an almost mystical, supernatural substance. In compositions like “VT3” and “VT10,” she layers paint on canvas in muscular strokes in an effort to explore its deepest potential.

“I allow paint to be paint,” she said. “I intuitively apply layer after layer of color, allowing each to inform the next, without concealing the previous. I thus show the true essence of the paint, show it for what it is, even in its deepest layers.”

Roffiel loves the act of creating art as well as sharing it with an audience. However, she wants to keep the mystery at the heart of each painting alive.

“I love talking about my work, because talking about art is one of my biggest passions, yet I don’t like to say too much,” she said. “I want the viewer to create their own story, to make their own art in their minds as they engage with the piece.”

ABOUT LAURA MOSQUERA

Laura Mosquera earned her M.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1999. She currently lives in Savannah, where she works a Painting professor at the Savannah College of Art and Design. She has presented solo exhibitions at the Contemporary Art Museum (CASA) in Salamanca Spain, Feigen Contemporary Gallery in New York and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago.

ABOUT OTHIANA ROFFIEL

Othiana Roffiel recently completed her B.F.A. in Painting at the Savannah College of Art and Design. She has worked for a major photography studio in Mexico City and in the curatorial department at the Telfair Museums in Savannah. She has exhibited her work in the American School Foundation’s Art Fair and earned the Nancy N. Lewis Endowed Scholarship in 2011.

IF YOU GO

What: “A Visceral Dialogue,” new paintings by Laura Mosquera and Othiana Roffiel

When: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday and by appointment, through June 22

Where: ThincSavannah, 35 Barnard St., Suite 300

Info: 912-544-1200