

Los Angeles Times

Review: “Draw the Line”

Lora Schlesinger Gallery

June 26, 2009 | 11:30 am

“Draw the Line” is a fine summer group show akin to a meal composed of a succession of small courses. Each of the 50-plus works on paper at Lora Schlesinger Gallery activates the senses with a modestly scaled, intense burst of flavor. No one taste is sustained long enough to tire, bore, overwhelm or numb the palate; the marvelous bites can be savored and the less interesting ones passed over quickly.

Nearly all of the work is representational, with the depiction of people and animals predominating. If that sounds like a recipe for staleness, it’s not. The work ranges from tame to squirmy, and traditional formats, especially of portraiture, prove no inhibition to invention, freshness or vigor.

Among the simplest and yet most vivid pieces are Enjeong Noh’s searingly alive sepia pencil portrait of Salomón Huerta and Peter Alexander’s gorgeous, *sumi*-like pastel study of a cat.

Lynn Hanson overlays an old AAA map of Southern California, family vacation route drawn in and detailed, with a charcoal rendering of a stealthy, sinuous rattler. The snake, daunting infiltrator of the nostalgic domain, is all deep shadow, pattern and negative space where the map’s own pathways show through.

Hugo Crosthwaite’s three graphite drawings fuse character and cartoon, idiosyncratic identity and flat graphic energy. In one of the intriguing snapshots, a man lightly fingers a frog; in another, a half-naked woman in character-cluttered undershorts glances back at us as she inks a large tattoo.

Among the show’s many other high points: Patty Wickman’s tender, almost tessellated drawing of children beside a manzanita; Marianela de la Hoz’s dark metaphoric tableaux; Bill Amundson’s satirical “Cheney Plant #3”; and Sean Sullivan’s needle-fine ink drawing of a knot of organic matter, all root and bark and bud, fissures, crevices and filigree. (UPDATE: Bill Amundson was incorrectly identified as Ed Amundson in an earlier version of this post.)

-- Leah Ollman

Lora Schlesinger Gallery, Bergamot Station, 2525 Michigan Ave., Santa Monica, (310) 828-1133, through July 25. Closed Sundays and Mondays.