

BRIDGETTE MAYER GALLERY



firstfridayfocus

By Holly Otterbein

► SPACE 1026

Jake Henry is nervous.

The Philadelphia-based artist is exhibiting at Space 1026, where the modus operandi is maximalist, graphic art that sometimes borders on grotesque. "This pastoral stuff I'm doing is a bit of a departure from that," Henry says. "It's unnerving. I think people are going to expect something a little more graphic-oriented."

It's true that in "It's a Trap!" his serene paintings of blue skies and prairie grasses stray from the comic-inspired style of the gallery. The works aren't neon-colored. They aren't in-your-face. Instead, they are subtle — maybe even guileless.

His pieces likely look different because they are rooted in a place hundreds of miles away, the small farming community in Tipton, Ind., where he grew up and learned to love the horizon line. "I know it so well," he says. He paints it well, too.

Yet Henry isn't a complete outsider. He was a Space 1026 member for about a decade, before he recently got married and decided it was "time to do something else." You can spot Henry's background in his metal works, which resemble the frightening, giant teeth of a Transformer. His day job is welding. "I guess I still enjoy the gnarlier side of things," he says. *Through June 30, opening Fri., June 1, 7 p.m., 1026 Arch St., 215-574-7630, space1026.com.*

► DALET GALLERY

When the Chinese-born artist LiQin Tan held a show at Dalet



Allen Bentley,
Swept Away

Gallery last year, curator Irena Gobernik says viewers were visibly shocked.

She implored me to look at photographs from the show, which reveal more than a few wide-eyed looks. "You will see astonished faces of the visitors," she says. "You will feel the spirit of the exhibit."

They were likely dumbfounded because they couldn't pinpoint how Tan, an art professor at Rutgers University-Camden, crafted his work. He uses computers to make folk-art sculptures and, conversely, creates digital imagery through ancient materials. To further confuse, he projects animations onto the work.

"The technique I use is very technological," says Tan. "Not many people use it for artwork so far. In Philadelphia, they still use the paper printer for fine arts."

But Tan's installations, prints and animated pieces are not overwhelmingly highbrow or aloof, like some digital art. Instead, the works are earthy and scary, depicting the female figure, brains and other natural imagery. *Through June 23, opening Fri., June 1, 5 p.m., 141 N. Second St., 215-923-2424, daletart.com.*

arts & entertainment

► AND THEN THERE'S ...

At **Third Street Gallery**, photographer **Keith Sharp** will make you do a double take. He prints images of outdoor scenery onto cotton and silk fabrics, which he then hangs in various settings to photograph. In the digital print *Suspended*, it takes a second to locate where the print of a tree begins and where the actual tree ends. It's surreal and a little unsettling. But it's a good reminder, that, as Sharp says in a statement, "There will always be two worlds — the natural and the man-made." **Jean Burdick** will also exhibit works depicting plant life and complex patterns. *Through July 1, opening Fri., June 1, 5-9 p.m., free, 58 N. Second St., 215-625-0993, 3rdstreetgallery.com. ...*

Contemporary artist **Allen Bentley** creates dreamy, fluid paintings of couples embracing each other under water. Bentley usually examines dance and human affection in his works, so this exhibit for **Bridgette Mayer Gallery** is a new direction, but not too new. *Through June 30, opening Fri., June 1, 6 p.m., 709 Walnut St., first floor, 215-413-8893, bridgettemayergallery.com.*

(editorial@citypaper.net)