

BRIDGETTE MAYER GALLERY

Larger than life in liquid pigment

By LEAH OLLMAN

JULY 28, 2006

SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

More than they're crackled up to be

Kaoru Mansour has developed a method for making collage paintings that mixes invention and formula. In turn, the works themselves oscillate between surprising and rote. They are never less than attractive, but collectively they suffer from a sameness that comes from overuse of a distinctive technique.

The base layer of Mansour's work is a coat of acrylic that dries with a crackle pattern similar to some ceramic glazes and is related as well to the spidery craquelure of old paintings or their varnishes. The Japanese-born, L.A.-based artist then applies dozens of layers of clear acrylic, sandwiching between them landscape photographs she's made and transferred to transparent film, or scans of flowering plants.

She embellishes both types of images with painted patterns: linear weaves, spore-like floaters or dangling, bulbous teardrops. The process endows the paintings with a waxy, translucent depth and the patina of age.

Both are evocative, but their consistency overrides their idiosyncrasy. The technique becomes a decorative conceit, a shortcut to more varied means of engaging both time and space.

Mansour's best moments are the slightest, when her calligraphic line meanders from the representational image into pure ornamentation. Manuscript illumination and Indian miniature painting come to mind. In works as tightly conceived and neatly realized as these, such spatial deviations and whimsical flourishes tip the balance from dismissible to intriguing.

LMAN, 949 Chung King Road, (213) 628-3883, through Aug. 12. Closed Sun. through Tue.
www.LMANgallery.com

<https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2006-jul-28-et-galleries28-story.html>