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Galleries By Edith Newhall

Seeing Vietnam through another lens

Having devoted much of the last decade to making paintings and painted ceramics that explore the aftermath of the Vietnam War and transform the writings of American veterans into visual poetry, Jane Irish is looking at Vietnam through a different lens.

The paintings that make up her fourth solo show at Locks Gallery, "Sông Hu'ng Withdrawing Room," took her to France and the interiors of *malouinières*, 18th-century manor houses in Brittany in which the decoration of a drawing room, in particular, was key to expressing its owner's worldliness.

It's a natural subject for Irish, who has often portrayed rooms without people in them to haunting effect, as though the extravagance of their decor might be in direct correlation to things or people lost long ago. The past weighs heavily in her paintings, no matter how airy or light-filled they might initially seem.

In *Malouinière Mauve*, drawing-room doors are open to reveal distant views of the Brittany countryside while a sprawling mural that appears to take up much of a wall shows a harbor scene in China; a mauve carpet is reflected in a deeply vertical, gilt-framed mirror; part of a round table occupies the front of the painting, awkwardly. It's a wide-angle view, as though shot with a camera, but such a painterly painting, filled with all kinds of passages and color harmonies. You're pulled in.

Several of Irish's paintings are of murals — extant ones or perhaps of exotic scenes invented by the artists. *Sông Hu'ng*, the name of a river in Vietnam (it means "Perfume River"), is the title of the show's largest painting, a five-panel work in egg tempera on canvas that depicts a panoramic waterfront scene. It's hung in a corner of the gallery so three of its panels on one wall adjoin two on the other, essentially wrapping around the cor-



"Yellow Room" (2012), by Jane Irish, in egg tempera on linen. It's at Locks Gallery through May 11. The paintings that make up her fourth solo show took her to France and the interiors of 18th-century manor houses in Brittany.

ner like a mural in a *malouinière* drawing room. The pastiches of Indian, African, and Asian images in *Yellow and Red*, a triptych, suggest antique wallpaper.

Two of Irish's painted and glazed whiteware urns hold court on pedestals, diminutive and reserved compared to some of her earlier ceramic works. In the company of these lush paintings, they stand less on their own than to accentuate the imagery of the paintings. In fact, they'd add a nicely subversive touch to any of these drawing rooms.

Locks Gallery, 600 Washington Square South, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. 215-629-1000 or www.locksgallery.com. Through May 10.

Bailey at Mayer

Walking into Radcliffe Bailey's show at Bridgette Mayer Gal-

lery, you might assume Bailey is conjuring the atmosphere of a 19th-century ethnographic museum. His gouache paintings of Congolese carved wood figures in scenes of travel line the walls of the front gallery, symbols for Africans in transit to the New World. His "medicine cabinet" sculptures in the front and rear galleries, filled with accumulations of piano keys, cotton, and other materials, hint at the contributions of African Americans to American music.

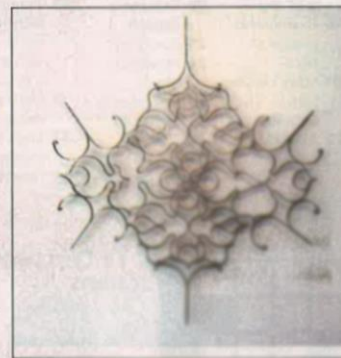
But the works most suggestive of a museum's installation are his sculptures: *Currency* and *Mende*, two steel-and-glass display



"Notes from Tervuren" (2013) by Radcliffe Bailey; gouache, collage, and ink on sheet music.

cases, each holding a color photograph of a single life-size carved African figure; *Double Consciousness*, comprising two life-size, brown-tinted wax casts of the same Negroid human head mounted together on a steel platform, and *Nest*, a large wall-mounted steel shelf of a taxidermied bird sitting atop an arrangement of piano keys.

The mood is more carnival than museum in the gallery's



Daniel Petraitis' "Security Snowflake" (2013), fabricated steel, at Rebekah Templeton.

vault space, in which Bailey has mounted a life-size pigment print of a photograph of a black magician/trickster. On a pedestal in front of the print, he's placed his own handmade facsimile of the trickster's hat, perfect down to the red rooster feather tucked into its band.

Bailey's eye for resonant materials and ability to transform them to serve his purposes is readily apparent in this exhibition, his first with Mayer.

Bridgette Mayer Gallery, 709 Walnut St., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. 215-413-8893 or www.bridgettemayergallery.com. Through April 27.

Not found, made

Daniel Petraitis has acquired a reputation for creating machine-made, mass-produced objects the old-fashioned way: by hand. And that's not all — he rejiggers the scale of said objects to tease your brain a little bit more.

Warhol and Oldenburg once did something sort of like this, but Petraitis' models are more resolutely object: a Crown Victoria rear window (cast in aluminum), an upright middle finger (cast in prosthetic rubber), and a photograph of a Bic lighter (lit) blown up to the size of a fire extinguisher.

In his show at Rebekah Templeton Contemporary Art, Petraitis has also included a found object that gives no hint of its previous life except through its title (1421 N. Front St.), a marble stair from the front of a house at that address that he sanded and stood vertically on its end like a tombstone, and a Security Snowflake reimagined as an ornamental object in fabricated steel.

Rebekah Templeton Contemporary Art, 172 Grand Ave., 12 to 6 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays. 267-519-3884 or www.rebekahtempleton.com. Through April 27.