

BRIDGETTE MAYER GALLERY



Chaos and harmony in Arden Bendler Browning's cityscapes at Bridgette Mayer Gallery

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It is easy to dismiss the city landscape. Usually my husband and I hurry from one place to another, not taking the time to admire the architecture, the sights and, of course, the people. Despite its sometimes overwhelming pace and tendency to isolate her dwellers, the city can be quite lovely. Arden Bendler Browning's show, *Clickpath* at Bridgette Mayer Gallery effectively rejoices in the frenzied aesthetic qualities of the unique metropolis that is Philadelphia.



Placeholder, Arden Bendler Browning -Bridgette Mayer Gallery

Bendler Browning sees a romance in the varying states of maintenance and decay throughout the urban scene. Her paintings convey an impression of the blurred images we casually observe while walking, biking or driving through the bustle of the city. Subsequently, these works are filled with a wonderful energy that is unique Philadelphia.

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TwoDirections, Arden Bendler Browning, Bridgette Mayer Gallery

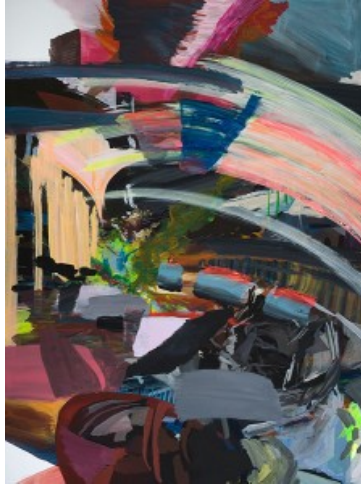
The artist's use of color and texture is mindful of the contradictory nature of cities. "The Next Block" crystallizes the way a mood can mutate when wandering from block to block. For this piece, Bendler Browning chose to attach dried paint to the canvas; this technical decision recreates a gritty, urban texture that references trash, decay and noise. Contrasting gestural brushstrokes are suggestive of the tendency toward the extreme that cities display: affluence here, poverty there. While one block may boast pristine walkways, polished surfaces and bright lights, the next may bear the heaviness of financial hardship and burden. Her speed ranges from slow to quick, which successfully records the "split personality" of a journey through Philadelphia.



The Next Block, Arden Bendler Browning – Bridgette Mayer Gallery

While my husband and I were viewing "Clickpath," we noticed and admired Bendler Browning's use of quick perspectival shifts. Her seemingly endless merging planes lend a sense of movement and action to her work. We also observed that she has capitalized on the split between the natural and the constructed via manipulation of line. All at once it seemed as though we were looking at the angular lines of buildings as they merged with the organic movement of a range of mountains. Bendler Browning's use of raw materials, flashe on Tyvek and wood, complements her style. The flat qualities of the paint do not take anything away from the energy of her brushstrokes.

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Just Up Ahead, Arden Bendler Browning – Bridgette Mayer Gallery

While viewing "Two Dimensions," we noticed that Bendler Browning utilized reflective imagery to encapsulate the flash of color and shade normally seen when driving at high speeds through (removed "a") heavily populated areas. "Two Dimensions" also showcases a depth of saturation and blocks of color are layered to create a pleasing visual thickness.



History, Arden Bendler Browning – Bridgette Mayer Gallery

Further teasing out the idea of contrast is her interactive video piece, "Construction Project." The viewer seems to be moving down a street at walking pace. Painted segments of the landscape drop in and out of view, much like the way a city landscape tends to unfold around you as you walk. Here the ever-mutating landscape of the city is glorified as an endless, morphing painting.

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Clues, Arden Bendler Browning – Bridgette Mayer Gallery

We both enjoyed Bendler Browning's interest in the stark beauty of the cityscape juxtaposed with the dirt and grit of the street. In her works, there is a definite acknowledgement of, and perhaps affection for, this dichotomy. City life is not altogether pristine and/or organized. It is both structured and muddled and there is an enjoyable harmony and discord here. After we left the gallery, I noticed that we both remarked on the architecture of the surrounding buildings and Brendan pointed out a truly lovely half-moon rising above us. I must wonder if we would have had the presence of mind to remark on these visual treats had it not been for Bendler Browning's stimulating show.



Reshape, Arden Bendler Browning – Bridgette Mayer Gallery

Clickpath will be on display at Bridgette Mayer Gallery until January 19, 2013.

More information can be found by visiting their website, www.bridgettemayergallery.com. All images courtesy Bridgette Mayer Gallery.