

Artamo Gallery

Improvisation in color

By Kerry Methner / CASA

SPLASHES OF VIVID COLOR moving in tone and depth meet viewers at Artamo Gallery this month as colorist Elana Kundell presents her recent oils on canvas and panel.

“I use color in an emotional way and I find inspiration in music... Music has a way of expressing the intangible, how we experience life. There’s an immediacy that comes through,” the artist explained.

On exhibit through December 29th, the works surprise in more than one way. In the window, a large red piece, the result



Elana Kundell

Photo by James Sarlier from ©2011

of a musical collaboration with Momo Loudiyi and other well-known world musicians, invites immediate response. It is one of eight pieces that are collaborations with musicians. The red piece was completed just before the show was installed. “The music’s energy was completely contagious,” Kundell noted of the collaboration. “Music immediately translates into color; into the way I use color to express emotion.”

Step a little further into the gallery and viewers will find a series of tiny works, five inches by five inches, that are perhaps even more intriguing. “For me the small ones are where I can fully develop the ideas, because it is so rapid to work ideas out on that scale,” Kundell shared. Because of this, as she has worked over time, Kundell has chosen smaller and smaller panels and canvases. “These pieces encapsulate a world in an intimate space... They are a small snapshot of a world... Every piece, every person, every leaf is unique. We all have our own function.” They’re clearly special expressions to the artist, not quick production pieces.

“Moving rapidly through ideas and the process makes it very manageable and intimate,” she explained.

Kundell develops the surfaces of her work intuitively using knives, brushes,



Soundscape II, oil/panel, 12x36" by Elana Kundell

fingers, and cloth to form dense, intersecting layers.

While Kundell works intuitively, she has also studied in the field. Having grown up on the Central Coast in the Thousand Oaks area, in 2000 Kundell completed a B.A. in art at University of California, Santa Cruz, with a focus in Painting and Printmaking as well as studies in Italian. Prior to that in 1998-99 she studied at Università di Bologna and Accademia di Belle Arti in Bologna, Italy.

Kundell is inspired by artists who “fearlessly express their vision regardless whether it is in fashion.” She explained, “You have to speak your truth with authenticity and boldness.”

For her, creating via painting, is not an optional activity, it plays a complex role in her life. “It’s something that I need to do to stay sane,” she shared. “I’m driven to do it. To understand life and relationships; to remember places I love; to connect with

my life experiences on a deeper level; to connect with other people on a deeper level. It’s an organic process. I have no idea what its going to look like when I begin. I start with a color, make a big mess, then start to clean it up.” And she succeeds with vivid rhythm and energy.

Artamo Gallery, a member of the Santa Barbara Art Dealers Association (SBADA), is located at 11 W Anapamu Street and is open Tues-Sun 12-5pm. Reach the gallery at 568-1400.



Transformation I, oil/panel, 5x5" by Elana Kundell



July to October, oil/canvas, 36x48" by Elana Kundell