

Artists Making Their Mark

There is a lot of superb art being made these days; this column shines light on a trio of gifted individuals.



LORI SHORIN (b. 1964) has always loved drawing and sculpting; both have constituted, she explains, “my answer to keeping a journal.” Born in Queens and raised primarily on Long Island, she grew interested in peace and environmental issues early on thanks to her parents, who are both professional social workers.

While earning a B.F.A. from the State University of New York at Binghamton, and then an M.F.A. from the University of Pennsylvania, Shorin focused primarily on paintings and drawings of stylized figures. As a child, she had been profoundly moved by a visit to the house in Amsterdam where Anne Frank and her family hid from the Nazis during World War II. In the educational gallery there, the young visitor saw a photograph of yet another little girl maimed because of her religion. This experience made Shorin question the value of organized religions. In 2002, she began making plexiglass sculptures depicting iconic religious figures with their faces replaced by mirrors that reflect the viewer. God, she believes, is not a distant, institutionalized concept, but part of all of us, wherever we live and however we worship. Entitled *You in Me and Me in You*, the plexiglass series was inspired by both a biblical passage and the teachings of India’s Paramahansa Yogananda, whose unique blend of meditation and physical exercise has, Shorin says, “become the agent that has brought me into balance.”

Over time, Shorin came to envision compositions for figurative sculptures in a classical realist style, but she recognized that she did not possess the requisite technical skills, nor deep experience in working from live models. To address this gap, in 2006 she sold almost everything she owned and moved to the Florence Academy of Art, where she spent the next four years studying under Robert Bodem, and also painting under Academy founder Daniel Graves and others. Inspired by such Italian masterworks as Bernini’s dynamic *Ecstasy of St. Teresa* (1647-52), Shorin came to excel in conveying the unique vitality of each model through the expressiveness of eyes, gestures, and other aspects.

Today, Shorin is busy making a series of sculptures that address the unity of all religions, as well as the universality and momentousness of motherhood. Its first installment was *Spiritual Sisters*, which

Lori Shorin (b. 1964)
Manna from Heaven
2012, Polychromed ceramic
33 in. high x 26 in. wide x 26 in. deep
Available in a bronze edition of 8
M Gallery of Fine Art, Charleston



depicts Mary and Devaki sharing the story of the Immaculate Conception that each experienced before giving birth to Christ and Krishna, respectively. Completed just this year is *Manna from Heaven*, in which Maya, the mother of Buddha, sits in a lotus flower, breast-feeding the baby Moses. Even a photograph of this work conveys Shorin's mastery of rhythm, what she calls "the ebb and flow of the flesh over musculature, and of musculature over bones, and of how the dynamic energy that moves them all creates a visual symphony. I only touch my sculpture when I feel connected to a positive source, and I believe that this energy will reach the viewer."

Shorin teaches part-time at the New Hampshire Institute of Art, New York City's School of Visual Arts, and the Teaching Studios in Oyster Bay (Long Island). Charleston's M Gallery of Fine Art is working with Shorin to create a permanent World Peace Garden there; an exhibition of Shorin's other works will appear there next spring. Shorin has pledged a portion of her sales to the Self Realization Fellowship, a favorite organization that promotes "the spirit of brotherhood among all peoples by teaching the eternal basis of their unity."

it will be fascinating to see where Harrington applies his skills in the future: "I am not sure what direction my work will take next. Often I look through my latest body of work, select the pieces that I think are strongest, figure out why they are particularly successful, and then replicate those principles in my next body of work."

Though this is surely how smart artists have always proceeded, it is encouraging to hear so young a man ignoring the external pressures of fashionability and the market to concentrate on what he does best, and also on pushing the boat further out next time. "The unknown," Harrington says, "is what keeps the process really exciting."

Harrington is represented by F.A.N. Gallery (Philadelphia) and Wells Gallery (Charleston).

Evan Harrington (b. 1989)
Lenten Roses
2012, Oil on canvas, 18 x 20 in.
Wells Gallery, Charleston

EVAN HARRINGTON (b. 1989) grew up near Philadelphia in Bucks County, an exceptionally scenic region that has attracted artists for well over a century. His father, the gifted professional artist Glenn Harrington (b. 1959), taught him to paint and draw, but it was his mother, Christine, who got him to take formal lessons. Their son went on to study with the master still life painter Frank Arcuri (b. 1946) and the Georgian-born imaginative painter Niko Chocheli (b. 1968). Having earned a certificate from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Harrington is now studying toward a B.F.A. at the University of Pennsylvania nearby.

Like his father, Harrington works primarily in oils, yet his brushwork is generally tighter. Both men revere the lineage of artists descended from Velázquez, including Degas, Sargent, and Sorolla, though Evan additionally admires the luminous work of Daniel Garber (1880-1958), who taught at the Pennsylvania Academy for more than 40 years.

Although he also paints landscapes, people, and animals, Evan Harrington is making his name most dramatically with still lifes. These compositions almost always hit their mark, so now he just needs to focus on keeping the work fresh. "My goal," he explains, "is to dig deeper than the surface classifications of subject and theme, to explore things like texture and pattern." More broadly,



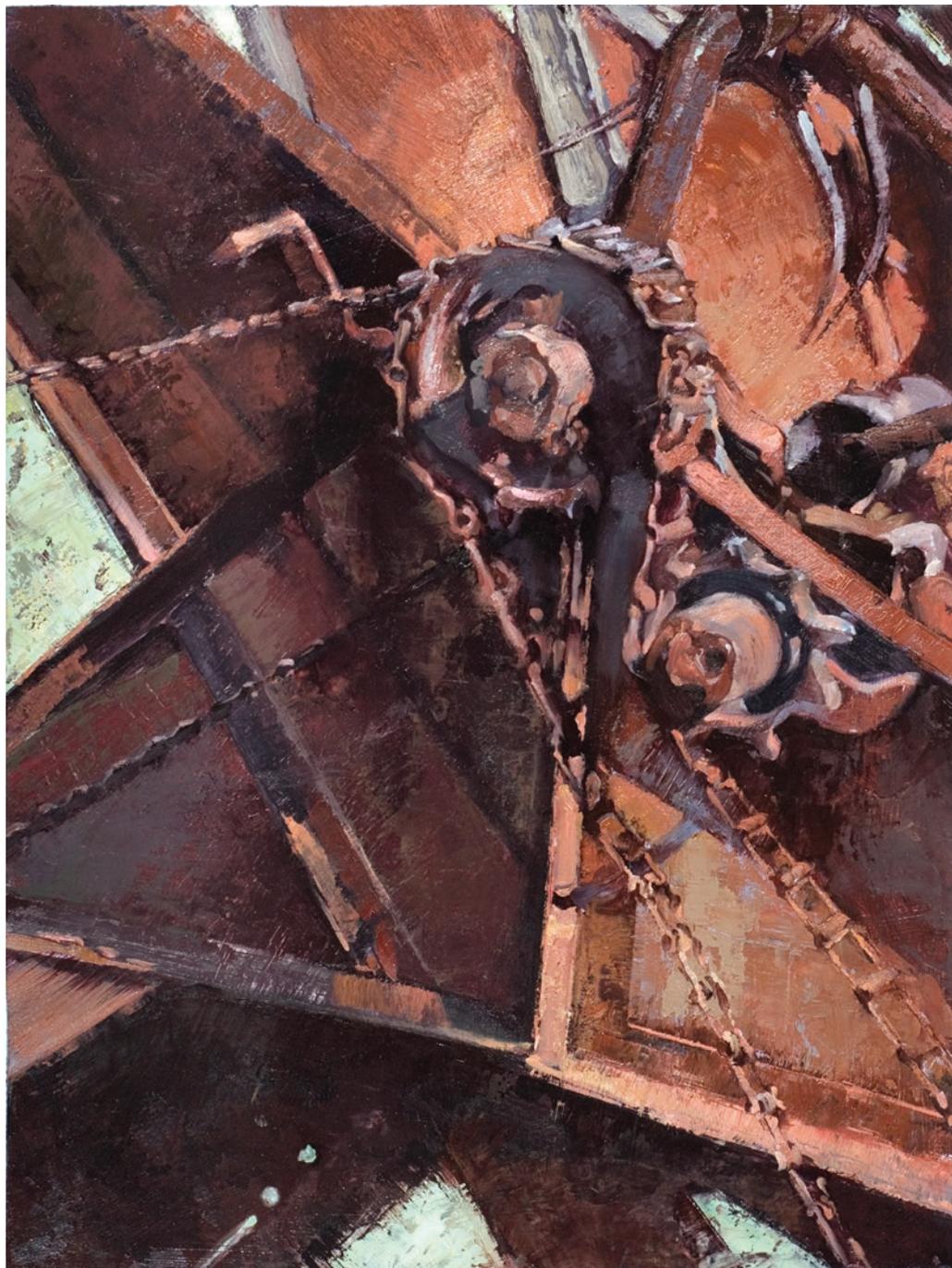
JILL SOUKUP (b. 1969) says she finds inspiration for her lively paintings “everywhere — in the interplay of shapes, values, edges, textures, and colors. Intuition and a sense of composition bring these elements together.” It’s not surprising, then, that her subjects vary widely, because they are not entirely the point. “Thematically,” Soukup explains, “I find myself returning again and again to the juxtaposition between rigid, mechanical, man-made objects and the fluid, organic aspects of nature — discovering that despite their contrasts, they share and exchange the same tendencies.”

Soukup is increasingly admired for her scenes of city streets and machinery — all hard edges and crisp reflections — and also for her dynamic images of animals, which she considers a kind of reprieve both intellectually and technically. Although she sometimes depicts people, beaches, interiors, or foliage, it is most often between these two poles that Soukup moves, a fact that makes sense in light of her unique upbringing. She grew up in Denver, the daughter of a veterinarian, and thus completely comfortable with animals from early on. Like many girls, she had a particular passion for horses, and indeed her mature paintings of them in motion are among the most compelling being made in America today. During her senior year of high school, Soukup started her own animal portraiture business, and was even commissioned by the school to paint a mural of whales.

This mix of talent and entrepreneurialism led her to earn a B.F.A. with a concentration in graphic arts from Colorado State University, and then to an 11-year career designing graphics at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science and elsewhere. Alongside this beneficial work experience, she excelled in classes at Denver’s Art Students League under Quang Ho, Bill Starke, Dale Chisman, Mark Daily, and other teachers. Having shifted to full-time artmaking a decade ago, she remains devoted to Denver partly because “the light in this part of the country is so crisp and dramatic.”

Whether she is painting in Colorado or far from home, Soukup always brings a camera. Back in the studio, her expertise as a graphic designer is brought to bear: After printing her photographs in black-and-white, she uses Photoshop to crop the most promising compositions, eliminating weaker ones as she goes. Soukup then draws small black-and-white sketches of them. Only those that succeed both thematically and abstractly move forward into the form of color studies in oil, and lastly into finished canvases that feature a surprising variety of textures, often scraped with a palette knife to lend further dynamism. ■

Soukup is represented by Ann Korologos Gallery (Basalt, CO), Astoria Fine Art (Jackson Hole), Eisenhauer Gallery (Edgartown, Martha’s Vineyard), and Saks Galleries (Denver). She has been selected as the featured artist at the Coors Western Art Exhibit and Sale during Denver’s National Western Stock Show (January 12-27, 2013).



Jill Soukup (b. 1969)
Rusted Gears
2012, Oil on board, 36 x 28 in.
Astoria Fine Art, Jackson Hole